



*The birds of the air come and perch in its branches.
 - Matthew 13:32*

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New life in Christ!

Saturday, February 12th, was a cool but sunny day, and for Delayne Jenkins and the AcoCG, it became a day to really celebrate, as she was added to the body of Christ in baptism! Here’s a look at what that morning was like, as a warm and excited group gathered at the Emmetts for Delayne’s rebirth, with those who couldn’t be present in person sending their love and support through Zoom—





With thanks to Deriise Dowell for several of these pictures!

Mask mandates, meeting places, and missions...

On Friday, February 25th, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention updated their guidelines for dealing with COVID-19. Under the new guidelines, people in areas with low or medium transmission level are no longer required to wear masks, and Gwinnett County falls into that category. Gwinnett County Public Schools lifted their mask mandate that same day, based on the revised CDC guidance, so we aren't required to wear masks when we meet at Meadowcreek. Those whose health is at greater risk, or those living with higher-risk people, may still want to take extra precautions. The leadership of AcoCG advises you to do what is best for your health, and please stay home if you're not well.

It's been exciting to hear about our progress in finding our own place to meet—as accommodating as Meadowcreek has been, most of us are looking forward to the time God provides us with a church building for worship services and other activities. We have an agency that's helping us locate property around Lawrenceville that meets all our needs, and we may have additional help with resources coming as well.

On that note—We will take up our Special Contribution from the following Sunday, March 6th, through Sunday, June 5th. Our leadership team has asked us to start planning and praying for it right away. **All** of this year's Special Contribution will go to the Building Fund, which we haven't been able to add to for the last several years. We have sufficient Missions reserves left over from prior years to help our sister congregations in Zambia and Haiti. We'll get more details in the budget midweek this Wednesday, so we hope everyone can Zoom in and take part!

Several of our singles in the SOMA ministry are raising funds for a mission trip to help and build relationships with our sister congregations in Africa. Look for their bake-sale table in the lobby, and please help them with contributions if you can!

Honoring the past, celebrating the present, looking forward to the future!

In February, the month in which our country celebrates Black history with all its notable individuals and achievements, ACOCG set aside the last Sunday of the month to share our stories, images, dreams and faith connected with this celebration. Kenny Watkins, Glenn Hayes, Perry Parks, Dr. Burrell Pope, and Kyle Ross brought us the Word and spoke from their hearts with great impact; Kyle's son Chandler Ross shared poems by significant Black writers; and Melvin Jordan, Jerome Tench and Glenn Hayes provided music to inspire and encourage us. Here are some images of that morning—



Catching up with...



Jeff and Jessica Mueller

Where are you from originally? What would you like people to know about where you're from?

Jeff: I consider myself to be from East Tennessee, though I was born in Iowa, which is where both my parents grew up. My dad had a career with the Aluminum Company of America as a mechanical engineer and got transferred to East Tennessee, so that's where my two younger sisters and I all grew up, in Maryville, a suburb of Knoxville. I went back for my 40th high school reunion last September and it brought back memories—my ten years growing up there were better looking back in time than I realized as I lived them in the moment. But more of my life has been defined by living here. I graduated from high school in 1980, ended up at Georgia Tech and never left the Atlanta area after that—much to my mom's chagrin; back in the mid-90s when I'd been married for about four years, she said to me one day, "I've just come to the realization that you're never going to come back," which kind of made me sad to hear. But most of my life was really defined by my move to Atlanta. This is where I met people in the campus ministry and became a disciple and it's also where I met my wife Jessica—we met in the church, and we had that foundation of a common faith, the common commitment to Jesus that we both learned when we studied the Bible with people who were modeling that life to us. So I guess I'm really from here, in a sense, even though my life has only been here from age 20 on.

Jessica: I am from Annandale, Virginia which is in Northern Virginia right outside of Washington, D.C. Most people probably don't know that I was brought up Jewish; we celebrated all the holidays, we went to temple—up until I got into high school, when I told my parents, "You know what, I would rather go to football games instead of go to the Sabbath," and my family accepted it. They were very chill kind of folks; they didn't get too upset until I was getting baptized, when they got a little upset, but they still were okay with it. I do love where I'm from because it's beautiful.

How did you come to live in the Atlanta area?

Jeff: I remember out of high school I wanted to go off somewhere different; I didn't really have much of a plan—I knew that I didn't want to go to college in East Tennessee, I wanted to go somewhere away. The school had a good reputation, and Atlanta was not too far away, so I could always come home on weekends if I wanted. And I think there was an element of God behind it for me to get into Georgia Tech. I really got in almost by the skin of my teeth, in the sense that I applied late and I was accepted only on the condition that I come for summer quarter. I don't think I was a prodigal son in the sense of wandering, but it was more that I just wanted to get away and walk in my own adventure.

Jessica: Well, it was funny; one of my best friends went to school for fashion merchandising in Atlanta, and she had traveled, had been to Europe and England, and she would just talk about how she loved Atlanta. We were talking one time, and she said, "Hey, what do you think about Atlanta?" and I said, "Let's go visit!" So we wound up coming down almost on a whim.

I was living with my parents at the time, I had graduated college and was sort of looking for direction; I'd studied criminology and criminal justice in college and was trying to get jobs in Northern Virginia but was coming up with zero, so I thought, "Maybe if I move to a new area I can find a job." My parents were kind of happy about it, but they were kind of sad because they knew if I got a job in Atlanta I wouldn't be coming home. So I went to visit Atlanta, and I loved it! I loved the people, the climate, the cost of living—I had friends who were living in one-bedroom apartments in Northern Virginia that cost a lot of money, and I could get a two-bedroom two-bath apartment in a complex with a lake, in Dunwoody of all places, and it was like, "This place is great!" So that first weekend when my friend and I came to visit, we put a deposit on an apartment, and I told my mom I'd probably be back in six months, and it was literally within six months that I became a Christian—[Acts 17:26](#).

What do you do for a living? How did you come to be in that field?

Jeff: I'm a civil engineer. I wanted to do something science- and math-related; when I was going into college, I started in architecture, but I realized that wasn't quite as science- and math-oriented as I originally thought it was—although I will say that the experience of studying architecture has been beneficial to my ability to think creatively and think outside the box as an engineer; sometimes engineers want to find the one solution to the problem, when there are really different ways of solving the problem. But I'm a civil engineer, and at this point I really do mostly municipal engineering, everything from roads and drainage to traffic operations to stormwater management. Most people don't realize that when you do highway design, the three most important elements of a safe highway are drainage, drainage, and drainage. I learned that in school, and there's a lot of truth to it; most of the problems that you have with the design will rise or fall on how the drainage is handled. When you're driving down the road, what keeps you safe isn't all the bells and whistles, it's the drainage, the stuff you don't see. When it rains, everything changes. Right now a current assignment I have is to serve as the Interim Director of Public Works for the village of Stone Mountain, but for nine years Jess and I worked for the City of Norcross together, commuting every day together—that was a lot of fun.

Jessica: My best job was being a mom! When Jeff and I got married, we decided that when we had children I was going to stay home—at first I think I was conflicted about it, but eventually I embraced it and loved it; it's the best job ever. I'm currently at the Norcross Police Department, and I do love it! It's hard to believe, I've been doing it for 15 years this July. Sometimes it's been a roller coaster. God's been teaching me so much about myself and loving people! My heart is really to help people, and my favorite part of my job is when the folks come to the window and tell me what they need and I'm helping them—I meet new people every day. It's funny, being a criminal justice major I kind of went full circle. Fifteen years ago, when I was ready to get back into the workforce, a sister said to me, "When you meet somebody, ask them what they do, and if you like what they do, ask if they are hiring." So I asked Alex Precup, who was visiting church—I didn't know this woman, but I said, "Hey, where do you work?" and she said, "The courts in Norcross." I said, "Oh, are they hiring?" and she said, "No." And I said "Okay"; that was my first time trying, and I didn't get a job, but that's okay. She came back to church the next Sunday, and she brought me a folder with the application, and she said, "There's a job opening in the Police Department, and you need to be there first thing Monday morning." I said, "Is it a job in the courts?" and she said "No, in the police department." And I was like, "No, no, no, I don't want to do that!" You'd think a criminal justice major would be saying "Yay!" but I just thought working in the courts would be a glamorous job, but not the police department.

Before that, I was reaching out and trying to encourage a sister who lived in Norcross, and I remember seeing downtown Norcross and thinking, "Oh, what a cute little town!" So driving in for the interview, I didn't care about the job, I just loved this little town! I drove in, put in my application, and three interviews later I got the job. I had worked at law firms as a legal assistant, and the chief in the police department who hired me thought I would be bored in this job, so he made me sign a document guaranteeing I would be there for two years because he thought I was going to quit. But I said, "No, you don't know me—I'm not quitting, I'm really excited about working in the police department." I haven't talked to him lately, but guess what? I'm still here! There are times I've wanted to quit, but I love my job.

I'm a records clerk; you do criminal histories, and I love working with the DA and the solicitor's office—I get materials for them, paperwork, and I have to download videos for them, and that's fun. And I love mentoring—I recently got to work with two amazing young women. One is 17 and wants to be a police officer when she's 21, but the past couple of months I got to mentor her and help train her to be a records clerk, and she became so good! Now I've got another young lady, and she's adorable, she's 20, she goes to Georgia State, she loves interviewing people and she wants to do journalism or film or something. But I'm working with her now and training her to be a records clerk; she's sharp, and she's doing awesome. But if I could just train and mentor people for a living now, I think I'd like that. Mentoring someone means helping them become better than you. I want them to soar! I watch them and I think, "Wow, it's so inspiring and encouraging!"

Tell us how you first got involved in with disciples – what was your first impression of disciples and the church?

Jeff: I was a freshman at Georgia Tech, and one of my classmates, Jeff Baldwin, invited me to come to a Soul Talk, so I said, "What's a Soul Talk?" It sounded like Soul Train or something, so I thought there was going to be a bunch of black people there; I said, "Sure, I'll go!" I went, and Rick Maule was leading discussions about the Bible and making it practical, giving practical applications of things like the parable of the soils, parables about being accountable and different things. And I started going to church every now and then with them—though I never volunteered to go, it would only be if they asked me, but I rarely said no. I felt a sense of honesty, like I couldn't lie because that wouldn't feel good—it was a character thing. So I got to the point where I was impressed with their approach to the concepts of the Bible and the word of God. I grew up in mainline denominational Christianity—baptized as an infant, confirmed in third grade and all that kind of stuff—but I was not applying it in the context of my own life. I had a lot of self-pity, and was almost depressed about life; I didn't know what I wanted to do or my purpose in life. I'm thinking to myself, "If I'm going to do the Christianity thing, these are the people that I'm going to do it with—this is the best thing I've seen as far as real application of the Bible." The big "if" for me at that point was if God was real, because I was coming from the scientific approach, and if God's real and this is all real, then this is the path, this is where I'm going to go to; these guys are serious, they're really taking it seriously and making it happen. So that's where I kind of fell into the journey wandering through the desert or the thick woods or whatever. And I think the battle at that point was that I looked at God as an idea, not as the image giver, meaning that He has the same capacity for emotion, feeling, love, as I have, but not understanding that they came from Him. I never personified God, I never saw him as a person or tried to empathize with what God was feeling about us. But if He is real, He has all the characteristics and traits that I have, He's the one that created those and gave them to us. So as long as God was a series of ideas, there was no real reason to take it further, so when I first met disciples I was impressed with their approach, the sincerity, that they were actually putting it into practice.

Jessica: I was kind of searching. I had gone to the Catholic Church with the girlfriend that I moved here with. She was Catholic and I looked up to her; to me she exuded a loving God, very loving and giving, so I wanted to go to the Catholic church with her. I really liked the priest there, and I went there about six months; I was trying to connect but nobody wanted to connect with me. There was something missing. I was a waitress at a Steak and Ale at that time, and I worked with a lady there I was getting to know. Her name was Shelly, she seemed pretty normal. I was just trying to be a friend, because she was my age and we seemed to have things in common, so I would invite her out or to a keg party at my house or something. I was getting to know her and I said, "Hey, where do you go to church?" and she started sharing, "Oh, I used to drink and all that, and I just felt empty," and it really resonated with me—I said, "That's me!", because that's all I was doing; I was just drinking and going to bars and dancing or whatever. So I remember having lunch with her a couple of times and asking her where her church was and what time, and I just showed up—I just invited myself, and she didn't really think I was coming. I remember being there real early, and I was so excited about being there but I tried to act calm, you know.

I left immediately after church; I said, "I got to get to my church"—I thought of the Catholic church as my church. But I just wasn't too sure about this new group because it almost seemed too fake. I thought, "These people are too excited, too friendly." I'd never seen a conglomerate of Black, White, Asian together, looking like they really cared about each other, and I just didn't believe it. So I thought, "I have to come back and check this out." So I would go out dancing and drinking every night on weekends, and the phone would ring and I would just say, "Ahh!" because I'd been out till 2 in the morning and church in the morning was at 9. Shelly would call and I would feel guilty and feel like I had to go—but really, it was God saying, "You have to go." I didn't know until after I studied the Bible that Shelly was a criminal justice major and we both had so much in common, it was crazy! But I think what I saw in the church was the love.

When Jeff and I met, I was hanging out with the singles, and they put the campus and the singles together, and that's where I first saw Jeff. It was at a devotional, and he had spoken for a few minutes very vulnerably about his lack of relationship with God in that moment and his quiet times. I had this little book with my Bible that I had picked up that was about how to get more engaged with God, so I introduced myself to him and told him I was a new disciple and said, "You were sharing that you need some help with your quiet times; here's a little booklet I picked up at the bookstore that maybe would be helpful."

Jeff: It was called *Ten Minutes with God*—I still have it. It's actually in the album of our engagement.

Jessica: He made me an album, a beautiful book about different aspects of our relationship, and it was actually the weekend of Valentine's Day that he asked me to marry him. I went on a ski trip with the singles, and Steve Bowen was leading it, he chaperoned us, and Jeff I think really wanted to ask me to marry him that weekend and I ended up being out of town, so he had to do it on Valentine's Day. He didn't want to do it on that day because he thought it was corny.

Jeff: I'm a nonconformist; I don't like the greeting card industry driving my choices.

What has surprised you most about life as a disciple?

Jeff: It goes back to the feeling that I had when I was baptized in '83; once I really responded to God's love, then it was like—all I know is, "Today is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2). I don't know what the future holds. Even as a disciple I tended to read the stories, and the story ends, "...and they lived happily ever after." In the Scriptures, Jesus says, "I have come to give you abundant life, life to the full, and joy"—that doesn't mean you're going to be able to tell what the future holds. What it does mean is you'll be able to cope with whatever the future might be, whether it's good or bad—sometimes coping with a good future is just as challenging, if not more difficult than coping with bad future. I think what surprised me most about my life as a disciple is that most of the time what I think is going to happen, doesn't, especially in these last couple of years. Back in 1988 when we had the Boston World Mission Seminar, we were painted a picture of what the future was going to look like, what it could be—but you still don't really know.

I guess one thing you've got to be able to say is, you had a vision for what you thought would happen. I shared this in a Zoom service, about the first Hispanic heritage month virtual worship service where they had all the people carrying flags reminded me of that Boston seminar, where they had people walk in with flags from all the nations—they were saying, "We know what we want to go do and we think this is what it's going to look like." But you have to be able to accept the future that God gives you and not be shaken by it, not be disappointed, because a lot of times I think what we have in our minds about what the future ought to be is not going to be what God has in mind, but we still have the joy and peace, and ultimately we're looking forward to eternity rather than the limited hopes in this temporal world. So I think what surprised me most is that not all my dreams have come true, not all my stories have been "happily ever after"; but at the same time I'm grateful to be where I'm at today, and that comes through that fundamental focus on day-to-day, winning each day.

Jessica: I think it's a moving target; I think it's always changing. When I was 20 I was becoming a disciple and I thought, "Wow, these people are pretty cool! Being a disciple is nothing like what I expected!" I thought religious people would be boring and not having fun, and in my twenties that was important to me. But in my thirties I was being a mom and thinking about my kids growing up and "This is going to be amazing!"

I think it's just different things each decade—things in our marriage, and now we're able to travel and do things I was never thinking about. So I think God is showing me even now in my sixties about expectations, kind of like what Jeff was talking about—not really not having any expectations, in the sense that you need to dream and have hope, but at the same time be willing to let God lead. I look at Abraham going to a place he didn't know, and Jesus who had nowhere to lay his head, and I want to have that spirit, that kind of heart, always to be willing to go anywhere, do anything, even now, like going on a mission team—what does that look like? Do we need to go somewhere? Does God want us to go somewhere, or do we need to work where we are? But that's what's so awesome about God! Life is always changing, so surprises are happening for me all the time.

What do you wish other people outside the church knew about following Jesus?

Jeff: We just talked about this Wednesday night in the first Hebrews class! I think the most important thing is the whole notion of eternity, and it touched me, the whole notion that what we're looking at right now is temporary, it's actually passing away before our eyes. And so the pursuit and the worry and the focus on the temporary world, anything that has to do with "the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, the pride in what one has and does" (1 John 2:16)—if we grasp that this is temporary stuff that we can't run aground on, I think really that seems to be the big battle that the world has. They're focusing on "I've got to address these issues that are associated with this world that is passing away, I've got to invest in this, this is what my commitments are going to be." If my most important thing is not eternity, if it's not following Jesus, it's something that by its very nature won't be able to provide real success in life, real satisfaction, and ultimately eternity.

Jessica: I think it's that God gives us security, peace and love and you can't get that anywhere else. Yeah, I think we're looking for peace. I know when I was 20 I was looking for that. It's really about the relationship with God and I think people need to understand that I think it's all well and good to get a nice job and have kids doing what the Joneses do. God is really what it's all about.

What has your biggest challenge been in following Jesus? How do you deal with it?

Jeff: Right now, it has been the tribulation—I've been studying about this, trying to put a Biblical perspective on it, God's perspective on what "tribulation" means. We think about tribulation as mass martyrdoms and all kinds of "disastrous" things, but generally, everybody probably has by definition some tribulation that challenges them and puts their faith to the test. I think the biggest challenge for me personally is I've had some of my idealism about what it means to be a disciple challenged during the tribulation of the pandemic—the isolation, the fear of death that seems to have gripped the church. I'm taking my own challenge, not being insensitive or unconcerned; I think some of the societal reactions within the church, the focus on civilian affairs. I see a lot of first-century issues—the walls of hostility that exist, that we really haven't explored, have sort of been revealed through some of the social unrest; some of the focus on politics within the church, the desire to speak to social issues and politics within the church—to me it's a current challenge going on in real time. I deal with that by continuing with what I know is right, living with my convictions, using the word of God to be my standard for applying proper principles in my life. At the same time, going back to our class on Jonah, I think it's a matter of acknowledging God's love for me, but then embracing God's love for the other guy and being able to continue to minister to people as individuals and work at it that way. Sometimes I think God uses these things to drive us in certain directions; I was thinking about in Acts 18, Priscilla and Aquila are introduced and they meet Paul as a result of being evicted from Rome because they were Jewish. And it's funny how the text doesn't go into all this discussion about how that was terrible, or editorialize about how bad the policies of the Roman Emperor were at the time, to cause them to have to leave—the story just says, "This happened, and hey, look what's going on now; we are now here in Ephesus doing great things." I don't know what the future is going to hold; something we might in 2022 think is a terrible thing, we look back in 2025 and say, "Yeah it happened, and now we're here and we're having victory in another area." The way I deal with it is to just be determined to try to stay on the narrow road.

Jessica: It's funny, after being home with my kids for those 15 years and now I've been 15 years working out in the world (not that I wasn't being out and about doing things, but it was different)—I felt sheltered back then, and now I can understand and appreciate it. I remember helping with the singing at midweek and I would look out in the crowd and think, "Everybody looks so mad!" But they were all working during the day, they were probably drained, and I remember sisters sharing there at midweek, "Oh, I know you've all had a hard day," and I would be self-righteous and think, "What's their problem? We're disciples of Jesus!" So now I'm working, and God is showing me it's not easy to be in the world but not of the world. You're outnumbered, and to love those around you and to be righteous and not fall into civilian affairs like Jeff was talking about, not getting involved in slander and the like—it's challenging! The only way I can do it is lean on my brothers and sisters, and my husband; there are times when I didn't want to tell Jeff my day, but I need to be open, I need to do like it says in John 3 and come into the light. For the truth to be exposed, I have to share what's going on, like saying, "I'm mad" or whatever—fill in the blank. So definitely, for me I've been really spending more time recently praying throughout my day. I really appreciate those that in their faith will pray at 12 and at 3 and at 6, I think that's awesome. So I was talking to this sister and she said she prays at 2:00 every day, and I tried that, and it didn't work, so I said, "What I'm going to do is take a moment to pray every time I step away from my desk throughout the day, whether I'm thanking God or asking Him to help me with the situation or whatever"—and it has been life-changing! I'm praying all the time; it's been great, and I think it's really helping me. It took me a while to figure it out, but recently it's like a light bulb came on. It has been a blessing lately at work, especially the last couple of months, and that's when I have been doing that more than ever. I want to retire soon and I am 62, but work's not too bad, so at this point I told Jeff I think I could work another two years—I just want to be used by God, and if this is where I need to be right now, I'm resting in "it's okay."

What is your favorite scripture?

Jeff: I think for me it's Hebrews 2:1, "We must pay the most careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away." And Revelation 12:11b says "they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death"—this victory over our fear of death, that's what I'm hanging onto right now. There's one in Jonah chapter 1 that's kind of defined my life for the last six months or so: "Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me." (verse 2)—you're going into cultures that you're either not excited about or afraid of, maybe even having a loathing or a lack of respect for, but God's telling you to ascend that wall of hostility and climb over it.

Jessica: That's a hard one for me, there so many, but the one that always I always go back to, one that's great and so true, is Proverbs 3:5-6, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight." It's true for past and present and future!

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time—interests, hobbies, organizations you belong to?

Jeff: Right now we're trying to sell all of our stuff on eBay— books, equipment and things—in anticipation of retirement. It's like a real-time ongoing yard sale, asking 350 million people if they want to buy any of our stuff. That's the only thing I can say I'm working on, outside of my work effort; it seems to occupy more of my time than I would have thought. The generation above us have all passed away, and we've inherited all their stuff. Now we are preparing to go next, and so we have to prepare and make it simpler for our kids; they don't seem to be interested in any of our stuff.

Jessica: Before the pandemic I was in an African Violet Club, so that was a lot of fun. I love plants, but I need to learn more how to take care of them. Recently I've been excited about creating some terrariums—I love cactus & the little teeny tropicals, so I'm really excited about that. I love exercise, so that it's something I do every week; I'm part of a gym and we do stretch classes virtually. Before Covid I was going to the gym—it's right around the corner, which is a blessing; I can walk to it. I love hiking, taking walks, traveling, going on little trips. Jeff and I had said that we are going to do a little bit of that. Organization—it's not my forte, but I love trying to organize things, so I'm working with Jeff on that as we're trying to downsize and lighten our load, in a sense. I've recently started playing sudoku; Jeff just taught me how to do it. And Jeff is really good at puzzles—we have some that he's done framed up on the wall.

What might someone be surprised to know about you?

Jeff: I think that probably most people would be surprised that I was a high school football official for about 10 years—out there on the field refereeing high school football on Friday nights. I've been out of that for a while now.

Jessica: I worked for a private investigator; it was only for a short stint because I didn't do very well—we had these little radios, and in a crucial moment I did not operate it well. But one time there was a job they let me go on that was a worker's comp case, where a guy was claiming injury and I had to pose as a college student doing a paper, and it was pretty scary! I went into the house, saw that he was faking it, and I had to record him; it was not fun, so I'm glad I only lasted for a few weeks—it could have gotten dangerous! I didn't have a gun, I had no protection, and I was only 20 or 21. I thought about being an FBI agent or working for the CIA, but the application was so thick and they said if you become an agent you can't tell anyone anything—you would have a secret life. And I didn't know if I could live that way, so I didn't wind up pursuing that.

If you could speak to yourself as you were ten years ago, what advice would you give yourself?

Jeff: "The future will not be what you expect—but you'll still be fine."

Jessica: "Don't take things personally!"

A sweet and special birthday celebration...

You might not have had the chance to get to know Julia Ruiz Diaz, but when she's in the fellowship, you can't help but notice her—she may be small in size, but God has packed a great deal of love and positive energy into that tiny package! Communication can be a challenge, because English is her third language and she isn't as strong in it as she is in Guarani (the language of indigenous Paraguayan people) or Spanish, but her ready smile says a lot. During the last year, she was diagnosed with some serious medical conditions, underwent surgery, and is still being treated, so when her 50th birthday came around, it was a great opportunity to make it a special occasion for her (without wearing her out). Take a look—

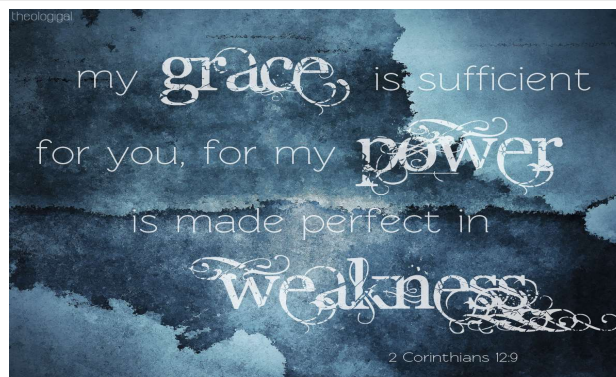


With thanks to Alicia Ruiz Diaz for additional pictures!

...and family group fun and games!

The Emmetts celebrated the relaxation of many Covid restrictions by holding a game night last Saturday.

These pictures can give you some idea of the fun, but we'll just have to imagine the noise level an enthusiastic game of Pictionary can cause! After two years of masks, virtual meetings, social distancing, and very limited personal interactions, it feels so good to get closer to the kind of fellowship we used to take for granted. Not everyone is comfortable going without masks yet, and those with a vulnerable immune system (or those taking care of the vulnerable) are still advised to take whatever precautions necessary to protect themselves and those they love, but for many, this change in our Covid defense levels brings welcome changes! Thanks to Danny Emmett for sharing these pictures!



We welcome news and pictures on interesting personal stories, family group activities, and more. Please send them to Nancy Berry, nberry2@gmail.com. Thank you!

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