

2021 Letter

January, 2022

When 2020 ended, we were looking for things to get back to normal. Didn't happen. For us, at least this year's issues were more about things than a missing person that provided the main crisis for us in 2020. People are so much more important than things, so this is an improvement.

For many in our area, the big crisis was the winter storm and the incompetence of the electric grid operators. (Why did Texas think it was good to have out-of-state people on the board of directors?) We never lost power or water, so we pretty much just stayed inside for the duration and were warm and well fed. We did contribute firewood to neighbors who needed it. Thanks to the two young ladies with a 4-wheel drive vehicle who were picking up firewood and delivering it to those in need.

The first issue that hit us this year was an auto accident in May. Steve went to sleep while driving due to a medication error. That got us an ambulance ride to the hospital. Steve was treated and released and Nita declined treatment. Car was totaled. We were already talking about giving up a car, so we just decided this was a sign that it was time. One less material thing.

Our second big issue also started in May when we noted water coming up through the joints in a laminate floor. Turns out, the pump to get rid of the condensate from the A/C had failed, and the failsafe sensor to shut down the A/C in that situation wasn't failsafe. The remediation company (sent to us by the insurance company) has repeatedly demonstrated incompetence and dishonesty. It took them two months to get around to removing all the floor, and they found water puddles still existed under the floor. Wet for two months means mold. They said they got all the mold, but, not believing them at that point, I tested. Good thing I did. Next, a real mold remediation company got rid of the mold, but that company would not do the rebuild. Insurance has sent us a third contractor for for the rebuild, but that still has not begun. Therefore, we actually spent the majority of the year living in hotels.

The damaged area of the house is the bedroom end, and we were told that a bathroom would continue to be available, so we thought we would spend our days in the other end of the house, and just go to the hotel to sleep. That turned out to not be the case. Spending so much time in the hotel left us discouraged at times, missing the house. But it also taught us thankfulness for what we did have. Our lodging and food was probably far better than 95% of the people in the world, so we thank God for the hotel and restaurants, even if it is not the things we are used to.

We had been casually looking for options for retirement living while working on downsizing. In December, we found a deal too good to pass up at The Vantage in southwest Fort Worth. We signed the lease in December to get the deals and started moving this month. This accounts for some of the tardiness of this letter. Our new address is:

The Vantage #301
6301 Overton Ridge Blvd
Fort Worth, TX 76132

This new address is about four miles from the house, so no need to change church, doctors, or stores. Our phone numbers and email addresses remain the same. It is a bit painful to have to leave so many things (memories) behind, but we had already been working on that. To speed things up, we will get professionals involved when the house is put back together. Look for an estate sale announcement in a few months. (No, the apartment does not have room for a 19 foot long dinner table.) This also changes a lot of specifications on the rebuild. We had been working to restore the house back like we liked it, but now the realtor is advising us about colors, materials, etc. that will make it more sellable.



Health-wise, the good news is we have so far avoided COVID (as far as we know). Steve's years of Fibromyalgia seem to have severely impacted his stamina, interfering with his ability to take care of the house. This influenced our decision to move. We are also feeling effects of aging as time passes. That and numerous funerals we have attended remind us that our bodies do not last forever. But, as believers in Jesus as our Savior, we know that what follows is far better. Looking forward to no more pain, no more tears, and being in heaven with God.

My 2021 report on Peggy is a lot shorter and less dramatic than the one for 2020, and that is a good thing! No getting lost, no malpractice, no mistreatment. And for this we thank God and Arlington Heights Health and Rehab. AHHR provides compassionate care in spite of the COVID challenges. They are willing to listen to and work with family and have gotten to know Peggy and how to respond to her. They have established a medication regime that all seem to be happy with. Peggy is spending more time in bed these days as she is aging also, same as the rest of us.

At church, Steve continues to serve as an elder and facilitated the GriefShare support groups in 2021. Both of us continue to be part of the Life Team. The big news at St Paul is the coming retirement of the senior pastor of the last 30+ years. One of the very capable associate pastors has accepted the call to take on the senior pastor role. We are sad to see Pastor Messmann depart, but excited to see what God has for St Paul under Pastor Audette's leadership.

So we are getting used to our new normal and wondering what 2022 will bring. We are hoping that having a new home and less COVID will allow us to receive guests more than we have the last two years.

God bless you,
Steve and Nita

