

## Happy New Year 2018

We've learned One Thing this year.

2017 opened normally – Bobby ministering to teens on his bus route, Denise serving 21 schools in ESOL (English as Second Language) for the local school district, and both of us helping a new church begin in our area.

**Mar-May: flurry of dr/hospital visits**

Then on **March 1**, metastatic neuro-endocrine tumors were discovered on Bobby's liver, and a whirlwind began. Intra-arterial radiation in **May** brought the swelling 'way down, providing us time to remember that which is *important: friends, family, fellowship*.

**June: family visits FL**

**June:** First, Alicia (23) spread her wings and rented a house with friends, thankfully just 4 miles away! Next, Bobby excitedly celebrated his 50<sup>th</sup> class reunion in Jacksonville, reconnecting with lots of old *friends*. Finally, Denise's mom, brother, sister, nieces, nephews, etc, gathered in FL for a

wonderful *family* vacation. Pictured left in the beautiful Rainbow River: daughter Alicia; sister Lori with Glen, Lyle, & Lane; Denise & Bobby; Mom.

**July: Arizona**

A week-long trip to Arizona in **July** renewed the bonds of *fellowship* with Shiloh Christian Center. These dear *friends*, as well as the beauty of the high desert, rekindled a joy in ministry, and we felt encouraged that the Lord is not through with us yet.

**Aug: Denise back to school**

All too soon, Denise headed back to work on **August 3**! However, Bobby had taken medical leave in May, and even though he was feeling much better, the doctor would not release him to return to work. Never one to quit, he fought discouragement by finding lots to do for *friends* and *family*. He's learned that every moment is an opportunity to TRUST GOD and to rest in Him, even when storms rage around us.

**Sept: Hurricane Irma**

Trusting God in the storm took on literal meaning in **September** when Hurricane Irma barreled through Florida, impacting our county significantly – 70% were without power, and school was closed more than a week.... By the grace of God, our property was untouched, and we never lost electricity. Peace in the storm.

**Nov: Guatemala and Belize**

In **November**, Caleb (21) sprouted wings and moved to Ohio, with the help of big sis Elizabeth who flew down to help him navigate from Ocala to Findlay. He's working at

Cooper Tire and staying with Grammy 'til he finds an apartment. The same day he left, Bobby & Denise departed for 12 days in Guatemala and Belize. God poured out innumerable blessings as we met staff and families of Jose Gilberto Christian School (part of the OBI Sponsorship Program for many years) and visited countless *friends* who feel like *family*. Huge revelation: the women we visited, they really get the "Mary" thing (Luke 10). Sure, they know how to work hard like Martha, but they understand the One Thing: time with



Jesus to hear from Him... which includes intimacy with God and *fellowship* with one another.

What refreshment and life-changing renewal the Lord gave us on this trip!

**Dec: family together in Ohio**

**December** brought another blessing:

a “quick” (1000-mi.) drive to Ohio, with all of our *family* together for Christmas. Pictured left at Mom’s house: Elizabeth, Zach, Amber (7), Alura (3), Denise, Bobby, Alicia, Caleb. The rest of Denise’s *family* was there, too, for a wonderful celebration of our Savior’s birth.

Here in **2018**, the storm continues as Bobby is in another round of radiation to slow the growth of the tumors. In all this we trust God – He is faithful! We have His peace in the midst of the storm and increasing confidence in His great faithfulness.

May you be blessed with time in His presence in this New Year. We love you and thank God for your part in our life.

A<sup>3</sup>BCDEZ Dickens *family*