

PARISHIONER

Seeing with the Light of HOPE *Profile*



FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

December 3, 2017

This Advent, as we reflect on the theme *Lighted Windows*. We are sharing the witness of parishioners who light the windows of their hearts and lives (and the world) with the specific light we are focusing on that week.



Life can change in an instant. A serious medical diagnosis is difficult and challenging at any age, but especially when it's a child. Nickolas Pritchard was in our school's first grade when in May 2015 he was diagnosed with a brain tumor. When his parents were asked how they were handling such a heartbreaking situation, they responded "With faith and hope. Without faith and hope you have nothing." Our parish and local community rallied around Nick and his family with prayers, love, and support. After surgery and a six month hospital stay, his family was able to bring him home. Over two and half years later, the Pritchard Family's journey with Nick continues ... a journey lighted by hope. They have provided this update on Nick for us:

Dear Friends:

We would like to thank everybody for your love and support of our hero, Nickolas Pritchard. We could not have made this overwhelming journey without God and you. We have made new friends, built closer relationships with friends we already had, and have grown stronger as a family.

It's hard to believe that it has been over two and half years since Nick's diagnosis and surgery. So much has happened. We are so grateful for the many blessings and continue to push through challenges as they come. Your prayers, good thoughts, and many acts of kindness continue to strengthen and inspire us. It has made a huge difference in our lives.

Through the goodness of some very wonderful and selfless people very near to our hearts, we were able to add a special room to our house and brought Nick home in November 2015.

Nick is stable. A small part of the tumor remains on his brain stem and continues to be checked. Nick has experienced some damage to his brain. We are praying—and ask you to continue to pray with us—for his healing and recovery. Nick needs 24 hour care. We are blessed to have a nursing service is able to cover a good chunk of the day. The rest we cover ourselves and have learned to do some of Nick's basic treatments and care.

The last two years have included doctors appointments, trips to the hospital for procedures, and extended stays to treat respiratory issues. We were able to get a previously owned handicap accessible van that has made easier to transport Nick and his chair. It allows us to go places as a family.

While Nick is still a part of his class at Saint Catherine's, he's also part of a special program in the Central Dauphin School District. His nurses go with him on the school bus to his classroom in Linglestown. During this cold and flu season, we have opted to do home schooling with him at our house. A simple cold for Nick is not just a simple cold. We do everything we can and take as many precautions that we can to keep him well.

We are able to bring Nick to the monthly ASD Mass at Saint Catherine's - which he loves. This smaller environment is better for him - especially during the winter months. We pray with him everyday. He often smiles during those prayers. We know that our little boy is very close to God.

Our family is doing well. Gavin is now a junior at Dauphin County Vo-Tech High School and Mia is in second grade getting ready for First Reconciliation and First Communion. In January 2017, God blessed us with Ryan who has brought great joy - especially to his big brother Nick. It has been an amazing year!

We don't know what the future holds, but make the best of each day and cherish every smile Nick gives us. We are so thankful to God for our many blessings.

Our faith gives us hope. We know that no matter how hard life can get, God is always with us. We know that He is present to Nick in very special ways. Hope doesn't mean its going to always be easy. Hope means that no matter what happens, we can get through it with God, family, and friends.

Love,

*Bryan and Samantha Pritchard
Gavin, Nick, Mia, and Ryan*

