

Winter Hospitality

The driveway to Scenic Valley Inn where we meet for church gets impassable when the roads are icy, so we normally have to cancel Sunday morning worship once a year due to winter storms; this year we've had to cancel FOUR times! Since the street to our home always gets snowplowed well, we invited the congregation to worship in our home on one of those icy Sundays.

Here are 55 parishioners crammed into our study/kitchen/living room waiting for the service to start!



Can you find Nate and our children Amos, Irene, Jed, Peter, Grace Anne & Lillian, our daughters-in-law Magali & Hope, and 2 grandsons?

Paula and I (Nate) recently spent a whole day planning for the upcoming year. We discussed our long-standing family purpose statement "equipping Christian leaders to fulfill the Great Commission" and listed five ways we currently do that: Hospitality, Teaching, Childrearing, Music, and Health.

Hospitality tops the list and is an integral part of the other four. **(We don't think it's a coincidence that Paula's Bible has a misprint in Romans 12:13 that repeats the command to practice hospitality!)** Practically every week, we provide meals for over a dozen hungry young folks, teach Bible studies, counsel parishioners, teach childbirth classes, and homeschool our 6 children (sometimes with a grandchild in tow) – all from our home. This past month also included

providing one-night overnight accommodations for a single gal visiting our area and several nights for a college student whose life had been threatened!

A fellow pastor recently commented to me about how eager the young folks in his church are to visit his home because **so few have experienced functional family life**. Paula and I are noticing the same phenomenon, so even though it can be exhausting when guys stay until almost midnight talking at our house, or when we have to scramble to put more food on for guests we weren't expecting, we believe that this ministry of hospitality is strategic. *Please pray for God to sustain in us enthusiasm for hospitality and to provide fruit in terms of lives equipped to fulfill the Great Commission.*



Men's Bible Study at our home.



Young ladies group from our church

Our First Three Funerals

"Pastor, why isn't the end of John 6 in the lectionaries? Have you read it? It seems to say that eternal life comes from nothing more than God giving us to His Son and us looking to Jesus and believing Him. Is that true?"

"Well, I don't know about your lectionaries," I told this Roman Catholic man, "But yes, it's true."

"No purgatory? Just believe and have eternal life?"

"Yes, that's what Jesus said."

"Good, because I told my mom that before she died, and she believed it!"

My jaw about hit the floor! We had been praying for years for the salvation of both this man (the husband of one of our parishioners) and his mother, but I had pretty much given up hope for their salvation. Upon hearing this testimony, I encouraged the husband to share with as many people as he could what he had discovered. As we arranged the memorial service for his mom, he insisted on delivering a gospel message himself from John 6:40!



Abigail Kailah "Abbie" Shetter
May 14, 2001 - January 01, 2019

Two months later, we visited Paula's parents in GA, and on New Year's Day, while we were still in town, Paula's 17-year-old niece was discovered dead in her car in Paula's parents' driveway. *What a heartbreaking time!* The family's pastor asked me to be with him as he led the funeral, so I sat there numbly on stage, hardly knowing what to say.

The next week, back in Kansas, the parishioner whose mother-in-law I had buried in November called to say that her husband was now dying of cancer. *I have never felt so heavily the weight of our mortality!* As I visited the family, I felt led to sing some hymns at his deathbed, expressing Biblical assurance of heaven for believers, an assurance that his Roman Catholic priests never offered him. A few days later, the family asked me to lead a service at the visitation. Guess what passage we chose? That's right; I re-preached his gospel message from John 6:40: "...every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life..."

Please keep our parishioners and family members in your prayers as they grieve these difficult losses.

A Granddaughter!

That very week God also sent us the comfort of a new life:

Prisca Arietta

(our first granddaughter) born to Beni & Rachel! She joins big-brother Thomas, and we will miss them greatly when they move later this year to minister at Purdue University.



Nate with granddaughter Prisca,
born January 14, 2019

Family News in Pictures



Paula with grandson Will



Our younger kids & Nate making the most of all the snow



Paula with our oldest son Josh @ his office in the Texas capitol.

Medallion given to Nate by an Army chaplain for 12 yrs of pastoring soldiers



Kid's Corner: Elisabeth Mercy ("Betsy")



Betsy is our 10th Child

Three years ago, in my last Kid's Corner, I mentioned I was reading Genesis. I've finished that now and have read about a quarter more of the Bible. My favorite verse so far is Rev. 3:12: "Behold I stand at the door and knock..." I've also gotten better at cooking. Cookies are my favorite, but I still need a recipe for most things. I'm now nine-and-a-half, and have started babysitting some younger friends from church while their parents meet with mine. I'm excited to be an aunt to four – soon to be six – nieces and nephews. I enjoyed hanging out with my cousins at Christmas (especially playing soccer in a giant bunkroom with my siblings and uncle Ben's six boys) and spending time with both sets of grandparents – even though I was sad when my cousin died. Please pray that I can be a good influence on the little girls I'm babysitting and that I would continue to grow in the Lord.



Betsy and friend Kira (sister-in-law Hope's sister)



- Pray for Paula's family as they grieve the loss of Abbie and for our church members who also grieving losses, that God would comfort them and inspire them for the next season of life.
- Praise God for the birth of **Prisca Arietta** to Beni & Rachel, and pray for safe and healthy pregnancies for Josh & Jandi's baby due in May/June and Peter & Hope's baby due in August!
- Please pray for God's blessing on our daughter **Betsy** (profiled in Kid's Corner).
- Pray for God's blessing on the mentoring that Nate, Paula, and some of our children are doing with young folks in our congregation. Pray for wisdom for Nate in his leadership role with family as well as church elders, deacons, a church evangelist and an administrative helper. Pray also for Nate & Paula to find consistent time to cultivate their walk with God and with each other.



Our household at Thanksgiving - only 7 kids!

