

With Grateful Heart

I (Nate) awoke after Thanksgiving to the first day that really felt like winter: temperature in the twenties, a glaze of ice over everything outdoors, bright grey skies, and masses of geese honking overhead as I took my morning prayer-walk. Inside the house, the family (with the exception of my early-riser Aletheia) was sleeping late after hosting guests well into the night, so all was quiet as I stood back from the freshly-lit woodstove to enjoy the warmth and reflect on the coming day. My eyes alighted upon several dozen paper leaves taped to the opposite wall, upon which we and our guests had written what we were thankful to God for, as part of our Thanksgiving celebration. A lump came to my throat as I read:

- ✿ **“Suffering and hardships”**
- ✿ **“Persecution”**

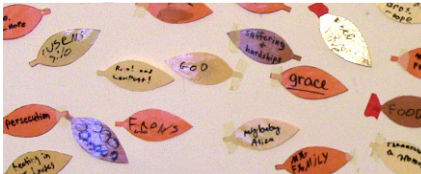
In God’s providence, the sermons I’ve been preaching on 1 Peter have been just what some of our parishioners needed to equip them to face social backlash for living out their faith.

- ✿ **“Forgiveness”**
- ✿ **“God drawing us close to Himself through yucky emotions”**

I recognize these words from another parishioner that I’ve been shepherding through a soul-trying time.

- ✿ **“New identity and freedom in Christ”**
- ✿ **“A family that I can spend thanksgiving with.”**

I think of the international students who came over for dinner, how they have been isolated from family for years just to get an American degree.



The “leaves” on the wall



Lillian’s ladyhood trip w/ Paula to the Smokies for her 13th b’day



Amos, Grace Anne, Cousin Lacie, Irene, and Peter at Thanksgiving



One of the K-State student groups with which Beni ministers



Peter with his LightSys internship mentors, Tim & Patricia Young

I am stabbed with regret that I have not spent more time with my international friend.

- ✿ **“Freedom of religion”**
- ✿ **“Amazing things God is doing in East Asia”**

Ahh. These must be from my son Beni, whom we picked up at the airport two nights before. God blessed his mission trip to Asia with full financial support, good health, and a great time of learning about campus ministry and underground churches there. He is still glowing after leading two young men to Christ!

- ✿ **“Sisters and brothers”**
- ✿ **“Being back together again”**

Yes! 3 nights earlier we picked up my son Peter from the airport after a 2-month internship with LightSys that had him traveling all over the eastern United States fixing computers for Christian ministries. We tried to embarrass him at the airport by singing the Muppets song, “Together Again.” And oh what fun to have him back on the drums and hammered dulcimer as we played music together between our Thanksgiving dinner and dessert!

- ✿ **“Mama and Papa”**
- ✿ **“iscreem”**

Looks like a kid was thinking about dessert!

- ✿ **“0000000000”**

I see even baby Maggie wrote something she was thankful for!

**O God, You are so good!
Thank You!**

Kid's Corner: Jedidiah Quentin (in his own words)

That other picture of me in the kid's corner 2 ½ years ago is really funny! I'm 4 now, and I finally get to sit in the car booster seat that [my big sister] Betsy had. I can run faster now and can play Chess and Battleship. I even beat [18 yr-old] Peter at Scrabble Jr., but I'm still trying to figure out how to get him in "mount" position when we're wrestling! I'm looking forward to when Josh gets home so we can have a snowball fight. I'm hungry all the time. I liked the noodles



Grace Anne cooked and Mama's quesadillas and Irene's pancakes – I even like Amos' kombucha, and, of course, I like cake. In the picture you can see the tiles that I helped Papa put into the new bathroom; I put in the rubber cross things to keep the tiles apart. For quiet times, I like to listen to *Patch the Pirate* and Bible memory chapters. Please pray that I can learn to read well and be gentle with my sisters.

Jed is our 11th child, and just as feisty as he looks in the photo!



- Please keep praying for good health for our family. No actual crises, but lots of little things that add up.
- Pray for the 2,500 local people with whom our family and others shared the gospel during the annual walk-through nativity, and the 200 students with whom Beni and his team shared the Gospel during his mission trip overseas, that the seed of the Gospel would grow and bear fruit.
- Our annual family retreat is scheduled for the week of Christmas. Please pray for spiritual, physical, and relational renewal, as well as renewed vision for what to focus on in the coming year.
- Now that Nate has finished preaching through 1 Peter, please pray for inspiration for his next sermon series.
- Please pray for God's guidance as we explore the possibility of family-band concert tours, beginning with a 1-week tour in the Midwest this January. (Let us know if you're in the Midwest and want to schedule us!)
- Please pray for vocational guidance and opportunities for our sons Josh and Amos, as well as for Peter, who is halfway through his "gap" year between high school and college.
- Two of our vehicles are on their last "legs." Pray for God's provision of a replacement at the perfect time!



Amos teaching a medieval history lesson at Agincourt 500



Our "littles" (Alé, Jed, Maggie, and Betsy) in costume

Merry Christmas!