

Concert Presentations: Family Missions



2021: Issue 1

“Say to those whose hearts are frightened: Be strong, fear not! Here is your God, He comes with vindication; With divine recompense, He comes to save you.” Isaiah 35:4

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Pratt Family Update:

The above sunflower was from our garden, and was still at bloom when I was about to send out the October Newsletter. It is February. As God wills it, we shall soon see the beautiful flowers bobbing their colors once again.

So much has happened since the last Newsletter, which came out in July! Indeed, the October Newsletter was all set, ready to be sent out, and then such changes occurred as to make it obsolete! I decided to give it time. Perhaps, with patience, God would guide me with how to continue next.

Back in October, the big news was that a family was camping on our property, and had been for a month and a half. This family had felt called to rid themselves of all extra possessions, and rely completely on Him for all their needs, including direction! Such faith!!! As they awaited direction, and the weather turned colder, they at last headed South to see what He had in mind for them.

This was a huge adventure, for both of our families. We all learned many lessons, and were thankful for the opportunity to be taught. Today, that family finds themselves in North Carolina, awaiting further direction from Him. They see much of the world, and report what they see to us and other followers of Christ.

On our end, while unexpectedly hosting the family (which included 2 daughters, so close in age to our own, and a mother, father, and wiggly dog) was enriching beyond our expectations, it also included several challenges.

First and foremost were the “normal” challenges of putting two families together for an extended period (we are still friends, and family in Christ, praise the mercy of God!). However, we also faced the extra weights of playing catch-up for the massive amounts of projects which it takes to get an off-grid homestead ready for winter. Firewood needed to be prepared, the barn readied for winter, hay moved in, etc. And we were 3 months late!!

Add to this schoolwork, preparing musical programs, and progressing always with musical skill; Well, let’s just say we are truly grateful for our Saturday Sabbaths, where we can relax, recharge, and worship Him!!!

The Homestead News:

Snow, snow, snow, and more snow!!! Which, of course means sledding, snowmobiling, and SHOVELING!!!

Is Esther expecting??? Well, she and Xerxes did indeed have their wedding day. So, we shall see if, in 5 months, we shall be blessed with kids, and fresh goat milk!!



Already in his black and white tux



Radiant in white

Sarah: the Angora Bunny arrived around her 8th week birthday. She is a love, and is already litterbox trained. Her fur is the softest I have ever felt, and supposedly, will give me as much yarn over the course of a year as a small sheep. The jury is out on that one, so we will have to report in after a year has passed!!



There was no way that Sarah was riding home in a box...

Micetro: is the sly culprit who invaded Elijah’s room and entered his aviary night after night, throwing its inhabitants into an uproar from 2 am to 4 am for months. This consisted of Mendelssohn, Baby Bird, and Berry, all parakeets, nervously eyeing the intruder as he made off with their bird seed, then screeching madly as he made his escape. Traps were set, of all the varieties and types Tractor Supply could offer, covering all entrances and exits. Like Houdini, Micetro mysteriously evaded all attempts at capture....until that fateful night, when Elijah stayed up, and clonked him on the noggin with his home-made wooden sword. Rather disheartened to think he had finally dispatched his worthy adversary, Elijah put him in an aquarium to see if he would recover. He did.



And while Jessie, aka Mom, the animal lover, rejoiced with the family over his recovery, she was less than thrilled when, rather atypically, both Bruce and Elijah advocated that such an intelligent animal deserved permanent residence in said aquarium. Jessie was out-voted, and Micetro is now living-it-up in comfort, although, per Mom’s instructions, the only care he receives is with gloved hands and masked face. He doesn’t seem to mind.

UPDATE: Meet **Volestro:** Sadly for Elijah, Micetro escaped his habitat, and most likely is no more. Not to worry, however. Another creature obviously wanted to make its home with us, as a neighbor exclaimed to Bruce, as Bruce drove by on the snowmobile, that someone was desperately following his trail, attempting to keep up. With one scoop, Bruce swept the tiny rodent into a container and brought him home to Elijah. The unknown animal looked like a fuzzy, fluffy mouse, but had a short stubby tail covered also with fur. Obviously near-sighted, and content to burrow and tunnel to his heart’s content, he originally bore the misnomer of Molestro. After a bit of research, however, he now is appropriately titled.



Unfortunately, Volestro very much enjoys burrowing, which makes him extremely difficult to photograph. The above Vole is a stunt-double from Google Images.

Bruce: Bruce continues to lovingly guide his family along the path that he feels best follows the course that Christ set forth for us. This means lots of hard work, both to prepare for the business side of the world, as well as practical hard work, such as preparing for winter. Part of this includes venturing into the world of canning, making our very own spaghetti sauce, as well as egg-preservation, even coming up with his own curry-pickled eggs!



Marietta and Bruce share a moment.

This also means lots of close family time, laughing, talking, playing, and loving. Further, Bruce guides us in reaching out, as we are called to do, in any way we can to help the world around us. This includes inviting others in need to our property for a stopping point, until they continue on their journey, as well as driving with Elijah to Colorado at the request for assistance from his eldest son, Christopher. Bruce is uncompromising in one area: doing God's Will. And we all lovingly, determinedly, follow that Calling!!

Marietta and Elijah at the beginning of September 2020



Marietta: Is officially a fourth grader!! Though probably not for long, as we race through curriculum, especially math!! She is very excited at the introduction of basic pre-algebra. We have also been delving into the world of Botany for science, and American History for social studies (which I found rather appropriate, given our country's recent events.)



Marietta and Tobit are best friends!!

Marietta loves to read, and just finished "The Black Stallion," by Walter Farley. We are very excited to now watch the 1970's movie, with Mickey Rooney.

She did face a rather traumatic night, as I finally finished reading aloud the book, "Where the Red Fern Grows." (For those who don't know, this is a classic, following along the lines of "Old Yeller.") I thought to cheer her up by assigning her next free-read book. She said, "As long as it's happy and no one dies." As I smiled and handed her "Charlotte's Web," by E.B. White, I suddenly gasped as I remembered that, actually, a main character does pass at the end, and it's really quite sad at that point! Like a champ, she took it in good stride, and quite enjoyed the book. However, I figured that perhaps we better go to the "Misty of Chincoteague" series, which I have high hopes is simply a horse story with no untimely endings.

Elijah: is loving Spanish! Finally, he sees what I have been saying all this time, about learning a second language! Our teacher, who is native to Honduras, with extremely high expectations, challenges Elijah to move at a rather astonishing pace, and Elijah is rising to meet him! A fascinating element is the differences between the nuances in words between languages. For example, as the teacher explained, in Honduras you do not "love" the hamburger. You "enjoy" it. You do not "love" the book. You may find it "interesting." The word "love" is reserved first and foremost for God, and then for your spouse and children. How interesting!!

As Elijah pushes to learn this, as well as the never-ending world of verb conjugations, he also continues to move ahead with his music, work on outdoor projects, pursue his drawings, complete his schoolwork, and be an

amazing big brother always ready for a game of tag. He is chased around the house until he complains that his legs are sore, and then he does it again the next day! Lately, he has been taking Pony, the now one year old puppy, on his “walks” around the property. These walks involve him strapping on some old, downhill skis, and attempting to cross country through the woods, down hills, up hills, through bushes, across small creeks. At this point, I would not be surprised to look out the window and find him in a tree, complete with skis and puppy.



Elijah puts in long hours. He fell asleep during Bible reading, his best pal, Mendelssohn, perched contentedly on his head.



When I think of Elijah, three words that come to mind are “disciplined, steady, and patient.” He is always a huge help around the house, and we never have to worry if there will be enough wood stacked by the woodstove.

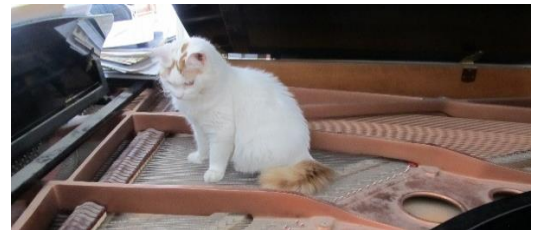


Sketching left-handed as Pony the puppy adoringly snuggles, having slowly “snuck” onto the couch and into Elijah’s lap.

Tobit is our indoor baby, and, despite what he thinks, not an outdoor cat! Here he is, looking rather abashed, after we rescued him from the great outdoors during his most recent escape attempt.



To his credit, he did once catch a mouse that was trying to steal some grain. After watching Tobit for some time, it was clear this was an unknown entity, and at 3 am, I was rather tired of waiting for instinct to kick in. It was, perhaps, the mouse’s lucky night, as I scooped him up in a Tupperware container and put him outside. I do hope he found cover, for somewhere out there, waiting in the shadows, were Moose and Mr. Mills.



We have had Tobit for over a year, now. As a true music lover (as was stated in an earlier issue), Tobit truly fits in with the Pratts!

Moose and Mr. Mills: Were adopted in August. These two magnificent toms are a bit different than our sweet boy, Tobit, who resides strictly indoors. Tobit is a total of 7 pounds of baby. Moose and Mr. Mills are each around 15 pounds of pure muscle. These two described “hunters” needed a home, and we needed some good mousers. While they are quite affectionate, and obviously failed in their duty to stop Micetro from his invasion, we have already held quite a few funerals for everything from mice and flying squirrels, to chipmunks and bluejays. We equate Moose to a lion, and Mr. Mills to a cougar. What do you think?



That being said, they do seem to have quite bold spirits. As I go on my walks, often I am accompanied by these two, one on my right, and one on my left. Indeed, as Bruce and I sat in the meadow in the moonlight, listening to coyotes in the distance, Moose seemed to have little fear. He sat on the rock, and only returned home when we told him firmly that it was time.

UPDATE: Mr. Mills passed away suddenly in January, but very peacefully, at the veterinarian's office. We feel sure Mr. Mills felt at ease with his passing, as at least he was able to get his brother, Moose, to a loving home. Moose now sleeps on our bed as much as his noble cat heart desires.



Jessie holding Sarah Bunny

Jessie: is so thankful to be finding her "big family." Having grown up as an only child in a relatively isolated area, Jessie is stunned and grateful to find a full, loving family in the body of Christ. This body is a loving, forgiving one, which challenges all its members to be their absolute best, as we live not for ourselves, but for Him who created us, and loved us first.



With a little TLC, perhaps this newest find will soon be spinning Sarah yarn!!

Fun Fact: Have you heard of pinecone jelly? It's delicious and has many health benefits!!

The next issue of *Concert Presentations: Family Missions* will arrive in April 2021! If you would like your name added to our mailing list, please contact 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: What's your favorite color?

-Bruce: Christly Purple

-Jessie: I like earth colors, like blues, greens, and browns...But I also really like white, and all shades of yellow. And I suppose any soft colors, like soft pinks and lavenders. Just...not neon, thanks.

-Elijah: A bluish-green. Turquoise, I guess. Like the color of the Caribbean Sea.

-Marietta: I don't have one. I like them all! They're all my favorite colors, sometimes. I even like black, sometimes, like in the black, starry sky. I like red in the Bible, because it gives me a clear understanding. I also like it in the sunset. I really like sky-blue, and autumn-leaf yellow, and fresh, dark grass green. I like them all!!

Next Issue Available in April 202

A Moral Consideration

Why the Sabbath? A day of “rest” and worshipping God not only sounds easy, but enjoyable! So why is it the ONE, of all the Ten Commandments, that most people do not observe? The rest are pretty important!!

When we first began observing the Sabbath, little did we know just how challenging it would be! The lure to be productive, or even cave in to the fear of winter approaching, was always present. We could even tell ourselves, stacking firewood is FUN!!! But, that is fooling ourselves.

What we found is that the Sabbath is our chance, our day set apart, to fully connect with our God, and study His Word. This is rather important, as we face the challenges and turmoil of a rapidly changing world. Indeed, it is easy to see why this commandment is listed above even “Thou shalt not kill.” We NEED our connection to Him to help us resist all the wrongs that try to get the best of us each day, be it materialism, alcohol, or adultery....and so, of course, we can see how those opposed to God would like us to believe that the Sabbath is no longer important, and completely irrelevant. However, this Commandment is about as far from obsolete as one can get!

Scripture Says:

**Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day. Six days you may labor and do all your work, but the seventh is the Sabbath of the Lord, your God. Exodus 20:8,9*

**Whoever loves me will keep my Word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him. John 14:23*

But what does Jesus do? Does He observe the Sabbath? Isn't he the new covenant?

**He came to Nazareth, where he had grown up, and went according to his custom into the synagogue on the Sabbath day. Luke 4:16*

While many disagree with *what* should be done on the Sabbath, Jesus clearly observes it.

**...whoever claims to abide in Him ought to live [just] as He lived. 1 John 2:6*

But didn't Paul say the Sabbath wasn't important? No. That's a misinterpretation of other scriptures...all by Paul, and *only* Paul, not Jesus or the other disciples. But in one of his last letters, Paul says:

**Therefore, a Sabbath rest still remains for the people of God. And whoever enters into God's rest, rests from his*

own works as God did from His. Therefore, let us strive to enter into that rest, so that no one may fall after the same example of disobedience. Hebrews 4:9-11

If we are supposed to follow the 4th commandment, what does that mean?

Jesus says: **No one can serve two masters. He will either hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon (money). Matthew 6:24*

Now I understand why all the businesses were closed on Sundays, during the “olden days!!” Truly, we were to spend our Sabbaths worshipping and praising Him, and learning of His ways!! And now I see why, when we *don't* take a day off, to reach out to connect with God, our connection with Him suffers.

But isn't that trying to “save” ourselves through works, rather than by faith in Him? I would say, if we have faith in Him, then we follow the works He told us to do!

But, what about the day? True, the early Church often gathered on Sunday, but it's still clear that they observed the Sabbath on Saturday, not Sunday, as Jesus did. What happened?

Well...where does corruption often come from? Money, power, and politics! In 321 AD, Emperor Constantine, who previously had been a *Sun* worshiper, decided it would be a great move to *embrace* this new, powerful religion. So he mandated a rest for all peoples on the day of the *Sun*. *i.e.* Sunday. A bit later, in 363 AD, in the Council of Laodicea, the Church followed suit, even *forbidding* followers to rest on Saturday.

Bruce and I were raised Catholic. This news was a bit disheartening, although, at this point, we were sadly aware that the Catholic Church has some...trust issues. However, we need not be dismayed! Fortunately for all, the Bible is there for all who are interested to study on their own, and come to their own conclusions! It's a bit more complete than my 1 column.

Jesus says, “A good tree does not bear rotten fruit, nor does a rotten tree bear good fruit. For every tree is known by its own fruit.” Luke 6:43, 44

Keeping the Sabbath is a challenge. While it should be easy, and it does get easier, it is not at first. Life gets busy-but fear not! Our God was so compassionate, and so all knowing, that He gave us a COMMAND so that we would always have help finding Him. It's all part of His divine Plan. As this world turns, and people need their God, try it! Then you, too, can judge by its fruits.

