

Concert Presentations: Family Missions



2020: Issue 2

“The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I lack. In green pastures you let me graze; to safe waters you lead me; you restore my strength.” Psalm 23:1-3

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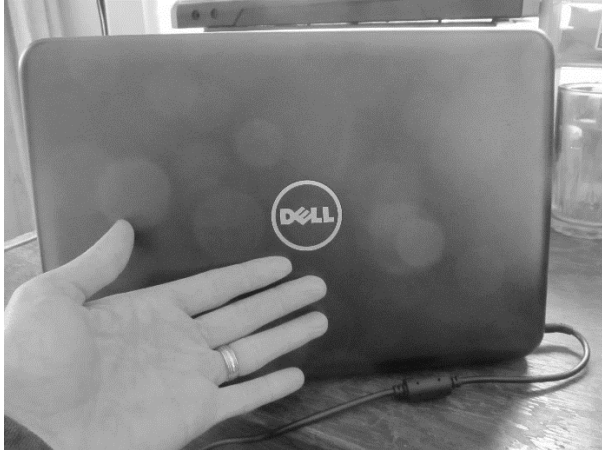
Pratt Family Update:

So many changes have occurred in our lives, we are indeed thankful to have the unchanging Shepherd of the Lord. Though we may not understand the “when’s,” or the “why’s,” we can be sure that every little detail is in His Plan. All we need to do is trust and follow. So simple, yes?

One lesson in trust came in simply the production of this newsletter. Seemingly thwarted at every turn to get this simple communication out to those whom we love, whether by needing to download a simple computer program, but living too far away from reliable internet connection for it to be feasible; or by discovering that I needed an altogether new laptop, this has been indeed a lesson in letting go.

I, at last, found myself standing in front of the library window in town, a good half-hour drive from our home. For the second time. This time, I had my new laptop, which my friend gave me, as she had felt that “He had told her that I needed one.” This beautiful piece of new technology was precariously balanced on one hand, as close to the window of the library as I could reach (they are closed, due to the virus) and my ancient cell-phone was clutched between shoulder and ear.

The person on the other end of the phone was a lovely woman named Amy. Also under shut-down in the Philippines, she instructed me what to type with my free hand to finally download the necessary program. At last! I am able to reach out to you!



Which takes us back to the Sunday night before our March tour: We are ready to leave at 5:00 am Monday, to travel down to one of our favorite places to visit with wonderful communities: The Cape! Equally ready is a letter, with apologies, for why we feel we need to cancel this tour. After much prayer and introspection, Bruce gives the word: cancel the entire tour. Why? Because the entire reason we do what we do is out of love for the people whom we serve. We could not justify potentially bringing such a sickness to the communities, or unknowingly spreading it.

Three days later, almost everything in the outside world had been shut down, and with April and May, the decision was completely taken out of our hands. We do not know what the future brings... Well, Lord, where do we go from here?

Well!! It IS Spring! Life is anew! As we are home for the foreseeable future, we are able to do something we have always wanted to do, but had felt called elsewhere. May I announce the beginnings, (and yes, they are quite humble,) to the Pratt Family Homestead...although we have yet to pick a "firm" name. Suggestions are welcome!

Almost as if we were starting where we were ten years ago, we looked over our land, and decided on a nice, sunny spot. Bruce took out the chainsaw, and quite quickly, with so many hands, a new place appeared for a garden. It is an ambitious space, about 30 x 80, which is no surprise as Elijah is (fortunately) leading the effort. He has the green thumb of the family. This is good, as right now, it appears to be a large expanse of...dirt!!



Yellow Wing

Soon after, seven chicks followed. Marietta was thrilled, as she wants to be a farmer (along with being an archaeologist, concert pianist, veterinarian, and fancy dog-treat maker). Five are Rhode Island Red females. Two are....questionable. Two ducks of an equally ambiguous nature joined them, much to Elijah's delight.



Little Peep

Within three days, my friend contacted me saying that she needed to re-home her Nigerian dwarf goats. Much to MY surprise and delight (I always wanted more kids!!) I soon found myself the surrogate mother of 3 seven-week old goats, 2 bucklings and a doeling, which needed to be bottle fed.



Xerxes, Nevaeh, Boaz

When it was left unclear if we were to keep said goats, or return them to their prior owner when her situation changed, we decided we needed our own goats. Thus followed 2 eleven-day-old doelings, Saanen/Nigerian dwarf goat crosses, pure white. It soon became apparent my friend was NOT planning to take back the first 3. So, we now have 5 new kids to add to our family. As we had read and watched numerous versions of “Heidi,” I felt well prepared...



Esther and Ruth

Bruce and Elijah: make an amazing team, as we all know. However, lately, they have not been working together in their tuxedos. Instead, with a speed and skill that dazzles me, they have planned and constructed a barn/coop for the goats and chickens, and are now hard at work finishing a surprise for Pepere, Bruce’s dad: a tool shop!

For years now, Pepere has requested this area for tools, and we have always replied that now was not the time. Well, now is the time!! Again, I’m not quite sure how a pianist develops the know-how to install solar panels, build barns, and, did I mention he bought a pasta maker and has been making homemade pasta??

Bruce has been filled with thankfulness that he and Elijah can be a team, even in this way, and share these experiences. As Bruce designed the house in which we now live, and he and his dad (Pepere) built it, with help from Elijah, now Bruce is working on new buildings with his own son, and Marietta is helping. This is something that we hope to leave to our future generations, in a way that today is seldom seen. And Elijah and Marietta will be able to tell the story of how each building came to be, and how they remember how it was, when it was just woods...



Even now, as Elijah comes in to tell me to postpone dinner again until 7 pm, I hear the sound of hammers ringing. Both Dad and Son are eager to complete their projects, and return as quickly as possible to music. Indeed, they work from the time they get up, in the mud, rain, freezing rain, snow, and sun (which seems the least of all weather, lately), until dinner. Then they come in, thaw out, have a good meal, and groan as they move their sore bodies into the living room to relax before tomorrow. They are happy, good natured, and such an example!!

Bruce's Current Favorite thing to Say to his Family
"There's no crying in baseball!" -Tom Hanks from the movie, "A League of Their Own."

Elijah's Most Frequent Statement
I'm hungry. Is it almost time for dinner?



*The future garden, which Elijah has rototilled twice already.
The massive boulders are piled in the back, right.*

Pepere and Memere Joan: are new characters to our newsletter, but an integral part of our lives. Until this new pandemic, just about every weekend saw Pepere coming up to, as he likes to put it, "God's Country." He has an extremely patient, giving wife, also known as Memere Joan. Pepere and Memere Joan are Bruce's parents. Pepere's favorite thing to do is come here, play his guitar, and relax, and...work. In fact, it is all we have been able to do to get him to come here and sit! He likes to "play" with his backhoe, and "fix" our private road. Or "repair" the upstairs. Hence, why he very much, and we very much, needed his shop. But, shhh! It's a surprise for when he next comes up!!!



*Shop in Progress
Picture of the Final Product in the Next Issue!*

Memere Joan is camera-shy. But she took the below photo!

Pepere and his rescue dog, Lucky.



Words of Wisdom from Pepere

If you're going to tangle with a pig, you're both going to get dirty. But only one of you will like it!

(We're not entirely sure what that means. Please feel free to send in interpretations.)

Marietta: is so excited, as April was her birthday month (she turned eight years old!), and she now has a "real farm!!" She someday hopes to add her "dream" animal to the farm- a horse. We told her it might be a while. She has also decided, after watching "Little Women," that she might add "author" to her list of future careers.



Currently, Marietta's favorite subjects are math and science!

She is also very enthusiastic about using her sewing machine, which she learned how to use when Bruce's Aunt Raisa, who is a real seamstress, came to visit! The last thing she wants to be sure to share is that she finished reading the book, "*Heaven is for Real*," by Todd Burpo. This was a gift to Marietta from a friend who lives at one of the communities on the Cape. This was a wonderful book, which the entire family is now reading!

Marietta has been a huge help to her family. Amidst practicing piano and school work, singing and guitar, Marietta will help bottle feed the kids, shovel dirt to start seeds, and hammer in nails in the shop. She also helps her mother set the table for dinner every evening, and helps to clean up when the meal is done. Truly, we are so grateful for this little girl!!

Marietta's saying when it's a hard day:

Sometimes I feel like a studded snow-tire, but I just keep slipping!!

Tobit: is also a new addition to the family!



Like the character from the Bible (to be found in some versions, and not others), Tobit seems like just a good guy, who had a lot of misfortune come upon him. He was a small, malnourished kitten who came from a hoarding situation where a woman had too many cats (30), and decided to do the right thing, ask for help, and rehome many of them. We hope, as in the Bible, Tobit has found the happily ever after to his story. He certainly seems happy!!

Jessie: thrives on routine. She is still trying to create a new one which will incorporate homestead work, business, piano, housework, and academics. She is rather stunned, yet thrilled, to find herself the new mother of 5 kids, 7 chickens, and 2 ducks, and like any new mother, has already been on the phone with the veterinarian at least 5 times. Nevaeh, in particular, likes to heave huge sighs of delight as she is gently rocked to sleep.

With Marietta's help, Jessie moved every single piece of furniture with cloth out of the living room, and into various other rooms of the house, as the babies await the proper age and weather to be introduced to the barn, which, though they do not yet realize it, is their real home. Sometimes, Jessie shakes her head, and thinks to herself, "Never did my house think it would see this!" But, she is so very happy, and feels so incredibly blessed!!



Bruce and Jessie out on the snowmobile trail

Indeed, even with all the changes in the world, in our lives, the Lord has been good to us. We are happy, each moment, with where the Lord leads us. For He truly is our Shepherd, and we do have everything we really need. When I start to get uneasy about the world, I look at our lives, and feel He surely can restore our strength, if only we search for that strength in Him.

Jessie's words of wisdom that are not her own.

If the Lord brought you to it; He will see you through it.

*The next issue of Concert Presentations: Family Missions will arrive in July 2020! If you would like your name added to our mailing list, please write to us and we will gladly do so! We also love hearing about the lives, experiences, and wisdom of those whom we meet in the community. We look forward to hearing from you!

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Pratt Fun Facts: Musical Revelations

-Elijah finally purchased a classical guitar for himself. After a long day researching gardening, or helping dad with the many projects, or practicing violin and piano, He enjoys relaxing with his guitar, and “playing a little Bach.”

-Jessie is a closet lover of bluegrass and Celtic music. She loves those songs with Hymn themes, and will sing along to them at the top of her lungs. When alone, in the car. She may also attempt to plunk out these same songs on the piano or guitar, again, when it seems no one else is in the general vicinity.

-Some of Marietta’s favorite compositions are Rachmaninoff’s 3rd Concerto, Tchaikovsky’s 1st Piano Concerto, and Lalo’s Symphonie Espagnole, Op. 21. Like big brother, she also recently purchased a classical guitar for herself, one that is just her size!

-Bruce’s suppressed musical desire has been to delve into the organ. Now, he is finally able to pursue this passion, as a local Church donated their unused organ to us! He may have to vie with Elijah and Marietta, however, as both children have expressed enthusiastic interest, as well.

Next Issue Available in July 2020

A Moral Consideration

A pandemic. How very...unexpected. Or is it? We are told in the Bible to expect trials and tribulations, of every kind. Even the best of peoples in both the Old and New Testaments don’t always have it easy. While it’s tempting to simply “react,” how are we called by God to respond during these times?

Scripture Says:

”You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength.” Deuteronomy 6:5

Jesus affirms this as the “first of all commandments,” and then continues, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these.” When a scribe says that these commandments are “worth more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices,” Jesus responds, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” Mark 12:28-34

“Let us not grow tired of doing good, for in due time we shall reap our harvest, if we do not give up.” Galatians 6:9

James says, “If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and has no food for the day, and one of you says to them, “go in peace, keep warm, and eat well,’ but you do not give them the necessities of the body, what good is it?” James 2:15

He further says “Is anyone among you suffering? He should pray. Is anyone in good spirits? He should sing.” James 5:13

We are clearly called to continue to pray. To continue to praise God and give Him thanks! To continue to help our fellow Man in whichever way we are called. While we are told to be shrewd, (Matthew 10:16), we show God we love Him by obeying his commands, (John 14: 23) and we trust Him as our eternal Shepherd, no matter where his plan may lead us or our loved ones. So we can truly cast our worries aside. He bears our burdens.

*They that hope in the Lord will renew their strength, they will soar on eagles’ wings; They will run and not grow weary, walk and not grow faint.”
Isaiah 41:31

