

January 2012

My blogging style has changed – maybe temporarily, maybe permanently. It's evolved, if you will, to meet the growing needs of my family. I no longer have time to sit down 5 times a week and write about my thoughts, my plans, my stories, my ideas, nor do I have the time to detail my agenda. With 5 kids now and all of the new things we're doing (new baby, homeschooling, new career for both Hubby and I, new ministries...), I rarely do find myself sitting down and when I am, it's rare that a computer is in front of me. So for awhile, I will just post updates on the members of my family and our lives. This will still serve as a way to keep in touch with those who read my blog (those especially that I cannot find as much time as I'd like to talk on the phone with because of all the noise in my house – phone conversations are nearly impossible at certain times of the day!), and my blog will also continue to serve as a family diary for us to look back on someday and enjoy together. Updates:

Family – we began homeschooling last fall, and we still like it. We've had to make some adjustments to our planned curriculum since new little bro Luke (born Oct 7 2011) is quite a happy though demanding handful. We began co-op on January 9, which is a local program they have here at a church for homeschoolers. We go every Monday, and each grade level participates in 3 different classes taught by the moms of the group. Since it's our first year, I don't have a class to teach yet – I pulled nursery duty. Yep – 3 hours every week working in the nursery with my little Luke and about 5 other babies – Luke is the only boy. My husband asked me how I managed that one (because I LOVE babies!), and I don't know – lucky I guess!! Apparently there are some ladies who don't want to deal with diapers and fussy babies and all that, but for me, there couldn't be a better job for me to serve at co-op. My other kids really like co-op. Beeber (age 3) is in

Preschool, and he came home the first week with a “carrot project” – the top of a carrot in a cup of water. It was supposed to grow some green out the top, but ours didn’t. He didn’t seem to mind though. It’s funny because when he handed me his carrot as I was picking him up, I thought it was the remainder of what he had done with his snack until the teacher explained it to me – haha! Disney is in Kindergarten at co-op, and she really likes it. Since we’ve decided to homeschool our kids beginning at 2nd grade, Disney is also in public school preschool, and she loves both of them! The older girls enjoy co-op too; it gives some of the structure of school without all the unnecessary rules and drama, and the classes are taught from a Christian perspective. I like that the kids are held accountable to other adults besides their parents for their assignments and quizzes. The Sunday-Monday rush is taxing for our family since we have seven bags to pack Sunday night for co-op AFTER a big weekend spent getting ready for church service, but it’s worth it and we are settling into a routine. Wednesday sees us leading groups at youth group, and we had a friend offer to take the 3 middle kids to AWANA and they really like that. Thursday we have Bible study, and as I said, much of our weekends now consist of planning Sunday church service and TRYING to find time to rest and relax. Overall, we’re busier than ever, but I feel happier than ever – God is so great! I felt so run-down and was having a really hard time for a few months, but I had some checkups with the doctor and think I got the problem solved. I feel better than I have in years and I can’t thank God enough!! Now we just have to get Hubby some more sleep since he is waking with Luke all night, every night AND working 2 jobs, not to mention all of the help he gives me around the house.

The past few months, I’ve learned better to accept the circumstances of life as seasons that are constantly changing. I’ve also learned to better accept that the way things are now are most definitely going to change in a few months. I’ve learned to look forward to seeing what God has

in store for my family rather than to let the ever-changing dynamics of our lives fill me with fear, dread or worry. As far as things at the new church, we've set up a wonderful childrens ministry, and we have about 20 kids that come every weekend. This is an AMAZING thing when you realize that the church had 0 kids attending only 4 months ago. We have been contemplating ideas for a youth ministry (tweens and teens) as well as some other things, and only God knows where we will be with that in a month or two. As I tried to say, things change so fast that it's difficult to update it all on my blog, especially when this post alone has taken me a few weeks of having to put it aside and come back to add more later in order to finish it!

Before I stop writing for the day, I do want to share an amazing God story we got to witness this past Sunday. My husband had been up late most of last week writing his sermon, and there was a pancake supper at church on Saturday night. I ended up staying home with my boys because I was feeling run down and Luke was crabby and oozing things from places (you don't really want more details, trust me... baby stuff). So late Saturday night, Hubby decided to start telling God in prayer that he needed rest, and I was doing the same. Sunday morning, I was making my runs for church – I am the designated driver for the childrens ministry. Many of the kids that come to our church need rides because their home situations are... let's say complicated. Our church is located in the middle of the country about 6 miles from town, so I make 2-3 trips there in the morning to pick up the kids and to drive my own family. Sunday we saw a man riding a bike on US Route 6; his bike was pulling a trailer that normally is used for pulling children, but his was loaded with supplies. I wondered if he was homeless or someone who was making a long trek because it isn't all that unusual to see someone journeying down US 6 – our little corner of the world seems to be on the way to everywhere! So we see people journeying down 6 from time to time, but not usually in the winter. On my last run, as I

pulled into church, I noticed the man on the bike was also pulling into church. I got the kids settled, then went out to welcome him. Turns out, his name is Michealangelo, and he had been on his journey on his bike for FOUR MONTHS! He's from Los Angeles, and he began by biking north in California, and then coming out this way headed to New York – because God sent him on this journey. He saw the sign for our little church on US 6 and decided to stop. Michael has amazing faith, and he had amazing stories to tell! My husband asked him if he would share some of these with our congregation, and Michael obliged, even after sharing his concerns about the way he was dressed. I don't have the time to go into all of the amazing details of the personal touches that God put on this story – I've already burnt the eggs that I was cooking and the house smells disgusting. But I will sum it up briefly: Michael's unexpected visit meant that my husband's sermon that he had carefully prepared was not used last week because we were treated to the testimony of Michael instead. So my husband can rest a little easier this week knowing that his sermon is already prepared. Also, we've been talking in our own family and at church about really living a Godly life and what that looks like; we've been trying to make opportunities to GO OUT and serve God rather than just sitting around, doing the same old things for US. Michael's testimony reaffirmed these concepts – here is a man who has devoted his entire life to doing what God wants him to do. He left the life that he knew and WENT OUT THERE and is sharing the Word... And here I am frustrated because my words are failing to convey the story... And I wish I could find the links to the info about this guy on the internet. Hubby found them so maybe when he gets home from work I can ask him and add them to my blog.

But anyway, it was a magical Sunday, and I am thankful that I got to be a part of it! I will leave you now with a little update about my little Luke – he tried his tot wheels for the first time in January. He likes it, but only for short periods of time. He is a grown up little guy in a baby's body

with a baby's attention span. He loves to stand, and practice walking ALREADY even though he is not yet 4 months old. He also loves to watch other kids in action – his sisters and brother and also the kids at co-op and at youth group. WOW – I really have to blog more often! Once I got going, I had so much to say but not enough time to say it... sorry that I was kind of all over the place, but that's the price I pay for sitting down and trying to do this with all these kids running around and my many tasks to accomplish! Until next time...

lukes first time in tot wheels.mov

Rebellious ducks, or something like that

Continuing the medical theme from summer camp, enter the 2012 4th and 5th grade winter retreat held right at our church. The older kids get to go all the way to the camp in Michigan for two days, but as a cost-saving measure for the parents I am sure, this crowd gets one night with no travel necessary outside of being brought to church. That suits me just fine and allows more to come who otherwise would not. I know of one family for sure whose junior-higher wasn't going to be able to go to his retreat though his younger brother was at ours.

I arrived Friday night just a smidgen late and check-in was well underway. In fact, most of my cabin was already settled in and watching the opening movie which entertained them while waiting for the official start. I joined my colleagues upstairs and helped settle in the stragglers. Did I mention

that Friday was the day of a major snowstorm? After driving on snow-packed roads from Algonquin to Elgin and back home, I and a hundred moms, dads, and other leaders slogged down the roads to make this event, the only one not canceled. But I am sure parents would brave even more to ~~be rid of their young-~~
~~uns~~ give their brood an opportunity to draw closer to our Lord and Savior. Though there was one cabin that had several boys missing by the time the main event started, mine was complete (at least it was by dinner time when the last trooper arrived). I even had a couple of repeat campers from summer, one of which I hadn't seen since then as he attended the church's school, but not regular church on the weekends- at least the one I serve at. Even my junior leader was the same. Yep, Mad Cow Disease was represented in full. What? Oh, yes. Remember the medical theme I mentioned? Well, all the cabins were named after diseases and cures. Most girls would never go for a cabin labeled SARS or mad cow disease, so they naturally got the cures while the boys proudly represented their diseases.

Once the movie was shut off in the middle (sorry for those who may not have seen it before...) and rules had been gone over, it was time to get into things with a game of course. That game was Duck Hunt.