



Apr-Jun 2023

Dear Prayer Partners,

“For as the rain ... snow ... watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth ... seed ... and bread ... : so shall my word be that goeth forth ...: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.” Isaiah 55:10,11

“And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.” Galatians 6:9

Since our last prayer letter in March, we have been busier than we've been for a long time. Although we get physically weary more quickly, yet we are very excited that the Lord continues to help us not to become "weary in well-doing", but rather very thankful that He continues to give us work to do to serve Him! We are so thankful for the promises in His Word, like these two verses above that tell us that what God does shall prosper. We are seeing some of these wonderful accomplishments that God is doing after being here in Arizona 10 years.

FAITHFULNESS

Pastor Gary Messick and his wife, Beverly, pioneered the Living Waters Baptist Church, originally known as Yavapai-Apache Baptist Church, over 30 years ago when the Lord led them to the Verde Valley as missionaries with the Independent Baptist Indian Mission. They have served faithfully among the Yavapai-Apache nation and have ministered to many Native Americans through the years.

Ten years ago, when the Lord led us to Rimrock to pastor Faith Baptist Church with only a few people, God also led Paul and Naomi Sondergaard to help us in this ministry. We had met Paul and Naomi at Ambassador Baptist College and they were very interested in joining us in the work in Arizona. After a year and a half of serving faithfully at the church in Rimrock, especially

taking over responsibilities when Mike had his heart attack, the Lord impressed upon their hearts to work with the Messicks among the Native Americans, where they have been serving since that time. God has continued to work in their hearts as well as ours, and in March, Pastor Messick announced that he felt it was time for him to step down from the ministry as pastor of Living Waters Baptist Church, due to age and health issues. In May, the church voted unanimously to call Paul Sondergaard as their Pastor! What a thrill it was to be a part of this celebration of the faithfulness of the Messicks and also see how God prepared Paul and Naomi to assume the leadership of the church! It was a busy, yet exciting time, as we joined with the church folks in this celebration and transition. And we were truly humbled to see how God

brought all this about over the last 10 years of our ministry in the Verde Valley of Arizona!

FAMILY

At the end of March, we flew to South Carolina to attend our granddaughter's wedding. It was especially exciting because our daughter, Melody and husband Jim, her parents came from Chile. We had an especially wonderful time with much of our family, including Sue's sister and co-worker on the mission field of Brazil, who came up from Florida. We were so thankful the Lord allowed us to go. We were also able to speak in two of our supporting churches in NC the Sunday following the wedding! This was a special day for us, too!

We also must announce another addition to our family, when our #5 grandchild, Ember Leigh Lacock, made her appearance to Bethany and T.J. They also will be beginning their first pastorate next month in Delta, Colorado. God is SO GOOD!

"FRUSTRATION"

We planned to visit the following week with another grandson who is the cook for the Wilds in NC, then continue on to our mission's annual Family Week, with World Wide New Testament Baptist Mission. However, God had other plans. After spending a day in the ER at a local hospital, Mike was diagnosed with kidney stones and sent "home" to rest with medications. We were SO grateful for the hospitality and gracious understanding of a dear friend, Becky Spragins, who allowed us to stay with her during these days. Through much prayer and discussion with family and others, we made plans to return to our home in Arizona. It was disappointing to miss the Wilds visit and the mission family week! We were so thankful, though, that Melody and Jim were there with us through these difficult hours of pain, uncertainty and decision. Praise the Lord we were in His hands! Upon returning to Arizona, Mike was slow recovering, but all is fine now. Sue became very sick the next week (week of the conference), so it proved to be the right decision.

FUTURE

We continue to serve at Living Waters Baptist Church in Camp Verde; Mike is the adult Sunday School teacher, Sue teaches Children's Church as well as is responsible for all the music. Mike has also been able to continue filling the pulpit for sister churches when needed as well.

Please pray for us as we visit Legacy Trade School next week, where our son, Mike and Stephanie are working night and day to see it opened in August! We leave Monday for Marysvale, Utah, then flying to Florida to attend their son's wedding before returning to visit the school.

Thank you for your continued prayers and faithfulness as we labor for Christ here in Arizona!



In His service,

Mike & Sue Smith

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"Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are laborers together with God ..."
I Corinthians 3:8,9