

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!!

This year, our letter can't really be called a Christmas letter. But, it is important to reflect for a moment on the gift of God's Son, Jesus: born of a virgin, heralded by angels, worshipped by shepherds, threatened by a king... willing to die to pay the penalty for the sins of every person in the whole world. His birth is why we celebrate Christmas.

At the end of a year, we often spend some time in reflection on the year that is past and making our plans for the year ahead. If you have read our previous letters from 2018, you know that we celebrated PVBC's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, we took opportunities to travel, and as our family gets older, there have been some changes. Here are some quick highlights: we travelled to New York during spring break for Naomi's cousin's wedding, had many friends from the past in attendance for our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary open house, camp hosted our first Family Camp Weekend Retreat in many years, summer camp flew by with almost 30 kids who gave their hearts to Christ, we mourned the passing of Carol Sommer, hosted a record number of guests in the month of August, and Naomi left her teaching position and we began home-educating our kids. That brings you up to speed through the Fall.

After our final camp event for the year, the Sponables hit the road in November for a 15-day road trip to see some incredible places and some fantastic family and friends! We travelled through: IN, IL, WI, MN, SD, WY, UT, NV, CA, AZ, NM, TX, OK, MO, IL, IN and back home finally to the greatest state, MICHIGAN!! Some of the places we were able to visit: Wall



Drug, Mt. Rushmore, Zion National Park, the Pacific Ocean, Joshua Tree National Park, Petrified Forest National Park, and so many other beautiful areas. We want to say a huge "THANK YOU" to those who gave us a place to stay during our trip and all those who prayed for our safety. Along the way, we spent a couple days at Frontier School of the Bible looking for some quality counsellors for this next summer, we spent 3 days in California enjoying the wonderful weather, visited the Aquarium of the Pacific, we celebrated Thanksgiving in Phoenix, AZ with some friends from years ago, and then headed for home. All together we travelled over 5,500 miles! One miracle was that every day that we were driving, we had sunshine and dry roads, (except our very last day from Kalamazoo to home). What an adventure! There were so many examples of God's awe-inspiring creativity, demonstrated in everything from tiny wild flowers to towering mountains. What a God we serve!!

December was a busy month too. The kids went with their home school group to a nursing home and sang Christmas carols. On the 13<sup>th</sup>, we celebrated our 15<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary! Naomi and Ella Mae got all dressed up and went with her mom, sister and nieces to see the Nutcracker performed by the Grand Rapids Ballet. And, we have been able to spend some extra time with Naomi's parents as they are back in the states for an extended stay while her Dad recovers from knee replacement surgery.

There are so many ways we have seen God at work in our lives this past year. He continues to confirm that He has called us to this ministry at Pleasant Valley Bible Camp. It is hard to believe that in a few days, we will be starting our 11<sup>th</sup> year. WOW! The time has flown by. We also know that it would be impossible for us to do what we do at camp without the faithful and sacrificial giving of so many of you. Praise the Lord that as of early December, the Lord has provided us with almost 90% of our needed monthly support. Thank you to all of you who pray for us and give.

As we begin the new year, here are some things that you can pray with us for God's will to be done:

- That each winter retreat would be filled with young people and that each one would be encouraged in their relationship with the Lord
- That our family would be drawn closer together and strengthened, despite hectic schedules for Naomi and Steve
- That our kids would each choose to love God and serve Him in whatever He calls them to do
- That Naomi's dad would have a full recovery from knee surgery, and protection as her parents travel back to Guyana, South America
- That God would give wisdom and humility to Steve in his leadership at camp
- That Naomi would give Godly counsel to her clients and have opportunities to share the Gospel with those who need to know there is a God, and He loves them
- That Satan would be restrained, by God's power, from causing disunity or distractions in the lives of our staff, guests, or campers each day
- That we would see the additional \$500 per month raised to reach our 100% goal

May God bless you and keep you, as you hold tightly to His promises and trust that He will never leave you or forsake you. Remember what the Bible says in Romans chapter 8:

*<sup>35</sup> Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword*

*<sup>37</sup> But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. <sup>38</sup> For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,<sup>39</sup> nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*