



Maiorano Minutes

4th Quarter 2017



Heading into a New Year?

Over the last couple of months we have celebrated the birth of our Savior, a time of thanksgiving, and the preparation for the upcoming new year and reflection on the old. As we reflect back on 2017, we have so much to be thankful for. God has been so faithful even when the world seems to be so topsy-turvy. We have life everlasting through the finished work (the death, burial, and resurrection) of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have our eyes fixed on Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith. We have a hope because we know what our future holds. We know that God's compassion never fails. His compassion is new every morning. Great is His faithfulness (Lamentations 3:21-23).

One of the things that we can be thankful for right now is the beautiful weather we are experiencing while other parts of the country are suffering. As I write this letter, it is the end of December which is normally our coldest month of the year. Jim and I were out playing tennis in t-shirts in 60+ degree sunshine. It is hard to fathom that other parts of our country are experiencing fires, snow, torrential rains, and bitter cold while we enjoy spring-like weather. We need to remember to uphold those around our country that are suffering from the devastating events of the last year.

Taking Our Life Back in the New Year!

It is not our intention to start writing newsletters every six months, but I am afraid that is how our life has gone over the last year. We covet your prayers on our behalf, and we know that you can't pray if you don't know what is going on in our lives and in the ministry. We have been so swamped with projects that we have lost our time, and sometimes it feels like we have lost control of our lives. Over the next couple weeks, Jim and I hope to take a step back and re-evaluate what we are doing, so we can gain control once again.

There have been many circumstances pulling us in a multitude of directions: some good, some bad. We know that in the midst of the busyness, God has called us to be His servants, and He promises that His yoke is easy and His burden light. We want His yoke, not ours. Sometimes we lose sight of that. We pray that we will walk in His steps and not in our own as we begin to plan for the upcoming year.

Please Help Us with the Post Office!

One of our biggest frustrations over the last couple of months, has been dealing with the Post Office. People's checks have been returned. A computer was returned which we then needed to track down. Things ordered have been shipped back, and then we have had to pay for reshipping because it wasn't the company's fault. We have had credit card accounts frozen because they were getting returned mail. It has cost us time, money, phone calls, frustrations, and a meeting with the postmaster! If you have sent mail or

gifts to us at the address below, and they have been returned to you, PLEASE send them again along with the yellow sticker on your envelope. There is a barcode that will tell the postmaster why it was returned. If you have not heard anything from us acknowledging your communication with us, please let us know. We always communicate to you personally to thank you for your gifts, and we acknowledge personal letters and notes. Your help will assist us with our mail issues.

Classroom Struggles

There have been several problems in the area of education. I mentioned in our last letter that I was to the point that I didn't even want to go out into the classroom anymore. Some of it had to do with students, but it was more the attitude of the students in general. There is still a prevailing attitude that we can't shake. If I look around the classroom and ask myself why these students are here, I would have to respond that most are here because they are made to be here. 18 years ago when the educational ministry began, we had a whole different breed of student. They cared about their grades; they wanted to do well; they were concerned about what they were going to do in the future. Today many students would prefer to sit at home on the couch and play video games, watch TV, or lose themselves on social media sites rather than contemplate a useful place in society. That makes educating them a real challenge. I used to have a room full of leaders, now I am hard pressed to find one that I can count on. That brings us to the question of how does God want us to reach this new generation?

This year we started with twelve students that were being taught in a traditional classroom setting, one online student, and one student that has special needs and comes with her mother. This has created a very diverse classroom that has kept Jim and I scrambling to stay ahead of three different groups of students. This has been a real challenge. About a month into the year, we had some issues with one particular family, so we lost two students. We had a nine-year old boy come into the classroom in November, and now at winter break, we have lost yet another student due to a family situation. It has been a year of ups and downs with every week bringing a new set of challenges.

Social Media's Effect on the Classroom

It wasn't all that long ago that we had a talk with the parent's of our students about the effects of social media on their children. We warned about what has gone on in the world around us. About three years ago there was a 17-year old who was being harassed via social media. We knew his family. The parents sat down with him and told him that he just needed to turn the phone off and ignore what was going on. He was so intent to know what people were saying about him that he couldn't let it

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go. He was back on the phone again. A couple minutes later his parents heard a shot and found their son dead.

There is a great video on youtube. I strongly suggest that you watch it if you know of anyone involved in any form of social media, especially children. I will give you the link at the end of this paragraph. It talks about how we have created a make-believe world where a person's worth is measured by how many likes or followers they have on social media. This is a fickle, imaginary world that can change at a moment's notice. Our kids are growing up caring what perfect strangers think about them. Their world revolves around it. Every single moment is consumed with thoughts about what someone might say about them.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V3zAUqj9Wxo>

Unfortunately, what we have said to parents goes unheeded. "It's not that big of a problem for my kids. They have it under control." Parents are convinced that their children need phones. If phones come in the classroom, they are given to us, and we return them at the end of the day. When we return them, the students' fingers are already flying before they have the phone firmly in hand. So where have their minds been all through school? "Who has contacted me? What are people saying about me? Has anyone liked or disliked me?" And what if no one has contacted them in the space of the seven and a half hours they have been in school? The world as they know it must be over! It's like watching a drug addict searching for his next fix!

Is a Flood Coming?

Our neighbors and friends have asked that question and then asked if there was something they should know. Why would they ask that question? Maybe it is because we have a 1/10 size ark at the front of the property by the highway. This year in the classroom we are back to the beginning of our four-year cycle of education. That means we cover Genesis through Ruth in the Bible, and we started our history lessons at Creation and will conclude with Classical Greece.

Four years ago we constructed a 1/10 size tabernacle. This year we built an ark. Our ark is 45 feet long, 7.5 feet wide and 4.5 feet high. The first couple of sections of the ark contain the account of Creation and the Flood and a 6,000 year timeline with major events throughout history focusing on the Biblical accounts and the history of the church. Sixteen feet of the ark are decorated - complete with a sitting area, kitchen, gardens, bedroom, animal pens, a granary, and a moon pool. Curious? You can see pictures of its construction as well as a booklet with all the signs and explanations for each by going to the **new website address** on the first page and click on the Noah's Ark picture. It will take you to the Community Outreach page. Click on the picture to see the construction, or you can click on the booklet link and read the signs that are in the ark. There is also the 6,000 year timeline and the Creation/ Evolution facts to think about.

It was a much bigger project than any of us expected and took much longer than we thought. Part of that came from the lack of leadership in the classroom. Without much supervision, nothing useful seemed to

get accomplished. We fought time and weather, but praise the Lord, we had a beautiful day and the help of a good friend over the Thanksgiving break which allowed us to assemble the ark. After all the work and expense that went into this, we have decided to protect it so that it can stay there, Lord willing, for years to come. 4,000+ people drive up and down the road every day. We are hoping that this will be an outreach and ministry opportunity to the community. We are inviting churches and school groups to come in to see the ark, experience the thought process of building the ark, and allow the Bible to become more than a storybook. Our hope is that the Bible will come to life to those who see the ark. We also pray that it will help each one it touches to give thought to where they stand before a holy and just God.

If you are interested in the 12-page booklet about the ark, and you don't have access to the internet, please let us know. We would be happy to send you a copy.

Who's Who in the Classroom

So what does the new year look like as we finish up the 2017-2018 school year? Let me introduce you to the students from youngest to oldest.

- Elliott just came to us in November. He is a very bright 9-year old 4th grader. He seems to be doing well with the adjustment, but it has been challenging.
- We are losing Kadajah after a year and a half. She is moving and will be greatly missed by her friends.
- Chaunte and Nehemiah are both in 6th grade. This is Chaunte's second year and Nehemiah's first.
- Dawson and Mattias are in 7th grade. This is Dawson's second year. Mattias was with us before and has come back to join us once again.
- Erin and Aijah are 8th graders. This is Aijah's third year with us. She and Chaunte are sisters. Erin's brother, Colin, left us this year. He has followed in Sam and Joshua's footsteps and is currently attending Middle College High School taking college classes and doing very well. Erin wants to be a doctor and is finishing up a college level English course this year. I am trying to keep her challenged until we can get her into college courses.
- Kyle is the only 10th grader we have this year. This is his second year with us. We are hoping to see his brother next year.
- Joshua and Kendra are both in 11th grade. Kendra is working hard to get enough credits to graduate at the end of the year and head off to college next year for nursing. Joshua has been with us for six years. I hope to see Joshua try his hand at a couple of college courses next year through a dual enrollment program offered by Grand Canyon University.
- Storme is working as an online student. The plan is for her to finish up with everything but math this year and take college courses next year while she completes her high school credits. Online education with our internet has been challenging in many aspects.
- Ashley is our special needs student. She has cerebral palsy, autism, and other issues that have made learning a challenge. She comes with her mother because she needs so much special attention. Her mother says that she has learned much and enjoys being with the other students.

God's Word - Light for the New Year

How blessed we are to have the privilege and the opportunity to have the Word of God available to us. We not only have His Word in our own language, but we have many choices of which English Bible we want. Many of us have more than one. There are concordances, word study books, access to study tools on the internet, etc.

Inside the pages of the Bible are life-giving words that come from God written as a love letter to each of us. His Word is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path, but we need to understand that the light is inside the book. If we want the light to be useful, we need to open the book and let the light out! The Bible does us no good when it sits on our shelves unopened and unused!

What a blessing we have had studying the book of Hebrews on Monday evenings. Talk about a book that steps on toes and cuts to the core. It exposes our thoughts and intentions and makes us take a good look at our lives and why we do what we do. If your interested, you can join our classes online. If you are unsure how to do this, contact us and we will help you.

On Sunday mornings we have just come through the books of I & II Corinthians. What great letters to set our feet on solid ground so that we can walk in a manner worthy to please God in all respects. People have shared how this study has freed them from misinformation and allowed them to now defend what they believe and what they feel is right Biblically. Again, we are so blessed to be able to know Him through the study of His Word.

God's Answers to Prayer . . .

1. We are blessed to be able to watch our grand daughter, Hailey, grow. She is 17 months old and a real cutie.
2. The ark is finished! Praise the Lord! We have had several people stop to see it. We have a pastor talking about bringing a Sunday School group through and a nearby school planning a trip with their students. We pray that the ark will reach out to the community.
3. We have had some great testimonies of how God is working in people's lives through Monday night Bible study and the Sunday fellowship.
4. Continued improvement in health and strength.
5. People that God has brought into our lives to encourage and uplift us.

Please Pray For the Following . . .

1. Wisdom as we press on in God's service, and a willingness to keep an open mind to change as God leads in new directions.
2. Kadijah, as she needs to adjust to a new school. We pray that she quickly makes friends and acclimates to the new environment.
3. Elliott's adjustment to our schedule and classroom structure. We know that it is difficult to change schools, especially in the middle of the year.
4. Possible graduation/acknowledgements for students that are finishing their high school years here and heading into their college education.
5. Continued work in putting together an online educational program.
6. Our continued dealings with the Post Office and the routing issues they have with our mail.
7. Wisdom as we continue to struggle with internet issues and how to handle this in the classroom.
8. While we praise God for the beautiful weather, we are asking for rain/snow because we haven't had moisture to speak of since September!

Our grandchildren

Storme, Hailey, and Sam



Hailey's 2nd Christmas

Class trip to Bisti Wilderness Area



Earth Science

Looking for fossils in the shale layers at the PTC.

Students found many leaf fossils



Noah's Ark

The kitchen area to the left.

Moon pool with water collection (right).



Grape arbor to the left and the gardens to the right



Putting the ark together down at the road side. You can see the three decks



Students in front of the ark. (Missing two of the boys)

