

Blessings

We always knew that we were blessed with our 5 healthy babies, but the reality of how blessed we really were is beginning to sink in. Our first 4 children were very easy, content, healthy babies, so our 5th child, Luke, has rocked our world a little bit. He has always been an intense baby; very energetic, playful, sleepless, alert and specific about his wants and needs. But during the past few months, he's been sick as well, so the poor little guy is having trouble being comforted. We've taken him to the doctor a few times, and he's been diagnosed with bronchitis and an ear infection. As if these illnesses were not enough, his chest x-rays show he has an enlarged heart. We are currently praying that this is not a symptom of something seriously wrong with little Luke's health. My husband made me promise not to google it since we've made a few medical scares in our family worse by scaring ourselves with random internet information. We are currently waiting for our appointment with the pediatric cardiologist. Scary stuff.

I will continue to update when I can. In the meantime, prayers for Luke would be wonderful ☺

So How'd It Go?

Overall, so much better than my fears were telling me it would go. I had my second cesarean section on Friday, October 7. Boy was I nervous beforehand! I figured I would write out the details, just in case we decide to do this again I can look back at it and know what to expect. So I warn you, if you're squeamish about medical procedures or just plain not

interested, then skip the post. But if I can make just one person feel more at ease about their impending cesarean, even if it's future me, then it's worth writing this all out and sharing the details.

The day of my scheduled cesarean, the hospital told me to arrive at 5:30 AM. Hubby and I set the alarm for 4:30 and got there a little early so we could visit the hospital chapel and pray together. Thankfully, Grandma had arrived in town the night before and had our 4 kids at her hotel. The first nurse we asked did not know where the chapel was in the hospital, which I found strange, but then again, our local hospital is undergoing major expansion and renovation, so I guess that's the excuse I'll let them have for the fact that their chapel (when we finally found someone who knew where it was) was just an empty room. No matter because God listens where ever you are, so we prayed together and went back to the maternity ward where they began to prep me for my surgery. They put an IV in, which didn't go very well. Seems I have great veins in my arms for drawing blood (the blood techs always ooh and ahh over me and my veins, which makes them weird in my book), but in my hands, not so much. Getting IVs is always very painful for me, and it bruises up my whole hand. This day was no exception. It hurt a lot, and they had to give me 2 holes before they got it right. Then the nurse comes and tells me that because of the combination of it being my 5th baby and the fact that I had to have a blood transfusion last time that they were going to have to give me a back-up port in my other hand just in case. So they start doing that, and that one hurts even more. Next thing I know, I have a golf ball sized lump in my hand – "The vein blew" the nurse told me. I don't ever want to hear anyone tell me that something carrying blood throughout my body "blew", and I still haven't googled that one to see what it is because it sounds so nasty. And at this point, I'm near tears thinking that if things are going wrong already, what will happen when they cut me open? But they finally got my second IV port in, and then after the insertion

of the catheter (not a big deal and I will spare the details), I was ready to be wheeled off to the surgery room in a wheelchair.

Luckily I had taken the c-section class at the hospital, so the cold sterility of the operating room did not alarm me, and I also knew that my Hubby had to wait outside until certain preparations were made. On our way into the operating room, I saw the backup doctor, and he was talking to himself in the hallway in kind of a strange way. He is known for being a bit different, so it didn't really worry me, especially since I knew my regular doctor would be there also. Besides, Dr. Strange delivered my 3rd child, and she was the easiest delivery I had. I will spare details for what happened next; it's a bit personal – if you really need to know how they prep a patient for a c-section then take a class at your local hospital. Then the anesthesiologist came in, and my heart sank when I realized it was the same lady who gave me my epidural during the birth of baby #4 – the epidural that never worked. She gave me my spinal, and it pinched a little, but much less than an epidural, not really a big deal at all. My legs started to get tingly, and I was really starting to panic big time. I kept asking the anesthesiologist if everything I was feeling was normal, and she was so nice and reassuring. They had a blood pressure cuff on my arm which kept going off every few minutes, and they also gave me oxygen in my nose – I felt very well cared for. They let Hubby in, and he and the anesthesiologist (so tired of typing that word, think I'll just call her Dr. Drug from now on) sat by my head the whole time. Dr. Drug said that they would test me to make sure that I was numb before they did anything, but guess what – they didn't. I brought this up to someone after it was over, and they had a good point – they probably tested my numbness but didn't even tell me about it. Since it was working, I didn't feel the test, so they proceeded. Duh. It's just that I was so nervous about the numbing not working after what happened with my epidural; you can't blame me for being concerned.

The next thing I remember is the tugging and pulling, which is also something for which the c-section class prepared me. But it was actually much less unpleasant than I had panicked it would be. It's just that it seemed to take forever. They said it would take about 1-2 minutes and according to Hubby, it took 4 minutes. If you ask me, I would say it took 15 minutes. The whole time I could hear the doctors talking and I kept asking Hubby what they were saying because I was panicking about the health of the baby and the fact that I was lying there sliced open on the table. He said they were just discussing their techniques. My Hubby kept looking down there, past the curtain, and I kept wondering how he could do that – if it were him lying on a table sliced open, I don't know that I could look. But then again, I don't think it was like surgery looks on tv – I was picturing a completely open body cavity, but that's a different kind of surgery. I guess that's why there was all that tugging and pulling. So anyway, finally Hubby says that the baby is out, but I don't hear crying, so I begin to panic even more (notice a trend here? I am a worrywart, in case you haven't noticed). But both people seated at my head tell me everything is fine, and then I hear the baby (Luke James) cry. I feel so relieved, and I can't believe it's over. Except it's not. They clean up the baby, and they hold him up in front of my face for about a millisecond, and then they take him out of the room along with my husband and probably about half the staff that was on hand. At some point, I don't remember when, but I'm pretty sure it was after the baby was born, Dr. Drug held up a little vial and says, "I'm going to give you this." She puts it in my IV, and I find out later that it was Duramorph, a form of morphine. I'm wondering now if this is something they give all their c-section patients (those who are not opposed to medications), or if I got the "panicking patient" special. At any rate, after the morphine, my memory gets fuzzy, but I do remember lying there getting sewed up (still not feeling a thing below my chest). My complaint was that it seemed to take FOREVER because I had nothing to do but lie there, and

all I could think about was seeing my baby. I even got envious of my poor husband, because here I had just gone through this surgery and now HE was getting to spend all this time with the baby and I hadn't even barely gotten a look at him. They should really think about putting a tv in there or something... or would that distract the doctors? Best not to think about it, I guess. I had to keep talking myself out of looking at the ceiling because it was reflective, and I could see a little of me and a lot of red there – they ought to fix that too; I would bet that no one wants to see themselves getting surgery. But finally they were finished, and a few of the staff people worked together to lift my helpless body onto the gurney for the transport back to my room.

When I got there, there was Hubby with the baby, all excited to see me, and then I finally got to hold our new son. And he was (is) so incredibly beautiful. The rest of the day was wonderful. Slowly my legs began to work again, and I could not believe it that I had absolutely no pain! It did not resonate with me that I was on drugs. I did feel kind of loopy, but I didn't really think much of it and enjoyed the euphoria of having a new healthy baby and the relief that the worst part was over. Weather-wise it ended up being a terrible weekend to be stuck in the hospital – it was 80 degrees out and sunny, and the grandmas took my kids to the zoo on Saturday, so I had to miss that, but at least they got to go. When I was released from the hospital on Monday, it was still very nice out for a few days, but I didn't feel up to going outside and by the time I did, Northern Ohio fall weather was in full swing and I've been cold ever since. Oh well, such is life, and my Hubby had perfect advice when I was bummed about missing the beautiful fall colors (it was amazing how different our neighborhood looked with all the leaves on the ground after just 3 days!). He said, "There will be plenty more color-changing seasons, but there are only so many baby seasons." What a wise, wonderful man!

Back to my recovery in the hospital, it went fairly smoothly, although I did have a lot of pain starting Saturday once the morphine wore off. The baby was up all night on Friday, but I didn't mind at all because I just wanted to be with him. I haven't watched tv in years, but over the weekend, I watched countless episodes of 3's Company, Roseanne (forgot about the one where Becky gets into the liquor cabinet, haha!), and Everybody Loves Raymond – you know, shows from when tv was actually good. I learned about the Prohibition era from PBS, and I also learned that there are conspiracy theorists who believe that there really isn't gold in Fort Knox – hmm, that's something to think about I guess. Luke slept a full 5 hours on Saturday night from 1:30-6:30, and so did I since no one came for my blood until 6:30. Last time I was in the hospital, I seem to remember them coming for blood every hour on the hour which made it really hard to sleep, but then again I had a lot of complications last time including the need for an emergency cesarean and a blood transfusion. Sunday night, little Luke decided he wasn't going to sleep again, and I woke up from my 45 minute nap that night feeling terrible – achy and lots of other pain, and chills because of a fever I was running. Not only that, but there was a mean nurse who informed me in a not-so-nice way that I was over my limit of acetaminophen, which meant I was not allowed any pain medicine. That really ticked me off; partly because of the way she said it, and partly because no one had given me any indication that this was a problem. Had they warned me that I was getting near the limit, I would have declined some of the meds offered to me to avoid this. Actually, all of the other nurses had been telling me that I should stay ahead of the pain. They specifically said not to wait until the pain was really bad to take the meds otherwise they wouldn't work. The staff must have known I was upset because at 11pm Sunday night, my doctor called my bedside phone personally and reassured me. And my doctor is the one I credit with my smooth delivery and quick recovery – she has been 1000% better than my previous doctors in every way throughout this process,

and for that, I am so thankful.

Since I've been home, I've been resting (probably not as much as I should have, but I have 5 kids now, who can rest with 5 kids in the house??). Hubby has been *amazing* at taking care of me AND things around the house, but he also started a new job 2 days after the baby was born, which leaves him with 2 jobs, taking care of the 4 kids and me AND waking with the new baby at night as he likes to do. My mother did a ton of laundry while she was here, and I'm just now starting to do laundry again a week and a half later, so that helped a lot too. People from church have been wonderful about sending meals for our family, and that has been incredible. Not only that, but we also have frozen meals that people sent and that my husband's mother made while she was visiting for when our meal delivery runs out. It's been crazy, but we are managing, and a week and half later, I've been out and about and back in the real world. I still have pain, but nothing extreme, and my 600mg ibuprofen works pretty well for that. There are 2 complications I had that I was not expecting; one is worthy of a blog post all its own and I'll get to it next time. The other is the return of my backaches. I've had a sore back since high school; I worked fast food and had to pop a Doan's before every shift to make it through. There are various things that I think caused it, but what does that matter now. The strange thing is that during my pregnancy, my backaches disappeared. Most women find new backaches during pregnancy, and mine disappeared. I didn't think much of it until I get home from the hospital and experience my back pain again. This is discouraging because I know the incision pain will go away with time, but the backaches seem to be getting worse, and I have no guarantee that my back will ever feel better. I guess it's something to talk to my wonder doc about in my 6-week follow-up. I already had my 1 week follow-up with the doctor, and she said my incision looks really great and my body is healing well – for that I am thankful.

Baby's healthy, 4 big sisters and brother are healthy, I'm getting healthy, and Hubby is healthy (even if he needs much more sleep – praying for that to come soon) – what more can we ask for! Life is good; God is great!

And oh yeah... everywhere little Luke goes, he has a constant crowd of admirers. If it wasn't so sweet, it would be annoying because hey, when is it MY turn to hold the baby?!?

□



Many Blessings This Week

Today, I became an uncle yet again. Kyndal Grace Hazelton was born at 3:46pm weighing in at 7lbs 10oz and measuring 19.5".

It has been a long haul but she arrived safely. Calls at 12:30am... 3:00am...7:45am. Finally, Charnel's water was broken around 11 this morning. We have two little girls and a Bandit sharing the house with us for the next few days. Two special healthy little ones arriving in less than a weeks time... [WHAT A BLESSING!](#)

A touch of sadness also. Ma2's mother passed away Saturday at the age of 88. But I am sure that Mrs. Foster is now with Emily and Mr. Foster in a place where there is no longer any

pain or suffering. May HE watch over the family and may Jonathan return from his deployment safely.

I have the final piece of my Weekender gig coming soon. In the next four months, I will put the spit and polish to the lineup of "Songs I Have Learned" including finding 4 male voices to fill the finale out. One I have asked (any other interested gentlemen out there? Two other fellow tangenteers are (I will assume) out of the question. One from a distance perspective; the other admits that he "doesn't sing."



Well It's Been A Long, Been A Long, BeenaLong (Few) Day(s)

Started on Wednesday afternoon. Dad came home from his crossing guard duty and headed to his bedroom (in itself not unusual) and fell asleep (which is a little strange). Around 6, he came out for a bit and told us that he was not feeling well and shortly turned in for the night. Around 11, I heard the parents talking and all of a sudden, I hear Mom calling my name. So I run to the bedroom and see her holding him up trying to steady him in an attempt to get him to the restroom.

Before I get to him, he (not so gracefully) tumbles to the floor. To me, he looks kind of pasty and sweaty and he is mumbling but coherent (unlike the stroke adventure). Call 911 and by 11:15 he is on his way to the hospital. Mom and I get there about 11:45.

While sitting in his ER room, his heart rate goes on a roller

coaster. Up and down, down and up. The lab tech came in and attempted to draw blood and wouldn't ya know... he was being stubborn and didn't want to give any... but eventually cooperated. Around 3:30AM, we are finally informed that he is going to be admitted (course, we didn't see THAT coming at all). So, 4AM finally get to bed. I got a few hours. Mom got 45 minutes.

Thursday, he was given a pint of blood. About 3-4 years ago, he had to be given 7 pints after suffering a bleeding ulcer. We had to wait until the battery of meds he has to take everyday to travel through his system before they can do anything extensive to determine what his problem is.

Friday morning, Dad is scheduled for a colonoscopy. I had to go over for my own lab work so I arrived in plenty of time for his voyage to the OR. Mom arrived shortly before the procedure began as Dad made sure. The procedure did not last long and showed that he had suffered another bleeding ulcer, nowhere near as bad as the previous one. In fact, it had stopped. Apparently, he is really prone to these because of his susceptibility to the acid in high acid foods: citrus fruits, tomatoes and the like. I guess when we order fruit from our school's FFA later this season, he will not sit and indulge in 2-3 huge grapefruits in one sitting. Back up in his ICU room (it seemed a bit different than the last time I was there), he fell asleep so I did not feel guilty when I left to meet some friends around the corner for lunch.

Today, at least we know what the problem was and is being treated. He probably will not be able to come home today as his "numbers" are still not where they need to be. But with the help of the doctors, prayers from loved ones and with HIS guidance, I'm sure Dad will be back to his "normal (?)" self in no time.

Charm

Well... yesterday was another voice lesson. It went much better than last week's meeting... perhaps it was because I focused on 4 or 5 pieces I have been working on since almost the beginning. Once again, a deceptively simple song is one of the most problematic (well... the last part of it is rhythmically tricky, but will come). Another piece, I need to find that spot of greatest emotional impact. I KNOW where it needs to be but need to back off just a bit on some of those other big moments. I have to skip next week as the j-o-b asked me to come in an hour early on Thursday.

Today, I had my first follow up with the doctor. He seems to think all is well... progressing nicely. He asked me what I have been doing... how long I am on my feet each day, etc.

Well... given my current job, I am on my feet probably 95% of the time. I have been taking short walks as the seasons have changed but not quite up to the 3-4 mile hikes I was accustomed to taking but those will come in time. As we have both commented, "I miss my walking buddy." I told the nurse, who lives two houses south of me, that I didn't think that trying out for [The Wizard of Oz](#) or [Annie](#) was such a good idea.

Once again, I did bring up the idea of trying out for Roosevelt and brought a chuckle. But I have been going to my weekly voice lesson so once my leg is closer to 100% I will once again be doing something. The actual appointment was nothing more than hearing things I had already known. He did feel my leg and commented that it is still a bit tight. I guess his prescribed 4 month check was nothing more than witnessing my charming personality ☹ KIDDING... I know it is necessary but doesn't hurt to display that indelible Jamiahsh charm.

Feelin' Groovy

I can honestly say that I AM feeling better today than I have for a while. I was able to stand throughout my entire voice lesson without feeling the need to sit. Maybe this thing is not going to take a year to fully heal after all. But if it does, I can deal with it. Someone asked when I was going to be in another show. It just dawned on me that I COULD have tried out for the role of FDR in *Annie*... no walking involved and he does get to sing and harmonize during the White House reprise of "Tomorrow." AH, well...

I am a step closer to replacing my blown Sunfire. "Big" John and Edy are in the process of looking for a new auto and they know I am in the market for a good, reliable mode of transportation. I went to their house this morning and checked out the '02 Honda SUV (a compact SUV). Definitely a car that has been well taken care of and very nice, full of bells and whistles. During my test drive, I commented to Big John that there was no "ka-chunk ka-chunk" as I approached a stop sign as there is in the car I currently drive. I have been told that it is "nothing to worry about" but somehow....

Back to my latest lesson... I am thinking my list of songs I have been working on is about to be edited. There are some songs which I do not think I am going to have performance ready anytime soon and there are others that I have been looking at which will take no time at all... one of which we ran today. Plus, by the end of my first song, I was on my feet! Much better than sitting on the chair.

This & That

It seems that the addition one of our newest [tangenteers](#) (I see a newer addition... but it has been years since I have taken a French class) I am quickly falling behind in my posts (although she does have a few hundred to catch me ☐).

Yesterday, I noticed real progress in the continuing dissolving of my blood clot. I still feel it... not really painful but it is still keeping me at a slow clip. Madame Peters was in tonight (haven't seen her since the day before I went to the doctor nearly two or THREE (?) months ago. I assured her that I am recovering nicely... however slowly. But I will be back to my 3-4 mile walks 3 times a week before long. Telling myself that I will be able to do the things I really enjoy doing in time helps with the psychological.

My recital with the rest of K's students is less than 4 weeks away. Memorizing my very wordy but very fun piece is challenging but I am really close. I have nailed down a fine female to do the bit with and once she completes her run in *The Wedding Singer*, we will get together and get 'r done.

Well... that is all... My food is probably over done and I have to watch *The Office* which I DVR'ed... Michael Scott's farewell is looming. I think next week is the extended special episode.

Is this the moment when the series will "Jump the Shark?" How will Will Ferrell fare in the new role? Time will tell.

It Was The Rat Poison

Last night, I FINALLY was up to attending a great game night with marvelous friends and one newcomer (a newcomer to me although, he had been to at least the Super Bowl extravaganza,

I believe. My first game night in three months was full of laughs and great times. I got to see dear friends I have not seen since New Years or before and this also helped my continued progress. Laughter and wonderful times with some of my closest compadres is indeed the best medicine... better than rat poison, that is for sure.

I also got to see the four kids (plus two tagalongs which one of our regular game nighters brought along). Poor Beebs definitely was NOT feeling up to his normal self. The other little ones played on the Kinect system... something which I think looks interesting in the near future.

After the merriment of the evening wound down (about 12:30), I set out to make the 12 mile trek home. Before I even left town, I was traveling along and all of a sudden, a raccoon jumped out in front of me. Instinctively, I swerved and crossed the yellow line. Unbeknownst to me, one of B-town's finest was right behind me and turned on his red and blue lights.

"Did you see the raccoon I had sicced on you?"

Indeed I had! Apparently, the town has gained quite a surplus of the critters... living in the sewers until they plot their take over. Sounds like a bad B-movie to me. The friendly officer and I engaged in a conversation about any future theatrical endeavors I have coming up which led to the tale of my 3 month journey. After my identity was confirmed and I was not deemed a known terrorist, I was sent on my way. Good thing I did not indulge in the wine that was brought to our night of fun! I don't think it would be good to mix with the rat poison, anyway. ☐

THEN, I got back home and learned that the Buckeyes were defeated by two points by Kentucky with a buzzer beating shot. So much for my bracket... and I was doing so well for my first time ☐

BOY DID I NEED THAT!

My adventures for the week have been very rewarding and gratifying. Monday, I went to a board meeting of which I have not been since January ☐ Everyone was happy to see me and inquired about my well-being and progress. Slow but sure and gimping along but progressing however little. After the meeting, C,L, and I went to dinner and had a nice, engaging conversation that entailed a lot of topics not the least of was some possibilities about my next great adventure. One **VERY PROMISING** possibility will depend upon my current manager. Since I seem to see her less and less frequently, I left her a message informing her of the possibility. I just pray that she makes a decision that will be beneficial to both of us. I told her I will not pursue anything until I am as close to 100% as possible.

Today, I went to my first voice lesson in three months. I was immediately bombarded by two adorable boys. One who kept regaling me with jokes typical of a three or four year old.

By the time the 6 year old was read to whoop me at Battleship, it was time to begin my lesson. I did AMAZINGLY well for sitting in a chair... of course, I tried to sit with correct posture. But I narrowed my recital choices to two.

One requires a female to join me. K informed me that there are a few of her other students who would be up to the challenge but she hesitated to have a teenager perform the number with a 30 something. So, she allowed me to try finding a guest performer. Very fun piece while just a bit challenging. I can think of a few ladies I would enjoy performing with.

So... while still gimping along, the two days venturing around helped immensely! Being with great friends and doing what I

love to do definitely helped! Just learning to accept the fact that it is a talent which I need to begin to share more and more. One of the many gifts I have been told that I possess which can only come from Above. Thank Him for that!

PLUS... as an added plus, I got to catch up with a GREAT friend from my WM days. Via facebook on which I found her a few weeks ago. Go to chat a bit, discuss lots of things including the dismissal of our former boss which seems to be interesting yet surprising all at once.

Feeling Adventurous

I'm not sure if it was the 60°+ weather of the past weekend (sure felt good) or just the idea of a little return to normalcy (whatever that is) but I have decided that this week I am going to set out on a few of the things I have been missing out on. Last Friday, I ventured out to get my first refill on my meds. A 90 day fill up... I guess I really am going to be on it for A LONG TIME, but it is for the best.

Later this afternoon, I am going to attend my first FCF board meeting since this all began (back in January... I refuse to miss more than 2). I am so excited to be able to get back and help get one of my favorite shows rolling along. I have finally come to the conclusion that thinking too much about auditioning for either [The Wizard of Oz](#) OR [Annie](#) (at another area theater) needs to take a backseat until I am 100% ready to go. Even then, I really want to focus on what lies ahead after I reach that goal. Still thinking about what that is going to be.

Thursday, I am going to my first voice lesson since January. K informed me that I picked the perfect time to do so. Her

students are preparing for their annual recital and she was hoping that I would be back on my feet ready to go by then. I will pass along the details once I am confident that I will be strong enough to participate. God and everyone else knows I want to be but I am still being a bit realistic. It has nothing to do with my vocal ability; hopefully, my physical ability will be there as well.

AND FRIDAY... **MY FIRST GAME NIGHT SINCE JANUARY!** I cannot wait until I see some of my friends whom I have not seen since the start of 2011. Even those I have seen since. Hopefully, I can convince a little buddy of mine that I do not live in the hospital. ☐

Goal setting and pushing forward just a bit surely will not impede my progress. After all... the doctor wanted me to go back to work the day after I was released from the hospital.

And in all this time, I forgot to wish my fellow Tangenteers a **HAPPY THIRD BIRTHDAY!** It has been a very fun and at times thought-provoking adventure and I truly enjoy continuing to get to know some of my best friends even better through their life experiences and thoughts! And **WELCOME TO SPRING...** it HAS been a long winter.