

It was NOT a quiet year here on the shores of Wood Lake. But it was mostly stuff that wouldn't interest you. That is why we have hidden coded access to a Swiss bank account somewhere in the text.

The **Ross & Karin Olson** clan grew by merger. On September 14, **Sarah Cook** married our oldest grandson **Christopher**. They are both competitive speed-cubers – Rubik's Cube. ® At the reception, every place setting had a cube and the majority of the guests could solve it speedily. **Sarah** is a graphic designer working for First Free Church and **Christopher** is a videographer for The Cubicle and represents them at tournaments all over the world.



**Patrick Rachel Jeff Jason Aizec Brian KaWan Ross Karin Eric Susan Tami Chris Annika Laura Clara Esther Helen**

**Karin** has re-awakened more of her artistic gifts. She joined several other artists in decorating the (now) lovely Gramercy garage by painting her second mural. Her art has been displayed at Gramercy and First Free. She continues to create greeting cards – not quite “out of nothing” but using magazine ads, fundraising envelopes, thrift store books, used cards and dryer lint (...just kidding about lint.) Monthly, twelve of our Gramercy Park neighbors help her put together greeting cards which she designs. She is artistic director and chair of the Sunshine committee which makes seasonal door hangings 4 times a year for every unit in our building. Using over 60 thrift store dolls **Karin** had been buying over the years, she created Santa Lucia Dolls, with white dresses, red sashes and holly crowns with candles. She sold 12 at the Richfield Craft Fair and hopes to bless many more doll-lovers with the rest of them next year. She loves teaching kindergarten Sunday School and mentoring young moms at MOPS. She had her remaining (non-functional) toes removed so we did not rent a cabin this summer during her six week (non-weight-bearing) convalescence. The upside of this is that she was able to finish several embroidery projects! **Karin** is scheduled for the sixth surgical replacement of her gastric pacemaker battery – they last a little less than 2 years. The big diabetes news was starting the Continuous Glucose Monitor which greatly improves control by communicating with the pump and making some adjustments automatically. That elevates her to “Medtronic poster girl x3”! She gave a humorous talk at Gramercy on “Nine Questions People Ask About Diabetes That Drive Me Crazy.” Things like, “Should you be eating that?” It was picked up by her device trainer and went viral! On next July 11, 2020 we will have reached 50 years of marriage and we hope to invite many of you to celebrate with us!

**Ross's** creativity runs to words. He tried to supplement our income by teaching English to Chinese children online. Aside from having to do it at 5 am Minneapolis time, the main problem with that scenario was that they did not want him. The profile seemed to lean towards hyperactive recent college graduates, preferably female. An opportunity to write children's stories for a college professor in Hong Kong who would have them translated and illustrated by her students fell through. Maybe her students are all out protesting. **Ross** even investigated taking some of his writings and selling them for publication. But as this thought was developing, God did an amazing thing – He resuscitated our retirement account and helped us economize — including being down to one car. We appear to be on a sustainable track financially and the writing will continue to be made available online for free. These are Biblical monologues, which began as scripts for Advent and Lent presentations at church but have grown into Bible study tools. Even though they are essentially historical fiction, based on the Biblical record, there is an attempt to get “inside” the characters, as if they were to be acted out. Study questions have been developed and used with our Men's Fellowship. Check out [www.rossolson.org/drama](http://www.rossolson.org/drama). Otherwise **Ross** has been shedding responsibilities, some voluntarily and some not. Still on the Outpost Board but not chair. Still running the [www.tccsa.tc](http://www.tccsa.tc) website. Giving talks in various places, sometimes with an audience. He maintains his commitment to being a (hopefully) righteous troublemaker. He was interviewed once on the radio and they were not stormed with protestors. **Ross** continues to do “Papa Day” on Wednesdays with the homeschooled grandchildren who are available for field trips. We have been hosting Chinese students for over 25 years but this year the number who asked for a host family dropped off precipitously. We have maintained relationships with several we had previously hosted. After our years in Hong Kong, and having adopted wonderful additions to the family, the China and Hong Kong connections are strong.

The rest of the family is wonderful. They take after their mother. **Jeff and Rachel** are raising their four girls. They housed their nephew **Patrick** before and after his trip to Australia and are hosting a 14-year-old Guatemalan girl, **Melany**, for three months this winter. She is on school break and wanted to see snow and improve her English. Bingo. And for **Jeff and Rachel**, I guess if you already have 4 girls, adding a couple more kids does not make a statistically significant difference.

**Susan and Eric** have increased their involvement in their church. **Eric** is also a key employee at Metro Spec. **Susan's** ministry through poetry has grown. She was invited to speak at a women's retreat and received lots of positive feedback. She participates in the poetry group here at Gramercy which includes Doris Arnold, her teacher while at Field School. **Susan** comes once a month to clean for her aged parents – we gratefully pay her. And she always did want to help old people!

**Jason** has been a delight, connecting with his kids and calling his mother almost every day. He is effectively participating in parenting these young adults and employed **Aizec** in his roofing and siding business during the warmer months.

**Tami and Chris Molitor** have successfully launched 2 kids. **Tami** home-schools the last two. **Tami** was the costume wizard for Chinese American Dance Theater and will probably do that for the new school — see below.

**KaWan and Brian (Snowman the Soulman)** have moved into a brand-new apartment, close to his studio and her work. His band gets frequent work. **Brian and KaWan** are helping with worship at Grove Community Church. **KaWan** continues to help special ed adults with career skills and teaches ballet at two Minneapolis City Parks. They co-parent his two kids with the kids' birth-mother.

Everybody thinks their grandchildren are wonderful. How can I convince you that ours really are? OK, yours are, too. But let me hit the highlights.

**Christopher** (23), already got a paragraph shared with his wife, the newest Olson, **Sarah** (23)! **Patrick** (20), fresh back from a semester of Bible School in Australia is working as a car glass technician who can repair or replace your windshield wherever you are. The company will pay for college courses. **Aizec** (18), the tallest brother and still growing, is a high school senior. He is already earning scholarship money for his bowling with two perfect 300 games in tournaments! He is challenged by severe cluster headaches which respond to very few therapies but one of them is oxygen, so he carries a tank in his car. He got a tattoo which says, in Chinese, "Never Give Up." **Annika** (almost 14), has gotten high marks in Chinese dance competitions in California and Boston, both with her group and individually. Due to management issues at her former studio **Annika** is now dancing with Phoenix Chinese Dance Academy.

**Laura** (16), has her license and a car. She is taking courses at University of Northwestern, St Paul (Post-Secondary Enrollment Options) for both high school and college credit. She drives to and from and is still in many enrichment activities including Angelica Cantanti Treble Singers. **Helen** (14) has courageously completed 11 years of daily growth hormone shots. She earned her blue belt from Sterling Karate. It's a good thing she is so compassionate or we'd all be in trouble! **Esther** (11) is in Twin Cities Ballet of Minnesota Nutcracker for the fourth year and **Clara** (9) for the third year. They and **Helen** sing with the CHAT home school choir and perform in dramas put on by "His Image Theatre." **Esther** is the tallest of the siblings. What is it about being number 3?

**Avery** (20), going to school in Pittsburgh, is now aiming to be a physical therapist/athletic trainer with a master's degree. **Xavier** (16) would like to be a professional football player – his sister can prevent and/or treat his injuries and he can provide her with practical experience without risk of being sued.

We have attended a number of funerals, some were our peers – those in the building include believers and some whose spiritual status we just don't know. We lost **Karin's** Aunt Delores and **Eric's** mother who both were ready to go and left rich legacies. **Tami's** mother died after a courageous struggle with cancer. Her theme throughout was "Choose Joy." Jerry Coffman, who as Hi-C Club director was instrumental in **Ross'** spiritual development in high school, died, still ministering to the end. But we also lost church friend Dale Bostrom, who with his family made a great contribution to the lives of our grandsons and left us at age 58.

So, the **Olsons** have completed another trip around the sun and left tracks. How many more there are for us, indeed for the whole earth, is open to question. We are incredibly privileged to be able to put it all in God's hands. We are able to, but we don't always do it! But knowing the Creator who entered His creation as a helpless infant, lived the perfect life and then – get this, it is the most important – was unjustly accused, tortured and died, all to take the punishment we deserved for our sin. Then He put an exclamation mark in history by rising from the dead. Jesus Christ defeated death and Satan. But note that the next point is crucial. Because God does not usurp our free will, he will not force this forgiveness and salvation on us. He asks us to confess our sins and receive it by faith. Have you done so? This year may be the last, for you and even for the world.

JOY TO YOU!

**Ross & Karin Olson**