

Will & LeeAnn Groben



Personal Update for November 2014. I'm not doing very well at keeping current with these updates; I'm not even doing very well posting to Facebook regularly. Part of the problem is that there is not much that is "news" and part of the problem is that I have to keep confidences and most of what is "news" involves those other people in the church. Oh well... here is something for those of you who faithfully have been praying and hoping for the best for us. We really appreciate you, even when we don't write!

We did get a new roof and it is working well. We also bought a new furnace and air conditioner, and got some work done on the ductwork in the basement, so we are now much more efficient and consequently warmer upstairs and in LeeAnn's office than before. We had the electrician return to set up a portable generator outlet, install an outlet for the dehumidifier close enough to the air conditioner condensation pump that the water can drain into the pump, and help us wire the family room for cable. We hired an out-of-work friend-of-a-friend



who did a week's worth of handyman stuff for us. Then he found a job, so we still have more to do! We are not fully furnished yet by a long shot, but we bought two sofas, a recliner, and a big television, so now the family room is set up for small group meetings. We bought a grill for the back porch. That's some progress, though not as much as I would like to report. I know the list will never end, but there is so much on the list that it overwhelms me.

Back in April, we enjoyed a long weekend on the Potomac River in West Virginia. It was a peaceful retreat, and fun to walk around the small college town where we stayed. In August, we visited LeeAnn's parents and grandmother in Indiana. We stayed at a lovely local bed and breakfast, and had a delightful time with our family. Just recently, LeeAnn traveled back to Florida for work, and enjoyed time with co-workers, her family, and my father. We have enjoyed visits here with friends from seminary, friends from Florida, my father, and one of my cousins who ran in the Spartan race in Philadelphia.

After my cousin's visit, which shamed me because he is four years older than I and ran that race in less than an hour, whereas I would not have even tried it, we got more serious about our health. We already knew we needed to exercise much more, but we also were interested in improving our diet, because the way we were eating was resulting in constant weight gain over the past couple of years. I got a complete physical, which showed several blood measures out of whack, which prompted the doctor to tell me to eat better and exercise more. Ok, we knew that going in! We read a book about the Sonoma diet, and in one month, while not going hungry and still enjoying our food, we collectively lost twenty-two pounds! We still have more to lose, but we are encouraged that we are developing better eating habits, including cutting way down on foods that spike your blood sugar and thus get stored as fat, such as sugar, white flour, and unnecessary fats. Still trying to get consistent with the exercise, but – hey! – we exercised this morning, so we are on a roll!

Ministry Update. In the NFL, rookies talk about being very overwhelmed their first year, but everything seems to slow down for them a bit the second year. I guess it is like that for me. I would not rate myself as an efficient or effective pastor yet, but I am learning and things are smoothing out. And LeeAnn has been much more at peace in this new house, where she can enjoy nature outside the door and more seclusion during her workday. We still pray together in the mornings and each have Bible time in our own studies, and that has helped a lot too.



Ministry successes include new people joining the church, monthly fun activities for the whole church, good meetings with other pastors in town, my first baby dedication, vacation Bible school bigger and better than last year, supporting child evangelism fellowship's Bible club in the elementary school, Christian Service Brigade multiplying into two battalions with one run by our people and one young man coming to Christ in the spring, lots of energy and creativity for the upcoming Christmas events, four guest preachers all doing a great job, leading prayer for part of the Day of prayer festivities in town, getting encouragement and coaching from a retired pastor who now is connected with a local Christian college, seeing ministry teams develop in the church, baptizing a woman on Hospice, feeding underprivileged children at the Camp at the Old Mill, having social time with almost everyone in the church, seeing our young men step up as leaders, having several people go on short-term missions trips, enjoying a high level of commitment for ministering to children, hosting the "I Still Do" marriage conference, attending a pastor's conference, seeing the worship team develop, being asked to preach at the community Thanksgiving service,

weaving eleven sermons on spiritual growth in with sermons on John 1-12, seeing certain individuals take steps of faith or hearing their praise reports about what God is doing in them... there likely are more praise reports, but those are off the top of my head and at the tips of my fingers...

There are a few frustrations, about which you might pray. As people have come, others have gone, so we are not growing overall in numbers. Most of our visitors are walk-ins who do not come back; we are still doing too little evangelism and inviting. The local ecumenical effort to help the poor results in praise sometimes and stress other times. Our young adults small group is leaderless and sputtering. Two of our four youth programs are doing great, but the other two are dead. Many of "our people" are sporadic in attendance and not engaging on a deeper level yet. I have not had time to update my personal website all year. Giving is down and spending is as low as it can go so we might not make budget this year. One team that has not developed is for teaching the adult development class, so I am still struggling to prepare for that as I pursue the other priorities on my "to do" list each week.

Thankfully, God has been good about encouraging and affirming us all along. Sometimes he has used some of you! This past week, three girls in the children's ministry gave me handmade cards thanking me for my faithfulness as pastor! God drops surprises like that regularly enough that we know he has not forgotten us. We appreciate your prayers and encouragement. Please feel free to get in touch, we would love to hear how your life is going! Blessings...

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