



Jan-Mar 2021

Dear Prayer Partners,

***"A man's heart deviseth his way: but the Lord directeth his steps." Proverbs 16:9***

How often we think we know what way the Lord wants us to go, only to make plans and discover that He had something else in mind! We apologize for the lateness of this prayer letter, as we intended to write a month ago, but other things got in the way, including nearly a month of sickness. But praise the Lord, Sue is on the road to recovery and Mike has successfully held down the fort! Thank you for the prayers many of you utter on our behalf on a regular basis! We are certain answered prayer is why we are recovering and going strong again.

### **CHANGES**

The beginning of the year was going very slow for Faith Baptist Church in Rimrock. We continued to meet, but due Covid-19 as well as folks being away, our attendance was poor. In February, we met with the "faithful few" in our congregation, letting them know what the next several weeks would look like, because one family had decided to go somewhere else (for good reason), Mike's and Stephanie's family were going to be gone for a couple of weeks ministering, and also we had made plans to go away for 2 weeks to visit two of our children during their Spring break. Our daughter Joy was having a biopsy on her lung and we felt it was really important to be with her.

Living Waters Baptist Church, (Mission church to the Native Americans) located in the next town, was in need of some help also, so together after much prayer, meeting with the pastors of Living Waters, and discussion with our church folk, all were in agreement to go help for a few weeks at the Native American church. As it turned out, Mike was able to help them get their Sunday School running again by doing the teaching and taking a load off of Paul Sondergaard, the Assistant there (they hadn't had S.S. for a year). We also provided a good amount of special music with both Young Mike's family and our people. It was truly a blessing to serve in this way and the church is once again growing. Then Mike was also able to fill in a

couple of times preaching as the pastor had some health issues, too. All during this time, Faith Baptist continued to meet for our weekly home Bible Study and Prayer meeting on Tuesday evenings and was well attended.

Meanwhile, one of our regular couples returned after being gone for several months. And our people have decided to resume our own services as of the first week in May.

So you see, these last couple of months were not the **"way we had devised"**, but it became very obvious that **"the Lord was directing or steps"**.

### **CONCERNS**

Besides the concerns we have had for our own church and ministry, these last 3 months we experienced some serious concerns in our family. Our daughter, Melody, and her husband, Jim, who are missionaries in Chile went through several weeks of uncertainty when Jim was hospitalized for a blocked intestine and had surgery. Due to covid restrictions, Melody could not see him for those long weeks, and actually received very few updates from the hospital. Things were very precarious for several days, but the Lord brought him through and he has been back preaching again (at least on zoom and Facebook since they have not had services for over a year).

Then our daughter, Joy, whose husband is also a pastor, fell in January and seriously broke her foot in

several places requiring surgery and a long recovery period. While using a knee scooter, it tipped over and she also broke her shoulder. During the MRI they took of her shoulder, they discovered nodules on her lung. So this began a series of tests to check for cancer. It was during that time that we made our visit to help and give a little support. Praise the Lord for the way He worked out our visit! And even more praise for the fact that no cancer has shown up anywhere in all the tests. They still don't know why the nodules are there, (possible side effect from Covid she had in December) and she'll have another CT scan in June, but we're thankful for the "no cancer" news so far.

### COMPLICATIONS

We have appreciated the various ways that Mike and Stephanie have helped us personally during these past 2 years since they came to Rimrock, but even more so for the added help and joy it has been to have them in our church. Our people have loved them, and they have contributed so much to our people and community. The Lord showed them an opportunity to assist a missionary in Canada during April, May and however much of the summer was needed. The church in High Level, Alberta, Canada had put off doing the additions project to their church for nearly two years, had raised funds, material was donated, etc. They just needed someone to head up the task. Also, the missionary wife has some debilitating health issues that has caused the pastor and church to need help for some time. So Mike and Stephanie felt this was something the Lord definitely wanted them to do. (Mike had spent a week there over a year ago just surveying the project that was needed.) They intended to come back to Rimrock when the job was completed. However, they were given notice that their landlord wanted to sell their house, and asked them to leave the first of April. These have been trying days, as they could not find another house in our area, so finally sold a lot, and put their possessions in storage. It was a huge undertaking, but the Lord worked out every detail! At this point, Mike is uncertain whether they will come back to Rimrock or maybe the Lord will lead them elsewhere (**'directing their steps'**) after the project is completed in Canada.

However, once again, we saw how the Lord **"redirected their steps"**, even when they truly believed they were headed to Canada. After trying to enter Canada 4 different times, and being told different stories from each border agent, they were denied access into Canada. The Canadian Pastor is continuing

to work on a couple different aspects involving government officials and medical personnel to try and get them in. At this point, while they wait on Canada, Mike, Stephanie and Rachel are in Colorado, helping to alter a retired pastor's home. He recently had a stroke, and now needs handicap renovations.

### COMMITMENT

With so many trials these last 3 months (Sue was also sick for nearly 4 weeks), with our family members as well as results of Covid pandemic in our community, it would be easy to be discouraged and "lean to our own understanding". But God has it all in His control, and He has **"directed our steps"** and allowed us these last several weeks to have a renewed commitment and desire to continue to serve the Lord where God has placed us. As a result, we have had extra opportunities for preaching, teaching, and Sue even gave a mini concert/Bible study for a ladies group in March. Mike has filled the pulpit for a couple different churches as well. And we are excited to see what the Lord is going to do in the coming weeks and months!

### CALL

- + Pray for SOULS!!!
- + Pray for God's will to be done in Mike and Stephanie's future, especially with regard to the Canadian project
- + Pray that people in Rimrock will be less fearful to come to church
- + Pray for future guidance



In His service,

**Mike & Sue Smith**

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