

Dear Family and Friends,

Ever wonder what Mary felt when the angel of the Lord announced to her that she would give birth to the Messiah? What a shock it must have been for her and yet her heart was ready to accept whatever God put in her path. Luke 1:38 tells us what Mary says, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word." Mary knew God could do anything and whatever He did would be good. This is what has described 2017 for our family – God can do anything and whatever He does will be what is best for us.

Sometime last December, Tim presented to me (Sarah) that he was strongly considering the possibility of going to the Philippines to help launch and teach in a seminary. God had already been preparing my heart as I believe He did with Mary. Together we were ready to face the change for God's best in our lives. As we ventured on the journey, we drew closer to the Lord in seeking His will in every detail. He proved to be faithful in giving us clear answers and grew our faith in His power and goodness.

Tim finished his doctorate in May, receiving the degree that will equip him to serve in Haven of Grace Seminary training Filipino pastors and young men for ministry. He stepped down from the senior pastorate at Emmanuel Baptist Church in Millville, PA on July 31st. He is very grateful for seven years of ministry with these wonderful folks. We will all cherish them as family. Tim is busy now with setting up meetings to raise support and enjoying this phase of ministry, encouraging pastors here in the states as we share our burden with them and their churches.

I (Sarah) have been grateful for the challenges God has given through this experience. Though it is difficult at times to reign in my emotions, I find that God gives grace to humbly admit my weaknesses and lean up on Him for strength. When I can say with Mary that God's will be done, there is true peace and joy in what lies ahead. For me, my greatest adventure is learning to focus on my children daily as we have entered the realm of homeschooling for the first time! It has challenged me to hone in those organization skills and be open in asking my Tim for help. He has been such a wonderful encouragement to me through the whole process! After returning from our family survey trip to the Philippines (August 23-September 11), we focused on homeschooling and packing up our home, putting it up for sale and eventually for rent. During this time we also learned God had another blessing in store for us! We now look forward to meeting our fifth child in May 2018.

Of all the children, Jonas (3 ½ years old), might be the one who is most excited about the new baby coming in May. Out of the blue, he will say, "I'm so glad we are having a baby!" His sweet spirit and excitement for life has truly been an encouragement to us as we face change. Even while in the Philippines where we faced differences in culture, he would exclaim with excitement, "This is AWESOME!" Jonas really likes anything that is awesome—superheroes, airplanes, anything that flies or does amazing tricks.

Lydia (6 ½ years old) looks forward in being a mommy to the little one. She already has quite a bit of practice with taking care of Jonas. Lydi is now in the 1st grade, enjoying the extra times with Mommy as she learns to read, count money, and practice spelling. Though school comes a little more difficult for her than for her two older siblings, Lydi has done well in the final grades and enjoys sharing her experiences with Jonas. Lydi has also learned how to ride a bike this year and enjoys cooking, drawing, and crafting whatever she can imagine.

Kiersten (9 ½ years old) has grown so much this year, learning to include her younger siblings in her imaginative play and practicing her drawing skills in top secret letter adventures with her cousin Stephanie in Colorado. Homeschooling has been a hard transition for her as she learns to motivate herself in her finishing her schoolwork each day, but she is learning some valuable lessons. Kiersten is still our biggest reader, even reading Micah's 5th grade books to fill her hunger of reading!

Micah (10 ½ years old) is growing into a very responsible young man as he learns to work and help Dad around the house. God's grace has been greatly evident in his life as he has enthusiastically jumped on board with the change in ministry for our family. He has grown more in realizing what is important in life, willing to give up material things for spiritual and seeking to help others learn and grow to be like Christ. His favorite pastimes are Legos, creating videos, games of all kinds, and leading the other siblings in adventures. We look forward to seeing how God uses him now and in the future.

Thank you to all who have encouraged us and prayed for us as we face the changes and challenges of our new adventures! God has used so many of you to help us along and to prove His hand continues to be powerful and good in our lives. We trust you all will grow as well in knowing more of our Lord, His power and His goodness!

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

With Love,

Tim, Sarah, Micah, Kiersten, Lydia, Jonas, & Baby Valiante