

## 2019 Annual Christmas Newsletter from... *Icthus Ministries and the Dingle Family*



Early Morning on the Haven Farm



Dingle Family's Rafting Trip on the Nantahala

Greetings from the Dingles and Icthus Ministries, in the heart of the Smokies! We send love and prayers for you all – that God will richly pour out His grace and presence on your lives. All of His precious promises are “Yes and Amen” in Jesus Christ, our Lord!

Things have been hopping in Bryson City this year! Icthus was blessed to host 14 church retreats at the Center in 2019! It is always so much fun to watch young people grow in their faith, grow closer with each other, and recognize God's hand on their lives. The women's group that came in the fall had such an incredible weekend, studying the Word and having fun together. There's always something fun to do or something amazing to see in God's creation here in the Great Smoky Mountains! We are blessed to live here, work here, and share our lives with all who come here as guests. We continually pray for those that come, and then have to return to busy lives “in the real world.” It is difficult in these times to “unplug” and find a place of refuge. When young people come to Icthus, they are often incredulous that there is no cell signal or WiFi! We smile and wait for them to acclimate to a time of more communication with each other and more reflection. It is good to remember the old ways.

We were thankful to host 5 new groups, one of which was from Montreat College, a Presbyterian college not far from Asheville. Their students were a delight! Also 2 church groups graciously served us and our community by helping with landscaping and going to the local laundromat to wash clothes for people and share the Gospel. It was awesome to host the 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Praise Festival this past

October, in conjunction with @ 10 other churches. This summer, Bill shared in the honor of baptising 4 in Alarka Creek, 3 of which were older gentlemen.

This year we have hosted many full-time ministers, families, and even professional authors at the Creek House and Haven House. Praise God for His time of refreshing and anointing that so many have experienced here. A local pastor's wife, who was helping me clean, said she felt the Lord's presence so strongly as she worked. That is our prayer for all who come to Icthus!

Our summer staff this year consisted of our daughter, Emma! She was a tremendous blessing. Also a cousin of Bill's, who was recently widowed, came for a month to help with pasture and yard maintenance. We are so thankful for how individuals and churches give of their time and resources to help us! As each year goes by (now almost 30 years for Bill!!!), the maintenance of the Retreat Center, Shop, Barn/Chapel, Pavilion, 2 guest houses, a personal house, a recreation field, 3 pasture fields, 2 gardens, and @ 50 acres becomes more challenging to handle alone. If you would like to help in any way, please seek the Lord with us!

### ***The Dingle Family .....***

Our family is so blessed to be living and serving in Swain County! This year Emma went off to Western Carolina University! Reah and Lydia are attending Swain County Public Schools in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades, and David and Elijah are still being homeschooled in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades. This past February Bill had a total knee replacement, and is now doing very well. Some highlights from the year would be: the new calf- Ginger, Emma and Edith competing in the National Clogging Championships, Reah making All-District in flute, Dave hitting an inside-the-park homerun, Elijah making hand-made knives, and Lydia opening her own art shop on Etsy.com. Just yesterday the athletic trainer from Swain wrote how blessed she was to purchase one of Lydia's paintings and some of her original greeting cards! Thanks to all of you who love and support our family!

### ***Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!!.....***

Bill with Ginger



Lydia's newest painting

