



January 16, 2023

Dear family, friends, and prayer partners,

As we enter a brand-new year, we wish you a (belated) Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. We desire to be both hopeful and realistic about what 2023 may bring into our lives. The wise and all-powerful care of our loving Heavenly Father and His sufficient grace give us confidence to face whatever the year may hold in store.

We (obviously) did not get out a Christmas prayer letter or greeting cards this year. But we did have a full, fruitful, and blessed Christmas season. Here is a report of events since our last letter.

In October, Cornerstone held its annual Missions Emphasis Month. Special speakers from other ministries in Taiwan came to challenge our people. We continue to preach and pray for the Lord to call men from our congregation to full-time ministry.

In early November, Matt officiated a wedding for one of the young ladies who came up through our Sunday School and youth ministry. Her husband is a believer who grew up in one of the other missionary works with which we fellowship. We see so many of our teens leave the church when they go to college and never return; and most of them end up marrying unbelievers. It was a blessing for us to be part of this important milestone in the lives of two young people who desire to follow on and serve the Lord.



For Christmas this year, Marla felt led to plan and direct a musical outreach program. After

surgeries last May and June, her wrists have recovered sufficiently so that she felt able to play the piano without too much impairment. The program involved more than thirty members of the congregation, who participated in music, recitation, or performed supporting roles. Songs by the church choir and a children's choir, as well as a handbell ensemble, were accompanied by narration and Scripture readings and followed by a gospel message. This program was performed at Cornerstone on Christmas Eve.

We counted 15 first-time visitors in attendance and about 10 more unsaved family members of our church congregation. Marla was particularly thrilled that two physical therapists from the clinic she visits attended and also brought their children with them. Please pray for these two ladies' salvation.

We held a regular worship service on Christmas morning, then in the evening we took the same program out to a new church planting ministry in a nearby community. This work is led by the Brian Bollon family, who were part of Cornerstone during their language and cultural acquisition. Because they do not yet have a nucleus of believers (nor even many regular attenders), we were able to be a blessing to them by taking our program out to their location. This allowed them to invite their community to hear the Christmas message and become acquainted with their church. About 5 unsaved contacts attended the program.

On January 2, Cornerstone held a one-day New Year's retreat. We rented a bus that carried us all out to a forest park about an hour away. Matt taught a Bible session on the "Christian Hope"; then we had a picnic meal, played games, and enjoyed walking and exercising out-of-doors. After the restrictions of Covid, we were all glad to enjoy fun and fellowship together away from the church building.



In October, we introduced the Cornerstone congregation to the principles and procedures for seeking and calling a church pastor. Since God has not raised up a national pastor from within our congregation, we are preparing them for the time when we will be stepping away from church leadership (in August). We have organized a "pulpit committee" and begun the process of orienting and training them for this task. Please pray for this ongoing need and for the functioning of this committee.

As you can see from this report, we have been extremely busy for the last three months. In addition to all of those things mentioned above, ongoing preaching and teaching preparation has kept Matt tied to his office with few breaks. Finally, this week, things have slacked off enough so that we can get some much-needed rest and turn our attention to some of the things that we have not been able to do during the hectic holiday season. January 20 will begin a 10-day Chinese New Year celebration in Taiwan. Sunday worship will be held as usual, but other ministries will stop during this period. We are looking forward to a lighter load for a few weeks.

Finally, an additional missionary family has recently arrived in Taiwan. The Brian Buckley family visited Taiwan just before the Covid outbreak. In October they were finally issued visas to return. They have moved into a home near the Brian Bollon family and will be assisting them in that new church work. Josh and Rachel Stewart are planning their return to Taiwan at the completion of their furlough in late March. They have let us know they will be returning to Cornerstone to assist the congregation as it continues to seek a national pastor. As the time of our departure approaches, the church will transition over to Josh Stewart's leadership.

Marla and I are planning to return to the US in August for a furlough. We will be settling in church-provided housing in the Midland, Michigan area. Our plan is to visit our supporting churches primarily in Michigan, Wisconsin, and Pennsylvania during this period. We are praying and considering what ministry the Lord will guide us to pursue after this furlough is complete. Please pray with us about our next steps.

In Christ,

  
Matt & Marla Hanna