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December 2017

Dearest friends and family,

As we enter this Advent season, our thoughts turn to the birth of our Savior and Lord, and we are also reminded of all the dear people that have been a blessing in our lives. We trust that each of you is doing well. For us, the past year has been one of significant difficulties and challenges, but also one of blessings, a year that has drawn us closer to the Lord and renewed our thankfulness that He is on His throne and sovereign over all.

First, we praise God because Phyllis has been doing much better in recent months. As many of you know, she has for years struggled with chronic headaches that would take her out of commission for days at a time. In the early fall, she talked to her doctor about going off of some of the long-term medications that she had been on for years. She had done some reading and found that just about every one of those medications listed headaches as a possible side effect. She wanted to get off of all of them and, as necessary, add them back in one at a time to see if perhaps it was one of the medications causing all the misery. It took a few weeks of withdrawal, but with the doctor's blessing, she was able to wean herself off of three of the medications, and in a short time, the headaches were mostly gone. She remains mostly headache free today, and when she does have a headache, it is not the debilitating kind that she struggled with for so long. And it turns out she didn't need those medications, anyway!

Daughter Amanda and her husband Jordon are doing well. They got a new truck, a Toyota Tacoma, last summer and have been enjoying it. They still live in a beautiful home in subdivision a couple of miles north of us, and they remain active in the Edge Church, serving on the security team and participating in a small group. Jordon continues to work with his dad building custom homes, and Amanda with her dad as chief engineer of Crawford Broadcasting's four Denver radio stations. Both Amanda and Jordon are licensed Amateur (öHamö) Radio operators, and they have a nice HF (shortwave) and VHF/UHF station set up at their house from which they can communicate with hams all over the world as well as with local ham radio friends. They also enjoy shooting. Don't forget, guns and radios are always great gift ideas for them! And I'd better not forget their two cats, Scooby and Penny, who constitute the occupying army at the Hopp house.

Son Gary continues to live and work in the Ft. Worth area. We don't hear from him a lot but we pray for him daily. Earlier this year, Gary and wife Jessica had a baby boy, Kayden, our third grandchild. Our granddaughter Sara just turned 19. She graduated last spring and is planning to marry soon. Grandson Sean is now 17. Sean lives in Lewisville, Texas with his mom and stepdad. We're very proud of all our grandkids and thank the Lord for them.

Since this time last year, Cris has really been through the wringer in terms of his health. Last December, he began having pain deep in his lower left leg. He went to three different doctors and got three different (and wrong!!) diagnoses before his primary doc sent him for an MRI. That is what showed the real problem ó a serious infection in the leg. Cris had his first surgery on January 5. That cleared the initial infection, but the leg and incisions would not heal. By April 19 he had undergone seven (!!!) different surgeries and spent weeks in two different hospitals. He was on IV antibiotics for more than six months. As it turns out, the infection was inside the tibia, and the process of getting it out was an invasive and aggressive procedure which was followed up by plastic surgery involving muscle and skin grafts. The recovery process has been slow, with lots of physical therapy and gimpiness. Cris is just now getting back to something approaching full mobility. He is still working on range and endurance. The docs told him the recovery would take a full year, so he still has a few months to go. We thank God for getting both of us through this ordeal, for an outstanding team of doctors, and for Amanda and Jordon, who had to do a lot for us while Cris was laid up.

Cris is in his 34th year with Crawford Broadcasting Company and still loving it. He looks forward to going to work every day and is grateful to have Kingdom work to do there. The past year was a challenge at work with all the hospitalization and mobility issues, but he managed to keep up with things. He continues to enjoy amateur

radio, visiting over the airwaves with friends near and far (hams, listen for him on 7.166 MHz on Saturday mornings at 7:30 Mountain). In the summer, he loves to fly fish and ATV, although he didn't get to do any ATViing and not much in the way of fishing this year. One new thing is that Cris has recently gotten back into the cockpit after a 25-year hiatus. He was pleased to find that his stick and rudder skills had not left him and he was still able to fly an airplane with some proficiency. However, in the 25 years since he had been in the left seat, the navigational instrumentation (avionics) had all changed, as had the FAA airspace system and rules, so he had learn all that anew. He also just got his FAA Remote Pilot Certificate, which in layman's terms is a drone pilot's license. That will enable him to use his or the company's small unmanned aerial system for commercial purposes, such as inspecting radio towers (hey, it beats climbing!).

Our annual vacation to Lake City, Colorado was very different this summer, as Cris was unable to ATV or do many of the usual activities. Still, we enjoyed the peace and beauty of that place for a week, including a herd of deer that came right up to our porch every day. We look forward to being back there next August if the Lord allows.

We stay very much amused by our fur baby, Spice, who is a one-eyed gray tabby that we have shared our lives with for over five years now. She is leash trained, travels with us, and owns our mountain cabin. She has a serious toy mouse addiction.

We continue to worship and serve at our home church, Redeemer Baptist in Aurora, when we are in town. Cris is back on the administrative team and he teaches the men's group several times a year. It's been a great blessing to be part of the Redeemer church family for the past 13 years.

Although we didn't get to spend any time at our mountain home and property up near Grand Lake, Colorado over the winter because of Cris's health issues, we spent just about every weekend there through the summer and fall, and we enjoyed having Amanda and Jordon up there quite a bit, too. We did a lot of sitting around, which was just about all Cris was allowed to do, but that was just what the doctor ordered.

All that time in Grand Lake over the summer gave us the opportunity to spend a good bit of time worshipping at Stillwater Community Chapel, which is just a mile from our cabin and where we have attended on summer Sundays for the past 18 years. We have become great friends with the pastor and his wife there and very much enjoy our mountain church family. What a beautiful place to worship! Recently, Cris was asked to serve as an elder at Stillwater, and after much prayer, he accepted. We look forward to serving the Lord at Stillwater through the winter months and the coming year.

It seems these days that we hear nothing but bad news. With all the political garbage, we are bombarded with news of scary happenings from across our community, state, nation and the whole world every day. It's easy to get discouraged. There is so much hate, so much strife, and many people are wound really tight so that it takes very little to set someone off to do something unthinkable, as we see all too often. Thankfully, there is hope for our nation and this dark world!

We are reminded at this time of year that Jesus Christ came more than 2,000 years ago, born in a stable in Bethlehem to bring hope, salvation, peace and good will. That was a long time ago, but His invitation is still open. If people will only look to Him they can have this hope, peace and assurance of eternal life. It is our prayer as we celebrate the Savior's birth that you know Him and His peace!

May you and yours have a blessed Christmas!

Cris & Phyllis Alexander
(and Spice, too)



P.S. Look us up on Facebook!

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