

Spring seems to have arrived with the close of winter retreats this year. Nice change! Oh, it's been cold again for a couple of days here and there, but nicely warm overall. It seems we can't already be midway through April, but we are. Spring cleaning, which seems to consume us during March and April, is drawing to a close (Yea!) - four days left over the course of the next two weeks! In May, we're looking forward to three Co-Labor Challenge weekends - churches and friends of Barakel coming to grab rakes and shovels to pick up leaves and put down wood chips on the paths along with readying many other places around camp for the summer. Things look so new when it is all finished. There will likely be finishing of bits of spring cleaning here and there, in places that aren't heated - we like to leave those for as long as we can! :) Spring Men's Retreat, Set-Apart Girl Weekend, and Memorial Day Family Camp will follow, with Summer Camps on their heels.



Over the last 8-10 weeks, much of my time has been spent in poring over catalogs and deciding what merchandise to order for our Trading Post this summer. There have been a lot of hours conversing by phone and email with sales reps, artists, and companies to finish the process. NOW all that 'stuff' (someone actually called it 'junk') is showing up on the Trading Post doorstep! The picture you see gives you some idea what two shipments out of ?? can do to my space! I've been hours just checking in orders to make sure we got it all, and everything is in one piece and artwork is what it should be. Most of the pricing process is still to come. I had no idea what this process would entail, and have learned a great deal these several weeks: Like it's good to ask teenagers what they like, 'cuz it's becoming quite obvious that I really haven't a clue! Like how one, for days on end, can wake in the morning (or even in the middle of the night) with mind spinning over details, and what contacts still need to be made. (Or what to DO with all that stuff now that it's here!) But, in spite of the wildness, I'm really enjoying the job, and learning new ropes. Summer will be a whole new curve!

I'm enjoying some other forms of service this spring: Helping once again to paint sets for Fairview Choral Group's musical, and making a wedding cake for one of our "staff kids" (who obviously isn't a kid anymore). I have a graduation cake to do for another "staff kid" (a special "adopted" niece), and possibly at least portions of another wedding cake this summer. (It's too complicated to explain that one, so I just won't go there. . .). I still enjoy our summer staff coming for Thursday night open house when they can, and am spending special time Tuesdays with that special adopted niece. There will soon be mentoring meetings with a college aged girl as well.

I do truly thank you who support me with prayers and gifts. You bless my days, remind me that this is where God wants me, and give me the moral support needed to continue. I am grateful for you, and pray God's blessings for you, as well.

Prayer and Praise

- *Praise for a good winter: safety for campers and staff; decisions made
 - *Prayer for our upcoming weeks of ministry - largely to children
 - *Praise for God's provision for Barakel and staff (Jesus and I paid off a big bill recently :)).
 - *Prayer for God's continued provision for Barakel and its staff
 - *Praise for physical strength, health, and spiritual growth
 - *Prayer for physical strength, health, and continual growth in the Lord.
 - *Praise for God's Word and the Gospel presented there
 - *Prayer for discipline in daily reading God's Word and considering how the Gospel should change my life.
- Thank you so much for praying for all of us!