

BLESSING FOR A SPECIAL CHRISITMAS AND NEW YEARS- 2012

Always think Christmas is the time of the year to share with family and friends, far and near, the special things in our life over the past year. It's special time of the year to share God's love with everyone.

2011 was a challenge especially for Richard with first his surgery in Cobourg, then his radiation treatment for throat cancer at Princess Margaret Hospital, in Toronto for 6 weeks. It was a difficult time for him. The last meal he ate was at our family Christmas a week before Christmas. I spent 3-4 weeks with him in Toronto and stayed the last two at the Lodge as needed to keep him going and to make sure he would drink and get to the appointments. He did not tolerate Boost or any other supplement drinks. He was determined not to have tube feedings which meant he survived on water and on two weeks on Intra venous when really needed. But thankful he made it through but is much thinner having lost 80 lbs. The last several appointments at PMH they have all been pleased. His CAT Scans show the progress as well. But sometimes still difficult to eat and nothing tastes like it used to. He sees the cardiologist monthly as was not able to take all the previous medication and needed adjusting and hoping to get his heart, etc back in better condition again. His coloring is looking much better and he still is involved in many things with the church choir, genealogy, history, looking after the Cockburn Heritage Room at Victoria Hall and several related projects there. He kept busy with the gardening, outside work and now working on our computer/family room in the basement. We certainly appreciated all the support and prayers of everyone especially during this past year. Just before Christmas he had the part of one toe removed as it was not healing and had been treating it for more than a year. But all is well there now. So pray 2012 will be better year for him.

David, my brother has had difficult with his back/legs etc for the past year and had a hip replacement Nov 24th. Now at home doing exercise and hoping to get much better in the next few weeks. I have been spending some time to help Marlene and him lately. Marlene is also busy with her mother who has dementia, etc. We have great times with their whole family Andrew, who lives in Toronto and Jason, Shandelle and their children Cole, 4, Jordan, 3, in Mississauga. They bring lots of joy and fun to all of us. (Now (Jan) 6 weeks later and he is doing well and back driving the car and getting around but has to be careful in the snow and slippery weather. But we have not had much of that this year yet.

John and Brenda celebrated their 40th Wedding Anniversary in June 2011. John has also had some heart concerns and while he was having a stress test in mid Nov., his heart rate was very low (28) and he was put in ICU immediately and for close observation. He had a pacemaker put in 2 days later and seems to be much better but still has to have more tests. His son Jonathan, of Toronto, has just changed his job and now works for an Actor's Agency as one of their reps. He is working days now so was able to get down after work most of the days his Dad was in the hospital.

Then a few other close friends have had medical problems lately so I have been kept busy supporting them during these times. Millie, our family friend, had a triple bypass at Easter time. I was with her in Kingston for several doctors' visits, her surgery, her follow up, and when she got home. She is doing well now and spends time with our family.

Another older friend of the family moved to the Golden Plough Lodge (long term care) in June and Richard was especially busy helping to close out her apt especially since she had so...so...much stuff there. We are responsible for her as well and she is most appreciative and thankful. Thus we have others who join us on special family and holiday occasions.

I still keep busy with many other areas of ministry, pastoral care and mission. I am clerk of Session at St. Andrew's, member of the choir, Women's Association, WMS, Pastoral Care, etc. We began a "Young at Heart" Coffee Time this fall every Friday a.m. We think we will have it in the afternoon when we resume in Feb. I am Past President of Presbyterian and now Vice President of CNOB Synodical of WMS and busy planning for the Annual Meeting in Cobourg next April. I am the convener of the International Ministries Committee and its Personnel Committee which keeps me up to date with our missionaries and partner churches.

One highlight of this year was attending the National Women's Gathering in Richmond Hill with over 550 women from Canada and overseas. I helped to host the international guests which meant a few trips to the airport and helping them during the gathering. Everyone had a wonderful time. It was a great opportunity to share as we learned from the various speakers, workshops, renewal of friendships with many women from across Canada, during special times of worship and praise together. It was a great success and now there are plans for a second one in a couple of years.

I also attended our Presbyterian Church in Canada General Assembly in London, ON. in June and again had a great time listening to reports and being challenged of what our Church can be today and in the future. Many important ideas have come forth and the whole church will be working on several; one being "Mission Possible".

I am hoping that I may be able to visit Taiwan in March of 2012 to visit the hospital and friends there. Much will depend on my family's needs at that time. It is 140 years since Mackay began the Canadian Mission in Taiwan and the North Synod and others are having special celebrations this year. Changhua Christian Hospital Er Lin Branch is also hoping to open a Long Term Care facility and they have invited me back for that. Then later in the year is the 90th Anniversary of the Women's Work (previously WMS) and I was at their 60-70 and 80th so would be very special if I was able to be present for the 90th. Waiting for guidance as to when it is best for me to leave my family and to visit Taiwan.

Appreciate your friendship and support in prayer for my family, and me especially during this past year.

Our minister has been having heart problems and needed to be off for sick leave for two weeks right at Christmas. Since it was such short notice and I am the clerk of Session then I was responsible for 5 services in those two weeks. Everyone helped and many good comments. He is now back to work but he still has more tests and visits to specialists coming up. So praying our church will be faithful and assist during this time.

May God continue to bring us closer to Him at this Christmas time as we share His great gift of love with others.

May our gentle Saviour's birth within our hearts give cause for celebration and humble reflection Now and forevermore! Christmas is a time to Rejoice!

Love, Peace and Joy

Joy

December 2011 - January 2012