

"...How shall they hear without a preacher?  
And how shall they preach unless they are sent?"  
Romans 10:14-15



## Illinois Update: God is Faithful

Leanna Bolden

Eternally Speaking Now

It's been awhile since I wrote last December. To say the least, I've been busy! As you may recall, I shared how God had called my family away from our home in Texas, to a land we did not know in Illinois. (Genesis 12)

I'd also shared in December how the Lord had warned us not to resist His call, pointing to Jonah's first response as the example *not* to follow. (Jonah 1)

Well, I have this to report: while it is indeed a foreign land and it's already offered its trials, Illinois is *waaaaay* better than the belly of the whale.

Every sacrifice, every mid-night pleading for God to 'let this cup pass' and do things another way, every frustration over not getting my will-- it all fades in comparison to what the Lord has done. ***I'm so glad He didn't do my will!***

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## Seven new believers in Christ, and Two baptisms

At the end of our first and second Sunday services here, Robin offered the people the opportunity to surrender to Jesus. Four gave their lives to the Lord the first Sunday, and three more the second. In between the two weekends, a seven-year old asked to be baptized. We borrowed another church's baptismal, she was baptized by her father, and a teen girl was so moved that she surrendered her life to the Lord as well and got baptized! Several more are already lined up to be baptized Resurrection Sunday, along with a sweet 70-year old lady who asked Robin, "Am I too old to get baptized?" to which he responded with a resounding, "No!" ***You're never too old to glorify God.***



## God's Presence and Confirmation

I've fondly discovered that, to the degree we cry out to God in desperation, it's to that same degree that God rushes in to meet us. Before we left Texas, half-way through our 'sending' party, everyone gathered around to pray over us. A friend captured this picture, adding the verse from Romans. (Thanks, Amber!) We were especially impacted by the bright light blasting down, the children's hands on my arm, and the rainbows on Robin's shoulder and Zachariah's heart-- After being here for only three weeks, the Holy Spirit seems to be bringing "embryonic fulfillment" of what is depicted in this picture. ***God is faithful to His covenant, and He keeps His Word.***



## ...And then there was SNOW

Here are a few more fun ways Jesus has made His presence known to us:

\* SNOW! This provided for hours of fun. I conveniently sat in the warm house, watching through the glass door as Zachariah played. He had a blast, and I got this writing done! :)

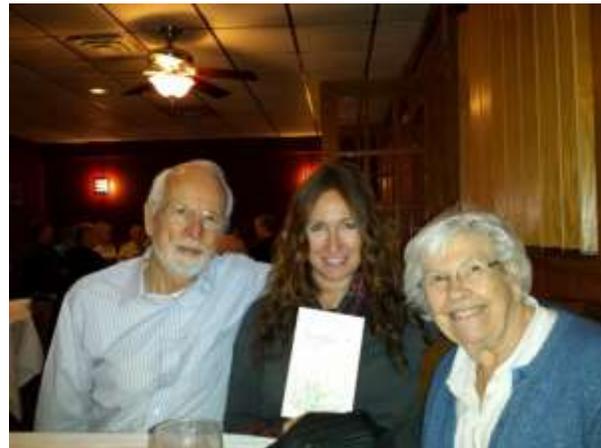
\* When the movers arrived with our stuff a few weeks ago, the day they arrived happened to be the same day Zachariah gave his life to Jesus five years ago-- it was a refreshing picture of God doing a new, life-creating work here. **Jesus is all about new life.**

\* As the movers unloaded, a chorus of chirping birds caught my attention. I crossed the narrow road to get a closer look, and guess what I saw? There were about fifty robins all over the field next to our home. I'd never seen anything like it before! Yes, they were *robins*-- all across the *field*.

**What a picture of God's plan to make disciples and to multiply the Gospel through anyone who will make themselves available to Him.**

\* Soon after we moved in, my parents visited -- a timely and much-needed help for sure. They did so much with and for us! **The Lord sends loving helpers right when we need it.**

\* The Lord is also rapidly providing friends for Zachariah. As many of you know, this is a huge prayer request for any parents who move, and we believe this is only the beginning. **God hears and answers.**



\* Zachariah and I have also found some homeschool co-ops to join. Robin and I will both be teaching segments at the Good News club, and I'm getting to know the women at their weekly Tuesday morning study. Two of the church families facing marital crises have been willing to humble themselves and seek counsel and prayer. All of this in just three weeks, and **none of it our doing. Indeed, God is faithful!**



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## **CHALLENGE:**

**We cannot thank you enough for praying over this new venture. From the depths of our souls, we three say it again: THANK YOU.**

Of course, in the midst of all the praises, the enemy has worked hard to discourage and frustrate. As it is with everyone's lives, things are far from perfect for us.

Alongside all the above, over ten pieces of furniture-- most of them very special or antiques-- were badly damaged by the movers. On top of that, the move ended up costing us excessively more out of pocket than the movers quoted-- and we got three different quotes. We can't get rid of an ant infestation in the parsonage...there's a seriously overwhelming sea of boxes in the garage...we miss our dear friends...and the adjustment to major downsizing is, well, an adjustment.

Yet, all these issues fade in comparison to people being  
**saved, sanctified, and baptized.**

All this fades as I consider the possibility of marriages being restored.  
Temporal comforts are nothing compared to eternal investment!

Every time I see another ant or find one more broken piece of furniture, the phrase that falls out of my mouth is, 'It's still better than the belly.' The alternative to coming here was disobedience-- *and there isn't anything worse than that.*

Whatever godly thing the Lord is telling you to do, please, for your sake and the sake of those around you, do it. **Follow Jesus.** God guarantees it will be better than getting stuck inside the disgusting, acidic, smelly belly of a whale.

*“When my soul fainted within me,  
I remembered the Lord;  
and my prayer went up to You,  
into Your holy temple.  
Those who regard worthless idols  
forsake their own Mercy.  
But I will sacrifice to You  
with the voice of thanksgiving;  
I will pay what I have vowed.  
Salvation is of the Lord.”  
Jonah 2:7-9*

Have a blessed week, and a glorious Resurrection Sunday! Love, Leanna

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