

Merry Christmas



Last year's Christmas letter talked about trying to figure out our new normal after the passing of Steve's parents. We are hoping 2020 is not it.

The year started well with us hosting the Senior Social Group from church for a New Year's Eve gathering. There were a couple more meetings of this group before COVID, but we miss seeing these people since March, and it does not look like a New Year's Eve party will be a good idea this year.

We missed church services and other activities for three months due to lockdown. Both Nita and Steve continue to serve on the Life Team, but that activity has been greatly limited. Steve has continued as an Elder and as a leader of the support group, GriefShare.

Peggy was not exempted from these issues of 2020. The medical system lost her for several months, and it took a remarkable series of miracles to get her reconnected with family. Page 2 of this document gives the story of her year.

In January, we found that our 17-year-old

van that had served us so well needed a new transmission. That would cost about three times what the car would be worth after repair, so we decided to replace it. In the spring, we also had a carport built to protect the cars from the weather. The contractor did an excellent job.

Steve fell in June, spraining both ankles and bruising the feet. Sprains take a long time to heal. There is usually not much pain now, but it is still easy to overdo it.

Due to the virus situation, we have no travel to report, and our Easter, 4th of July, and Thanksgiving celebrations included just the two of us. We are still excited Jesus rose, still blessed to be free, and still thankful to God for His many gifts.

With the limitations due to COVID, Peggy being lost, and the extremism in politics, this seems like a pretty miserable year. However, the bigger picture is still good. In this Christmas season, we believe - and celebrate - that God demonstrated His love by sending Jesus to pay the divine penalty for our sins, so believers have eternal life in heaven when life in this world is over. That assurance makes the troubles of this world seem less trying in comparison. We are also so blessed by God in this world with each other, with the Warp Speed program's remarkable progress towards a vaccine, and with the reuniting with Peggy. Looking forward to 2021!

God bless you,
Steve and Nita

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Peggy's 2020

This time last year, our letter was quite positive about the care provided by Sipia Select Residential Care and caregiver Lena Hughes. Unfortunately, Lena was ill herself and becoming less able to care for others. (She passed away in August.) In February, Peggy was moved to a different home in the chain, and then COVID-19 hit. We were not allowed to see Peggy. Later, we learned that there was a different doctor that came to that home, and he cut Peggy's medicine by two-thirds (clear malpractice). Without enough of the medicine that has helped her for 38 years, Peggy can become agitated, especially when she does not understand what is happening, such as why we did not visit.

Sipia was overwhelmed with COVID-19, so communication was poor (understatement), but I was not worried due to the past excellent care. When they finally responded on June 16th, we found out they did not have Peggy. After stopping all her medicine in mid-May (more malpractice), they transferred her to Hickory Trail Hospital in DeSoto, Texas on May 30th. We were later told Peggy had been eloping from the home trying to find her "Dr Steven".

Hickory Trail, citing privacy policy, was not helpful when I called there. I did fax some basic info about Peggy to them immediately, hoping (in vain) to prevent them causing further harm. They called June 19th, saying Peggy was asking for me, and let me talk on the phone with her, but they were still otherwise uncooperative. We found later that she was discharged on July 1st — probably in the middle of an attack of her Acute Intermittent Porphyria (AIP), her long-term diagnosis.

I continued to try to get information from Sipia. On July 22nd, Sipia finally told us that Peggy had been discharged, but not returned to Sipia. Hickory Trail would not tell me where she was sent. I got the legal system involved. It moves slowly. Eventually, a court ordered the hospital to tell them where they sent Peggy. Discharge paperwork showed an address of a group home that was out of business, a first name, and an incorrect phone number. More malpractice?

Even with prayer warriors, courts, attorneys, investigators, and police involved, Peggy was still missing until November 12th, when we found out that she must have a really good guardian angel. I had pretty much given up on finding her alive. Because no medical claims had been submitted after July 1st, I feared she was getting no treatment. The group home she went to (which we still have not located) apparently gave up after three days and called EMT's. (They had not filled the prescriptions sent by the hospital, according to benefits claims. More malpractice.)

The EMT's took Peggy to a psychiatric hospital (Green Oaks) in Dallas. After five days, they determined correctly that her issues were not psychiatric. (This is the first time I know of that psychiatrists have been able to do that.) She was transferred to an acute care hospital, Medical City - Dallas, on July 9th. With Peggy's speech issues, they were able to understand the first name, but not the last. Miraculously, they took care of her without knowing if or how they would be paid. (The business office was very pleased when I could provide ID numbers for her coverage — probably worth something in six figures to them.) It is also amazing that they could treat her this long without giving her medicine that would worsen the probable attack of AIP.

Peggy was found November 12th (PTL!) when the judge on her case was talking to the Clinical Director of the North Texas Behavioral Services Authority and mentioned that a patient had gone missing. The clinical director had already been contacted by Medical City about Peggy, and guessed that Peggy might be who the judge was talking about.

She has now been discharged from the hospital and lives about 11 minutes from us. Due to COVID-19, Peggy is currently in a two-week quarantine after the move.

I have tried to keep this brief. There are so many details left out that show that Peggy must have been in God's hands to make it through all this.

Thank you for caring about Peggy. Thank you for your prayers, and thank God for preserving Peggy through all this, and reuniting her with family.