

the Famlet monthly

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Dear Family,

It's Sunday night and another pleasant General Conference weekend is in the books. Our family spent much of today with Ben, a nice young man in the Derwood Ward who spends a lot of time with Hannah and seems to be appropriately frightened of me. He watched the morning session at our house and then went with us to Grandma's house for inter-session taco bar (Grandma and Grandpa weren't there, but everyone else was—hope they don't mind) and then stayed with us to watch the afternoon session there. When her mother asked her how she felt about the inevitable ribbing she would get for bringing a boy to this sort of thing, Hannah's reply was something along the lines of, "Meh, what do I care; I'll be gone in a few months." True enough. The little girl from Maryland has now secured housing at BYU's Helaman Halls, despite having recently learned that she had cracked the most prestigious echelon of the University of California system, garnering acceptances to both UCLA and UC-Berkeley.

The weekend started with a run. I am well enough acquainted with my parents to recognize that they will take pleasure in knowing that if you go to the [Ben's Run 5K results page](#) and enter "Willis" as the search term you'll find the finishing times of ten runners, all members of our family, and not including Hannah, who "ran" it wildcat alongside Grace, or any of my brothers, who strolled around the shorter one-mile course with their youngest children.

Ben's Run is a low-key, annual race through the hilly Stonegate neighborhood that is home to every local member of the family except for Coco and us. The event has become an annual rite on our calendar, especially this year because Sophie and (reluctantly at times) Grace participated in a pre-race training program run by Aunt Jen on several Saturday mornings leading up to it.

Incidentally, if you actually did the search I recommended above, you should not read too much into Jen's time. She was obviously hanging back with Grace and Ben (her son, Ben, not Hannah's friend, Ben, or [Ben's Run's Ben](#)—these are three different Bens). I remember a time not long ago, before she wrecked her Achilles, when Jen was faster than me. A lot of parents like Jen ran alongside their kids, which enabled me to place significantly higher than I should have (2nd in my age group—thank you very much). As usual, I have prepared an exhaustive list of excuses in defense of my time in case you would like to hear them... What do mean, you wouldn't? ... Well I did run the eight miles home after the race ... And did I mention how hilly Stonegate is? I made it home in time to shower, watch Sophie open her birthday presents—which included an iPhone, so I'm now paying for four of those every

month; I might need to find a second job—and catch the first session of conference.

(That last paragraph was probably more fun to write than it was to read. Sorry.)

Sophie's 12th birthday was enhanced by the presence of Grandma Carolyn. Sophie's local grandparents have been in Guatemala with a bunch of other old people from their ward all week, and so it was a rare birthday that did not include them. But it's always great having Grandma Carolyn here. We particularly appreciate the free swim coaching. She went to the girls' practice, recorded their strokes and turns on her iPad, and then pointed out all the things they could do differently to improve economy and drop time. I'm too embarrassed to let Grandma Carolyn analyze me, but I would certainly benefit from her coaching more than any of my daughters. Maybe next time.

Her visit to the eastern seaboard was occasioned primarily by the baptism of another granddaughter, Kaisa Kent of Suffolk, Va. We joined her down there last weekend for the baptism and an enjoyable, if brief visit. I was hoping to squeeze in a bike ride with Roland, but that was washed out by heavy rain. Looking out at the pouring rain through the large picture window in Roland and Marci's kitchen, Grace remarked, "At least it isn't snow."

The snow is gone but it doesn't really feel like spring yet. Today was eventually beautiful but started with temperatures in the low 30s. The first floor of our house got nearly that cold one day a few weeks ago when powerful winds accompanying Arctic temperatures in something called a "polar vortex" briefly knocked our power out. The lights came back on within an hour or so, but our main floor thermostat ([one of those fancy electronic ones that Pepco paid us to install](#) and that Pepco can allegedly control from afar on "high-demand"—i.e., very hot—days) did not recover from the outage. And so we spent the next day and a half waiting for a Pepco technician to come out and fix it, all the while watching the inside temperature march downward through the 60s, 50s, and 40s, and into the high 30s. We decided to go out for breakfast during the ordeal just so we wouldn't have to clean up after ourselves afterward in the cold. Our status as bad parents was once again confirmed when Grace responded to this solution by observing, "But I never have to clean up after myself."

At least she recognizes that.

Grace celebrated her 9th birthday in March with a *My Little Pony* themed birthday party. She would binge-watch *My Little Pony* on Netflix around the clock if she could. I'm about ready for this phase to be over.

Love,

Tim et al





The late start to spring has delayed the arrival of the cherry blossoms but not the start of the Cherry Blossom Festival, including this event at the National Building Museum. (The National Building Museum is pretty cool.)

Hannah did not join us, opting instead to attend a Saturday morning review session for the AP calculus exam, led voluntarily each week by her calculus teacher, Mr. Giles.

We love Mr. Giles. All hail Mr. Giles!





Grace — Age 9



Sophie and Ceres in the car home from Kaisa's baptism. I neglected to mention in the letter that Sophie had gone down to Williamsburg and Jamestown (about 40 minutes from Kaisa's house) with her Girl Scout troop the day before we all went down.

Sophie joined us at the baptism on Saturday morning after two nights of "sleeping" with her troop. She was a tired girl.