

Our Love to you at Christmas 2018

What a wonderful time is Christmas. Our hearts beat quickly for joy at the thought of you all and the impact you are making in support of the reign of Jesus, whose coming into our world we celebrate now. It is always perfect timing that he observes. We have clarified before all our senses the fact that he is at work in and through us. Joy to the World! Without bombast or self-importance, the Christ-child infuses us with satisfactions and joys quite unspeakable yet clear, and he points out not only his enabling presence but also his enduring power at work. Hark the herald angel sings – in the desert and in the city! Hope abounds!

Our travel bucket-list was expansive this year in celebration of Judy's 80th birthday. What fun we have had! We joined in with Gord and Lou, at their invitation, in San Diego amidst that coastal beauty. Later, Costa Rica revealed much of the beauty of the birding world – with many new sightings for us. We celebrated our actual birthdates with Amy and Jim's family and Scot during an Easter trip to Kansas. Still later we got to visit Marty and Duke with stops in Kansas both ways. We timed a later trip to Michigan in order to include time with Rowland, Jr. and Jane and girls, along with Barbara, Erma and Tom. We then continued to our small family reunion in Kansas with our three children and spouses and their children - 11 people in an old farm house sent out by Sears and Roebuck in the 1800's. Plenty of good times and reminiscing and sharing and bonding and making great memories. Birthday parties every step of the way, capped by a visit from Scot for Christmas.

When we were home we continued our work in the desert, searching for migrants who were struggling against all odds to make it across to a liveable situation, but who were not making it. What heart-rending stories we have heard! Truly, human life can be made extremely miserable in quite unbelievable ways, and the assuaging of misery seems in short supply despite The Babe's example and command. We also both have continued as Stephen's Ministers each with care receivers. Healing presence and comfort for those in crisis is called for at special times in life. We have been blessed by those who have allowed us into their special times.

2018 has been a growing year for us. We are convinced that our home congregation is one of God's richest blessings for us. We feel the

strengthening presence of the Christ-king coming through those who surround us with their love and concern. We continue to learn together with them to be stewards of this world and bringers of hope to others. We grow as we go! We at this point are especially concerned about our systems of justice, health-care, and our threatened democracy. May we remain strong in our resolve to bear the image of God in God-pleasing ways, and may our national home be a haven of shalom for all, community by community.

We pray for God's eternal power to be evidenced in your lives in the coming year, and may the abounding joy find expression in your living. We thank you for what you all have meant in our own search for shalom.

Love, Rowland & Judy

Merry Christmas and a Joy-filled New Year to YOU! God's Reign IS HERE!

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Our family reunion in Kansas



Merry Christmas from our family to yours