

Rochester, New York

December 2021

*Merry Christmas and Happy New Year
from Bill & Susan Morehouse!*

2021 has been a challenging but fruitful year of change! As the world around us continues to rock and spin, sometimes seemingly out of rational control, we've been holding together as individuals and as a family as best we can. Let's leave the chaos of COVID and social strife aside for now to take a peek at us gathered with **Joel** and **Julia** in their new home city:



Thanksgiving together for part of the tribe in Savannah!

Unfortunately, Johanna was scheduled to work Thanksgiving weekend in the NICU at Golisano Children's Hospital, so we had to leave her behind this time to celebrate with the Farnham family in Mayville, NY, while **Nana** and **Grampy** (that's us!) took a leisurely drive down to Savannah, stopping at B&Bs, cruising on the Blue Ridge Parkway, and visiting some of Susan's old haunts at Pawley's Island and Seabrook, SC along the way. As you can see, **Sarah** and **Nate** and were able to join us, along with **Kari**, **Coral** and **Jasper**, but we'll have to wait for more stable times for another full family reunion.

In the interval, Facetime, texting, and Zoom have continued to be fairly reasonable ways for us to keep in touch with family, members of the Arnett Block Association, the Police Chief's PCIC meetings, URMC students and MCCF, Western NY CMDA, CCHF, and many other prayer and support groups that we're part of, including a Thursday morning Men's Bible Study group that **Bill** has become actively involved with.

This past summer we were able to share family time with all of our grown offspring and grandchildren here and at our cabin in the Finger Lakes. **Nate** and **Kari** were able to stay longer and join us for a canoe camping trip to Forked Lake in the Adirondacks with their growing kids. Nate continues to be a very active tenured member

of the University of Cincinnati biology faculty where he has been successfully spearheading an interdisciplinary project called IRIS (Institute for Research In Sensing), while Kari's gifts and talents in ecology are being put to masterful use with Great Parks of Hamilton County as part of their dedicated team. **Coral** and **Jasper** are doing well with their music lessons and in school in spite of COVID restrictions.

Johanna and **Asa** welcomed baby **Solveig** into their family in April where she has been a great hit with siblings as well as charming us and everyone else she meets along the way.



Zoya is off to a great start as a freshman on campus at SUNY Buffalo, while **Anya** is making new friends among her 5th grade classmates, and **Elon** is into everything mechanical, like "combines" and "diggers" and "John Deere tractors." He also likes to challenge Grampy at Foosball and zoom around our neighborhood on his tricycle.

Joel and **Julia** wrapped up things in Phoenix and moved to Savannah, GA last spring where Julia's mother and sisters live. They have both found opportunities to minister with their musical gifts, while Julia got a job in the admissions office of the Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD) and Joel continues to work remotely in corporate finance. Just months after moving they graciously hosted us for Thanksgiving in their new home.

We didn't get a chance to go to Howell, NJ this year but are looking forward to **Sarah's** Christmas visit here with her 7 year-old twins **Carter** and **Weston**. The boys are becoming great swimmers and fishermen while Sarah holds the fort as a high-end graphic design freelancer and general can-do amateur treehouse builder.



Susan's harp has kept her busy with practicing nearly every day, and in recent months her live gigs have started to pick up again. Unfortunately, her community outreach activities are still seriously constricted, but those in our immediate neighborhood, at the Garden Park and Arnett Branch Library, with the Rochester Police Department, and more recently at School 16 have been filling in the gap. In the meantime we've had a lot of opportunities to be out and about together canoeing, hiking, and skiing.

Bill continues to work on the series of discipleship study guides he began in 2020 called *Celebrate Salvation*. His first 3 guidebooks – *Saved*, *Sanctified*, and *Sent* – were published last year as Course 1 and are being used in a number of groups in Western NY and elsewhere. This year he completed the first guide in Course 2 – *Awakening* – and has just published a 70-page book entitled *The Biblical Festivals*. More info about his writing is available online for interested parties at www.celebratesalvation.org.

Our remote 120-acre property in Cohocton continues to be a blessing with its trails, woods, meadows, pond, tent site, and cabins. We've had some wonderful times there year-round by ourselves and with Bill's brother Scott and his wife Carolyn, extended family, and friends.

Life is rich and satisfying! We're grateful for our Lord's amazing grace, love, and gifts of good health and provision. This coming year we're praying for a life-giving revival in our land. Contact us anytime at susan@harpsons.com or wmorehouse@gmail.com.

May our LORD fill you with more and more of His amazing FAITH, HOPE, LOVE, and VISION for the future this coming year. We appreciate and miss each of you, dear family and friends, and look forward to seeing and being together with as many of you as we can in the New Year.



Grandchildren with Nana and fish!

Bill + Susan

A vision of hope

Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.

Everywhere we look in the world today we seem to see and hear about evidences of bad news: strife, inequity, crime, poverty, racism, deception, discrimination, oppression, anger, hate, alienation, depression, famine, climate change, disease and death. The list goes on and on. Many thoughtful and caring people are striving earnestly in various ways to solve these and other problems like them. Certainly there are bright rays of encouragement and hope in the midst of it all, but darkness seems to be closing in. Various theories have been put forward about the underlying dynamics of the critical problems we're facing. Is there one unifying theme behind them all that can help us work toward solving them together?

During this season we remember a man named Jesus who was born of loving but poor parents into a society dominated by a partially enlightened but oppressive and colonialist government that discriminated against people like him. He was raised in a small town where everyone knew that he had been conceived before his parents were married. After honorably completing an education common to children in his community he joined his father's carpentry business and remained unmarried well into adulthood.

By the time he had turned 30 people were beginning to wonder what was to become of this dedicated man when, apparently under the influence of his cousin John, his life went through a dramatic transformation. After submitting to John's baptism he changed from a quiet hometown man into an impassioned itinerant preacher who brought a message of good news to a darkened world of God's merciful love, rule, and reign. He proclaimed forgiveness of sin, hope for the future, peace to the troubled, freedom and justice to the captives, wisdom to the searching, and hearing and sight to the deaf and blind. His message was and remains as simple now as it was when He walked this earth:

I am the way, the truth, and the life. Give all your troubles to me and seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and everything you need will be added to you. Then arise and shine when your light comes and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you and his glory will be seen upon you.

The critical fact we can proclaim is that the Savior of the world - God with us - has been born bringing wonderful news of hope, love, peace, and wisdom to all who have ears to hear and hearts to receive. And, having carried this message in word and deed, He laid His life down for us and rose from the dead to confirm His Word.

Rejoice with us!

O Father, may your kingdom come and your will be done on earth as it is in heaven!

Scripture references: Ephesians 5:14, John 14:6, 1 Peter 5:7, Matthew 6:33, Isaiah 60:1-2, Matthew 5:10