



# Oak Haven Happenings

December 2019

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## Happy New Year to all of our Friends & Family!



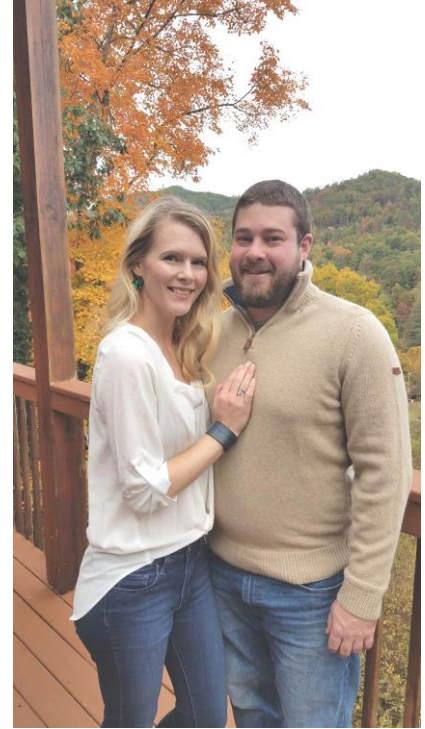
*Jim & Julie with (from left to right) Corey & Michelle; Jennifer, Bryan, Evelyn (2) & Aubrey (4); Liz, Brian & Juniper (2); Laken (8), Kristin, Hosanna (5), Abigail (1), Philip, John (6), Matthew (11), Robert (12), & Gabriella (13).*



Our big exciting news is the addition of our eleventh grandchild, James Nathaniel Clements, born on October 25th. He missed the above family picture by 14 hours. He was supposed to wait another three and a half weeks before arriving which made his parents miss most of our family vacation in the Smokies. Kristin & Philip enjoyed the drive down from Cincinnati to Tennessee the day before with all the Fall colors, took a quick family picture the next morning, and then headed back up to Cincinnati to have their baby at Christ Hospital. We are very thankful for a safe delivery for both mother and son. James is the happiest newborn I have ever seen. He has so many smiles and such a sweet contented look on his face most of the time.



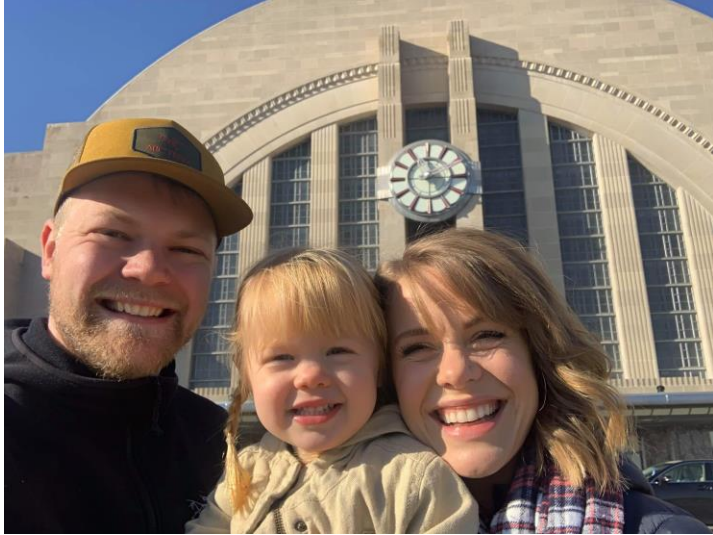
We had a great time enjoying the Smokies with all the rest of our kids, their spouses and ten grand kids in a 5 bedroom 5 bath cabin in Wears Valley near Townsend. It was so much fun hiking, playing games, making meals, celebrating Robert's 12th birthday (with homemade caramel apples and lots of toppings) and hanging out together.



One of our big highlights was seeing a mother bear and two cubs up close. They walked right past us on the big deck of our cabin while we were sitting next to

the window. We were hoping to see one out on a trail, but this was so much better seeing them up close, but safely behind glass. We weren't sure how Abigail at 14 months would handle being away from her parents, but she did great. We were impressed that she was so laid back with us, sleeping through the night, and calmly going with the flow of whatever we were doing. I would not recommend taking a 14 month old to play putt-putt though. She was always on the go.





Life is full and wonderful. We are really enjoying this stage of life. I can say that I have thoroughly enjoyed each season of my life, but I didn't think that I would enjoy the empty nest stage as much as I do. We really enjoy the time we have with our adult kids and their families. And having grandchildren is just delightful as all of you with grand kids know. Watching them grow, explore and learn new things is a really fun stage, not only for them, but for us as well. We enjoy watching Juniper (2) once a week

while Brian works on renovating their house, and taking care of Aubrey (4) & Evelyn (2) another day up in Xenia while Jim works on our rental properties.



Jim and I are also enjoying the freedom to travel more in this stage (eleven weeks this year). Our big trip was a three week trip in August to Austria, Switzerland and Germany. Jim's highlight was hiking up the mountains in Austria and spending two nights in mountain huts. (Actually, they are a lot nicer than huts.) It was really cool hiking high above tree line, seeing lots of alpine flowers, crossing over creeks and rocks, and listening to cow bells. It was the book Heidi coming to life! My highlight was the bike riding. We rode all around central Munich, took a Sound of Music bike tour in Salzburg and biked around a big lake in the lovely town of Zellamsee. We had so many other wonderful experiences on this trip: touring Bavarian castles, hiking the Kitzlochklamm Gorge, hiking along the huge Krimml Falls, and eating lots of pretzels & gelato. The Alps were incredibly beautiful and such a treat to experience.



Another highlight this year was taking a trip this Fall with my parents, sister Melanie & brother Jeff to Canton, OH where we all were born. It was really special to do a memories trip and see some of the houses where my parents lived, where they went to school, where they met at Junior Achievement,

etc. We also went to New Concord to see Muskingum College where my dad went to school and they spent their first year of marriage, as well as Malta/McConnelsville where my dad has fond memories of spending his summers when he was young. We laughed a lot, Dad told lots of stories, and we had fun eating our way around Ohio: ice cream at Tom's Ice Cream Bowl, donuts at Johnnie's Bakery and candy from Heggy's Chocolates. It was a lot of fun! We try to get out to my parent's "farm" in Indiana once a month to help them with projects. It is always nice to spend time with them.



Much of our time the first half of this year was spent fixing up two of our rental units. I didn't have the best attitude when things kept taking longer and longer. The second half of the year, Jim spent countless hours working at clearing the woods of invasives: Honeysuckle, Barberry, Autumn Olive, Euonymus, and Stilt Grass. We have now "weeded" 45 of our 60 acres. It is so rewarding to see the difference in the woods. While it has been a lot of work, it has been a labor of love for both of us.

A note from Jim.

As we go through this Christmas season, take time to remember that The Reason for the Season is ... you! While that may sound self-centered, the truth is that the reason Jesus was born, lived in this world, and died on the cross was to redeem you and me, and restore our relationship with God the Father. Let us appreciate that sacrifice as we go through the upcoming year by choosing to be a positive influence on the people and world around us. It's the gift that He would truly like us to give this season.

*"But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship."*

*Galatians 4 4-5*