

# The McFarlands

## Ministering at Peniel Bible Camp

September 2023

Dear Partners in Prayer,

As our busy summer camp season came to a close and our fall season began, we reflected on the application of the Apostle Paul's instructions in 1 Thesalonians 5:16-18: **"<sup>16</sup> Rejoice always, <sup>17</sup> pray without ceasing, <sup>18</sup> give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."** We **rejoice** and marvel in what the Lord is doing in the hearts of campers through the ministry of Peniel Bible Camp. We **pray** earnestly for the needs of those who come to camp, as well as those of our family and friends. We strive to **give thanks** in both times of trial and times of calm. We know that many of you join us regularly in rejoicing, praying, and giving thanks. Thank you for your encouragement and faithfulness.

This was a profitable summer! After two weeks of Family Camps, we hosted 319 campers from 77 churches during Junior and Teen camps, which is an increase of around 50 campers for the summer. What an exciting opportunity to encourage believers in the Lord, and reach unbelieving youths with the gospel message. We saw spiritual decisions made and rejoice in each one.

We also forged new partnerships this summer with 2 separate work teams. The first team came from Pennsylvania during Junior 1 week, and focused their ministry on preparation for concrete footers of the new playground equipment as well as custodial responsibilities for the camp. What a great blessing! The second team came from Indiana during Junior 2 week, and their large number of volunteers allowed them to work in a wide variety of areas. They helped with meals, custodial, programming, and projects. The project team accomplished many tasks with Josh: they cut, split, and stacked firewood, trimmed low-hanging branches, installed a border and mulch walking path between the zipline landing and tower, leveled soil at the newly renovated testimony area, and handled custodial responsibilities. We are so thankful for these partnerships that allowed us to get so much accomplished during our "busy season"! Aside from managing the work teams and projects this summer, Josh also installed gutters on The Studio and installed a new mini-split HVAC system on that building. He continued installation of the new playground, which is now around 75-80% complete.

Since the end of Teen 2 week, things continue to be busy and exciting! We've hosted 10 different rental and school groups, had a wonderful Ladies' Retreat weekend with around 100 ladies, and hosted a local church's Sportsman's Retreat. Later this week we'll have a school group here for Face Camp, then another rental group, followed by our yearly Couples' Retreat. In fact, we have a group scheduled here each week/weekend from now until almost Thanksgiving. What a blessing to see our camp schedule continue to grow, and have both new groups and returning ones come to PBC to see God face to face (Genesis 32:30)!



*First day of school 2023-24*

Going back to the verses in 1 Thessalonians 5 about giving thanks in all circumstances, we thank our God for protecting Josh during an unfortunate accident with the chop saw 2 weeks ago. It was a difficult experience for the family as we rushed to the ER, but the Lord allowed Josh's thumb to remain intact in spite of the damage to the tissue and a "tuft" fracture. He has regular appointments with an ortho hand specialist, and wears a splint and bandages daily. Although he is working with one good hand right now, he continues to make headway on projects and "work heartily, as for the Lord" (Colossians 3:23). We are always encouraged by and thankful for our regular volunteers, but in this particular trial, we are extra-thankful for these folks!

**Please praise the Lord with us for:**

- ◇ A profitable, safe summer camping season, and the "next step" spiritual decisions that were made
- ◇ A full fall schedule with many upcoming opportunities to give the gospel and encourage believers
- ◇ A smooth start to the school year for our children (Paul- pre-school; Audri- 3rd grade; Bella- 7th grade)

**Please pray for and with us in the following ways:**

- ◇ Safety for campers and staff during this fall season
- ◇ Volunteers to help Josh finish up the installation of the new playground
- ◇ God's work in campers' hearts to make "next step" decisions in their spiritual walk (salvation, commitment)
- ◇ Healing of Josh's left thumb
- ◇ Physical healing for Melissa (ongoing health issues)

Please visit the Peniel Bible Camp Facebook page for pictures, videos, and updates. You can also reach out to Josh or Melissa if you have any needs or desire details on a particular topic. We'd love for you to come out to camp and see all of the new renovations and projects for yourself, so please let us know if we can help facilitate a visit to camp. We are praying and thankful for you!

For His glory,

The McFarlands



*New zipline path*



*Installation of new playground area*



*Family time in Berlin, Ohio*