



The year 2014 was a year that brought new stages to our journey of faith and life as a family. In February, Clint began a new position with General Dynamics in Norfolk, VA. There was a lot of journeying back and forth between Norfolk and Martinsville for several months as the girls stayed to finish the school year and as I finished my time in ministry at First Presbyterian Church. In August, the whole family was together again to embark on an odyssey of packing and moving to Virginia Beach. In September, Gwendolyn began Kindergarten, and Eleanor began toddler class in a local church preschool. At that same time, I began another season of transitional ministry as Bridge Pastor of King's Grant Presbyterian Church. Just as that journey drew to a close, I accepted a call to serve as Associate Chaplain at Westminster-Canterbury on the Chesapeake Bay, a continuing care retirement community.

At the beginning of last year, I don't know that we could have imagined the directions or destinations on these stages in the journey. We have experienced the sadness of goodbye, the unsettledness of transition, and the hope of new beginnings. Through it all, we have wrestled with God's call, known the renewal and grace of the Spirit, and come to discover Christ in new relationships and companions along the way.

In the midst of the transition work, I came across a prayer based on Robert Frost's poem, "The Road Not Taken" that touched my heart and spoke deeply to my experience over this past year.

*Two roads diverged in a yellow wood, and sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood and looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth.*

For the times we are frozen with anxiety at the crossroads,
For the times we are reluctant to step forward in faith, Lord give courage.
*Then took the other, as just as fair, and having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear; though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same.*

For the ways in which our sight is limited,
For the ways in which we second guess, Lord forgive us.
*And both that morning equally lay in leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day! Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.*

To our grief for what "might have been",
To our doubt that clouds your hope, Lord speak peace.
*I shall be telling this with a sigh somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I-- I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.*

For the small steps on new paths, for the hope that lies ahead, we give thanks to the Lord.
Amen.

I am thankful for all of you who have been companions on the journey for our family. I will forever carry and treasure in my heart the gift of your presence and faith you have shared with us. Thanks be to God!

Love,
Jimmy