

Hello and Happy New Year from the Gerards!

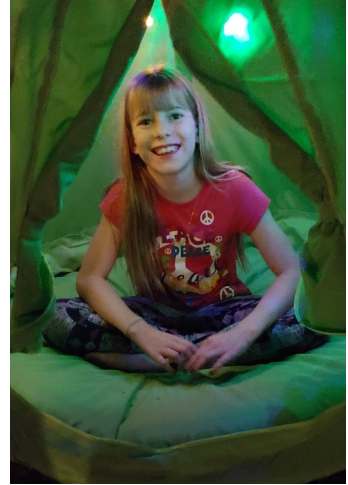
What a year 2020 has been. Like all of you, we have had many events cancelled and plans re-arranged throughout this past year...we have also joined in the hunt for toilet paper, went through bottles of hand soap (did the kids never wash their hands before?), became professionals at the Zoom conference call, and are getting our Christmas letter out in January! I am reminded, and ever so thankful, that nothing has surprised God or is outside of his hands.



Elijah- Is 12 and in 6th grade! He has passed both his Grandmas up in height and I know it is only time before I'm looking up at him as well. He loves to read, program, draw, and create boardgames. He started learning the guitar this past year in addition to continuing his piano lessons. Something he is thankful for from the past year is getting his own room.

She also loves all kinds of

Lily- Is 10 and in 4th grade. She remains constant in her love of nature and all creatures. We currently have 2 small catfish, an ant farm, and a scorpion as "pets" (in addition to our sweet pup Pippi). Something she is thankful for from the past year is having a puppy party to celebrate turning 10.



Ransom- is 6 and in 1st grade. He is full of life, energy, and vibrant expressions. He comes blasting out of his room in the morning and goes all day long. He loves to be outside swinging on the ropes or rings we have hanging from our trees. Some of his pastimes include building with legos, drawing and playing with his siblings. Something he is thankful for from the past year is learning to ride his bike without training wheels.

Dan- has had to be very adaptable this year both in ministry and in life. He switched from playing racquetball to playing disc golf and has loved beating people in another sport. He has been able to continue helping at church and playing on the worship band, at times to an empty building over a live online venue. He wrote quite a few songs throughout the year and 1 of them has been played at church. Something he is thankful for from the past year is the camping trip we took as a family.



DeAnn- We are in our 7th year of homeschooling and part of our CC co-op. I signed up to tutor Ransom's class again this year and love the kiddos I get to teach each week. Learning to teach over zoom was an experience and I quickly realized I didn't have to talk so loud at the computer. My ulcerative colitis remains under control, which has been a gift, and apart from the occasional migraine my health as a whole has been great. Something I am thankful for the past year is the times we have been able to have with family and friends, including a couple of visits from my mom.



Earlier in the year I ran across a verse that resonated with how I was feeling at the time. It is Proverbs 13:12. The first part of the verse states "Hope deferred makes the heart sick". I, like a lot of you, have had many hopes deferred this past year and it was easy for me to settle into the feeling of a sick heart. But fortunately, the verse doesn't end there, it ends with "but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life". I can feel the weight fall off as I read those words, as I choose to focus on them. You see the ultimate longings of my heart have been fulfilled in Jesus, what He has done for me on the cross, and continues to do every day. So I can be like that tree, alive and thriving, despite my circumstances. I pray that this New Year will bring you closer to Jesus, that you will give Him your hopes and longings, and that you will know more fully how much He loves you!

DeAnn for the Gerards