

The House Hunt

By Anne Chapman

It is often said, God is seldom in a hurry, but He's never late! Most of you know of the long, long search for a house for Pastor Mike and his family and many of you have been praying. The family is very appreciative and the Lord certainly heard all of our prayers. So, hang onto you chairs and prepare for a tour of the events leading up to finding the right home. Fear not, Pastor and the family have approved all information contained in this article!

On February 14, 2014, the family rented a house near Madison and I-80 and finally, after almost 6 years, were all together again under one roof. Then, last November, the landlady advised she planned to sell the house and was going to have to make many immediate repairs beforehand. The repairs were to be very disruptive – considerable work on the walls, floors, stucco, etc., etc. – and they needed to move right away.

An intense search began. It wasn't long before what seemed to be the perfect house appeared. A house on almost 2 acres with a barn. (For those of you who are new, Pastor and his family have always lived in a similar rural setting.) Even the street name held a special meaning. Surely, this must be an answer from God. Not So Fast! After 3 ½ weeks communicating with the agent for the owner, all terms were agreed to and a walk-through took place on a Friday before Christmas. Since one family member was absent, the agent said everyone was to meet again on Monday to sign the contract. Monday came and went, with no word and no answer to phone calls. Christmas, too, came and went! Then, on the Friday after Christmas, Pastor received a text message: "The house had been rented." How could this happen? It was so unfair! (Or was it??) Regardless, it was a shock and time to move was running out. An extension would be necessary.

The hunt was on again, along with a feeling of pressure. Rental houses with property are few and far between. Even a house which could accommodate Pastor's dad's trailer was very rare, not to mention a landlord agreeing to allow three LARGE dogs.

Hopes rose again when using GPS to go to a house which had been advertised. However, the GPS lady sent them in a different direction! What was happening? They ended up at a house with a huge property, not at all like the one they were trying to see, and on a completely different street. Again, was this a sign from God? The next day they scheduled a showing with high hopes. But again, Not So Fast! It was horrible!! Fatigue and discouragement began to set in. Faith that God would provide always prevailed as they asked Him to shut the wrong doors and open the right one, yet sheer fatigue can cause discouragement. Through all of this your prayers continued.

Over and over, day after day, week after week, doors were being closed. One house that "seemed" to be a viable house with RV access and dogs ok, suddenly changed when the owner installed a new access gate and the RV would no longer fit through. Some of those who would take dogs would only take 2 out of the 3. No way! Then at another viable house, when

walking into the back yard, there were so many huge barking dogs on both sides and the back that no one could even carry on a conversation! (The Schnase dogs don't do that.)

What was God waiting for? Was the right house just not there yet? Was there a lesson to be learned? Maybe a combination. In watching all this play out, however, I learned an invaluable lesson from our Pastor and his family – a lesson that could not have been revealed with a different scenario. I learned just how much love each family member had for the others. Given all the imperfections in the houses along the way, time and again each person was willing to make significant sacrifices for the good of the others. As time grew even shorter, something happened. Faith grew stronger and fear vanished. At this point, a clear message came from the Lord: "Wait and see. Keep looking, but do not take your eyes off Me."

Then, all of a sudden on Sunday, Feb. 1, a house on 5 acres appeared on Craigslist. They drove by after church and called for an appointment to see it on Monday. On Tuesday they signed the contract! Over 20 people had been inquiring. Plus, it previously had been committed to but the prospective tenants got cold feet about living on rural property and withdrew. God had saved the best for last! It didn't matter if a million people had been interested as long as God had reserved it for them. It is only about 15 minutes from the church and in a far better and safer area than the house with the barn! Plus, the owner takes care of all the land except for the immediate yard around the house. Oh, and the owner and his foreman are the most exceptional people anyone could ever ask to deal with.

It has been only two weeks as I write this. Everyone, including the owner's Foreman, has been putting final touches on the inside. Nella has painted almost all the rooms in special colors. Now for a little humor! The heavy rains a few weeks ago left the grounds very soggy. On the first real day of moving in, cars, vans, trucks, trailers etc. were all over the place. Then, Luanne rolled in and promptly got stuck in the mud! It was so sweet to see her walking toward her husband, keys dangling in her hand, while she repeated over and over, "I'm sorry, honey. I'm sorry, honey." About an hour later the foreman came tooling in and also got stuck! It was getting better by the moment! So, Pastor had to pull them both out with his truck. But that's not the end. On the main moving day on Friday, one of the helpers also got stuck with a truck full of furniture! By now it was getting to be routine!

All is well. God is so good. Did they get everything they "wanted?" No. Pastor and Luanne still need to share a bathroom, although it has two huge, separate counters. The house does not have a separate family room like they are accustomed to. Did God give them all they "needed?" YES – and much, much more! Isn't He Amazing!

"Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart." Psalm 37:4