

## Getting To Know Your Church Family

Amanda, James, Gracie and Harrison Saunders

I was asked a few weeks ago to write an article for the church newsletter to let the church learn more about my family. At first, I was hesitant to write this. Not sure of what parts of my life to talk about and which parts to hide. But going through these last few weeks of the baptism classes I've learned I don't have to hide any of it. God had this planned from the start and I'm right where He wants me to be.

So, let's start at the beginning. I was born and raised in Somerset County, PA. Although, I did live in Martinsburg for the first two years of my life, I found myself back in PA at age three. I was adopted by family friends after my parents were unable to raise me any longer. I lived there until I was three months shy of turning eighteen. My life wasn't the best nor was it the worst. I did go to Church of the Brethren in Windber, PA for several years. But it wasn't until the death of my adopted father at age 13 that I truly felt God's love for the first time. It was at the funeral home when my old Pastor from years earlier drove almost an hour to pray with us. It was eye opening game changer for me.



Then, at the age of seventeen I could no longer stay in PA and decided to move back to West Virginia. It was then that I met my (now) husband for the first time. Let me tell you it didn't go well. My new boyfriend and I showed up to hang out at a friend's house where James was waiting to meet me. After that we didn't talk for about ten years. Although, we would still see each other around since my cousin married one of his best friends.

Our lives went separate ways. He dropped out of high school to get his GED and go to technical school for HVAC at James Rumsey. I graduated from Hedgesville High only to party and get pregnant and ended up moving back to PA with my biological father. There I got a job, apartment, went back to college, and tried to straighten up my life. Then in 2008, my grandmother got sick and I wanted to move back home. So, I packed up my little Gracie girl and came home to West Virginia.

A few months later I saw James at a birthday party for my cousin's son. There, watching him with her two boys just melted my heart. That "dork," as I previously called him, was such an amazingly gentle man. So, two days later, I asked him out. Thankfully after talking for a few moments he said yes. Our first date was January 2009. Just a simple night in with movies and a pizza turned into a life together. We had our son, Harrison, in September of 2010, got married May of 2011 and he officially adopted my daughter in December of that same year.

Our life was going good. I thought it couldn't get any better, then the kids asked to go to church with Poppy. I thought sure why not I'll take them once or twice. Fully expecting for it to be like the last two places I tried, but when we came to Fellowship we felt so welcomed and not at all judged that I wanted to go back. Over time I've seen how wrong I was and that our life could be so much better with Jesus in it than it was without him. Now, my husband is even noticing the grace of God in our lives he's been talking about joining Sunday school or bible study nights.

Our God is amazing and I'm so excited to see what's happening next in our story. Stay tuned to find out!

Articles for the December Newsletter are due by November 21. Please consider writing an article such as a book, video or movie review, etc. Give your articles to Chris this month.

## RESCUE MISSION

The Martinsburg Union Rescue Mission will host a breakfast on Nov 7 at 8:30 am followed by a brief program explaining the ministry of the mission and a tour of the facility. Call 304-263-6901 x3 to RSVP

