

# Smith Update



Dear Friends and Family,

I pray that this letter finds you all well and warm. The days have been cold here and the nights colder. This year has produced record low temperatures for our area but with the cold God continues to bless us with beautiful sunrises and clear sunny days. Despite the temperatures our snowfall has been very manageable compared to previous years. This all gives us a greater appreciation for the new growth that spring will soon bring with it. Winter has also been a time of growth and a deepening understanding of the Freedom that we have through Christ's death. I cannot count the days and hours I have wasted in my life trying to find freedom or orchestrate peace in my life through my manipulation of circumstance. Looking to myself for the answer has been the millstone around my neck. I only deceive myself in thinking that peace and freedom are dependent on circumstance. If I truly desire peace then I need to look the only place it can be found, in knowing the character of God. He promises us in his own words.

Jerimiah 29:12-13 "Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for me with all of your heart."

I was blessed with the opportunity to be a featured speaker at the horse world expo in Harrisburg, PA this February. I shared with the people there that in horse training the only place that the horse can find real peace is in obedience to the trainer. Through the careful application of pressure the trainer effectively uses circumstance to teach the horse where peace can be found. The national reining horse association defines the ideal reined horse as "one who is willingly guided or controlled, with little or no apparent resistance; completely dictated to." This definition not only accurately describes a great horse but also gives us a model of what our obedience to God should look like. A horse that is willingly guided is one that chooses to display the will of the trainer rather than their own will. For a horse to choose the will of the trainer over their own will is no small thing. Horses are big strong animals that by nature desire only to serve themselves. This is probably why they make such a great example when looking at my own heart. If a horse is focused purely on its circumstance it can never find peace because peace is always dependent on things going the way that they think they should. (This sounds like a very familiar pattern to me) The horse that is willingly guided is one that has surrendered circumstance to the trainer, giving him complete authority in his life.



*One of many opportunities to share God's word*



*Cold weather brought beautiful clear skies*



*Erie U19 2013-14 Lady Lions*

*(Emma is bottom 3rd from left)*

As a follower of Christ I have a similar choice to make. I not only choose Christ as Savior but also and of equal importance I choose Him as Lord.

Philippians 2:9-11 "Therefore God has highly exalted Him and bestowed upon him the name that is above every name, so at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is LORD, to the glory of God the Father."

Lord is defined as one who has supreme power and authority. If I choose Christ as Lord I choose Him and I choose His word as absolute truth. I choose His will rather than my own will, just as the willingly guided horse chooses the will of the trainer over his own. As I shared with the clinic spectators, the horse makes this decision because he knows the character of the trainer. I choose to serve Christ rather than myself because His character is made clear in this;

Matthew 11:28-30 "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and my burden is light."

I pray that God will keep wringing the resistance out of me and in following Christ that I might become gentle and humble in heart. I am continually grateful for the freedom and peace that I have in surrendering my will to my Lord.

Time seems to be accelerating where our girls are concerned. Somehow Josie became a senior, got her driver's license, and is about to graduate all in the blink of an eye. Emma, a high school freshman, just concluded her second season playing U19 women's hockey and has officially become the second tallest in our house. Both girls continue to excel in school and are a continual blessing to us and everyone they come in contact with. They are a picture of God's continual work and we are so very proud of them. They are truly God's gift.

As always we are continually blessed by the growth in the students' lives. They are a constant encouragement and it fills my heart with joy to see young people committed to the truth of God's word. Our girls, Jillian, Lydia and Melody are doing great and they are an example of growth. They are growing in maturity and humility, choosing to surrender difficult areas of their lives to God. This makes them stand out among their peers, defined by their character. We are rejoicing with them as they are finding joy and freedom in obedience to Christ. Please continue to hold them up in prayer as they head into spring and summer, jumping into more responsibility and a very demanding schedule.

Thank you for supporting us in prayer. Please let us know if there is anything you would like us to be in prayer for. We would love for you to come visit us, see what Miracle Mountain Ranch is all about, and experience what God is doing here. Check out the Ranch and our family at [www.mmrm.org](http://www.mmrm.org)

In Christ,

Matt, Kim, Josie, and Emma Smith

### Praises

- We are making great progress rebuilding from the fires that took 3 of our barns in August.
- The continued opportunity to share Christ in our community through the impact of the fires.
- Productive school year for Kim and the Girls
- The opportunity to share God's word through the clinic at the Horse World Expo

### Prayer requests

- Direction for Josie as she steps into a new chapter of life
- Godly wisdom in counseling apprentices and our own children
- For Kim's blood sugar levels to stabilize and other health concerns
- Financial needs
- Reliable transportation for Josie



Great progress rebuilding from the fires



*The Class of 2014*

The ranch is non-profit and the full time staff are responsible to raise their own missionary support; all donations can be deducted from your taxes. If you are interested in supporting our family financially, checks can be made out and mailed to the address below or you can support us online @ [mmrm.org](http://mmrm.org)  
Miracle Mountain Ranch Missions  
101 Rodeo Drive  
Spring Creek, PA 16436  
\*\*\*Enclose a note "support for Smith family"