

# Merry Christmas from the Cox Family!

2017



Sweet Anticipation! This time of the year is filled with it. From presents, to celebrations and gatherings, we have much to anticipate. For our family, December has a new form of excitement as we are expecting the birth of a granddaughter in TX. The arrival of a baby is a miraculous time, and this anticipation in my own heart brings me to mind of how Mary and Joseph may have felt so long ago. So much excitement, so many questions, so many unknowns. Even as my own kids pummel me with questions about what this month will look like, I just keep giving them the same answer. We just don't know. Some of our greatest adventures, times of seeing God step into our lives in miraculous ways, have been in the midst of the unexpected, the unanticipated. But do I only look to see His grace during times of crisis? Or do I anticipate what He wants to do in our lives next? Do I wait with dread about the unknown, or do I anticipate His grace for whatever may come? When I look back on some of the greatest times of growth in my life, they were usually during times that I did not anticipate. As much as I wouldn't have chosen those circumstances,

I also wouldn't trade in that time for comfort. So as we pack and (sorta) plan, the most we can do is wait in anticipation for what the Lord has in store for us. We not only look forward to gazing into the eyes of this newborn babe, but we rejoice over the One who has already come. His anticipated birth thousand of years ago still sculpts our lives today. His death and resurrection was far from what men expected, but it still brings a hope of the greatest anticipation that we have yet to experience, heaven! When the season overwhelms you or life's trials dishearten you, remember that because of that tiny babe who was born in a manger, we still have so much more to anticipate!

## Cox Kid Highlights:

- Since writing this, Hannah and Garrett's little Shiloh Alexandra was born on Dec. 20th. She was a week past her due date and weighed 7lbs, 13oz. and was 20 inches long. Both Mom and baby are doing well and hope to come home in the next couple of days.





- Megan is moving out of Hannah and Garrett's house to make room for the baby and has found an apartment in Wichita Falls. She is now the general manager of the Dickies chain in Vernon, TX. We are so excited to be seeing her as well this December.

- Lydia is now officially driving on her own and impressed her parents by passing her test on her first try. Parallel parking a minivan takes skill! It's hard to believe she graduates this year!

- Emily is loving the Christmas season with all of the baking opportunities. I never have to worry about having something to bring to an event! She fills our home with laughter (and witty puns).

- Jonathan is finishing up a season of free swim lessons at the YMCA and enjoying his new kitten, Cocoa, and the sledding opportunities that the snow brings.

**Praises:**

- This fall was a whirlwind of events and speaking opportunities as well as a chance to

step away as a family for a week to the Smoky Mountains. We were so blessed by this time spent in God's creation and being refreshed in our hearts.

- For God's perfect provision and timing to meet very specific needs in our family and the ministry as well.
- For Hannah's healthy pregnancy and birth of Shiloh.
- For a good job and a great boss for Megan in TX.
- For the programs of the Ranch doing well and expanding. We are still working on our Brokenstraw Bathhouse, but the upstairs housing has already been in use throughout the fall and winter program.

**Prayer Needs:**

- Please pray for safety for the trip to TX and back. Jenni flew out earlier and Matt and the kids will drive down once Hannah and baby are settled in at home. We will celebrate Christmas in TX as a family.
- Jenni has been battling an infection for over a year. After 2 rounds of antibiotics, it has still not cleared up, but left her with stomach problems. Please pray for wisdom and healing. Our doctor has referred her to a specialist but they can't see her until March. We are pursuing dietary and homeopathic options until then.
- Pray for safety in the many upcoming travels. (See below)





- For wisdom as we teach and mentor the students in our School of Discipleship program.
- For God to raise up the summer staff that He would have serve here. Applications have already begun to come in.



- For staffing needs as we have some staff moving on and need to make position adjustments or hire more staff to fill their roles. We are also in need of staff housing.

**Upcoming:**

- We have speaking engagements coming up throughout the spring months and always appreciate prayer for wisdom as we develop our sessions. Jenni will be traveling to Mechanicsburg, VA in April to

speak for a ladies conference and we will both be speaking in Greenville, SC at a homeschool convention in March, as well as teaching our Marriage Dynamics class.

- Matt, Jenni, Lydia, multiple other staff, and our second year students from the School of Discipleship are all traveling to a counseling conference in February in IN. These conferences have been great training sessions for our staff as well as a tremendous encouragement and challenge to our hearts.
- Matt will be traveling to MO in February and we both will be traveling to additional seminars in PA throughout the spring months.
- We are also embracing our wonderful new role as grandparents!

The end of the year always causes us to look back and realize just how gracious God has always been to us. We marvel at His faithfulness in the midst of all that is going on. He has shown Himself as our great provider and sustainer.

May God bless you with a Merry Christmas and a wonder filled New Year to come!

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

