

Jason and I wanted to take a few moments to let you know that you are still in our prayers and on our minds. We know the days, weeks, and months after the loss of someone we love can be not only rough, but days filled with pain and unanswered questions. Know that if you ever want anyone to talk to, we are here for you. As you know we are a family-owned business so you can call anytime because we like to stay in touch with our families.

Here is a little bit of what's happening with us. As many of you know we live on a farm and our two kids show pigs in 4H and FFA. Jason and I have been praying for several years for God to bless us with the opportunity to get our bottom pasture fenced off. Well, it finally happened over the summer praise God.

However, what we didn't know until the end of August was that when we had the fence put up a baby deer got caught in the pasture with the rest of our other animals. I happened to stop by our neighbor's house one night after work since we hadn't met. Dave, our new neighbor has watched the entire process. I told him we thought the deer jumped over and then just couldn't get out. Dave replied, "nope not at all, the baby deer was in the wood pile and the momma got out. Every day the momma comes to the back gate and checks on her baby, and they meet up there throughout the day."

I immediately thought we have got to move our animals into the holding pen and open the gate and let this sweet baby out. As I shared that thought with Dave he said "I don't know that I would do that. This baby has been in here now for months it knows nothing about the outside world or the dangers." I agreed he had a good point, but I let him know I would let Jason know the story and see what he thinks is best.

That night Jason and I had very few words to say to one another, not for sure why, just one of those marriage moments. Anyways the next morning after I got over myself, I decided to share with Jason what Dave told me. Immediately we jumped into our Polaris and drove down to see if we could spot the little deer. And sure enough, right underneath the tree was the deer laying there in the back part of the pasture by the gate. It was as though it was waiting for mom to come by to see it.

Jason agreed with Dave that we are probably better off leaving the deer in the fence and letting nature take its course and if it jumps then at least hopefully mom will be there to help it. Of course, I had to run to the farm store and get deer corn and put out for it and some apples. Even though I know that one day it will go. Hopefully in the next letter we can tell you if it is a boy or girl. About two days after our discovery, we were heading to the creek and saw three deer standing in the back of the pasture and they didn't budge at all. Jason said it was momma and she went and got some back up to break her baby out (LOL). I will update you on the next letter as to where the baby deer is too. We think it would be cool if it was a buck and it just never jumped, only time will tell.

Right before the deer discovery we lost someone very close to us because of complications due to Covid-19. That was a very rough journey and I know many of our families have traveled that road. I want you to know if you are one of them, I am saying a very special prayer for you because I understand this is a grief like we've never felt before. After our friend Pat passed away, I snuck away for a few days into a cabin the woods in Garfield, Ark to finish writing the last chapter in the book Pat and I were working on called "American Idols". I hope to have it printed and ready for purchase at the funeral home in the next few months. But it was refreshing to get away for just a few days and I encourage you if you can just go somewhere and allow God to heal you. I know in moments like these it can be hard to believe God is with us but when His word is all we got we must believe He still standing right beside each one of us.

I was so thankful that Dave shared the story of the deer with us and then just a few days later our daughter won Grand Champion with her pig at the Wagoner County Fair. And when it's this time of the year it also means Jason is getting ready to become a daddy to new piglets. I came home the other night while Jason worked late and for some reason decided to go check on his pig that is ready to birth. Well don't you know it she looks like she is pushing and ready to go. So, I call Jason and he advises me I'm going to have to get into the pen with all the other pigs in which I really don't like to do. I was told to get in there with a pig who's in labor and other pigs who have hormones and are curious as to why their friend is acting weird. There are times I seriously question the vows of our marriage, and this might have been the night I had very few words to say to him.

Thankfully, I had a change of clothes in my car so I changed in the barn so I could salvage my high heels. As I continued to look at those pigs in that pen all I could think is I have gained way too much weight to be needing to run from these many pigs. I decided in that moment right then and there that I was cutting back on my food. If I'm going to be married to an Undertaker/Pig Farmer I am going to need to really be healthy and able to run for my life!

Being the submissive wife, I'm supposed to be I get the whip and go into the pen and attempt to get this girl out. Well, that was after I fed the others so they wouldn't be worried about me because I'm not a runner. After several attempts to getting her down she was bossy enough and grumbled enough I decided I was better off letting the Undertaker get her out. Anyways, we got her out and, in her crate, to birth and we are now on day two and she has not done one thing, not one thing!

So, hopefully our next update won't be so long but will be full of good news with happy story endings. But on a very serious note, if you need anything at all please don't hesitate to reach out to us and if you wish to not receive any letters of updates you can email me at ajshipman31@gmail.com and I will remove you from the list. Also remember that if you lost a loved one from COVID-19 go onto FEMA website and see if you qualify for any reimbursement on services at the funeral home. Also, if you haven't pre-arranged your cremation or funeral arrangements gives us a call so we can help you get everything in order. We are offering starting on Oct 1 until the 31st \$300 OFF of a funeral or \$200 OFF of a cremation package of your choice.

I will close this letter with a scripture that has been very close to my heart this past month and it's Mark 11:24 "Have faith in God," Jesus answered. Anytime we walk through the valley of grief it is best to have faith in God knowing that one day we will be reunited with those we love again if we will just believe and make sure that we ourselves are ready. I think it would be safe to say we are living in times when all we can do is have faith in God and stick together.

Life Celebrant Anita J. Shipman