

Merry Christmas, everyone!

Another blessedly boring year has passed in the Giessel household, with all of us in good spirits, good health, and so thankful for the provision and protection God has shown us throughout the year. His mercies are magnificent! Though some big things have come our way and busyness is a constant, this year has really been one of learning contentedness and relishing our stability and calm, as a family.

Among those big, good changes is that Peter started a new job with Alyeska Pipeline Services co. back in March. He had no lapse in employment and the new position came with a significant pay increase, which was an incredible blessing. It was exactly what we needed, precisely when we needed it, and not a moment sooner! His job is still as a Civil/Structural Engineer, and he has enjoyed his new boss and coworkers very much. Other changes this year include a massive yard remodel (we added a playground, drainage, redid our shed and deck), building new bunk beds for our daughters, and various vehicle and plumbing repairs to keep our lives in good working order. As his wife, I am so proud of Peter and utterly blessed by the immense variety of skills he has, along with a work ethic that won't quit. This year has been characterized by God's miraculous guiding and growing of Peter through the circumstances of our lives and the fruit has been to our benefit and for His glory!

With the children, changes have included beginning our first year of homeschooling. Callie turned four and Lilah, three; both have been doing preschool with me for about an hour during the day. Callie's achievements including learning to count to 100 and names the days of the week, Lilah is getting much better at coloring in the lines and learning the words to our daily songs. Both are bright and attentive, as well obedient and kind to one another. We're definitely in the trenches of child training and daily seek patience and wisdom beyond our own. Thankfully, the physical and spiritual growth of both children has been marked. The girls are working on memorizing scripture with daddy each night and that has been wonderful, definitely something that sharpens Peter and me as much or MORE than the children! Callie and Lilah surprise me daily with their humor and intelligence, both absolutely dote on their little brother.



Our house is full of the sounds of laughter (and the occasional ear splitting shriek) and discovery, we have been blessed so richly by the children God has loaned to us for a time.

The littlest Giessel was in fine form this year, as well. Seth went from a sleepy little lapbug to a crawling, mischievous explorer in the space of just a few months. He continues to be extremely good natured and cheerful and definitely demands the attention of all members of the family. His first birthday was this past October and, if you can believe it, right now he is on the cusp of walking. Seth has been a little reluctant to pop more than

two teeth, but we're hopeful he won't gum his food forever! The big sisters are excellent with him, playing with him to prevent his boredom and letting me know (in only a slightly tattletale tone) when he is playing with things he shouldn't. When they can keep him sitting still long enough he gets dressed up as a princess, but he is a good sport for their 'attentions'. Along with Callie and Lilah, Seth has been a true transformative blessing in our lives. His thigh dimples and baby jowls are just the adorable icing on the cake.



My own year was punctuated by traveling down for my brother's wedding to his lovely bride, Kristy (who also gave birth to their second daughter, Brooklyn!). I was so pleased to see my family and spend time with them, as well as showing Seth off for the first time. Coming home and putting on the hat of 'teacher' in addition to 'wife and mommy' was also quite the event, but it has gone very smoothly thus far. My time is mostly spent managing our home for Peter and raising the children, but I have also found much time to pick up piano playing again. My main focus has been leading the family in sing-alongs and hymns, and while I have a way to go before I am where I want to be, the girls bear with me quite gracefully through the nth iteration of 'Arky Arky' and



'Father Abraham'. My remaining (somewhat scant) free time is filled with knitting, and I am happy to say the entire family is warm and wooly this year! This season of life I am in is so precious, it is easy to lose sight of my greater purpose (glorifying God) in the busyness of every day, but thankfully my Beloved and wise friends are all so sweet and gentle in guiding me to where I need to be and where my focus should be centered. The greatest blessing of the past year, above any material thing, has been the contentedness and and joy God has given me through my circumstances.

I pray all of you who Peter and I love may be blessed with the same. God is mighty and holy, may He move as powerfully in your lives as He has in ours. To Him be all glory, and honor, and praise for everything that is good in our lives!

With gratitude and awe,
Peter, Taryl, Callie, Lilah, and Seth Giessel.