

## From the Fords – More kids but no more teenagers...

Our hearts are full of thankfulness to the Lord once again as we celebrated many events over the past year.

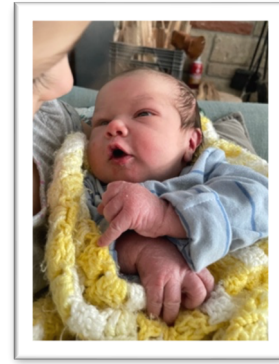
- From the spring, as we celebrated Hannah and Andrew's wedding, to 30 years of serving at Barakel, then Isaiah and Jonathan's college graduations
- 3 Grandchildren! James Michael Grunewald was born in September, Blythe Leota Dunn was born in October, and Obed Elisha Benninger was born this January. This brings the total to 8 grandchildren.
- We descended upon Stacy's parents for Thanksgiving and enjoyed a delightful time there. Then, they all managed to come home for a few days at Christmas. What joy!
- Cross Con '26 – We volunteered to serve in the bookstore with the hope of encouraging some of our "camp friends" who attended, as well as connecting with others seeking ministry opportunities. We also sat in on some of the sessions and were encouraged by the Word of God.
- Our youngest, Samuel, turned 20 just a few days ago, and with his birthday, the milestone of 13 years of our children being teenagers is behind us.



*Picture taken at Thanksgiving*



*James & Blythe*



*Obed*

Now we look forward with hope in the coming months:

- Summer Staff Recruiting – we will visit churches and colleges to connect with young people about serving at Barakel. Grateful for the 70 applications we have so far.
- Barakel events starting up this spring. Excited about spring retreats and the summer season. The time of the Lord's return is imminent, and so we desire to see others encouraged by God's Word to come to the One who saves and delivers from slavery to sin and death. Come, Lord Jesus!

Here are some books we've been reading during the fall season (sabbatical):

| Jon                                                  | Stacy                                                           |
|------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| <u>The Titus Ten</u> : J Josh Smith                  | <u>The Ascension of Christ</u> : Patrick Schriener              |
| <u>Discontinuity to Continuity</u> : Benjamin Merkle | <u>Great Prayers of the Old Testament</u> : Walter Bruggeman    |
| <u>Works of John Flavel</u> , vol 1                  | <u>Luke</u> : Dale Ralph Davis                                  |
| <u>Multi-Directional Leader</u> : Trevin Wax         | <u>Knowing Sin</u> : Mark Jones                                 |
| <u>The Redeemed Man</u> : Beeke, Phillips, Smalley   | <u>Divine Providence</u> : Stephen Charnock                     |
| <u>The Christian Gospel</u> : Tony Payne             | <u>The Good Portion-Scripture</u> : Keri Folmar                 |
| <u>Isaiah By The Day</u> : Alec Motyer               | <u>Friendship with God</u> : Mike McKinley                      |
|                                                      | <u>The Gospel According to Christ's Enemies</u> : David Randall |

While this season has been filled with many unknowns and some hard work, we have appreciated the extra time afforded to us to have a slower pace, be sick several times without the pressure to push through for a retreat, to work on camp and home things that stay on a "to-do someday" list, attend church more regularly as well as visit some other camp churches, receive some counseling sessions through Fieldstone in Ann Arbor, and time with each other while not focused on the ministry. Thank you for your encouragement along the way and for supporting us either through prayer and/or finances.

"The incarnation and the ascension of Christ restore what was broken at the Fall...in one He came to us in the flesh, in the other He brought us in the flesh to God... In sum, Jesus' return keeps the church's eyes trained on the future day. It makes us thankful for the present ministry of the Spirit, thankful for the current victory of Christ, but it also keeps us longing for Christ's return. It allows us to see the ascent as the beginning of the end and hopefully keeps us waiting for the full revelation of Jesus' kingship, when He enters to gather His elect and scatter those who have opposed him or his people." p. 113. The Ascension of Christ: Patrick Schriener

Serving at Barakel,

Jon & Stacy Ford