

# The Times of Our Lives



*Children are a gift from the Lord, they are His reward. (Psalm 127:3)... And of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace. (John 1:16).* The holidays are often emotionally charged for many reasons – they can be stressful, sad, or joyful. As we look back on 2019, we take comfort from Psalm and John. We are absolute in saying that we are overwhelmed with the super-abundance of His grace and truth. We have received spiritual blessing upon spiritual blessing, favor upon favor, and gift heaped upon gift. We are blessed beyond measure, grateful beyond words, and thankful beyond belief!

In this 22<sup>nd</sup> annual edition of *The Times*, we wish that your holidays are filled with love, joy, and warmth! And may we all continue to receive the ultimate expression of God's love for mankind – grace. *Happy holidays from the Davids*

## Breathtaking

In the spring, Mannie and John were at a loss for words when they visited the Russian Federation, a nation full of history, mystery and intrigue. The trip cleared up many misconceptions and revealed a lot of surprises about this empire that we often hear about in the news or read in textbooks; these came alive on this journey through the main cities of St. Petersburg, Novgorod, and Moscow.

The couple had one jaw-dropping reaction after another as they entered The Church of the Savior on Spilled Blood, St. Isaac's Cathedral, Red

Square, the Kremlin and the Hermitage. Mannie said, "Even the tour of the Moscow metro stations was stunning." John agreed, "The Metro was efficient and arrived on schedule to-the-second! Nothing like BART!" He followed, "Each station was distinct and are like public museums."

The Metro was one of the USSR's most extravagant architectural projects, with stations constructed as luxurious "palaces for the people." Built under the command of Stalin, the iron-fisted leader ordered the metro's artists and architects to design a structure that embodied radiance or brilliance and a radiant future. It is surely one of the many highlights of Russia!

## Celebrating Anniversaries

Mannie celebrated her 25<sup>th</sup> year of service at Schirmer/AON/Jensen Hughes and is also seeing the light at the end of inevitable retirement tunnel. Her travels continued at a steady but hectic pace, often spending just a few days in Anaheim, Seattle, Indianapolis, Phoenix, and Maui.

After a second bankruptcy filing at PG&E, John's retirement countdown was stalled a bit, but it is again running after completing the 35-year mark at the utility in 2019. He's looking at just about 400 calendar days to pull the plug on PG&E.

## Scandinavia & Russia

Left to right: St. Basil's Cathedral near Red Square, Nyhavn the 17th-century waterfront, canal and entertainment district in Copenhagen, and the Ice Bar in Stockholm. Mannie and John also visited Oslo and Helsinki to round out their trip through the Northern Capitals.





## He's an Angel...

Gabriel means "devoted to God," "a hero of God," or "God is my strength." He entered our lives in August and lives in Monterey with Mom Sam and Dad Antonio. Much to Gabriel's dismay in the fourth shot, we can already tell that the holidays will be fun!

## Top Grosser

As an Account Manager with TEK Systems in Phoenix, Justin earned a coveted recognition by cracking the Top 10 Account Managers (among a group of 60+) with less than 2 years of experience in the entire West Coast. Though he was also named an MVP finalist at year end, he did accept the Team of the Year Award for Tremendous Growth, Ambition, and Teamwork.

He continues to enjoy life in the desert and makes weekend trips to the Bay, visiting friends and family.

## Managing a Historic Landmark and Being a Mommy to Boot

Samantha's 2019 will be forever special – she was offered a permanent position as front desk manager at the historic Asilomar Conference Grounds following completion of her Accelerate to Leadership program with Aramark, ditched her studio for a house with her partner Antonio, made a big-girl purchase of a new ride, and delivered her pride and joy, Gabriel!

"Don't mess with this girl!", Mannie said. "She's quiet but packs a big punch. She's one of the strongest persons we know. She is and will be a great mom to Gabriel."

John followed, "Justin and Samantha have definitely matured by leaps and bounds, and we're excited for both of them."



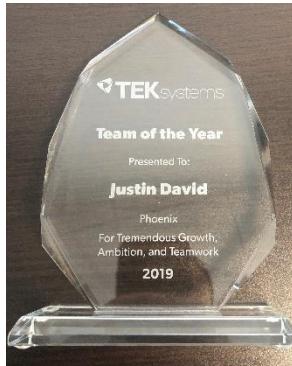
## 90 Years Blessed

Left: In October, John had a family reunion of sorts as he joined Auntie Letty's 90th birthday celebration in Manila. John and Mannie also celebrated their niece Weena's birthday get-together in Dallas in September. And, in April, spent a few days with family in Seattle... priceless!

## 2020 Preview

"We're ready for 2020!" Mannie and John said. They have already scheduled their weekend trip to New York City in March to watch Broadway musicals and the Golden State Warriors play the Knicks at Madison Square Garden; take a river cruise through the Danube during Oktoberfest before witnessing the Passion Play in Oberammergau, Germany, an event which has been held every 10 years since the 1630s; and a few months later, they will trek through the Balkan states in southeastern Europe – Romania, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia.

In between, the couple will continue to attend dance productions by the San Francisco Ballet, musical theater through the Berkeley Playhouse, and Cal women's volleyball games at the Berkeley campus. A year would not be complete without jaunts to Maui and Kauai as they did in 2019.



## Enjoying Life's Many Pleasures

Left: From the Mirador Del Valle, Justin enjoys the view overlooking the Spanish city of Toledo. Justin joined his high school friends celebrate the joys of life in Ibiza, after trekking through Madrid and Barcelona. In the capital city, the group spent a Sunday afternoon in the bullring... and after the first bloody spectacle, they were overcome with an eerie sense of silence! In the stunning countryside outside Barcelona, the group explored the charming medieval villages of Besalu, Rupit, and Tavertet.

Right: Justin narrowly missed MVP honors for 2019 at TEK, but added to his desk collection with a Team of the Year award.