

Concert Presentations: Family Missions



February 2022: Issue 1

“My son, when you come to serve the Lord, prepare yourself for trial. Be sincere of heart and steadfast, undisturbed in times of adversity. Cling to Him, forsake Him not; thus will your fortune be great. Accept whatever befalls you, in crushing misfortune be patient; for in fire gold is tested, and worthy men in the crucible of humiliation. Trust God and He will help you; make straight your ways and hope in Him.”

Sirach 2:1-6

Pratt Family Update:

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The world is, indeed, a very different place from where we were two years ago. So much has happened!! Please allow me to fill you in on the new world in which our family lives. This is a world where our family still works, plays, and worships together. However, gone, for now, are the days where our business and outreach take us into the world of live performance, regularly. New mandates and protocol make the touring life all but impossible. And so, the Pratts call to the Lord, to see where He wants us to go, what He wants us to do, and how He will make it all work. We know that our purpose, in whatever way He wills, is to glorify Him. We put one foot in front of the other, mustering, curious as to what He has waiting for us around the bend.

In general, the day starts at 6:30am. Marietta wakes up, reads her devotional, and then knocks on our door to let Bruce know that his peppermint tea is ready. Bruce begins his day by lighting the woodstove, and then watching Marietta as she cares for our goats, chickens, and ducks. Elijah is already reading his Bible, while Jessie (the writer) is preparing for different things, depending on the given day. More on that, later!!

Music starts the day, followed by curriculum. In the afternoon, there are many groups, and chores, which await all participants. As the world changes, our mission has shifted from in-person outreach across many states, to in-person community outreach locally, while reaching as many as possible with the current, given technology, and rare (but so prized!) in-person performances. We are so pleased to still be able to bring some of God's gift of pure, truthful love to all who wish to receive it.

The Homestead News:

Winter means endings and beginnings. We were thrilled when, over the summer, Nevaeh gave birth to a buckling whom we dubbed Youngin'. However, winter saw the passing of one of our white does, Esther, the passing of baby Youngin', and the passing of our two bucks, Xerxes and Boaz, as a virus roared through our small herd. They passed being lovingly stroked next to the warmth of our fireplace, serenaded with hymns. So, as of now, we have two does, Ruth and Nevaeh. None of our 7 chickens (Gray, the rooster, 5 Mrs. Reds, and Stripey), Mama and Papa Duck, 2 bunnies (Abraham and Sarah), or Moose the barn cat have been lost!



Nevaeh and Ruth love attention...and treats!

We did welcome a new family member, whom we have named the Professor. The Professor is a 5 year old blue Quaker parrot, whose favorite activities include squawking, dancing, and grooming Bruce's and Elijah's beards.



Professor and Elijah, chatting

With the loss of the majority of our piano and violin tours, as not only our main outreach, but also our main support; we, as a family, under Bruce's leadership, have had to reevaluate what God wishes us to do. Thus far, in addition to amazing online resources which we are now offering, Bruce and Elijah continue to offer free piano and violin lessons, knowing that compensation comes in many ways, and trusting in the Lord to point provisions to us. We also see such a need in our community for light, fellowship, discussion, enrichment, and connection. Thus, art groups, ballet groups, service groups, gardening groups, and more, are being organized and implemented, all free of charge. As one of our participants says, "The Church is supposed to be the people, all helping and supporting each other, in real ways. And you don't really see that too often." We are trying, and yes, indeed, it is a huge leap of faith. We encourage all of our readers over the years to go to our website to see the full details of what we are doing and what we offer!!

In the community, we lost a dear sister in Christ, Angela. She passed away unexpectedly, leaving behind a husband, and three children. Both she and her husband were veterans who served in Afghanistan and Iraq. Huge in the homeschool community, this was a woman who strongly advocated for the well-being of her children, as her oldest needs many services, as well as her youngest. Currently, the oldest child, who has Autism and is non-verbal, receives services through the school. The younger two children are being homeschooled by the father, while part of the week, they join us so that the father can work. This family faces many, many challenges, and we, along with the rest of the community, are doing all we can to encourage and help each other.



Audrey, Mom Ang, Dad Eric, Hunter, and Erica holding Bella

Bruce: Bruce misses performing for audiences keenly. As he says, "I never did music for myself. If I had wanted self-fulfillment, I would have stuck with rock-climbing. I pursued music so that I could give God's gift of Jesus to as many people as possible." With an innate distaste for anything other than live performance, and a drive to serve his fellow man and community, Bruce has found himself looking to God to ascertain how to guide his family. He is working closely with Elijah, who has a much greater fondness for, and understanding of, today's technology. Further, the two of them are guiding the family into realizing a dream shared by the entire family: serving the community by transforming our home into a place where we can truly strive to meet the emotional, physical, and spiritual needs of our community during these trying times. More on that....later!!

Of course, Bruce's days are filled with practicing, formulating programs, teaching piano, maintaining the Homestead, and in general, being a support in many different ways to a variety of people, from his wife, to his parents, neighbors, colleagues, and complete strangers. He even rescues injured wildlife. Indeed, Bruce wears many hats as he strives to answer Christ's calling.



Bruce with Marietta

Marietta: We have stopped giving Marietta a “grade.” I finally decided, when answering the question, “What grade am I in?” (to Marietta), that answering only fostered comparisons between self and friends. However, let’s just say...We are LOVING curriculum!! Marietta’s favorite subject right now is Zoology 3, through Apologia. This covers the “land animals,” from arthropods, to your common vertebrate. She also has begun World History, continues to memorize the countries of the world with Geography, and flourishes with fun words in Vocabulary. Spanish has been put a bit on hold, as our dear friends from Honduras moved to New York to teach. However, typing, writing (in cursive, of course) and free reading books such as Anne of Green Gables fill her time. She also practices the piano 2 hours a day. Further, Marietta is a huge help with the chores!



Marietta, spreading joy during a cozy winter’s day

In her “spare” time, Marietta plays with her parakeet, Snowy, pets her cat, Tobit, crafts art projects, adventures outside, and plays with her American Girl Dolls. For anyone who is familiar with the dolls, she has Felicity (passed down from me!!), Kaya, and Josephina. As Marietta says, it’s really the historical dolls that are so interesting! We call Marietta our “little ray of light,” because, well, she is!! Her newest interest is classical ballet, which of course, prompted a new group!! She also wants to go ice-skating *much* more. And finally, Marietta has also been doing recordings of herself reading passages from the Bible, as well as copying the Bible, which she does with her friend Snowy perched on her shoulder. The link to this site can be found on our website, and I hope you find time to relax, and check out her work!!



Tobit checks out one of Marietta’s homemade signs

Elijah: Is amazing. He is always ready with a smile, hug, help, or reasonable words. He is also the one to jump out at his mother from behind a closed door, which generally prompts a shriek from said victim, who then grabs the nearest pillow and flies off in hot pursuit of the culprit.



Elijah laughing with glee

After many years of hard work, Elijah has officially “graduated.” Yes, the boy has officially become an 18 year old man. Thankfully, as the above illustrates, he yet retains boyhood, and I pray he never loses it. As a man, Elijah is the driving force behind all things innovative about the family business. He frequently puts in 12 hour days comprised of violin practice, teaching, computer work, organization, etc. Elijah arranges the multiple groups which meet at our homestead, including a sports group and an arts and crafts group, as well as the many “sub-groups!” Conscientious and compassionate, Elijah has taken the trials of life and absorbed the lessons which make men, Men. Yes, of course, he has the rest of his life to go, but I am truly in awe of the man God is molding, and the way in which Elijah decides to answer Him.



On a lighter note, the Professor is officially Elijah’s bird. However, his best buddy remains his Bourke’s parakeet, Mendelssohn. The below picture was an 18th birthday gift to Elijah from one of the participants of the art group, Lyra B.



Fun Fact: Looking for a clean, appropriate for all-ages television show? We have been watching “Hazel,” a black and white program from 1961 free on youtube!!

Jessie: is always, always striving to grow. She is so very thankful to God for her family, and for her husband, who is the man she prayed to be with. Most important to Jessie is unity with Christ. Thus, learning how to love.....TRULY. Learning how to forgive....TRULY. Learning how to not judge.....TRULY. Learning how He wants us to answer His call.....these are Jessie's never-ending quests, for the Lord, for her husband and children, for her fellow man, and for herself. This quest, in unity with the family, has taken the entire family into much new territory. Jessie now does a live-stream Bible study on youtube. She does not claim to be an expert, and welcomes any who wish to join. The link can be found on our website. She would love to "see" you there at 7:30am Sundays, Mondays, and Tuesdays.



Further on Jessie's "new" list, she will also be trying her hand at ballet, along with Marietta! The "use it or lose it" phrase seems pretty apt, and ballet seems like a really fun way to not "lose it!!" Jessie has also been doing much more arts, crafts, and of course, chores!! With the loss of the hot water heater, due to weather in the negatives, while she waits for her Renaissance, capable husband to tackle the monumental task of researching and repairing said water heater, now even dishes are a more old-fashioned task!!



Jessie's students: Hunter, Erica, and Marietta

Another bright spot in Jessie's day is homeschool. It has been wonderful to have such a close, learning relationship with her son and now daughter. Further, as was previously mentioned, now, two to three times a week, she also has two more students, from the family in the community which suffered such loss. This has been very enriching, as Jessie generally falls in love with every person she meets, and these two children are no exception. Each has their own learning styles and challenges, and Jessie strives to meet their educational, emotional, physical, and spiritual needs. Also, two to three times a week, she then meets the oldest child off of the school bus, to be a caring presence. Frankly, although changes are always a huge challenge, especially to a person of routine, such as Jessie, Jessie certainly feels blessed in ways she never could have foreseen as possible!!

Photo Gallery!! What a winter it has been!!



It's a lot to run a family, a business, and homestead, while first and foremost, trying to do the Lord's will. We're blessed to have such a fantastic guy as husband and daddy.



It can take a "selfie" for Jessie to get in the pictures. It is surprisingly challenging to take pictures in the winter, as my fingers felt more like painful twigs. It's worth it!!



Whether outside or in, Marietta enjoys all the seasons.



Marietta and fellow student, Erica...and Bella, who is, as we say, a very intelligent pooch.



Elijah with Mendelsson, who was an excellent model for Lyra's artwork...once he was photographed.



Elijah and Jessie, a.k.a. Mom, take a deep, sensitive, very introspective photograph as they (pretend) to contemplate very important questions for humanity.



Pony is officially a dog, having had her second birthday. Her favorite activity? Chasing Moose.



Moose still likes to go on walks, even braving the cold and ice to be with us. He has no fear of the silly canine, Pony.



In the end, though, it's all play. Perhaps we could take a lesson from them, and just always be good friends, no matter what. ☺



The next issue of Concert Presentations: Family Missions will arrive in Spring 2022! 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!

The Pratts
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Pratt Fun Facts: What's your favorite time of day?

-Bruce: I'm a night owl. That's when I am most creative. I really, really, really don't like getting out of bed in the morning, but I do it.

-Jessie: I like early, early morning, when the entire world is getting up. I like watching the black turn to grey, and then color. It's so exciting, it's hard to sleep!

-Elijah: Nap-time. I really, really like to sleep, and can do it any time, any where. Bring it on.

-Marietta: I like getting up early in the morning, but I also really love to stay up late. Really, I never actually want to go to bed. I guess I like all the time!

Next Issue Available in Spring of 2022

A Moral Consideration:
Committing to UNITY During Trials

*“And let the peace of Christ control your hearts, the peace into which you were also called in one body.”
Colossians 3:15*

I had a hard time choosing the topic for this issue. I wish I could say it was from a lack of choice, but unfortunately, it was just the opposite. From how to celebrate Christmas, to the current mandates, I really wasn't sure exactly what to focus on. Therefore, I finally decided to let you in on what we have been wrestling with, and what helps to guide us.

Recently, we have been sharing with worship at our local Catholic Church. This has been both rewarding and challenging. Each denomination has its strengths, and each has its, shall we say, areas for growth? Like people, I suppose!! For the past two years, we did not focus on Christmas at all, viewing it as a materialistic holiday instituted from the beginning on a cultural level for very calculated reasons. However, in being back at an organized Church to share in worship, it cannot be denied that it is indeed a pleasure to celebrate the Lord's birth. Now, we do tend to do that all year round (hymns included!!), but to spend an entire season “readying” oneself further, and truly celebrating in union with others; it did indeed seem special. And so we did appreciate gifts given, as the givers gave them from the heart. However, we reserved the day of Christmas as just a day to remember the Gifts of God, of which Jesus Himself forefronts. We went on a family hike, after watching a lovely snowfall, and sang hymns. And while even the “25th” is a questionable date, this year, it did fall on our Sabbath. And so we did, indeed, strive to keep it holy!!

The next “biggest” issue, of course, has been the pandemic, and the mandates. I should say, in actuality, the true issue has been the effects which have been triggered. Unfortunately, seldom do we see reasonable discussion between various groups. “Vaccinators” view “Unvaccinators” as selfish, blind, uneducated, and frequently religious in a manic way. Much of the time, they are unwilling to listen to and respect the often legitimate views of those in the opposite camp. “Unvaccinators” see “Vaccinators” as sheep, blind, who are all too trusting of propaganda put out by those with an agenda, people unwilling to do more than minimal research, who will quickly give up inalienable rights out of fear. Much of the time, they are unwilling to listen to and respect the often legitimate views of those in the opposite camp.

The end effect is: division. We are told to leave judgement to the Lord. We are told to love not just our neighbor, but also our enemy. Fear is a weapon, not just of agendas, but of humanity. We innately fear that which is different, or is perceived as threatening. The goal of this “A Moral Consideration” is not to convince you of which camp

is correct. It is to convince you that regardless of which camp you are in, we are still called to treat each other with kindness, compassion, and humility. When we see various fruits, such as kindness, compassion, humility, love, bravery, honor, nobility, sacrifice, etc, we are told that most likely the tree itself is good. Conversely, when we see the rotten fruit of anger, hatred, violence, division, impatience, aggression, we are told that most likely the tree is bad, and the evil one himself is laughing with glee at the destruction being caused.

Isn't it fascinating that the rotten fruit seems to come from interaction between the two camps, and not from the camps alone? One camp, itself, does not necessarily produce the rotten fruit. It is when the camps collide. Then neither is bolstered toward good fruit. And THAT is a challenge. When two camps collide, with determination, do NOT let the evil one win. God is a God of creation. If destruction is occurring, we must be constantly double-checking ourselves that we are trusting God, and answering Christ's call.

Scripture Says:

“Wrath and anger are hateful things, yet the sinner hugs them tight...Forgive your neighbor's injustice; then when you pray, your own sins will be forgiven. Should a man nourish anger against his fellows and expect healing from the Lord? Should a man refuse mercy to his fellows, yet seek pardon for his own sins? If he who is but flesh cherishes wrath, who will forgive his sins? Remember your last days, set enmity aside; ...Think of the commandments, hate not your neighbor; of the Most High's covenant, and overlook faults.” Sirach 27:30 – 28:1-7

“For the flesh has desires against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; these are opposed to each other, so that you may not do what you want...the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.” Galatians 5:17-18, 22

“I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so also should you love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” John 13:34-25

His call is to trust Him. To be patient. To remember that these are our brothers and sisters. We are the created. We are not the creator. We are not the judges. When we simply move past words, and interact with each other with hearts filled with goodwill, I feel we are doing our best to answer Christ's calling. I pray that we each are given the Wisdom, Knowledge, Understanding, Guidance, and Grace needed to dwell with Christ, as He wills, forever, no matter the times ahead. *“Take courage, for I have conquered the world,”* John 16:33. In this lies unity with the entire Body of Christ, and the Father Himself.

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