

# MERRY CHRISTMAS

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December 25, 2014

Volume 17

Tis the week before Christmas... and I am sooo... behind (I know that doesn't rhyme). Does anyone know how late I can shop and still get Amazon to deliver before Christmas? This is the price I pay for those two amazing Christmas babies I was given 7 and 9 years ago. Still two birthday parties to go this week (plus all the normal Christmas stuff) and then the Christmas shopping. I was reminded that my life is always busy. I agreed but said "This week takes the cake." Then I remember this week takes TWO cakes!! You know what's really crazy? I am feeling pretty up to the challenge. I'm no rookie. Plus, Christmas shopping the last couple days means getting to shop with all the last-minute male shoppers. I had sooo... much fun watching them wander the mall lost and alone (or even better with an equally clueless friend) and making some humorously awful calls in desperation a couple years back. Exactly when is it appropriate to intervene on behalf of the significant other of a stranger?

This year has been a lot of fun, and yet a challenge with so many different ages and stages around here. The grown ups are hovering on either side of the big 40 and the kiddos span junior high to preschool. Mix in gender and personality differences and this means no family outing pleases everyone, but also, just about anything pleases someone.

Our family vacation took us to Sunriver, Oregon and we will definitely do it again. The boys' biking skills seriously improved and they loved the adventure of miles of trails. Andrew and I enjoyed biking without the crazy hills of home. The sunsets were beautiful and we rented a house for pretty much what a family of six pays for a hotel. I can't believe not being required to eat out every meal (which meant some basic cooking) could feel like such a relief. Grace probably got the short end of the stick on this one. She was not a fan of being carted around behind our bikes in the little buggy. There was lots of

crying, and trying to stream Netflix on our phones for her with fewer bars than such things require. We coincidentally were there the same week as our good friends, the Leinwebers, and were able to meet up several times to hang out together. What a great surprise. The picture that follows is of us checking out a sign on the way out of the lava caves that contradicted the assurances I had given the children that there were no bears or critters inside. Oops!





## Seattle David Family News



Andrew and I took off to Russia without the kiddos on a trip with our church this fall. Special thanks to my parents and our good friends the Ryans and Leinwebers for making it possible. This was our first ministry trip as a couple and we loved seeing Moscow together (we were in the Kremlin !!!). Did you know that you feel at least twice as lost in a country that does not use our A to Z alphabet? In Paris, Mexico, etc., I could at least make out names of cities, etc. The signs in the subways of Moscow told me NOTHING. I am sure this was true in India too, but I was married to a local so I didn't notice. In Russia this made me very grateful for our hosts, the Musgraves. We just kept our eyes on them. We were there for a pastors/leaders conference for church leaders from all around the former Soviet Union. It's amazing the way believers in Christ just feel like family even when you are from opposite sides of the world. We met pastors and church leaders who were inspired by, and will continue to pray for and see as a part of our family for years and years to come.

As for our kiddos, the days go slow and the years go fast as they say. They are all growing up and we are trying desperately to keep up with all that training and teaching we are supposed to do for each one. Here is a quick update on each:

Matt is 12 and in the 7th grade. He is in a full-on war with 9th grade algebra this year. He loves watching baseball and (American) football, and is Mr. Statistic when it comes to his sports. He still loves rock climbing. He has recently developed this strange habit of taking a deep breath and obeying me without arguing when given unpleasant instructions or consequences. At first this was very unsettling and then I realized it is self control and obedience.

Weird!

Isaiah is 9 years old and still a readaholic. This year he stepped up to the next level of soccer and played hard and impressed us. He loves backyard baseball with his brothers and because he loves reading biographies (didn't know it was possible for a little boy) is always piping up with information about everyone from Babe Ruth to Ben Carson to Augustine of Hippo. It definitely adds spice to our family conversations.

7 year old Zach is hoping for his two front teeth for Christmas and is all about football. He dreams of making it to the NFL some day like many 1st graders do and has been know to practice his throwing motion so many practice times a day (without a ball) that his arm aches at night. Now to find a youth football league that won't eat our Sundays up. I am not sure whether he loves reading or it is his competitive streak that motivates him to top last week's reading log, or finish his chapter book in one day, but I guess I'll take it either way.

I dress 3 year old Grace in the morning only to turn around minutes later to find her in a ballet leotard complete with tu-tu and occasionally a pith helmet (she does have 3 brothers). This is less practical when out on the town than the boys' perpetual batman costume attire (brrrrr....). She loves playing all the typical girl things so I won't even bother listing them here. She also likes her personal space and does not like being grabbed, touched or hugged without her clear permission. This trait she definitely inherited from her mother and her cute little girliness doesn't help her here. Everyone wants to give her a squeeze.

For our top kid moments/quotes this year, scan this QR code on your phone or go to:

\_\_\_\_\_ for a photo slide show with captions.

Lots of love to you all. Have a wonderful new year and thank you so much for all your cards and letter. We so enjoy them and keeping up with friends from all the different stages of our lives.

Your Friends,

Andrew, Amber, Matthew, Isaiah, Zach and Grace David

