

The twenty-fourth annual Christmas letter from Charlie and Lisa Gross

Recounting our blessings of 2011!



Another over the top year of phenomenal blessings from God! Being downsized from executive ministry on Dec 31st looked bad at the time, but proved to be yet another blessing. I had a ton of paperwork to do for dad to sell a beach property and get him on Medicaid. That took up a

chunk of January and then God blessed me on Sunday, Feb 13th when I received the unanimous call to be the pastor of West Grove Presbyterian Church, in West Grove, PA. We're a small congregation, but are truly the "friendliest church" around. Well after that wonderful news, we left for New York City to be there for the birth of Ella Dee Gross. She arrived the next day, a very precious Valentine's Day gift for Jeff and Taryn! (and, of course all of us!)



In May of this year, we were blessed with a visit from Daniela and Torsten Oelsner. Danny was our exchange student from Coswig (near Dresden) Germany in 1991 – 1992 and hadn't been back since. Her husband, Torsten, had never been to the U.S. and loved it. He loved the tour of a C-130 and tromping the grounds at Gettysburg. Later in May we made an offer on a quaint 135 year old brick duplex in West Grove, just one block from my church. (It was a short sale and took an anxious summer to go through.) In July, we celebrated our 38th wedding anniversary. Did something different. Took a 4 day jaunt to the wine country around Seneca Lake, NY. We stayed outside Geneva at Belhurst Castle and enjoyed some great wines.

At the end of July, we had our annual family weekend at Knoebels Amusement Park - rode the rides, hung out, played games and celebrated life as a family.

On August 26th, we signed the papers and became the owners of that cute little house in West Grove. Then on August 27th the rains came! Hurricane Irene came up the coast and hit the day after we bought it. The small print on the real estate papers said, "a little water in the basement." With the hurricane deluge, this "little amount" came to over 500 gallons that we bailed out on Saturday night. Good news? We've solved the problem.



Jeff is thriving as a Senior Consultant at Easton Associates in NYC! He analyzes biotech markets for clients and gives them expertise around product positioning. (at least that's what I think he does) He also plays husband and father roles very well!

Taryn got a promotion to Senior Managing Editor, Virology at Clinical Care Options. They know a gifted writer and editor when they read one. She balances that with life as a new mom to Ella.



Angie is excelling at school nursing in the Manheim Township School District. She balances that with running Ivy and Paige around, cooking for the Wednesday night Logos program at Wayside Presbyterian, shooting pool on Tuesday night, and taking courses toward her Bachelor's degree. It's hard to know how she does it all.



Dave is still loving his work at Verizon, has been working a ton of over time and is needed in cities that are installing fiber optic cable. He also finds time to serve the Lord by caring for needy families in the Wayside Presbyterian Church. He has a heart of gold and is truly a man of God.

Ivy is now in 5th grade, still reads a lot, is taking horse back riding lessons, plays the violin, and is a ball of energy. Paige is in 3rd grade, loves to dance, play, build creative things with Pop Pop and recently led Ivy and Pop Pop on a hike in the woods around our nearby lake.

Our traveling highlight this year Mediterranean. We flew to Ephesus, Rhodes Greece, Haifa back to Istanbul. We toured the Bethlehem, Masada, the Dead Galilee, Capernaum, and the phenomenal experience!



was a 2 week cruise in the Istanbul, Turkey and cruised to Israel, Athens Greece, and holy sights in Jerusalem, Sea, Nazareth, the Sea of Jordan River. What a



Do you remember that we unofficially adopted a family from a refugee camp in Nepal? Well, as part of the friends and family plan, our family is growing. Two more brothers arrived this year and we've become close to Narayan's father, his 5 brothers, and their wives.

Lisa continues to thrive in her hospitality gifts in so many ways. After I started ministry at West Grove, she was hosting small gatherings of members as a way of getting to know the people. She has now been at Cardiac Consultants for 16 years and helps them navigate the craziness of this time. She still drives once in a while for Church World Service and serves people in many ways. She also is involved with Wayside Presbyterian Church in their Presbyterian Women and in their sewing circle. Oh, and the added attraction this year was the extra house to furnish and decorate. She did a phenomenal job!

Oh, the year was topped off by a Thanksgiving visit from Katrin Hackenschuh (our first foreign exchange student in 1989). We shopped, we ate, we laughed, we loved being together! We are extraordinarily blessed!

Well our prayer for you is that you experience the amazing grace and love of Almighty God found abundantly in Jesus Christ! Have a joyous 2012!

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