

Thanksgiving and Back Again. . .

Wasn't it just Thanksgiving? We celebrated Thanksgiving with the Youth Group at the Youth Center, the day before Thanksgiving. It was great! We shared a wonderful meal, talked, laughed, played games, and even had a pie eating contest.

The weeks leading up to Christmas were busy, but especially the week of Christmas. . .

We had such a busy, blessing filled week. We had a wonderful time with the youth on Wednesday night at the Youth Group Christmas party. In the weeks leading up to Christmas, the youth made an 8 foot tall Christmas tree out of more than 500 re-cycled soda cans. They are big drinkers! We sang Christmas carols around the tree with lit candles.





During the party, Bill received two phone calls. One from a friend asking to come speak with us when we got home from Youth Group around 8:30, and the other asking if it would be okay for 20 to 30 Korean university students from Handong Global University in South Korea to come to sing carols at our house around 9:00 pm. Bill told me about the calls as we drove some of the youth home from Youth Group. As he spoke I glanced at the clock in the car and saw that it was ten of 8:00. My first thought was 'Yikes!', and then I started planning what we needed to do when we got home. As we arrived home I felt confident with the quick plan of moving a table, getting together snacks and juice, water and soda for the university students. However, I had just put my purse down when our 8:30 friend arrived. Fortunately, while we spoke with our friend, the Korean university singing group called and said they would be about 20 minutes late. I thought 'Great!' we can still make this work.

The Korean group arrived and one student did a series of magic tricks with a rope. He was really good, but it was funny because our puppy Alpie went and stood right in front of him wagging his tail and looking like he was going to jump up and grab the rope. I am happy to say that Alpie restrained

himself from grabbing the rope and running off. Then the Pitch Pipes, an incredible a cappella group of university students sang a wonderful array of Christmas songs and finished by praying for us. We then prayed for them, and offered them refreshments.



What happened next reminded me of a cartoon, the students surrounded the table and moved in tightly and then they swelled back out. I looked at the table in disbelief. . .there weren't even any crumbs left. I dashed over to Bill and told him that I was going see if I could find any other food to put out for the students. I triumphantly returned with some chips. I handed the chips into the circle and someone relieved me of the chips, I saw that they were dumped on the table and again they went in tight and backed away revealing that the chips were gone. Again I went searching for more food, I found a little more to put out, and everyone was looking satisfied so I thought all was well until. . .

One of the students picked up a can and said "Beer" pointing at the can; I quickly looked at the can and said "Root Beer" "soda". He again pointed at the can and said "Beer". I tried to assure them that it was soda, not beer. Finally one of them opened the can and tasted the sugary sweet root beer. Okay, they understood soda not beer. Ahhh.



Thursday, I taught ballet class and then led rehearsal for the Christmas Eve and Christmas Day presentations at Market Village Mall and Power of Love Church. While I was teaching and rehearsing the girls, Bill was downstairs leading a cookie baking group. After rehearsal we then joined them in making cookies to give away at the Youth Group table at the Christmas Eve celebration at the mall.



Friday, we went shopping for more cookie baking ingredients, followed by a wonderful evening with friends at the Connect3e fundraising dinner at the Sheraton to raise money to build a second home for Karen students.

(<http://connect3e.org/>)



April and our Swiss friend and missionary Stefan at the Connect3e Dinner.

Saturday, we baked and baked and baked cookies to give out to people at Market Village at our Youth Group outreach table, where we also gave out free Thai and English Bibles and tracts, as well as information about the Youth Center. Fortunately we had a lot of help from the Youth Group. :-)



We just had enough time to dash home for the costumes for the girls to dance at Market Village as part of a Christian Outreach Christmas Eve celebration. The girls did an amazing job. We are so proud of them! They danced to one Christmas song in English and one in Thai.



Then bright and early Sunday, Christmas morning, we picked the girls up to dance at the Power of Love Church.



Bill presented the Christmas Day sermon and lit the Advent candles at the Power of Love Church, and in my unbiased opinion :-)) did a wonderful job of making us want to draw closer to Jesus - not just for *one* Holy day, but for a lifetime.

The girls danced wonderfully. It is amazing to me that I have only been teaching them for just over 3 months, they are already so good.



Then Christmas afternoon we were so blessed to spend the afternoon with wonderful friends from Australia, laughing, telling stories and sharing a meal.



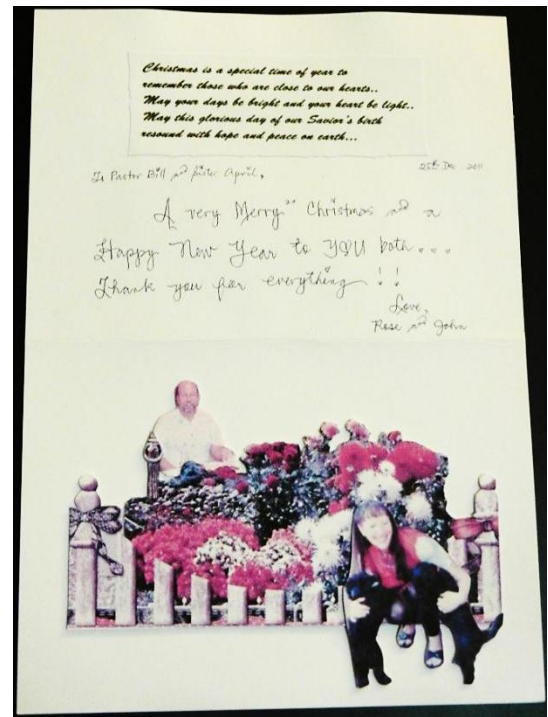
And so here we are, our hearts are overflowing with **joy and thanksgiving.**



We pray that each of you found yourselves drawing closer to THE CHRIST in Christmas.

Blessings in the New Year,

April & Bill



A beautiful handmade card from a friend here in Hua Hin.