

THE BOZEMAN REPORT

January/February 2018

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Then Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." (Mark 1:17)

Greetings, brethren, once again from Bozeman! We have had a rough start to the year, but it seems like we finally have gotten things headed in the right direction. We, of course, added our little one, Shella-Marie, to our family in December, which has been great. However, there has been an adjustment period in the family! It had been 10 years since we had a baby in the house, and now the older kids are getting their first real experience with the little one. They have done wonderfully with her arrival, all jumping in to help out as needed. They are also very helpful with taking care of the baby, even being willing to change diapers! It has been difficult to work into a real routine, but it seems like we are getting things settled. We had a little bit of a shakeup in our homeschooling routine too, but the older kids have done a good job of keeping up with their studies, around Cynthia's distractions!

We also had a lot of illness around here for most of the month of January, which slowed down some of our regular work. Even though we are small in number, we still had a terrible time shaking all the colds and flu bugs that were going around. It seemed like we were just passing things on from one to the other, and then back again! We held up the best we could, though it certainly impacted our schedule of studies for some time. We tried to hold as many as we could, but some of the time we just weren't able to get out.

Another thing that impacted our work in January was that my sister-in-law, Laura, lost her baby shortly after finding out she was pregnant. This, quite understandably, was very difficult on their family, and on us as well. We can empathize with their loss, and with the time needed to heal from such an emotional blow. Even now, we solicit your prayers on their behalf.

Studies...

We were able to get back to a semi-regular schedule that allowed us to pick up several of our community studies. On Tuesday evenings, we have been holding a study on various biblical characters. That has been an encouraging study for us, even though we have yet to have much response from those in the community. On Fridays, we have two studies. One early in the morning, where we simply get together to read a passage of scripture. Currently, we have been reading through Ezekiel. This is a short study that we hope will attract some folks who just want to do a bit of Bible reading with us before heading to work. We usually just read a chapter and then spend a few minutes talking about it. This time also gives Justin, Jacob, and I a chance to visit and discuss our plans for the work for a little while each week. It is a good time for us to encourage one another. Our second study is mid-morning. We are currently studying the book of Acts in this study. I have been leading that discussion, and I have been trying to simply work through the book verse by verse. We have actually had a couple of visitors to this study (probably more than any other regular study to this point). Studying in Acts has opened the door to talk about a lot of important principles having to do with obedience, relationship with God, and the functioning of the early church. This has been another good study for some of our younger folks who have been a part of the study!

I must admit, I have been a bit discouraged lately with how difficult it has been to strike up enough interest with others to get them to sit down with us and study. We are able to have a lot of "incidental" discussions (meeting people while we are out and about, and in the venues around the studies themselves), but we've still only had a few come and sit down with us. I was reminded today that even when we aren't seeing people come and sit, we are making contacts that may develop into something more significant down the road. We are also able to show our kids how important

Kris And Cynthia Brewer

Kris and Cynthia Brewer

327 Coulee Drive
Bozeman, MT 59718

Phone: 406-539-3760

Email: kris@learngodswill.com

Web: <http://www.learngodswill.com>
<http://gallatinvalleycoc.com>

Blog: <http://kris.learngodswill.com>

Average Attendance:

Sunday: 9

Wednesday: 9

this type of study and evangelism is. I have been encouraged by how our children have asked to attend these studies, and how much they participate in them! Not only are they learning, they are a good example to those around us who see them sitting and studying the scriptures!

Our regular studies on Sunday and Wednesday continue to progress well. I know I reported some time back that I would probably be wrapping up the study we've been doing for some time on Sundays, *The Life and Journeys of the Apostle Paul*. Well, that has not been completed as soon as I anticipated. For one reason, I put off teaching that material for some time while Justin and his family were making their trip east over the end of the year. Another reason for not finishing yet is that we have had quite a bit of good discussion as we have worked through Paul's epistles. Since we are not on any kind of deadline, there has not been a reason to squash discussions. I have enjoyed teaching through this material, and I believe it has been very beneficial for our group. Justin has continued with a very good study on *How We Got the Bible*. He is using Neil Lightfoot's book by that name as the foundation of the study, but he has put together a tremendous amount of source materials to discuss as we progress through the book. It is certainly a faith-building study, offering a lot of support for the validity of scripture, and the accuracy of it as it has come down to us!

Personal...

We were glad to have my parents come to visit for a few days after the first of the year to meet their new granddaughter (and I guess they came to see the rest of us, too). We had a nice visit, except for

the sickness that was going around at the time. Unfortunately, they were right in the middle of all the gunk we were passing around out here. The sickness limited the time we could be out and about, but we still had a very nice visit with them. We had Dad preach for us while he was here, and we enjoyed his lesson very much. It is always nice for us to get to hear him preach, and his lesson was encouraging to us!

I would like to mention that I have received word of several folks that are very dear to us that are struggling with some very serious illnesses. All of these are dear friends, and have been a big part of offering encouragement to us in the work that we are doing. I'd appreciate your prayers for them all. Even though I am not going to name them, the Lord knows!

As for my health, I was able to get some information from the ear specialist that I have been seeing for a few months now. He had me go in for a CAT scan, and discovered that I have cochlear otosclerosis. I had surgery for otosclerosis, a condition that typically attacks the middle ear bones, about 15 years ago. That surgery was successful, and I didn't have any issues for many years. However, now that the condition is attacking the cochlea in both ears, it appears that I will be having regular checkups to keep an eye on it. For the present time, I will have to change the kind of hearing aids that I have, as I have now lost almost all of the hearing in my left ear. Unfortunately, that is going to mean another significant expense to get the hearing aids that I need to help with the issue. If the condition attacks my right ear in the same manner as it has my left, eventually I will need another surgery--cochlear implants. I appreciate your prayers for me as we navigate this problem. I'm thankful to have an answer as to what is causing my issues, but realize that we potentially have a long road ahead as we watch for the progression of this condition.

Thanksgiving...

As I close, I want to once again voice my thanksgiving for your participation in our work. So many help us through financial support, prayers, and words of encouragement. It is refreshing to me to receive a note from those far away, who simply want to give us encouragement. I can't tell you how many times one of those notes has arrived here at just the time I needed it to help combat discouragement! Your care and concern for us is overwhelming! May God bless you in your work in the kingdom!