

On being a Father and a Pastor

I (Nate) have two congregations. One has two adults and nine children, and has grown at a rate of one every two years; it has been under my leadership for 20 years. The other has about 21 adults and 37 children, and has experienced a net growth of 15 every two years; I have been leading it for 4 years. My smaller congregation meets every day for worship and has lost two members (to death). The larger congregation, on the other hand, meets twice a week and has lost about 50 people (half due to moves, and half due to differences in expectations - ouch!).

The smaller congregation I speak of is my family (my wife and 18-year-old son being the two adults, and the two deaths being miscarriages about six years ago). According to the Apostle Paul, my family is an important factor in my ability to be a church elder, including the proof of my management ability, the orderliness and faith of my children, and the dignity, temperance, and faithfulness of my wife (1 Tim. 3:4-5 & 11, Titus 1:6). For these reasons, I feel a tremendous responsibility to pastor my wife and children well and prepare each one of them for fruitful ministry themselves. My wife does every bit as much pastoral counseling of women as I do of men, and it is the goal of my parenting to see each of my children equipped to become an elder or elder's wife, if the Lord wills.

I have always felt tension, however, between the demands of home and of work, and the pastorate has created some interesting things to think through: Should I feel good or bad about working 60 hours a week? Should I feel guilty for watching my neighbors drive to work while I take a leisurely morning with my family because we hosted a Bible study late into the previous night? Should I stop work in my home office when I hear a bloodcurdling scream from my toddler in the house? Should I travel to see my kids compete in out-of-town debate tournaments, or stay in town to be available for parishioners? Should I stop my sermon preparation on Saturday nights to put my little girls to bed with a lullaby, or keep ploughing ahead so I can finish sooner and not be as tired when I lead the Sunday morning service? Should I shoo the kids out of my office during the day or "let the little children come"? It can get interesting in a church office next to a homeschool that is running high school, junior high, elementary, and preschool studies all at once! But it's always precious when a toddler wanders into my office while I'm deep in thought about some profound doctrine and offers me a dandelion she just picked, saying, "This is for you, Papa!"

Would you please pray for me to balance my time wisely between my two congregations (my family & Christ the Redeemer Mission Church) so that both congregations are well-shepherded and fruitful in God's kingdom?



Our family loves to sing!



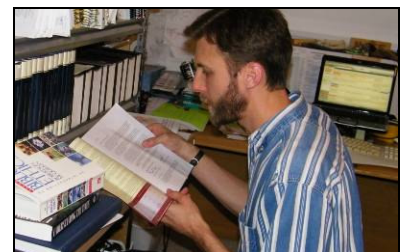
Paula and Baby Betsy



Paula counsels an army wife.



A new family in our church!



Nate in his office.

Kid's Corner: Josh Graduates!

Please join us in thanking God as we celebrate our first child's high school graduation! We'd love for you to join us for the ceremony on Sat., May 8, and party to follow. Call us at 785-537-4741 for details.

Joshua Tanner Wilson was born in Look-out Mountain, GA, and is the eldest of ten children. He has been a great blessing in setting a standard of Godliness for his younger siblings... most of the time! "The LORD has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes." (Psalm 118:23)

Josh has enjoyed a busy life full of work, school, extra-curricular activities, and family life. His hobbies include: camping, soccer, Air-soft, chess, reading, and music. He plays mandolin and guitar with the family band, and sings bass in the family choir. Josh also enjoys a good, rousing discussion, and as a



Josh, our first-born

result has competed in speech and debate throughout high school. His best achievement so far was winning first place at the 2010 Topeka NCFCA tournament with his brother Beni in Team Policy debate. He hopes to attend the national championship tournament of the National Christian Forensics and Communication Association this June and wouldn't mind prayers on getting there, but he realizes that it's in God's hands.

From a very young age, Josh has been keenly aware of injustice. In recognition of this God-given passion, he plans to attend K-State this fall on an academic scholarship, pursuing a degree in Legal Communications, with an eye towards a career in law and justice. He hopes to live by the advice the Apostle Paul gave in 2 Tim. 4:5:

"But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship... discharge all the duties of your ministry."



- Please keep praying for God to give wisdom to **Nate** for leading our family and pastoring our church.
- Pray for clarity of mind for **Paula** as she continues to counsel women, organize events (including our first graduation), and be a good wife and mommy!
- Please keep praying for our three deployed soldiers (James, Pete, and Thomas) and their wives (Dana, Caitlin, and Mary) during this challenging year apart, as well as for our Rear Detachment Commander, Carl (and his wife Alyssa), who stayed behind to hold down the fort while his unit is in Iraq!
- Thank you for praying for **members of the congregation** as they struggle through depression, fear, doctrinal issues, and relational conflicts. We have seen significant progress on all fronts, although it hasn't been easy. Please continue to engage in this spiritual war for souls through your prayers!
- And pray for **Josh** to manage his time wisely, finish high school well, rank high in his last debate tournaments, and transition to college studies gracefully.