



Cox Chronicles

Fall 2023

It never fails. Every fall you will find me both simultaneously cringing against the cold and in the next moment standing out in my lawn taking pictures of the sunrise sparkling off of the frost. I cannot help but be overcome with the beauty we live in this time of the year. I have only to take a run, watching the leaves swirl and dance across the road, to be reminded of my gracious and loving Creator. In those moments, I feel completely overwhelmed that He sees me, knows me, and yet still loves me. I'm in awe, that in all His glory and splendor, He cares about this ever changing and fickle heart. Yet when the bitterness of struggles come, how quickly I close up, turn my face from the beauty, and sulk in pity for what isn't going the way I want it to. This past year has been a season of struggling against circumstances and limitations. I want to brace myself and just endure until it passes, meanwhile tolerating anger, frustration, and sin in my heart. Have I not just

glanced down at a leaf and seen the magnitude of God in each detail?!? Yet it only takes turning my gaze away from Him to become consumed with my own agenda. I recently breathed a sigh of resignation, only to be confronted with an unexpected gift of provision and the reminder to not just "Cast our cares upon Him", but also that before we can do that, we are to humble ourselves before our God. In my head, I know that He has never failed us. Over 30 years of ministry have shown me this time and again. But I am just like the Israelites who watched Him perform miracles on their behalf and then quickly forgot Him and turned to their idols of comfort. I am like Jonah, who having watched God turn a city from sin to one of repentance and freedom, sat and pouted about it because it wasn't what he thought should happen. I am them. Yet God still loved them, still remembered them, still forgave them. It is this incredible grace towards me that I find so hard to swallow some days. I want to earn it, but that's impossible. I want to deserve it, but never can. Christ's death on the cross in my place constantly reminds me of the depth, immensity, and enduring love that God has for His people. It is the ability to walk in daily forgiveness that gives me the power to walk in obedience and gratitude for ALL that I am given. May my eyes be drawn from my selfish heart back to the cross where I bring nothing but my own sin and shame, and it is washed away with Christ's sacrifice and words, "It is finished."



A quick family update:

*Hannah and Garrett are still in TX and Garrett is having great success in the horse showing world. It is fun to watch their family in this cowboy culture. They are expecting their 4th child at the end of November and we are so excited. We are already trying to work out plans for a visit. (Pictured: Shiloh (5), Raelynn (4), and Rome (2).

*Megan and Simeon moved to Ephrata, PA at the end of summer to pursue a better job for Simeon. They are quite excited to have an apartment and a kitchen finally as their Ranch housing unit did not have one. Seersha (Pictured below) is growing leaps and bounds (almost 6 months old) and we are blessed that she and Megan will be able to join us for some down time on a family vacation.

*Lydia is still in Lafayette, IN. with the Vision of Hope ministry. This has been a challenging and growing time and they have offered her a job alongside the internship. We would appreciate your prayers for her as she needs to make a decision soon. We look forward to seeing her again around Thanksgiving.

*Emily had the opportunity after camp concluded to study for 5 weeks in Windsor, CO at a Bible Program called Ellerslie. She had an amazing adventure and was greatly challenged and encouraged by the sessions and studies there. She is prayerfully seeking God's direction for this next season in life and hoping to travel to TX to help Hannah when the baby arrives.



*Jonathan is now in 10th Grade and our official sidekick. He greatly enjoys interacting with the young staff and students with volleyball and other activities. He is enrolled in a charter school that can travel with us and he's now taller than Mom and rapidly gaining on Dad!

Even in this season of growing children, our home is rarely quiet or empty. We are blessed to be in a position of always being able to open our doors. Recently we just wrapped up hosting our Marriage and Family Dynamics II class for the second year students in the School of Discipleship. Since it is a smaller group, we hold class in our living room and this makes for a sweet time of fellowship.

Ministry Happenings:

We have been blessed with a very full summer and fall retreat season. It was an answer to prayer to be fully staffed in not just summer staffers, but also volunteers for the nursing department as well as all the others. Over 80 kids made decisions for Christ, and though it's nice to share numbers to measure impact at the end of the summer season, we really have no idea of the fruit that has been planted in the long run. We enjoyed the blessing of graduating our last class of students, which is a bittersweet time, and welcomed in our new group of students just weeks later!



It seems that things have just now begun to slow down a tiny bit. I was able to participate in a couple triathlons over the summer and discovered that this type of training actually helped relieve some of the rib pain I've been experiencing for years. We are still seeking answers concerning Matt's chronic hip pain. He recently had an MRI but the appointment to see the specialist isn't until mid November. He is still not able to ride the horses (or longhorn) yet. I was able to be his "stunt double" for the Ladies Retreats as he gave the Message from the Mount.

We have many trips and upcoming events in our future if the Lord wills it.

January: *Texas: San Antonio for a work related trip for Matt and Whitesboro to meet the new grandchild.



*We are seeking the Lord with an opportunity of going to the Dominican Republic for a mission trip as a family (we still need to raise about \$4000 for us all to go).

*Missouri for a Men's meeting for Matt

February: *The possibility of Jenni attending the Faith Biblical Counseling Conference in IN (where Lydia is located)

*Christian Camps and Conferences
Allegheny Sectional meeting

We are hosting our first couples retreat in many years! (Feb. 23-25) We will be the speakers and if you're interested you can sign up online at mrm.org.

We are co-advisors to 3 students this year. Our first year students are Jolene Bomgardner and Jasmine Osbourne and our second year is Katriel Furches. We have loved getting to know them better along with our co-advisors Chad and Miriam Martin (and their sweet newborn Finneas). They will take over hosting and meetings as our travel schedules pick up and after they move into their new housing unit this winter.

We are preparing to step away and take a break as a family for a week. It's always tempting to try to stay home and slow down but as we live on camp that has become increasingly hard to do. We ask for your prayers that we would be wise with our week away and that the Lord would allow us to rest as a family. We hope to connect with some family and friends along the way and are packing lots of books to read as well.

We graciously thank every one of you who has supported us in prayer, financial support, and encouragement. It has meant the world to us. Even this upcoming trip would not have been possible without a particular gift given to us to go. We often marvel at what the Lord has enabled us to experience in our 30 plus years of ministry here. While we are away, we will also be celebrating 30 years of marriage! We certainly cannot deny the Lord's faithfulness to us over these many years.

In His service,
Matt and Jenni Cox and family

mattjennicox@gmail.com

