

News of the Urbana Neradts, Christmas 2008

*“Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, **yet I will rejoice in the LORD; I will take joy in the God of my salvation.**” Hab. 3:17–18*

Dear Ones,

As the economy dips, the testimony of Habakkuk, above, is a great reminder. Our extended family has not been untouched by the difficult times, with Dad Neradt looking for a job and Straight A Builders of brother Trent with less work than desirable. Yet we too rejoice in the Lord and take joy in the God of our salvation.

Beyond the greatest joy of knowing Christ and having hope of eternal life with him, God has given us many other, temporal gifts to cheer our hearts. He has dealt bountifully with us and given us a very pleasant year. The year was not without drama, but it has been a joyful stage of life for us.



Most of the drama was (and is) related to Esther growing and the two of us learning about parenting. There was also drama when Hanna sprained Esther's ankle by taking her down a slide at the park. Esther had recently begun walking several paces at a time, and it was difficult to see her in pain and unable to walk for over a week. But, praise God, the ankle healed, and Esther is now walking around very steadily. Esther is also starting to use words, especially “uh-oh” and “up,” and understands a lot of what we say.



A positive aspect to Dad Neradt looking for a job is that we see him and Mom Neradt more often. They have come several weekends to visit. We also saw Mom and Dad Vander Zee several times this year, including two vacation trips in addition to holiday visits. One vacation was a family trip to Starved Rock in celebration of their 40th wedding anniversary. Later, in August, we met with several relatives in Michigan for a reunion of the extended family on Mom Vander Zee's side.

We are very thankful for our families. It is a blessing to enjoy both sets of parents and to live close enough to visit frequently. These interactions may be especially meaningful to us because of the transient nature of many relationships we have in town. Hanna's sister Vera left town this summer to study in Texas. Eric Landquist accepted a post-doc position in Germany and left in the fall, followed shortly thereafter by his wife Bethany. Susan Visser left in May to join her husband in Texas. But, we have gained a closer friendship with Kenton Visser, who now lives in our basement, and we are developing deeper relationships with the new couples in our small group. Of course, the only completely stable relationship is that which we have with Jesus, our Immanuel, God with us. May he be in your hearts as we celebrate his coming in the flesh during this season.

Love,

Brian, Hanna and Esther Neradt