

Bill, Peg, Kristen, Lauren, Meghan, Caitlyn, Shaelyn and Jaidyn McKell

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Dear Friends,

This year's family picture is an image of what life has been like in our family this fall—seven of us getting together periodically (in this case for Thanksgiving and to watch the Buckeyes win the Big Game), with Kristen keeping in touch via FaceTime.

Kristen, desiring an international experience after college, is currently teaching English in Beijing, China. She graduated from Ohio Northern Suma Cum Laude in May and spent much of her summer working at Young Life camp. She then spent a couple of months with her grandparents, as she helped care for her Grammy who continues to recover at home from a stroke she experienced a little more than a year ago. She left for her year-long experience in early October. If you'd like to follow along, she is sharing her experience with a neat little blog that you can find at Kristen.McKell.com. If you'd like to send her a card, please send it to our address and we'll ship it to her with our next package.

We're back to only two in college for a year. Lauren is having a good year at Muskingum where she was selected junior captain on the women's soccer team. We enjoyed spending time with a nice group of athletes and parents as we worked her games into a busy family soccer schedule. She is now doing her athletic training rotation, gaining valuable athletic training experience and coaching insights, at John Glenn High School in New Concord.

Meghan is a sophomore at Cedarville University. Despite top grades, she decided to find a major she enjoyed more than engineering. She is finding that enjoyment in accounting. Meghan is rooming again this year with her friend, Maggie, who we are happy to welcome into the family on the occasions she is able to spend with us. Meghan and Lauren both have cars at school this year, so they've been able to make it home frequently this fall.

Caitlyn and I were able to experience a wonderful adventure last summer as we traveled to Malaga, Spain to participate in a European youth conference my brother Ed and his wife Kim were leading. Cait had a great time worshipping and ministering with her cousins and many new friends. She and I had our best times together at meals and on morning runs in Malaga and touring for several days with Ed's and Kim's family at their home in Kandern, Germany. We flew back to the US with them as they were beginning a year in the states before returning to Germany next year. They are living this year in Memphis, but it has been great visiting with them on extended holiday trips.

Caitlyn is in the process of narrowing down colleges for next year. She is interested in missions and believes that an education degree may be the best way to prepare for that possible calling. She is a senior at Unioto High School where she again played high school soccer and assisted with marching band this fall. She plans to play on the boys' tennis team again this spring.

Soccer continues to complicate and enrich our lives, especially in the fall. XiXi joined Caitlyn on the high school soccer team and played center-mid on the varsity team. That's a neat opportunity for a

freshman, but the result of a tremendous amount of training and conditioning over the last year. That training included a developmental camp with the US Women's National Team in Nashville, a trip she shared with Peg last March. Jaidyn decided to forgo club soccer this fall and played on the junior high team instead. She had a great season, playing most of the time on a successful girls' team and occasionally on the boys' team. My role as announcer for both high school and junior high kept me at home games and left Peg travelling to away games and Lauren's games when there was a conflict. The girls are playing indoor soccer this winter and the two youngest will play club soccer in the spring.

Jaidyn is enjoying middle school this year. She and Caitlyn have us driving early to school quite often for before-school student council meetings. Jai continues to share the competitive dance experience with Peg (and sometimes Meghan), as she rehearses all fall/winter in Waverly and competes all spring.

Our "family fitness" continued at Great Seal State Park last summer. We all participated in the family session at 6am, while Lauren, Caitlyn and XiXi stayed for the athlete session immediately afterwards. Peg wasn't able to join us much this year because of persistent knee pain that eventually led to meniscus surgery this fall. She is now feeling better and hopes to get back into the fitness program with me at Ohio University-Chillicothe this winter. Our friends, the Hanes, continue to push us to be our best with trail running every Saturday during the "off-season."

The older girls have fallen in love with musical theater, travelling (often, but not always, with Peg) a number of times this year to see shows in New York, Chicago, Cleveland, Dayton, Detroit, Atlanta and DC. To keep the cost at the price of tickets and gas, they pack food and sleep in the car as they take turns driving. Of course, everyone is still into skiing and we are looking forward to another fun ski season. We would love to have you join us for our trips to Holiday Valley on the weekends of January 7, January 28, February 25 and March 18 (condo trip). We skipped our condo ski trip for a canopy tour in West Virginia in 2016, but we plan to be back at Holiday Valley that weekend in 2017. It's a family trip, so please bring your family and join us.

We loved worshipping at River Valley Community Church in Waverly the last couple of years, but it's been difficult truly being a part of the church community while living so far away. We decided it was time to find a church closer to home, where the girls could be more involved with a youth group. We have settled at Brookside Church in Chillicothe.

I have worked hard the last several years getting my traditional campfire stories on paper. This year's story is another one of my very first stories. It was my first effort to fulfill the many requests for a "ghost story" with a scary story that wouldn't keep scouts up all night. When we started telling "really scary" stories at the Southern Ohio Storytelling Festival, I came up with a couple of scarier endings. This is the middle one. (The scariest one has me saying at the end, "It's kind of comforting now isn't it, Andy. Andy? Andy!")

We appreciate your friendship and are grateful to be able to keep in touch. May God guide your paths in the year to come.

With Prayers,

Bill and Peg