

The Holt Family Newsletter-January/February 2021

Red Cliff Bible Camp

Dear Friends and Supporters,

January started off bitterly cold this year. For those of you who don't live in Wyoming, January 1st had a daytime high of 10* and the overnight low was -18*. We had a big snow at the beginning of the month, and it snowed several days at camp, but then the weather changed. By the end of the month, the highs were almost to 30*, and it hadn't snowed for weeks! By now, some of you are wondering what the weather report has to do with our bi-monthly newsletter, but this year the weather had a definite affect on the winter retreats. Much the same as the past few years, Keith, Dave Heyboer, and Dean Loftus continued to snowmobile into camp several days a week. The warmer days meant that they weren't absolutely miserable as they commuted the 13 miles of trail each day. Less snow meant less time spent shoveling out the camp, and more time preparing the inside of the buildings for the retreats. But since the weather is often unpredictable, we were quite concerned when the temperatures dropped once again, and the guys discovered that the pump for the kitchen area had frozen solid overnight. The following day, first Saturday in February, the entire resident camp staff (including all the kids!) snowmobiled into camp. We spent the day cleaning the buildings top to bottom in preparation for Couples' Retreat on the 10-12th of February and praying that the men would be able to thaw the pump out so camp could run normally the next weekend. By early afternoon, God had already answered, and we had running water again!

Our speakers for Couples' Retreat were Greg and MerriEllen Wright, from St. George, UT. Pastor Wright challenged the couples to grow in their marriages in 4 specific areas: Forgiveness, Forbearance, Faithfulness, and Fun. We had 3 other couples besides the resident staff who attended the retreat, almost one couple from each decade of married life. It was encouraging to see how the messages the speaker brought could be applied whether the couple had been married 2 or 50+ years.

This year, Keith and I attended each retreat as we had planned, but we decided to try something a little different with our girls. All of the girls enjoy helping during summer camp, but that schedule is a bit more flexible, with far more activities to do to keep them busy. During winter camp the retreats, run from Thursday afternoon through 11:00 AM on Saturday, are packed with as many extra services and activities as we can fit into that short time slot. Because we have only one main building for groups to meet in and for camp to operate out of right now, there are times that it's best not to have kids in there. For example, if a service is going on and one of my kids wants to ask me a question, but I'm playing piano for the service, having them run in and disrupt the service is not helpful. With often sub-zero temperatures, the girls will get cold very quickly if they are playing outside, and before we let them stay in our cabin unsupervised for an hour or so, we wanted to make sure they were old enough to be trusted to not burn the cabin down! This winter, we brought the girls up in shifts, two per retreat, and pairing an older one with a younger. The first retreat, Taylee and Elayna came with us to help with dining room cleanup after meals, as well as to help clean all of the cabins at the end of the retreat. Men's Retreat, it was Sierra and Savannah's turn. For Teen Retreat, Sierra and Vanessa got to help. Sierra got two turns since Taylee chose to pay half her own way to be a camper during the Teen Retreat. All of the girls were helpful, especially during the Saturday cleaning times. At 5+ months pregnant, I'm a little slower and a little less flexible than I usually am, not to mention the fact that Keith won't let me climb ladders to clean the bunks in the cabins. So, the girls were able to cover what I couldn't this year. We are hoping to have our entire family serving at all the winter retreats next year, but since we will have a new little one, we will have to see how it goes! Please pray with us for wisdom in this.

The last weekend in February, the weather once again got incredibly cold, but sadly for the men hoping for fresh powder, it still did not snow! Men's Retreat is usually a time that the men really enjoy exploring the mountains on snowmobiles, but with the last major snowfall having occurred 6 weeks earlier, there were far more obstacles sticking out of the snow than on most years. But the men still were able to enjoy snowshoeing, the tubing hill, and the BB gun sharpshooter contest. Pastor Kerry Hodgs from Rock Springs, WY, brought the messages to challenge the men in their spiritual lives.

Our final retreat of the year was Snow Blowout, our Teen Retreat. Once again, the Lord blessed us with so many campers that Keith had to close registration due to lack of beds! Every cabin had all the bunks full, and most of the cabins had one or two additional mattresses on the floor to accommodate all the campers. With the staff, volunteers, and campers, we totaled 102 people at Red Cliff that weekend. Pastor Ron Perry, from Folsom, CA, is a favorite speaker for many of the campers and staff, and he challenged the campers with 4 accounts from the Bible of men who were imprisoned for doing what was right and for making godly choices. We are so grateful for all of those who volunteer during the winter retreats in various capacities-snowmobile shuttlers, kitchen staff, and counselors! It would be impossible to make these retreats work without all of those who tirelessly pitch in and help to make the winter retreats run well!

In family news, our school year continues. We are down to just over 30 school days left, which will allow us to finish in May. Vanessa seems to have finally turned the corner on learning how to read. Even at the beginning of January, I wasn't sure if she had made any real progress since the school year started, but it seems to have finally clicked for her! Savannah has finally figured out how to "borrow" for subtraction, and she regularly gets 100% on her spelling tests. Elayna does her work well, but rarely does she do it quickly. She has come a long way with spelling this year and she has already completed one of her science textbooks. Sierra is the speed worker of the group. She regularly finishes her work before noon, and she definitely prefers science over history. Taylee excels at history and language skills, but earth science and pre-algebra is testing both of us! However, she is making considerable progress, while I am re-learning math skills I haven't used since high school! The newest member of our family is doing well, growing right on track, is no longer making me as nauseous, and hasn't been keeping me up at night (yet). For those of you who don't know yet, *it's a boy!* Yes, Keith is excited, yes, it took a few of the girls a day or two to come to grips with the idea of a little brother instead of a sister, and yes, they are all excited about him now. A couple of the younger ones aren't exactly sure it's fair that one day he will have his own room, but I'm sure by the time that day comes, they won't be that excited to share with him, anyway! Please continue to pray for a safe and healthy pregnancy and delivery, as well as for wisdom to continue to balance camp ministry with our family life.

This month, we are actively preparing for summer camp: finalizing staff contracts, planning camp schedules, games and music, and updating the website for summer registrations. Please pray for those who will be joining our staff this summer, as well as for those who will be campers!

Serving in Wyoming,
Keith, Stacy,
Taylee, Sierra, Elayna,
Savannah, and Vanessa Holt

If God is leading you to support us on a monthly basis or with a one-time gift as we minister at Red Cliff Bible Camp, you can donate directly to the camp by mailing a check to Red Cliff Bible Camp, PO Box 846, Pinedale, WY 82941. You can designate it "For Holt's Support", and the camp will make sure it gets to us. (It is tax deductible!) Our PayPal account is now set up on our Staff page at redcliffcamp.org. Please note that PayPal does take a percentage of each donation we receive as their service fee.