

The Cox Chronicles

Spring 2017

It's hard to believe that Spring is already upon us, especially as snow can still be found in the air on any given day! Regardless of the forecast, the spring retreat line-up and summer camp are quickly approaching. The Apprentices are anticipating the completion of their classes for the year and the start of their work practicum as we move into the summer. This is where the "rubber meets the road" for all of the studies they have completed over the last 9 months. This is also that time of the year where the Cox tires are also spending lots of time on the road. We have already traveled down state for two events and we plan on returning to SE PA for a homeschool convention, a ladies tea that I (Jenni) am speaking at, as well as a wedding. I also had the opportunity to speak for a ladies event in February in Gatlinburg, TN. While the students are on spring break, we are hoping to travel to TX to visit Garrett, Hannah and Megan (who moved to Texas in January).

Just a few days before Christmas, Hannah and Garrett discovered that their baby they were expecting in May had some serious health problems. They were sent to a specialist the very next day. By the time they arrived at the specialist in Dallas, the baby's heart had already stopped beating. Within the next 24 hours, they had delivered little Zemira Joy and were holding her in their arms. On Christmas night, Connie Cooper and I drove straight through to TX. to be with our kids. We were so blessed by the many that surrounded us and made sure that we had the funds to cover the expenses of the trip. We were able to be with them through the new year before heading back north.

For all the tears I cried in those days, I found that I did not cry for the loss of holding a grandchild as much as I ached for my own child's grief and that of her husband. I ached as my younger children grieved for them, and I ached to comfort them while feeling so powerless. As I was out for a run the day Zemira was delivered, the Lord brought to mind Romans 8:26-27.

“Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”

Indeed my heart ached and groaned for them, and the Lord gently reminded me that I was experiencing only a fraction of the love that He has for His children. I struggled to find the words to pray for my children, but found comfort in knowing that the Holy Spirit was advocating on my behalf. I could trust that my prayers were not only heard, but made sense of, even through the emotional mess I felt inside. And most importantly, I knew those prayers would be answered. We don't always get the answers we want, but we get answers. Loss is a reminder that we live in a fallen world, and that we need to set our hearts on our eternal position in Christ.

Spring on the Ranch

Besides the obvious abundance of mud which ushers in our warmer weather, we are busy preparing for a busy upcoming season. Here are just a few of the highlights:

- Marriage Dynamics class has begun and we greatly enjoy the time of team teaching the students and sharing our testimony and God's truths about marriage.
- The Spring Board meeting is approaching so we are busy rewriting our policy manual with all the latest legalities that need addressed.
- We are hosting a large indoor yard sale at the Ranch on April 8th so we've been busy cleaning out many of our storage units in preparation. The income from the sale will go to help with the Scholarship Fund, the Equine Program (to upgrade tack), The Food Service department (to replace things that are getting worn out), and any staff selling their personal belongings. We are always amazed at how many things we accumulate in a year's time!
- We are also in the process of rebuilding the Ranch stage. This has been a fun opportunity to look at new designs and even utilize some of the existing resources of the Ranch. If you have the chance, please join us on April 6th for our Fellowship Evening where we will share appetizers and share where we are progressing on the Scholarship Program and Bathhouse project.
- The local RunRev club is also starting up and Jenni has been given an opportunity to share at the meetings.



Family Updates

- Garrett and Hannah are settling into a different home on the Waggoner Ranch and working in two different departments. Garrett now runs heavy machinery and a crew, as well as guiding hunters for the wildlife management department. They moved closer to his area of work. Hannah still drives back to White Face to work part time with the horse breeding program. Please pray for them as they learn to live with the loss of their babies and rest in the Lord for His sovereign will.
- Megan (20) moved to TX in January and recently found a job at a restaurant. She has shared that this has been a precious time of her learning to lean on God's timing and provision. She is enjoying getting connected with Hannah and Garrett's church in Wichita Falls. Although it's over an hour away, they have found wonderful fellowship there. Megan has also been creating lots of canvases by commission via Facebook.
- Lydia (17) enjoys writing and drawing, as well as babysitting and baking. She and Emily are such a huge blessing to us as our schedule requires a team effort to keep the house in order. Lydia has blessed us in her boldness in sharing her testimony of God's grace through challenges with our ladies retreat as well as on the road. Lydia is going to be a camp counselor this summer.
- Emily (13) continues to impress us with her baking skills and adventurous spirit in the kitchen. Both she and Lydia enjoy spending time hitting the volleyball around in the gym. The girls continue to grow in their walks with the Lord and I find myself enjoying their humor and wit daily. Emily is anticipating helping in the Critter Corral program again this summer.
- Jonathan (8) could spend hours playing and creating with Legos and has recently enjoyed "helping" with the activities surrounding the stage renovation at camp. He looks forward to working with the "big boys" and being able to pop in and out of Matt's office. He typically packs a snack to share with Daddy on these special days.

Praises and Prayer Requests:

- We had to put Bosco, the longhorn steer, down this winter due to arthritis that had progressed over the years. He was around 23 years of age and served faithfully at the Ranch for many years. We are so blessed by the doors that the Lord opened for the ministry through Bosco. Matt is currently training Brisket (Bosco's replacement) but he has a lot of training necessary before he's ready to completely fill Bosco's "hooves". We praise God for the provision of another longhorn.

- Wisdom with finances for vehicle needs. We find ourselves either in need of investing a substantial amount into our 99 Suburban or find another one that we can put that money toward. We rejoice in His faithfulness over the years for the supply of vehicles for our family and the ability to make it up the front hill on many a wintry night.
- Wisdom and discernment for Matt as he is searching for another horse to use for Message from the Mount presentations. There is a very specific type of horse needed for this role. We praise God for the continued opportunities to minister in this unique way, both at the Ranch, and on the road!
- For safety in our travels. God has been so faithful to us through many an adventurous mile! We are blessed and encouraged by the many people that we get to connect with on these trips.
- For wisdom as we work with the students in the School of Discipleship. We are continually humbled by this opportunity to speak into their lives and by the needs that surface. We are not able to help them in and of ourselves, but God's Word does not return void and we pray that they go forward greater equipped to live lives that glorify Him!
- Please pray for our support level as it has dropped in recent years. We rejoice that God has called us here and rest in His provision for us.
- We'd appreciate your prayers as the Ranch is busy with preparations for summer camp. We are excited to see what the Lord is going to do in the lives of the kids that attend as well as all our staff this summer!

Thank you for all you do to equip us to serve in the Lord's work at the Ranch. We'd love to have you come visit or connect with you in our travels!

In His service, Matt, Jenni, Lydia, Emily, and Jonathan Cox