



Icthus Ministries News
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Dear friends & family,

Greetings from the Great Smoky Mountains in Western North Carolina! I realize that we have been silent on the "News" front for some time now, but we have not been inactive! I will recap some of our highlights for 2014 in a moment, but first let me say thank you for prayers, visits, gifts, and encouragement. We appreciate you and realize that many in the Kingdom have had an impact on this ministry even though Edith, the children, and I are the ones seen most often. We pray that 2015 will be a great year of hearing the Lord clearly and following Him closely.

FAMILY

I will start with the part of our ministry that is dearest to my heart - our family. We are continuing to homeschool our five children. While it is a challenge at times, we are grateful that we have the opportunity to pour into our children's lives. Here is a summary for each of us:

Elijah, (5) is in preschool & learning to write letters and memorizing a Bible verse for each letter of the alphabet. He is becoming quite the writer! Although we're not sure what he is writing, he does enjoy filling page after page with various letters. Like all the children he likes to learn and loves to play!



David (7) is in first grade. He is reading well and excelling in math. However, I think his favorite period is lunch! The boy can put away some groceries. He has a great work ethic & loves to help me around the farm.

Lydia (9) is in third grade and is quite the artist. She enjoys drawing animals, especially horses. Edith & I often refer to her as our little Ellie Mae Clampitt. She loves critters and being outside. Lydia played softball for the first time last spring and was chosen for the Allstar team. She also loved her first try at throwing pots!



Reah (11) is in the sixth grade and is a very good student. She is a voracious reader, tackling several books each week. She especially likes Nancy Drew mysteries and often reads to Lydia. Reah participated in her third year of softball last spring playing rec. league and on a travel team. She was an Allstar in rec. league, and her team placed third in the state tournament!

Emma (13) is in eighth grade and is also doing well in school. She is taking math, social studies, and science at the public middle school half a day, and Bible, English, and literature at home. It has been an interesting transition, but she has adjusted well. She is having a positive influence in her school. I enjoy our communication on the way to school, in the evenings, and especially praying over her each day before she walks into the building. Emma also played softball for the first time last spring, and was an alternate for the Allstars. She hopes to make the middle school team this spring.



Bill & Edith (58 & 29+) We celebrated our twentieth year of marriage all year long in 2014. In April we flew out to Sandpoint, Idaho and spent eight fabulous days with our good friends, the Gibsons. They live on the beautiful Lake Pend Oreille. We biked, fished, canoed, turkey hunted, painted, read, and had great fellowship & food with great friends! It was the first time in thirteen years that we were away from the children for more than two days. In September, two of my sisters came up and took care of the children. Edith & I were able to take another few days to mountain bike a couple of local trails, and have some "date" time. It was a wonderful blessing to step back from the daily things that grab our attention, and to be able to focus on one another for a change.

In July our family also had the opportunity to meet in Summerville, SC with my five siblings and their families to bury my Daddy's ashes beside my Mama's grave site. Dad passed away in March 2013, and we had a celebration of his life then. But since he had donated his body to the Charleston Medical University for studies, we had to wait before we could bury his remains. It was good to be together, and we were reminded of our heritage and the things our parents deposited in us. Now we have the opportunity to build on their rooftop and inspire the next generation to the next level. God is so good!



RETREAT MINISTRY

In 2014 we had the privilege of hosting 23 groups from NC, SC, TN, AL, FL, & OK. Edith & I had the opportunity to participate with youth, adult, and family groups in worship, baptisms, salvations, and prayers for healing and deliverance. The Lord is good! We saw many people have an encounter with Jesus, and they went home encouraged, refreshed, and strengthened. It is always interesting to watch the folks that join us in turning off anything that distracts and/or robs our time; i.e. phones, computers, i-pads, i-pods, video games, etc. Without exception they always become more engaged with one another and more in tune to what the Lord is saying. I love to remind people that Jesus is an every day, 24-7 Jesus. So every day He is speaking to us through His word, His creation, His people, circumstances, and many other creative ways.

Each summer has its challenges, and this one was no different. For the first time in several years we didn't have any summer staff. But the Lord always provides! Caleb Heald & Sheldon Hudson, from Phenix City, AL, came every third weekend. They helped me weed-eat and keep up with maintenance. Edith was able to acquire help with cleaning between groups. We also had a few groups pitch in on different work projects around camp.

The months of June & July are typically the busiest times of the year for us. However, we have

had a total of ten weeks over the last two summers that we have not scheduled during those months. In the process of praying about the situation, we were approached by another ministry called TEAMEffort. (www.teameffort.org) They have been hosting missions camps on the Cherokee Reservation for the last several years. They needed another venue to base out of, and asked if we would consider providing our center for this year. They need to use the retreat center June 1, through August 1, 2015. After prayer and discussions with the Board of Directors, Icthus agreed to TEAMEffort's request. As of this writing we have groups scheduled from May 24-Aug. 15. Almost every day during the upcoming summer people will have an opportunity to touch lives for the Kingdom, and have their lives touched by the King!

In the midst of everything else that was going on with TEAMEffort and other projects, the owners of a 2.75 acre field across the road from the retreat center approached us about buying their property. We closed on the property a few weeks ago! We are hoping to excavate part of the field, and make it a parking area. We are looking forward to providing easier access in & out at the center for everyone... including big busses. Yea God!

PRAYER REQUESTS As always we truly appreciate your prayers for:

Healing. On Dec. 27, I got my fingers caught in a chop saw. They are broken and cut, with severed nerves and tendons. Pray for full recovery and function. Also Edith and the children are currently on antibiotics for strep throat.

Protection. There is on-going conflict with neighbors that has resulted in threats and theft. Pray for resolution and reconciliation.

Provision. There are always projects in the works, and a need for skilled workers and finances to accomplish them. Pray that God would raise up workers, materials, and finances to achieve what He desires. We are praying for the day that we can build a new 100 bed lodge on the Haven property.

Presence. Our dream is that God's presence would be so evident on His place here, that even those who pass by would be changed for His glory. Pray for God's presence to rest mightily on us and this place.

Opportunity. Besides speaking/teaching to various groups/individuals that come to us, I've been asked to share at a memorial in February, a wild-game banquet, and a church service in March. Please pray that we clearly communicate the gospel wherever we are sent.

Thanks. We are thankful for God's goodness to us manifested through:

Twenty years of marriage

A beautiful family

Extended families that support us in so many ways

Twenty-five years of ministry at Icthus (Sept. 2015)

Brothers & Sisters that pray and help

The mountains where we live

The bountiful harvests we see – in the spiritual and the natural

Love and blessings in Jesus, our Lord,

The Dingles