

Cahill Family Newsletter 2024-25

For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus. Philippians 1:6

For those of you that are faithful readers, you may have noticed that 2024 came and went without a word from the Cahills. Well, the newsletter was started but never finished. Fortunately, the work God has started with us is not finished either and he continues to write our story even when we do not. So we'll try to catch you up:



Brian - Perseverance. 2024 was a year of going nowhere. Wow, that sounds like a downer doesn't it. My main long term goals made very little progress. Efforts to find a lawyer to address our road situation met with one rejection after another. Both cars needed to be replaced which meant hours of poring over used car ads with no exciting possibilities. When we finally purchased a car from a used car lot, it proved to be a scam that added a small claims case to the load of cares. A damaged barn roof was replaced, only to be blown half-off by a major storm front! At work I was discouraged by the loss of a boss and an employee who were both close friends. The church we started attending in January looked like it wouldn't work out so back to the search yet again. Other projects continued to simmer on the back burner, not really taking effort but mentally bearing down. Just trying to write about the year was depressing enough to abandon the effort and hope for something better. (Spoiler: in 2025 we purchased two new-to-us vehicles and a win in small claims court recouped a good bit of the money lost in the scam.)

Amy - Dwell. In January '24, I read a book about a missionary who prayed that God would do "whatever it takes" to help the new converts learn to pray and the answer was a difficult circumstance that drove the people to prayer. I too have lived with a God-given desire to increase my prayer life and so I prayed that He would do "whatever it took" to grow that in my life.

The answer came in a time of stress filled burnout. I entered the night shaking and heart racing as I felt surges of adrenaline pump through me for several hours, preventing sleep. My insides felt so knotted up, it was a chore to force down a few mouthfuls at meal times. It

was pretty miserable but incredibly I felt at peace. When I was up at night, instead of fretting about how much I needed to sleep, I would quote scripture to myself over and over through the hours I lay there. Psalm 34 is one I used a lot. During the day, I would be so emptied physically that I didn't really feel like doing anything, not even reading. So I learned to dwell with the Lord as I lay on the couch and prayed. I also learned to dwell with the kids as I just sat and watched whatever they were doing. A friend and neighbor that is an herbalist was an answer to prayer for healing, providing knowledge that helped calm my body during its time of crisis. Over the months I've had other crash episodes, but armed with my herbal treatments they aren't as dramatic as the beginning and my return to health has slowly but steadily come.



Flooded road still a problem



A dehumidifier inside a mini fridge box to make dryer energy efficient



Trained and ran the Gladiator Dash - a 3 mile obstacle course

In 2024 our family did the Experiencing God study. A big takeaway was to see where God is working and join Him, rather than start something yourself and ask God to join you. We began to pray that God would show us where He was working. The first week in January '25 we visited a house church and knew this was the place where God wanted our family. We spent several months getting to know people, meeting in homes, finding an exciting form of fellowship with other believers.

One of the men did an extended fast

and encouraged others in the church to take days to fast and pray with him. This led to introducing our children to fasting, starting with one meal each week and slowly increasing until some of the older ones accomplished a full day fast. The kids had such pure and enthusiastic hearts in this endeavor and it created a special bond as we all did something hard together. Once, when Amy commented after a prayer time that we had prayed for almost an hour, one of them piped up and asked us to pray a little longer to make the full hour!

Amy took the oldest 5 to a bi-weekly youth group, getting to know the couple that was hosting. We then volunteered to host sometimes and lead activities. When the leading family hit some struggles we found ourselves the new youth leaders and started a study on Chivalry which went along with our schooling.

God directed us to be part of efforts to minister to the hurting family and in that process we realized that there was some unhealthy control going on from one of the church leaders. Unfortunately this realization came too late; we had already done some things that challenged that control and were stunned to be dismissed from our group. As we tried to hear people out and come to a place of reconciliation, we discovered a fuller extent of the control along with others who had been treated similarly. Our prayer became one of choosing forgiveness and a desire to 'finish well' in our exiting interactions.

This struggle with confusion, hurt and eventual understanding brought us repeatedly to our knees before the Lord. After one particularly hurtful interaction we were walking on our road, numb with shock. As we processed what happened, we looked at each other and said "I guess we should rejoice right now" and so that's what we did - we literally jumped and praised God for the trial. We were also blessed to realize the network of believers we had that gave wise counsel as we sought out what to do. Amy's dad pinpointed the

problem, a brother-in-law listened and gave counsel from his experience, a sister and a mentor helped Amy find focus. The temptation to bitterness was ever present and while we kept choosing to forgive, we still struggled with the hurt. Brian's brother walked us through some thoughts on processing the emotions and asking Jesus to bring healing.

So we end 2025 in a time of grieving. However, knowing we followed the Lord's leading gives us confidence. *"If God is for us, then who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31)* He has the next thing in store for us and it is our duty and privilege to walk in Him, no matter the cost.



Made regalia for our tribal Pow-Wow



Garden bounty



Youth group packs 50 shoeboxes

Built a trebuchet and quintain for our tournament



Ivy trains new puppy - Kalmar



Lance (17): Is branching out into the work world. He worked for several weeks with his Papa, (Amy's Dad) making student housing ready for new tenants. He also worked on and off doing odd jobs at a nearby horse farm. In Dec. '24 he went with Papa to Dallas for a month, working at the Operation Christmas Child shoebox processing center. Turning 16 brought the milestone of Driver's Ed, showing Lance to be a very cautious driver. He also started the process of braces and has patiently borne all kinds of metal in his mouth.

In February of this year Lance joined his Uncle as the only youth on a men's mission trip to Belize. He amazed them with the way he could eat, and earned their respect through his willing attitude and hard work, keeping the "cleanest jobsite they had ever worked."

Ivy (16): Has exploded with many talents and interests. She crafts miniatures of all sorts and has learned how to find good deals online and at garage sales. A 3D printer has upped her technical skills while her reading choices took on new depth with Tolkien, Dumas and Jane Austen. She invests in her cousins through birthday cards, planning minute-to-win-it events complete with prizes and a fall themed escape room. She started teaching herself guitar and teaches piano to Ryder and her cousin, Silas. Ivy started Driver's Ed as soon as she was old enough and has developed into a capable driver, eagerly working towards a license. She was thrilled to go with her Aunt Sue on a mission trip to Kenya where she got to see the 'big

five' and the kids at the orphanage loved her long hair.

Flora (14): Prioritizes Bible study, has a good grasp on the sciences and finds math understandable. Writing is a challenge but she breaks it down into daily goals, combines humor with imagination and enjoys using the vocab words. This summer she and Eden attended a Health Science camp, getting to take x-rays, experiment with moulage, watch the fire school, and tour disaster city. It ended with a simulation where she rode in an ambulance as a first responder. The premature birth of a cousin in Colorado gave Ivy and Flora their first plane ride as they went with Amy's mom to assist in running the household while their Aunt was at the hospital. Flora was thrilled that it snowed while they were there and grateful for God's protection when the car skidded on ice and hit a concrete barrier. She likes to play strategy games and sometimes she can even beat Dad!



Eden (13): Took on the chore of milking the cow, often accompanied by Garrison. She coached Ryder in assisting with the lunch chore and now buddies with Ace in making desserts. She built a Wright flyer and did a report as Wilbur with Ace posing as Orville. She branched out artistically with acrylic paints, using YouTube instructional videos. Violin lessons are going well and last fall Eden was in a student concert, playing Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring with an organ to accompany. She stretched her wings a bit more this year, playing with her Grammy in an orchestra Christmas concert. Last year at Christmas she decided to try and overcome her reluctance to part with hard-earned money and carefully planned out gifts for all the family members.



Sewed dresses for Medieval unit



Loving on her little cousins during Camp Grammy - France!

Iris (12): Is on mission to bring a smile to those around her. She makes cards for Mom and slips notes to Dad when either are sick. Confident and capable, she moved into the 'independent' school room with her older sisters and handles school well, but can be easily discouraged if she tries to compare.



Bobbed hair to match American Girl 'Kit' and had a 20's themed party

(Iris cont.) Quietly friendly, she engages her brothers with imagination, spends hours playing American Girl dolls with Skye and falls into a supporter role for her big sisters' ideas. Iris was a big help when we watched 5 young cousins for a week, changing diapers, feeding the toddler, and supervising outdoor playtime. Participation in youth gave her an exciting sense of growing up and she anticipates celebrating her birthday with a mystery party.

Skye (10): Spunky and spirited, this determined girl has a habit of taking life by the horns. A teacher at Bible study loved her personality and was a great encouragement during a time of maturing. Though sometimes abrasive, Skye is also gifted in loving people sacrificially. Her willingness to sit out of the pool with a girl that had broken an arm won her a close friend and the two of them share a love of crochet. She benefits from her big sisters' interests and has enjoyed painting, barn work, and dog training. Horse camp for her birthday was a dream fulfilled. She proved a motivated student and was given the privilege of extra horse work. Skye has the makings of a teacher and prepared a number of projects to do with her cousins the week they were with us.

Billy the Kid wax museum report for school



Lost first tooth!



Baptized by Dad

Garrison (9): Another spunky one, this guy runs on full throttle. American history proved full of excitement with one battle after another! He lived each reenactment far past the required projects and was thrilled to ride a tank, fire a machine gun and collect bullet shells at our field trip to the Museum of the American G.I. living history day. A small unit on mushrooms sparked his interest and he spent weeks collecting and attempting to identify all kinds of fungi. Recently he has gone full blown into cardboard constructing, and decided to round out his life skills with a solo in children's choir. Our recent study on Chivalry and the Middle Ages resonates strongly with his identity as a 'mighty fortress' that cares for the weak. He is very protective of his little brother, Ace, and has worn a sword almost constantly since being 'knighted'.

Ryder (7): A determined, straight thinker, when Ryder knows what needs to be done, he does it. He tackles schoolwork, doubling up on math and sounding out his reading lesson like a soldier. Not one to wait, he often has a problem $\frac{1}{2}$ solved by the time help shows up and mealtimes are treated with an 'eat and run' mentality. Despite his direct personality, he gets along quite well with other kids and shows the heart of a gentleman. After doing a course on chivalry, he has taken to waiting for the food line until the "women and the children" have gone first.

Ace (5): Sweet, silly and always on the lookout for a party. Amy started working him into the school routine last year with a cutting skills workbook that he proudly worked on each day. This fall he was 'officially' installed as a student doing a letters class with Ivy and making a required attendance at morning time. He loves music and singing and was finally old enough to join choir. He made a

great leap in understanding strategy and can now join in on a number of complex games designed for teenagers. He loves to build with MagnaBlox and is a willing participant in gun battles and sword fights. He tends to leave his belongings everywhere and needs to be repeatedly called back to do his chores, earning him the nickname 'Ace-y outer-spacey'.



Library mini-golf!