

# Women in the Church Newsletter

*Transformed to pursue the glory of God in our daily lives*

*-Becoming What We Behold-*



Hannah Storms, Kim Davis, Gail Dawson, & Cathy Coble at a recent outreach at Meadowview Apts. in Pulaski.



Ladies from the leadership retreat at Claytor Lake State Park.



Take time this holiday season to look back over 2019 and see all that the Lord has done. Give Him Praise!



Sam & Elizabeth Goodwin- MTW, Germany

Flavien & Inyange Pardigon- Various Countries

Matt "L"- Belgium

Benjamin & Anna Wontrop- Church Planting, England

Murat "O"- Belgium

Many thanks to those who gave to the Missionary Christmas Gifts and Christmas shoe boxes!

This month we take a break from our Circle Bible Study, Transformed. We will resume with Chapter 2 in January 2020.

*Testimony Corner: Bekah Bartlett*

I firmly believe that our lives are shaped by the seasons we traverse and the character God builds up in us through these experiences. I fully understand the challenge of weathering a turbulent storm when we are struggling to comprehend God's plan, and slogging through the deep unknown.

Uriah and I have experienced joys as well as acute sorrows in our short four years of marriage, and they have shaped who we are as individuals as well as our bond as a couple.

In June of 2018 we lost a baby that had only been growing inside of me for a few months. As anyone who has experienced this pain knows, the grief was initially crippling. We leaned heavily on our Father for comfort and peace during the months that followed the loss of our tiny child. The thankfulness we felt for that peace from the Holy Spirit inspired us to name that baby Pax which means peace.

Not long after the miscarriage we were blessed and thrilled to discover that God had given us another baby! The first several months of my pregnancy were saturated with immense joy and anticipation. Who would this child be? We were equally as excited to have another girl or a boy. But when the time came for the gender revealing ultrasound at 20 weeks we were blindsided by a discovery we never could have anticipated.

We were informed that our tiny precious child had a cleft lip, potentially a cleft palate and unknown other complications. I remember distinctly how I dissolved at the news of this diagnosis. I was spiraling into the depths of the fearful unknown, and desperately looking for help, comfort and the reassurance that our little girl would be alright.

The second half of my pregnancy was marked by peaks and valleys of emotions. Times of prayer and continued thankfulness for this steadily growing child, as well as the ever present worry. Would she be able to eat? Would she be born with some of the complications we had been warned often accompany a cleft lip? I desperately wanted to give all of these anxieties to my Father but struggled daily to do so.

Mila was born a couple days earlier than expected and I knew the moment I saw her that none of my fears even mattered any more. As I held her tiny perfect body and gazed into her beautiful face, not even the tiniest part of me wished she didn't have that cleft in her lip. She was beautiful and God's gift to our family, and the deep deep love I already had for her went beyond the deformity.

Our God is exceedingly gracious and we were overjoyed to discover not long after her birth that her lip and gum line both had a cleft, but this did not extend to the roof of her mouth, effect her hearing, or involve any genetic abnormalities. Mila underwent cleft repair surgery three months after her birth and although the recovery was challenging for her as well as Uriah and I, she healed quickly and is currently thriving.

When I look back on the year we've just come through and the emotional peaks and valleys God has led us through, I am humbled and struck by the truth that "*God will never leave us or forsake us.*" He was there with us when grief took over, when fear crippled, when joy overcame, and He will continue to walk with us into the days ahead. There is so much peace in that knowledge and so much freedom to embrace this life with all its complexities.

His power is surely made perfect in our weaknesses.

All the glory be to Him!