

Hello and Merry Christmas/Happy New Years to all our Dear Family and Friends!

We love you all and we are so thankful, especially this Christmas, for the relationships that we have that will last forever. We've had an eventful year, to say the least, but we know without any doubt that Jesus Christ is our Savior and Redeemer. His love is manifested in our lives continually through blessings and through people like you.

Jared has made HUGE strides in his development this year. He is talking and walking now. He talks like a normal three year old. In fact, in his developmental preschool class (yes he's in preschool!!) his teacher made the comment that he is a great model student for speech. He speaks in complete sentences all the time. He started walking on his own in September. It was a slow start, and he is still wobbly now and then, but he gets stronger and more stable every day. He truly brings joy to everyone around him. He bore his testimony in church last month and there was not a dry eye in the whole room. His influence and love will continue to be an inspiration to all. Our favorite quote this year was when we were standing in the middle of our burned home and we were talking about how it was messy and needed to be cleaned up and he said, "I want to help. I need a washcloth." So sweet!



Jacob graduated from preschool this year and started kindergarten. He loved his home based preschool but he really loves kindergarten. He thoroughly enjoys learning and doing crafts. Jacob has become quite the artist and continually amazes us with his creations and "outside the box" thinking. Because Jacob is our most, shall we say, energetic boy, he has been our first child to come home with a "red light" from school. He has really improved, though, and is learning how to control that energy well. Our favorite quote from Jacob was about 2 weeks after the fire. We had talked about how the fire was not as bad as it could have been and we talked about all the things we were thankful for and that we were all safe.

Alicia asked him how he was feeling about the fire. He said, "It's sad, but it's really a gift because we still have you and dad and everyone."

Trent has become our super-reader. At the end of first grade he was still struggling a bit with reading fluidly, but now he reads books like a natural! He's cruising through the Magic Treehouse books! Trent continues to be a very good sharer. He's always thinking about what he can share with someone else. Our favorite quote from Trent is when we had a couple men over to our house visiting us and they were talking about thinking before we act. Trent said, "When you said 'think before we act' it reminded me of the story about Saul." He proceeded to tell us the story of Saul who becomes Paul in the New Testament. He is such a smart and good spirited boy!

Dean is reading the Harry Potter series for the 3rd or 4th time and loving it. Someday we will get him to read something else! He's also read his dad's books a couple times. He and the other boys quote from Matt's books all the time. It's really cute. Dean started plunking out the theme song to Harry Potter on the piano a couple months ago and with Mom's help got the whole melody going. Dean continues to be almost a second mommy to Jared. He loves him and cares for him very sweetly. Our favorite quote from Dean this year was when he was saying our family prayer he said, "We are thankful that Jared understands about Christmas, well, maybe not the real meaning . . . but he's happy."

David has started taking pride in the way he looks. He was very proud of being the best dressed cub scout at the Raingutter Regata, at which he got 3rd place with his boat. However, he also thinks it's hilarious to raise his arm near Mom so she'll pass out from the smell. David is our boy of extremes. Mostly he is our mellowest

boy, but when the emotions flare, there is no challenging him. The Star Wars theme was his favorite song learned on the piano this year. David (and Dean) were in the choir for our stake musical and also had a small solo part. They did great! Our favorite quote from David was after his dad said, "I bet you're going to marry a woman just like your mommy" and David said, "I hope so." Made Mommy's day!!

Alicia has had a crazy year. The first half was relatively uneventful, but busy, just like normal. She did learn



how to coupon, though, and found great joy in getting things for free! When summer started she was asked to be the Young Women's president in our ward. She was very intimidated, but excited. She had so much fun with those girls, and she has a scar to prove it! However, just two months after receiving that call she was asked to be the stake Primary president. So, the learning-a-new-calling process started all over again and she is really enjoying visiting the primaries in the stake and learning how wonderful the children are all around here. The fire in July was a huge "busy" maker. Everything has kind of been turned upside down. It has been emotional at times, but she is trying to think of the future—a brand new kitchen (why not look on the bright side of things, right?!!)

Matt has likewise had a very eventful year. After finishing his second book, he started working on vamping up his website and getting it full of great content. He got a call in

August from a man from VoiceAmerica.com . He asked Matt if he would consider doing an online radio show interviewing authors of science fiction and fantasy. After much prayer and thought, we decided it was the right thing to do and for the past 2 months Matt has done nothing but interviews and edit interviews! Some of the authors he's interviewed include Terry Pratchett, Christopher Paolini, Anne Rice, Dean Koontz, R. L. Stine, Terry Brooks, and Orson Scott Card. It has truly been an amazing experience. He is hopeful that it will help him get an agent/publisher for his books in the U.S. His first book will be published in India next year. He will most likely be starting to write the third book next year. You can go to his website: www.TheAuthorHour.com to listen to the interviews that have already aired.

The latest news with our fire is that the insurance company sent a senior rep down from Washington to look at our case. He was a very thorough man and truly had our best interest in mind. His recommendation is basically to give us everything we wanted. Wow! Never saw that one coming!! Now he has to go to committee and they have to approve it. So, hopefully after New Years they'll start rebuilding our house (it's been six months since the fire)! Yea!! Once the contractor gets started they say it will take about 5-6 months to complete all the work. We are hoping that by summertime we will be back in the house! We do miss it, but we have each other and are very thankful for that.

We are so grateful for the generosity and love from all of you. It has been quite a difficult year, but we still feel very blessed for the relationships and the gospel that we have in our lives. We wish you all a very peaceful and merry Christmas and a wonderful New Year!

Love,

The Petersons (Matt, Alicia, David, Dean, Trent, Jacob and Jared)

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