

Cahill Family Newsletter 2022

Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.
Hebrews 12:1

Dear family, friends, neighbors and those we meet, if you have this newsletter, it is because you are part of the community that surrounds our life and we desire to be a witness of God's love to you.

At the beginning of this year, Amy took two days alone to think, pray and plan for the coming year. She sought a word from the Lord as a directive for the year, using a prayer labyrinth to help her focus on listening. The word given was "surrounded," along with Hebrews 12:1, which talks about the witness of other believers, particularly those that have gone before us. Coming off a year of going it alone spiritually, this word was particularly encouraging. Amy decided to surround herself with books written by prior women of faith and particularly enjoyed, "In my Father's House," by Corrie ten Boom.



Amy and Ivy built a double decker rabbit hutch

Amy also replaced and enlarged the rotted sandbox



But God had more in mind than just books; He surrounded Amy in an unexpected way with a handful of dedicated mothers ready to join together in a new homeschool co-op. Due to previous burnout, Amy was hesitant to launch into this endeavor again, but through much prayer and talking with Brian, she felt this was the ministry God was setting before her. A book on running co-ops helped her set a framework for operating, and business principles borrowed from Brian's work experience were used to organize meetings. The biggest blessing was another mom

with strengths that complimented Amy's weaknesses, and together they forged the foundation of PACE co-op. The co-op meets in several homes on our road with other families driving in to join us. Most of the co-op moms also joined Amy in a local Bible study group. This is the type of community Amy has desired for so long - where life intersects on many points and we encourage one another as we go along.

Farm life continues to surround us. Our cow has been producing milk for 3.5 years straight, bees have grown to 13 hives and a customized incubator adds fresh chicks to the flock. Brian's inventions of the year include a Ryobi-powered bee vacuum, freeze-proof cow waterer and kid-proof window shades.

At work, Brian is surrounded by a team who has mentored, supported and facilitated the many projects that have been accomplished this year. Brian enjoyed a number of books on business principles and leadership, with his favorites by Patrick Lencioni. Lessons learned were used to create an IT Strategy and roadmap. Two years of planning came to fruition with



Brian hooked up and cooled the house with geothermal AC - which also waters the pastures!



Laser Tag was the family reward for memorizing Matthew 5

implementation of a program that facilitates employee freedom and responsibility for their home office setup. Certifications in Ethical Hacking (CEH) and Information Security (CCISO) were helpful in staying current with the ever changing IT landscape.

We benefited from the greater family of believers as we attempted two major family vacations to Ohio and then Colorado. A family of our size can be tricky to house, but a community of Christians committed to hospitality provided a number of places to stay. Brian learned how to replace the van wheel hub assembly, grateful that the tire didn't come all the way off. Strangers surrounded us with food, rides and help finding parts.

Brian spent time applying for a grant to repair the county bridge that serves our community. While discussing the situation with a commissioner, she mentioned Jesus' parable of the "unjust judge" and encouraged persistence. Brian began to pray every night, asking the Lord for justice. A search for a surveyor connected him with a professor who offered to make the situation a class project. We are grateful for this answer to prayer and the generosity of others to lend their expertise.

Lance (14) Sold skittles in his candy machine at co-op and choir for the first part of the year. Then he found a permanent selling location in a local gas station. Profits were invested in 3 more machines that needed a lot of clean up. Having aged out of ladies Bible study, Lance stays home and enjoys audio and video messages, followed by discussion and game time with Dad. A room rearrangement put his desk in Dad's office, which suits his need for a quiet workspace.

Ivy (13) is moving into the adult world. For her 13th birthday, she planned and co-hosted a tea with Amy, inviting other women who are part of our life. Her coming of age was also marked by piercing her ears. At Bible study, Ivy has moved into the adult book and takes part in the youth girls discussion group. She is fantastic at coming up with projects for the younger boys, and often it looks so fun that her sisters join in as well.

Flora (12) had quite a year with her rabbits! After months of trying and waiting, the first litter was born on the wire and died before we discovered them. The next litter yielded 7 bunnies, which were loved and enjoyed by all. She then experienced the sadness of loss when her buck escaped and was killed by the dog. A birthday present of a new buck gives her hope of more bunnies in the near future!

Eden (10) thrives in the co-op environment. She made friends, enjoyed the classes, and studiously turned in all her homework to win a Sonic gift card. One student dubbed her "Short Stack," and she playfully countered, calling him "Tall Stack." Two years ago, she joined the older kids memorizing the times tables, and was thrilled to see that pay off when she was able to skip half a math book this fall.



Brian plays gatorball at ALERT reunion

Pasture maintenance guy



Riding lessons as part of Camp Grammy



Flora's Greek themed mystery party with her co-op class



Finishing 100 miles!

Iris (9) has been Mom's encourager this year. She frequently makes cards with happy drawings, saying "I love you," and then leaves them for Amy to find. She and Skye play together for hours with animal toys set up like a town around their room. Iris will often engage the younger boys in a game of hide-and-seek or pull them around the house on blankets. She was proud to be promoted to fire builder this winter with plenty of help from younger siblings - one of the rewards of friendliness.



Fell off the monkey bars
Dec. 29th

First pet -
Snickerdoodle

Skye (7) is going through a lot of changes. She let her bangs grow long, lost both front teeth at once, and gained a later bedtime.

While she struggles with everyday responsibilities and details, she has handled several barn emergencies with clarity of thought and action. In school, she followed Lance's example of working ahead and finished the first grade math book in two months.

Garrison (6) witnessed his cousin's baptism in the Spring, which prompted talks about God and sin over the next few months. During one bedtime conversation, he was squirming with the conviction that was on his heart. Amy asked if he wanted to tell God he was sorry for his sin and ask forgiveness. He prayed, and the transformation was instant. Stilled with relief, he shyly told Dad what he had done, while joy radiated from his face. He waited until his cousin came at Thanksgiving to be baptized. He is serious about following God and prays for help with his greatest struggle - loving his brother.

Ryder (4) is a very determined young man...when he is convinced that something needs doing. Walking for the Spring 100, he needed a lot of coaxing until 7 miles from the goal, when he caught the vision and led the way. When Garrison earned a prize for reading, Ryder decided he needed some school too. Amy spent a week teaching him to write the letter "R". The next week he wanted to learn the rest of the letters in his name, and then independently practiced writing it for the next month. In June, he officially became part of the chore team with our starter chore of table clearing. This was exciting for about one week. He did discover that Ace could be a wonderful playmate, and the two of them moved from fighting to friendship.

Ace (2) fully embraces his status as baby of the family. Despite consistent training, he managed to drag out potty training all year. For a period of time he was rewarded with an episode of Paw Patrol or Bibleman for going potty, which caused his brothers to frequently remind him to use the toilet. Ivy gave him the nickname 'Tidbit,' and now, if Amy says "you are so cute!" he responds "No, I Tidbit." He keeps up a running narration on life, and picked up the word "mummify" from our Egypt study. He loves it when daddy pulls up the Lego movie theme song, "Everything is Awesome," which pretty much sums up his view on life.



Decked out in
regalia from our
Egyptian study



Asked mom to
do "swimming
lessons"



"Chickaletta"

Spring road trip - Creation museum, The Ark Encounter, St. Louis Arch, Zoo and Mammoth caves.



Amy and her Dad built a western town for this year's Camp Grammy.



Fall trip to Denver CO to visit family. Kayaking, rappelling, hiking, fall colors and waterfalls!

