

Church website: www.crossroads-efree.org

Petras Journal

Quarterly musings on our life together

He gives and takes away...

Prayer points:

- Pray for the growth groups that lives would continue to be transformed by the hope of the gospel.
- Pray for us to trust the Lord through this pregnancy with joy for the new life to come in May!
- Pray for the family/friend day Oct. 25, that the gospel would bear much fruit.
- Pray that we would trust in the Lord to grow His church and bring His people.

The last several months have held new challenges for us both personally and in church planting. We found out that we were pregnant with our 3rd child (due March 26th) only to lose it at just six weeks on August 1st. We have never suffered a miscarriage before, but know some others who have that prayed with us and encouraged us in this time. It is truly a loss worth grieving. Since the baby was so young my “tangible” evidence of its life are the notes of sympathy I will treasure.

God surprised us though, when, just a month later, I tested positive on a home pregnancy test again! This led to a battery of blood tests and ultrasounds over the course of a few weeks confirming that I was indeed pregnant with another child, whose heartbeat was de-

tected at 5 weeks gestation, using basic ultrasound technology.

This is just about miraculous! It should have been a month before I conceived again, but God is the one who opens and closes the womb, and He had other plans. The doctors and nurses and everyone who hears I am pregnant again don’t believe what I am saying, but this little one is there, and based on its size in the ultrasound, it is due May 8, 2010! As I write this, I am still in my first trimester at 10 weeks, but we are rejoicing at God’s amazing grace toward us.

We are just about at the two year anniversary of Mark’s mother’s death from leukemia as well. Our baby is with her in heaven this fall. He gives and takes away...

(continued on page 2 “He Gives”)



Date night at Raystown Lake Marina Cafe

Your continued prayer and financial support is much appreciated. You may send your tax-deductible financial gifts to:
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Inside this issue:

He Gives and Takes Away	1
Growth Groups	1
Triple A and Teaching Topics	2
The Kids :)	2
He Gives and Takes Away (cont'd.)	2
Prayer Points	1

Growth Groups

In September we began growth groups (i.e. small groups). The purpose of the groups is to begin or deepen our walk with Christ through the development of relationships. There is fellowship, time spent considering God’s word and its impact in our lives and prayer taking place at these groups. There are two groups going through Focus on the Family’s *Truth Project*,

looking at the relevance and importance of living the Christian worldview in daily life. It is reaching out to those outside our church who want to understand how to look at life from a Biblical perspective as well.

Another group is reading through a portion of Luke in a study from Matthias Media called *Following Jesus*. It continues to attract unbe-

lievers who are seeking a reason for faith in God and an understanding of the gospel. It is encouraging to see growth happening in people’s lives and the gospel confronting people who are in need of the forgiveness and grace of Jesus Christ for their sin. We are seeing continued gospel growth and the building up of Christ’s church through these groups.

Triple A and Teaching Topics

AAA is not the organization that takes care of your car when you are stuck on the side of the road. It is an acronym for Assess, Address, and Apply. We began a monthly AAA meeting in July to help ourselves get organized as a body and work together to fulfill our vision, mission and values in practical ways. From these meetings have come service ideas, ministry ideas, discussions about the order of service and who is doing what, as well as encour-

agement and equipping regarding our spiritual gifts and how they fit in the body.

Out of these meetings came the idea for Family/Friend Day, an opportunity to invite family and friends who don't know Jesus.

On Sunday mornings, Mark has been preaching through the gospel of John. We have come away with a greater understanding of who Jesus is and why we believe. At the end of October

Mark will take a break from John to do a short series called "Fear Factor." We will look at the fear of God vs. the fear of man, beginning in the Garden.

Our first *Six Steps to Talking About Jesus* (Matthias Media) study concluded and a second session began last week. This course aids those involved in understanding the "whys" and "hows" of sharing their faith in Jesus Christ. In the near future we are planning to do *Six Steps to Reading Your Bible*.



Anna learned to swing by herself this summer. Look at the joy!

The kids :)

Anna made two new friends in July, leading to a sleepover, lots of bike riding and playing outside and new boundaries for the family. Any fears we ever had of our shy and reserved daughter making friends are gone with the wind. Now that fall is here and the air is too cool or rainy to play outside, things are moving inside, but slowing down a bit as school started for her friends. Anna is also doing school at home with mommy, learning beginning phonics and numbers

past twenty. Today, she told me she would do the number page with missing numbers when she turned five, and the page with only the numbers 1 and 30 when she turned 6! She gets a kick out of the fact that 44 is said "forty-four" and 55 is "fifty-five" and so on. She wants to bring this fun fact up ever since she discovered it a few weeks ago!

Micah learned to jump on two feet recently and he delights in getting our attention by saying

"wah dis" over and over again to show us how he can jump off of things like the bottom step, a pillow, a box, etc. We have been applying the ice pack to his face and head more lately as a result! He is more attached to daddy lately, getting sad when he has to "go wer." He compensates by getting a bag or cart to push and going to "wer" himself. He learned to go potty as well, and loves his Elmo underpants the best! He is still gaining confidence with number two and going by himself to the bathroom. He likes an audience!



Anna and Micah taking a break from hiking at Chimney Rocks. Micah is wearing his favorite Car shirt. Anna is holding her walking stick.

He Gives and Takes Away (cont'd.)

On the church planting side of things we have had the disappointment of losing a couple from our church body. They were each in a one-on-one discipleship relationship and there appeared to be signs of growth in their lives and marriage. However, they suddenly decided they wanted to visit other churches

and have not followed up with us. The only conclusion we can come to is that the gospel was getting too close for comfort, but it is sad to see them go.

We have had the joy of seeing growth in our numbers since coming to the Y with an elderly gentleman, a young couple and four single "twenty-somethings."

Our group has gained energy and health over these last few months and we are praising God for the new faces and the willing hearts he has sent our way! The two discipleship relationships lost are now filled with two of these young folks being mentored/disciplined by those older in the church. We look forward to the people God will send next. They are His.

"You know in my circumstances [single parent, laid off at 58] I should be a nervous wreck, but I have more joy and peace in my life than ever before. Jesus has changed my life."

~Craig