

Dear Prayer Partners,

December 2017

***“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,
(and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,)
full of grace and truth.” John 1:14***

Another Christmas season is fast approaching, and once again we are reminded of the marvelous miracle of the Savior, God in the flesh, that we might receive GRACE and TRUTH!! What a wonderful message we have to give to the world! It is because of you, our faithful prayer warriors and supporters, that we can carry on the ministry of sharing this gift with the folk here in Arizona. Thank you for your faithfulness, and we trust you will enjoy the blessed truth of this season. Merry Christmas!

Ministry

We are so thankful the Lord gave us another year in which to serve Him. Since Mike's heart attack in 2014, each day means so much more as we realize it is a gift from the Lord to minister for Him. While our specific ministry is not necessarily "exciting," or unusual, we know that with God all things are possible, and we are thankful for the opportunities God gives us to touch the lives of people wherever He leads us.

We continue to minister each Sunday in our small church, Faith Baptist Church, here in Rimrock, AZ. God has given us amazing opportunities to be involved in the personal lives of many of the people He brings across our path! We hold weekly Bible studies and prayer time each Tuesday evening, ladies Bible studies each Thursday, visit neighbors and folk in our area as we walk through our community (it's a little different way of having visitation), and we minister in a nearby nursing home every third Sunday. We often take part in services in other communities as needs arise. Right now we are helping the church in Cottonwood with their Christmas program coming up in a couple of weeks. In addition to regularly scheduled duties and ministries, we find ourselves counseling several times a week with folk from our church and community. This is a ministry we did not look for, but God has directed, and we find that people need someone who cares enough to listen and give godly counsel through the Word of God. Sue continues to give piano lessons, and this, too, is an avenue of ministry as she is able to direct individual lives in the truth of God's Word through music.

Thank you for your prayers for our ministry! At times, we find ourselves a bit discouraged, as we do not see a lot of growth. But then God reminds us that HE is faithful, and He is using us to make a difference in the lives of individuals! Praise Him!

Mission

It is still very much of a burden on our hearts to see others answer God's call to come to the Western USA to reach people for Christ and start churches for His glory! This past year, we were privileged to have two young college students from Ambassador Baptist College visit for almost 2 weeks to get acquainted with the needs of the West! What a blessing and encouragement Thomas and Daniel were to our lives! While we do not know what God has in the future for these two young men as they returned to school this year and in their future, we know they were impacted by the needs here! We are praying that God will send more laborers our way.

Family

Each Christmas we like to share some of what God has done in the lives of our children - our greatest mission field through the past 50 years!

Since we were extremely blessed to celebrate our 50th wedding anniversary this past year, our children organized a wonderful family reunion. All were present for several days at our son Jeff's home in Elbert, Colorado, in June. This was no small miracle since we have 22 grandchildren and 1 great-granddaughter! Melody and Jim came with Debbie from Chile where they have served the Lord for 25 years! Their son, Jeremy, came from the Wilds Christian camp where he serves as a cook! Even their daughter, Becky, came from Shanghai, China. She is in her third year of teaching English there now. And Joshua came also from South Carolina.

Joy and Kent joined us along with their 4 children, and one son-in-law and granddaughter. Ruth and Justin gave us the news that they had just learned they were having a second child in February, and just last weekend they revealed that it is to be a girl! Their son, Jack, came with them. He continues to serve at Bob Jones University while he is in grad school. Rose graduated last May, and David is in high school. Rose is seeking God's will for her future and works at the Christian school and church where Kent pastors in Frederick, MD.

Mike and Stephanie have been serving at the Wilds Christian Camp helping to expand the facilities there, and also mentoring young men in the area of carpentry and helps ministries. They have two daughters, Sarah and Bethany, attending Maranatha Baptist University in Wisconsin, preparing for ministry. Their son, Drew, will graduate this year, and is seeking where God wants him in the future. Rachel remains at home, but has had opportunities to witness in a special needs home where she attends each week! And Katelyn has enjoyed serving in the camp along with Drew and his older sisters this past summer.

Jeff and Becky continue to serve in their church in Colorado Springs, CO, as they teach, preach, and help in whatever way God leads. They are both very involved in the local public school, and truly have made an impact for Christ. Jared is in his sophomore year at Bob Jones University; Joel graduated from high school in May and is now a freshman at Maranatha Baptist University. Jocelyn, Joanna and Jessica are all in junior high and high school, and are burdened to win other classmates to Christ.

Ed and Heather continue to serve the Lord in their church in Cincinnati, OH, leading children's church, and ministries involving young parents there in their church. Ed continues his work as an RN in two different hospitals, and God is using them for His glory. Katie began attending a new Christian school as she began junior high. Sophie is in 5th grade and is home schooled, while Tucker also goes to the Christian school for 2nd grade. Titus is 2 and definitely keeps everyone active!

We praise the Lord for the family He has given us, and for the ministries God is enabling them to do for Him! Our heart's main desire is to see "that our children (and grandchildren) walk in truth." (III John 4) We are burdened for any of our grandchildren who do not yet know the Lord or are wandering from Him, and covet your prayers for them as well. What blessings they are missing!

We wish you a **Blessed Christmas** as you remember the wonderful Gift God has given us!

In His service,

Mike & Sue Smith