

December 2016

Dear Friends,

Merry Christmas! We pray that this Advent season finds you filled with hope and joy as we once again prepare to celebrate Christ's coming into the world and into our lives.

*The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.... Isaiah 9:2*



When we wrote to you a year ago, our family was full of anticipation not only for the Christmas celebration, but for two very special gifts that were expected at Christmastime. Elenore Jane Hopkins was born to Sara and Eric on December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2015 and then Jono Francis Porterfield was born to Jason and Laura on December 15<sup>th</sup>. Both babies have brought so much joy to our lives! We can't believe that they are already almost a year old, and how much they have grown, learned and changed over these past months.

Last year we were also celebrating the recent marriage of our daughter Andrea to David Moses. David and Andrea just had their first anniversary and we all continue to rejoice in God's goodness in bringing them together. They live in Ft. Worth where David works as a computer programmer at Texas Wesleyan University and Andrea teaches trumpet. They are also very involved in ministry, helping to lead a small group Bible study with their church, serving as part of the leadership team to help plant a Nepalese Friends Church in the Ft. Worth area, and working on various community outreach projects. David and Andrea's home is often full of guests, who they receive with great hospitality.



Sara, Eric and Elenore live in Columbus, Ohio. We miss them so much, but are thankful for being able to keep up through photos, phone calls and Skype. They are doing great at their jobs - Eric as Assistant Attorney General for the state of Ohio and Sara as part-time tennis instructor and nursery director at a tennis club. Sara also coached the JV tennis team at a private girls' school again this fall, but plans to give that role up now that Elenore has become much more mobile! Sara and Eric help to lead a group for young adults at their church, and Eric plays bass with the worship band. They've had fun fixing up the home they bought last year.

Jason and Laura have both added some new work responsibilities. Jason is currently serving as interim pastor of student ministries at Friendswood Friends Church, until our new pastor arrives next June. He is doing a great job working with the youth and has also been a huge help in reconfiguring the church website and working with some of our network issues. Laura still serves on the faculty of the Family Medicine program at UTMB; this past summer she helped to teach the Behavioral Medicine module which involved some extra work but is something that she is very passionate about. In January she will add some new responsibilities in the area of clinical trials for vaccines. Mika is now in first grade and Luke in kindergarten, both at a dual-immersion bilingual program where most of their school day takes place in Spanish. We are thrilled at how much Spanish they are learning. They love animals, nature, swimming, playing tennis with Grandpa and helping out with their little brother Jono.



This past August we celebrated our 40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary! We were able to spend our anniversary weekend at a cabin in the woods, enjoying the beauty of God's creation, some gorgeous hikes, and some quiet time together. We're so grateful for the love that God has blessed us with. Another highlight of the year was a family trip to the Ozarks in June. We spent a wonderful week together enjoying the gorgeous scenery, swimming in the lake, cooking and eating together, playing games, cuddling the babies, and doing lots of talking and laughing. Lord willing, we will be together again between Christmas and New Year's. We cherish those special times.

May God's rich blessings be yours this Christmas and in 2017!

Love, Joyce and David Byrne and family