



*For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given:
and the government shall be upon his shoulder:
and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor,
The mighty God, The everlasting Father,
The Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:6*

*The birth of a single Child changed the world forever.
Let our hearts be blessed this Christmas
with a reverence for God's Precious
Gift of Life.*

Ross and Kavin

December 2006

Dear Friends and Relatives,

It has been an eventful year. Ross has been retired for 13 months and has neither run out of things to do nor driven Karin crazy – any more than usual. Just a few days after last year's letter went out, Ross' mother, Myrtle, died on December 5. Then about a month later, January 10, 2006 our 5th grandchild, Annika, was born to Tami and Jason. There was an afghan ready for her, made in advance by great grandmother Myrt in anticipation of her birth. Annika can be a very happy little girl but also suffers from severe acid reflux and has been slow to gain weight. You can see more about both these events on our web site, www.rossolson.org.

The attached card is commercially produced by a pro-life publishing company but actually features four of our grandchildren. The photo was taken when we did our family nativity scene two years ago (for those of you who keep track of such things.) I don't know if it is a greater stretch to note that the part of Jesus is played by Laura or that Aizec is an angel. Christopher and Patrick look quite comfortable in their roles as shepherds, although they would be horrified to find out that in the first century there were no video games to help pass the long hours in the fields.

Jeff and Rachel are in the process of adopting from China and hope to have their baby by next Christmas but the process is slow and difficult. Jeff finished a large deck and fence in their back yard this year. He still works for Thomson West (www.west.thomson.com) and does a lot of volunteer work at First Free Church, serving on the Council, managing the computer network and running the website, www.firstfreechurch.org. Rachel works with the MOPS program www.mops.firstfreechurch.org and attends Bible Study Fellowship. Laura, 3, is in gymnastics and swimming. She wants two sisters, two brothers (and perhaps 15 cats) at last count, although those numbers are subject to change without notice. Her often amusing sayings, royal pronouncements and antics can be viewed at www.olsonzoo.com.

Susan and Eric Anderson moved from their hobby farm to an apartment in St. Louis Park. Eric still drives for East West Allover courier but is getting back into engineering. Susan has given up the grueling 2 am paper route and works at McDonalds ½ block away. She also super-cleans houses. They are still with Quixtar and you can get good deals from them via their web site www.hensman-intl.com after e-mailing them at eric.susan.anderson@hotmail.com to get a password. They attend Cross of Glory Baptist Church in Hopkins.



Annika

Tami and Jason have their hands full with three busy boys and a baby girl. Tami home-schools the boys and they are making progress. They attend First Free. Tami also does professional photography and prefers to work with children. You can see some of her portraits on her web site at www.smg.photobucket.com/albums/v117/mommo. Jason does both commercial roofs with Ettel and Franz (www.ettel Franz.com) and residential roofs in his spare time. If you have a roofing job, he will try to fit you in. Christopher is 10 years old and is a collector of both jokes and magic tricks. Patrick, 7, played T ball this summer and did very well both hitting and throwing. Aizec is 5 and is taking Judo classes. Although it is supposed to be used in self defense, he prefers to attack. They attend Stockade boys' club. Annika makes friends everywhere with her winning smile.

KaWan has begun taking classes towards a masters in art education and substitute teaches in Minneapolis Public Schools and also some of the suburban systems. She has applied for a 15 month program to complete that degree and receive a teaching certificate that will begin in June. She has substitute taught all ages and all subjects but loves middle school students, and of course prefers to teach art. She has a special affinity for immigrant kids. She is doing some inner city ministry and attending Christ Church International and still works part time for First Free Church in the office.

Karin is still a discussion leader with Bible Study Fellowship (www.bsfinternational.org) and has Laura for a "sleep over" the night before class each week. She is also a "Mentor Mom" with Mothers of Preschoolers (MOPS www.mops.org) and teaches Kindergarten Sunday School. She has had more trouble with acid reflux, causing both pain and cough, mostly due to nerve damage to her esophagus and stomach from 38

years of type 1 diabetes. Her diabetic foot problems have been greatly improved by surgery to correct Deformities, and expensive orthotics. She has had an insulin pump for almost 7 years now. She has organized and expanded her greeting card creating activities with stamping and using Ross' excess nature photos.

Ross has looked into a number of medical activities including short term missions and even teaching pediatrics at a medical school in China, but is at peace with sticking to non-medical volunteer activities. A year ago he was diagnosed with type 2 diabetes so he is getting more of the patient's eye view on testing and eating right. He teaches Junior Church and leads the semiannual marathon Children's Hikes, which have now grown to 40 – 50 people by including Salem Free Church. He also teaches adult classes at church and gets occasional opportunities to speak on creation to outside groups. He is on the Board and runs the website for Twin Cities Creation Science Association (www.tccsa.tc) and has joined the board of Outpost (and will help with the soon to be on line www.outpostministries.org). Ross also assists with MOPS, doing science lessons for the home school kids who come with their mothers and their pre-school siblings. He finds that he has time to read novels and philosophy which he never was able to do while working. Ross also has a lot of time for special outings with the grandchildren, going on hikes or to museums, movies or zoos.

Karin and Ross volunteer with China Outreach Ministries and host Chinese students and scholars, meeting them at the airport, housing them temporarily and easing their transition into American life. We also often invite them to family gatherings. One event got written up in the Star Tribune, with a few inaccuracies, that appeared exactly on Thanksgiving Day www.rossolson.org/family/thanksgiving_w_chinese.pdf.

Karin and Ross have taken trips with the grandsons, who get to go when they can no longer come to Bible Study Fellowship Children's program. Aizec flew with us to Columbus to visit Karin's sister and brother in law, "Stina" and Steve and cousin Sharonda. Christopher and Patrick went with us by car to Omaha, Denver and Colorado Springs, seeing mountains, museums and miles and miles of cornfields. We visited friends along the way, Gaofeng and Minya, Hai and Jing, Julian and Davinda and niece Dawn Olson. Karin and Ross also took a trip alone to the North Shore to a quiet cabin by the water. We also attended the wedding of former patient and friend Sunny Rasmussen in New Hampshire. At home, after 36 years of marriage Karin and Ross got a "Sleep Number" bed, which allows Karin's "Princess and the Pea" sensitivity to be accommodated. Ross could sleep anywhere, of course, and sometimes does even in public. But he sleeps better and is more rested with a CPAP machine for sleep apnea. The only number to be worked on is hours of sleep — we both stay up way too late, and nap "like seniors." Karin believes that napping is a grandma's entitlement (especially after having the grandchildren over) and that it MUST be on the couch to count!



Ross' Dad, Stan, is doing well considering he lost his wife just a year ago. There is no recurrence of his cancer and he stays active as the patriarch of the family with 11 grandchildren and 17 great grandchildren. Karin's mother, Edythe, has been alone for nearly 2 years and has had several operations for the circulation in her legs. Due to eye problems, she has very limited vision. Since she does not drive, we and other family members need to take her to appointments. We also help draw up her insulin in advance to simplify her diabetic treatment. Edythe is expecting her 9th grandchild — Tim and Laurel Falck are pregnant — who will be younger than her 7 great grandchildren. And this will be the only grandchild to carry on the Falck name.

As the world seems to degenerate into insoluble problems and face potential disasters ranging from terrorism to bird flu, and the evil side of human nature seems to be winning in so many places, we rejoice that we know the God who came as a baby on that first Christmas in order to redeem the world He had created from the sin we all committed. He has transformed our hearts and will come soon to bring justice and peace. Some will oppose Him but we will rejoice and hope you will as well. That can happen if you confess your own helplessness and accept His forgiveness and loving Lordship.

Merry Christmas

Karin and Ross Olson