

Merry Christmas, Dear Family and Friends!

We hope that you are having a wonderful December, full of joy, laughter, and memory making. May you be filled with His Love this season and take time to reflect upon His many gifts. We would like to take this time to share with you about our past year; our memories, joys, and sorrows.

Our girls continue to be the source of much joy, delight and busyness for us. Dakota played in three sports – volleyball, basketball, and softball – being co-captain of her volleyball team and a natural defensive player in all three sports. We have had many late nights traveling home from away games, but we would not trade a it for anything. She also participated in a life changing mission trip during spring break to Louisiana with friends from First Baptist Church of Corinth and worked as a counselor at Denton Bible Church's Sports World Camp. Dakota is currently taking a dual-credit history course at a local junior college, and is thriving in it as well as her other classes as a junior at Denton Calvary Academy. She now has her driver license, and I have to admit, I miss our time together chatting in the car. She will turn 17 two days before Christmas, which makes this Mom kind of sad. I can't believe that in only a year she will be 18!

Trinity is now 9 years old and is a 4th grader at DCA. She is serious and studious about schoolwork and life, yet enjoys playing softball and Upward basketball and participates in AWANA. She is an avid reader and seems to have a natural talent for singing. We are looking toward getting her into piano and voice lessons. Trinity has such a sweet spirit and is a source of much delight for us.

Remington is 5 years old and is a "big" kindergartner at DCA. She has thrived in school and is enjoying learning how to read, but particularly likes the social aspect of having friends at school. Remi looks for the fun in all things and continues to like to tease and joke around with people. She has been in AWANA this year, played softball last spring, and this winter she is participating in Upward Cheerleading, which she thinks is great fun!

And last, but not least, comes Sierra, who is now an independence-seeking 2 year old. All who know her say, "She is something else". And that is the truth! ☺ She is fun, makes us laugh, brings us joy, says the funniest things, and is a quick learner...she is also a typical strong willed, stubborn, and willful two year old. Dustin and I sometimes think we've taught her certain things, and that she should know better, only to realize that we've said it to another daughter in the past and not her. So, as parents, we know we need to stay on course and continue with Sierra, just as with the other three, to "train her up in the way she should go, so that even when she is old she will not depart from it" (Prov. 22:6).

Besides keeping up with our girls, Dustin and I have been involved in many other things. When we married, Dustin said, we may never be rich, but we will never be bored. And he has kept that promise! ☺ Dustin continues to be in full time ministry with Strategic Impact, is the worship pastor at Denton Community Church, and teaches Missions Geography at DCA. Last spring he assisted the coach with DCA's Softball team and enjoyed every minute of it. He also had the privilege of speaking at the National Association of University Model School's conference and has received many compliments for his insights into integrating God's truth into teaching. I am an AWANA leader again this year, volunteered to be the junior class mom, and have been teaching riding lessons through the school's riding club, besides teaching the middle girls three days a week on their school days at home.



We shared many fun and memorable moments as a family this past year, but a few stand out from the rest. One was our family vacation to Michigan. We camped throughout our time there, enjoyed the diverse scenery and landscape, hiked, kayaked, climbed sand dunes, wore coats and gloves in June in 40 degree weather, visited a Shipwreck Museum, saw three of the Great Lakes, attended the National Cherry Festival, and visited Mackinac Island. We celebrated the Fourth of July in Petoskey by watching a parade, a vintage 1800's baseball game, and fireworks over Lake Michigan. We ended our time in MI visiting our long time friends, the Winns, and even got to pick fresh blueberries with them! Another one was in late summer when the girls and I went camping with my family at Lake Tenkiller in OK. We had a grand time swimming, skiing, and riding the jet ski. And then, this past weekend, Dustin, along with several other dads from DCA, took their high school daughters on a deer-hunting trip. During her first hunting trip ever, Dakota shot a nice 8-point buck and a small spike. I'm not sure who was more excited, Dakota or Dustin!



This year has been full of many joyous times, but we have also been through the hardest event of our entire lives. As most of you know, Dustin's dad, Herbert McCarty, went home to be with the Lord on October 5th, just hours after receiving the official word that he had been put on the heart transplant list at Baylor Hospital in Dallas. Words cannot even begin to describe the depth of grief we feel, and this has indeed been a very hard holiday season for us. We miss him so much- his presence, his voice, his laugh, his jokes, the way he loved and revered Vival, the way he cherished our girls, and how he honestly knew something about everything. He was one of the most God honoring men I've ever met and I feel blessed to call him my father-in-law. I admit that tears are flowing as I write, and yet I am comforted and strengthened knowing that Herb is "at home with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5:8), and that we can rest assured that we will see him again in Heaven. We can rejoice this Christmas in the truth that, "Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is the Messiah, the Lord" (Luke 2:11). A Savior was born. He lived a perfectly sinless life. He was crucified and died for our sins. He rose again. And now He is in His Father's house, preparing a place (John 14:2) for "those who received Him, to those who have believed in His name" (John 1:12). Our prayer for you this Christmas, is that you would receive Him and believe in His name, be called a child of the Most High God, and will rest forever in full assurance that He is preparing a place for you in Heaven.



Blessings from our family to yours,

*Dustin, Tracy, Dakota, Trinity,
Remington and Sierra*