

Greetings from the mountains of western North Carolina! It is our earnest desire that you are all well – in body, soul, and spirit. We at Icthus Ministries would like to take a moment first to thank you for your generosity, and then to give testimony to what God has been doing here this past year. We realize in this day and time that your gifts to Icthus are really a sacrifice, and it is a sacrifice that we do not take lightly! We spend much time asking the Father what His plans are for the retreat center, for the Haven, and for the Dingle family. When we receive direction, we are able to act and even live because of your gifts to the Kingdom. We bless you all in Jesus' Name! And we are confident that He is blessing you as you join in the work here with us!

This past year saw a lot of ministry and physical improvements. As I shared with a church in Alabama last week, it always amazes me that people come from all over the world and end up at Icthus! I was blessed this summer by a young lady from Chile, who told me in her language (with tears) what her experience at Icthus had meant to her. She said she could not put it into words in English, so I asked her to tell me in her tongue. It was easy to understand her heart. One highlight was a church's worship team that came to hear from God and create new praise songs. That was fun! They later sent over 50 men for a retreat, and the presence of the Lord was so powerful. This past November a Chinese student gave her life to Jesus! The next day we baptized two young men in the frigid Alarka Creek! God is so good to let us share in His work. We hosted around 875 people at the retreat center, and around 40 people in the Haven House. Numerous young people made decisions to become disciples of Jesus and learn to walk more closely with Him. That is what Icthus is about – presenting the Gospel of Jesus as it is- to people as they are. His love and grace that extend to us all is an unfathomable thing. We just try to create an environment where people can really hear from the Lord and hear from each other. People comment a lot about the absence of distractions at Icthus, and one of our goals is to encourage others to continue their “focused” life as a believer back home.

We had a different pace for about eight weeks this summer, as we hosted different mission groups who volunteered on the Cherokee Reservation. We also were blessed to have a few churches help Icthus with a few maintenance projects. In preparation for the mission camps, Icthus purchased some acreage across the road from the retreat center. We excavated, tripled the size of the parking lot, and created an overflow parking area across the road. We also completely moved Bill's office from the retreat center to his shop at the Haven. That opened up another private staff room at the center. As we had increased the number of beds in the guys' dorm, we purchased more memory foam mattresses with covers to complete the center. We were happy to hear so many positive comments about the comfort of the beds. Those of you that remember Icthus from the old days no doubt recall the army bunk bar that lay under the middle of your back!

The Dingle family was blessed and busy in 2015! The children have grown at an alarming rate. Emma attended her first youth retreat at Icthus, as a member of the Covenant

Christian Youth Group. She also participated in an epic, 800 mile bicycle trip that began in Yorktown, VA and ended in St. Louis, MO. For the three weeks that she was away, her mother and I checked facebook every night for new posts and pics. Her “Bike Across America” trip is one that she hopes to continue in 2016. She also ran in the Cross Country State Championships for Swain High School. Her girls' team came in fourth. Reah has given up piano, much to Edith's disappointment, but has taken up the flute with much diligence. She is enjoying going to band at the middle school, and she is an excellent student at home. She had the privilege of having one of her poems chosen for publication, and she has recently begun to take crocheting lessons from a neighbor. Lydia continues to amaze all with her gifts in art. In September three of her drawings were displayed at the Fine Arts Center as part of a community showing. Hers was the only art submitted from a child! David and Elijah are precious buddies. David enjoyed Little League baseball for the first time. Elijah just keeps us all laughing. Edith stayed busy with the family, cleaning the retreat center, and managing three gardens. She was canning vegetables and fruits almost every day in August and September. She gets much pleasure from growing and saving heirloom seeds, along with tending to the chickens. Now that homeschooling is in full swing, she depends heavily on me to help with the children's reading lessons. We have a kindergartener, 2nd grader, 4th grader, 7th grader, and 9th grader. Emma attends high school for half a day, and Reah will probably transition in the fall of 2016. I am doing well, although still asking the Lord for the help that He wants to send to Icthus. It has been a year now since my hand was badly injured in a chop saw. I am greatly encouraged, though I still do therapy exercises to increase motion and decrease stiffness. One of my highlights was to harvest a nice buck on the property back in November. Edith and I are gearing up to have more farm animals in the spring. We need to erect fencing and prepare living quarters for the two goats and Jersey heifer that we intend to purchase. Some time ago we received a word that the Haven would be a land that produced much fruit – both in the physical and the spiritual. We are honored to be a part of that.

If you are ever in the area, please don't hesitate to stop by for a visit. We might even put you to work! May the Lord be with you all and bless you in 2016.

“O Give Thanks to the Lord.....

For He is Good!..”

Sincerely,

Bill Dingle & Icthus Ministries