

Eric & Janet Thimell

Serving with Cadence International

Cadence.org/Thimell

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”

EPHESIANS 2:10

Dear Ones,

Greetings from Victory Ranch, South Carolina! This has certainly been the most physically demanding assignment we have ever undertaken but by the grace of God, much has been accomplished. When we arrived 10 months ago, despite the faithful labor of our predecessors, the Ranch property had accumulated a large number of projects that needed upgrades and crucial repairs—some partially completed.

Even after much previous effort, the huge pole barn was still only barely usable when we arrived last August. We are rejoicing that the barn now has two completed bathrooms, a huge cleaned-up space with a new ping pong table and other game equipment now ready to use, workrooms and storage rooms cleaned out and organized, and tool areas ready to effectively use, thanks to a lot of hard work and some stellar volunteers.

The Lodge kitchen and loft needed air conditioning installed and the upstairs apartment kitchenette needed remodeling and new flooring installed. Due to the generous gifts of many folks, we were able to complete both of those tasks. Last month, the air conditioning in the ministry room where we hold retreat activities also crashed and a timely God-ordained gift provided for that to be replaced.

The former chicken barn has been repurposed as a tractor barn where we can store Ranch work vehicles like the backhoe, the John Deere Z-Track mower, and Kubota tractor. Along with the E-Z Go golf cart, every single one of these pieces of equipment has needed some major maintenance and repair. Eric is learning a lot and we are SO GRATEFUL for men who come alongside and give generously of their time and talent to teach him what needs

to be done! Along with You-Tube videos, there’s nothing he hasn’t been able to figure out! Praise the Lord for that!

The Ranch sits on 17 acres of wooded property. After last year’s drought, many dead pine trees have had to come down. Some had already fallen in storms, but more need to come down still. We love our chainsaws! The 3-acre pond

has had the aeration systems overhauled. Eric is working on a comprehensive erosion plan for the entire property. The Mighty Mule security gate system needs major repair since the control board is fried. Finally, garden beds are being re-worked and cultivated and the never-ending battle against weeds and overgrowth continues daily through the summer.

This list could go on and on. We are personally amazed at all that the Lord has given us the strength to do. All of this, along with some amazing spiritual fitness retreats with our Army and Navy folks (before Covid-19 shut us down), round out a really busy 10 months so far.

We will not EVER be able to thank you all for your gifts, prayers, and labors of love on our behalf. We could not have even attempted all of this work without you being there for us. God has, through you all, provided for EVERY SINGLE NEED we have had.

We believe He is going to continue to provide for this work and the multitude of projects we still face. Besides those things mentioned, the decking around the Lodge needs to be replaced as it has rotted out in many places and the deck boards and railings are no longer safe. There are places on the Lodge where the siding needs to be replaced. We have already begun to gather funds for a UTV Utility Vehicle to be used



around the Ranch. The Pole Barn ventilator fan is burned out and needs to be replaced. We have a lot of firewood that we use in the woodstove inside as well as the outdoor fire pits used for retreats. A log splitter would be so helpful. (A 30-ton hydraulic splitter for those of you praying specifically). The serving line in the ministry room is in dire need of remodeling and the sliding glass door in the ministry room needs replacing as the outer glass is shattered. (This is the main entrance into the ministry room).

All of this physical labor is for the work of the ministry begun in downtown Columbia when in 1951, Billy Graham dedicated what was then called the Victory Center for ministry among the soldiers of Ft. Jackson and the airmen at Shaw AFB. In reviewing the years of accumulated reports and meeting notes we have been overwhelmed by the numbers of servicemen and women whose lives have been forever changed because they trusted Christ at Victory Ranch.

The retreats have been temporarily stopped, of course, due to Covid-19. While the upside has been getting major projects completed around the Ranch, we look forward to the days when we can host AIT soldiers for all-day retreats and the Navy Task Force Marshall sailors for half-day retreats before they deploy to the Middle East. We are looking forward to the day when we can reengage with the AIT soldiers training to be Religious Affairs Specialists, holding a weekly Bible study. We are also working to engage permanent-party folks who want to use the Ranch for “Duty Days with God” and team-building activities. While Eric and I are truly enjoying all the physical labor, we really would love to be regularly teaching Bible studies and discipling young people.

Meanwhile, Jim and Rachel Turnage and Andrea Haddock, long-time Cadence missionaries, have moved another long-time Cadence ministry called LIFE COMPASS to Victory Ranch. This ministry focuses on intensive discipleship training for college-age military-connected students (sort of like a gap-year), along with engaging them in cross-cultural ministry. They just moved here from Chiang Mai, Thailand and are in the process of raising new support. Their first group of students will arrive next summer. Also, Bob and Glenda Ball, newly minted Cadence limited-term missionaries, arrived here



a few days ago to come alongside to help with maintenance and retreats. They are living in their RV.

People often ask us how long we will be here at Victory Ranch. Our answer is: “As long as the Lord will use us here.” We are certainly in the latter years of our lives, but our daily strength and health is His business. We trust Him to get us up and through each day. We trust Him to design the Ranch ministry today and in the near and far future. We are personally enjoying the daily pursuit of Him in His Word and in prayer. Every day here is a reason to be astonished at Him and His goodness.

PRAYER REQUESTS:

- For retreats to begin again. We know the military has to be super cautious in sending their troops anywhere and we are respectful of all of this. The chaplains are able to do great ministry on post so pray for that!
- For continued financial provision for all the work that constantly needs to be done here. And for all the ability, for us and our volunteers, to get the work done.
- For depth of prayer support for us, for the Turnages and Andrea, and for the Balls as we work together to design the future of Victory Ranch ministries.
- That Eric and I would be able, somehow, to do some in-depth Bible teaching sometime soon. We really miss this and it sure would be icing on the cake.

Please know that you are welcome anytime here at the Ranch! We could put you to work or just feed you nice food and give you a comfy bed. Or all of the above! And also, please let us know how we can specifically be praying for you and the works that God has ordained for YOU to do!

In His love and for His sake,
Janet and Eric Thimell



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