

December 1, 2011

Dear Family and Friends,

We hope you all had a blessed and wonderful Thanksgiving. We were blessed to have a great Thanksgiving with the Murphy family at Boling AFB. Hard to believe its time to say Merry Christmas. Also we'd like to say thank you for the birthday wishes for me and Matt! We really appreciated them.

We have had some new developments with Matt's ankle. About two weeks ago the Dr at the hyperbaric in Georgetown felt like we should be more aggressive in closing Matt's wound. The hyperbaric has healed the wound, even closing it a little. The dr feels like more aggressive action to close it quicker would benefit Matt. Georgetown hospital, working with Walter Reed Bethesda, have decided to allow Dr Attinger to perform a flexer digiti minimi flap procedure on Matt's ankle. Dr Attinger is a well known vascular surgeon who is supposed to be the worlds best doctor performing this operation. Also, no one at Walter Reed does this kind of flap. This procedure is different than a free flap that the Walter Reed doctors discussed and decided wouldn't work for Matt. Here is a very generic and brief description of the procedure. The Dr will cut the muscle on the side of Matt's foot, leaving it attached, and fold it back into the hole in his ankle. Tomorrow Matt will be admitted to Georgetown and Dr will debride the bone. They have to make sure there is no infection in the bone. Then next week he will have surgery. This has all happened so fast. We were wondering why we couldn't do this weeks, months ago. From what we can gather its timing. The timing is right now.

We are very excited for the possibility of getting this wound closed. It seems to be a great move forward in Matt's healing progress. There are some concerns of course. The bone needs to be free from infection. The hyperbaric treatments should have helped with clearing up any infections. Although we know he still has infected pins. The concerns are the flap will not work, there could be infection afterwards, as well as the routine concerns that can happen with any surgery. Also, all this could delay or cancel our plans to come home for Christmas. I will say nothing is usually routine with Matt. So there are concerns. So again we ask you to pray specifically for these things: a clear report of infections, the flap will take, no further infections, no complications, we will still be able to come home for awhile. (We did get a report today, Dec. 3, that there is infection. Waiting on full report of what kind and where.)

Advent season is here. Time to wait. Waiting to celebrate the birth of Jesus. I love the anticipation of Christmas, baking decorating and wrapping gifts. I think there is almost more joy in preparing for the celebration and in the waiting to open gifts. Weird I know! I was thinking about Matt's surgery, timing, the waiting and realized other than Christmas, I don't like waiting. This last year we have done more waiting, mostly in waiting rooms, than any other time in our lives. Our experience in the waiting room has taught us more about God and our relationship with Him continues to grow.

Psalms 27 says to wait on the Lord, wait patiently on the Lord. It is easy to feel forgotten in the waiting room. But what we are learning is that God is in the waiting room with us. He is there patiently, lovingly, mercifully waiting with us through the joys and sorrows. We know many of you are or have been in life's waiting room. There is a lot you can teach us. Dave and I pray that as we wait on Christmas with great anticipation and expectancy we will be able to take that anticipation and expectancy into whatever waiting room we enter next.

Praying all of our hearts will be open to hearing and receiving all that God has for us as we wait expectantly!

Emmanuel ~ God with us!

Psalm 27:13-14

Yet I am confident I will see the Lord's goodness

while I am here in the land of the living.

Wait patiently for the Lord.

Be brave and courageous.

Yes, wait patiently for the Lord.

So after I finished this email and dinner I checked a voice mail on my phone. It was the scheduling person from Georgetown. She said there was a problem with TRICARE insurance. If the problem isn't cleared up tomorrow we will have to reschedule for next week. Many questions went through my mind. Will we be able to come home for Christmas, do we postpone surgery, what will happen to the wound if we wait? I was frustrated and sad. It is now Friday Dec 2. As Matt and I sat in the waiting room (literally) at Georgetown, waiting for the answer regarding the surgery Dave and I prayed for what ever would be best. Our prayer is that God will work out what is best for Matt's healing. We will be disappointed if we don't go home for Christmas. We are doing our best to look expectantly to what God is working out for the future.

Love & Blessings, Dave & Debbie

Dec. 2, @ 10:00pm Matt is finally in his hospital room at Georgetown. He had the first surgery ~ wound and bone debride. They changed out some of the pins in the exfix and cleaned out some infection. He was in a lot of pain but now he is sleeping. Tuesday, Dec 6 is the next scheduled surgery. Thank you for your prayers.