

Christmas 2024

Greetings Family, Friends and Subscribers,

The Ross & Karin Olson clan continues to branch out and diversify. Our parents, part of “the greatest generation,” are gone, so that we have been chronologically promoted to nominal patriarch and matriarch. We have done our best to enrich the original Scandinavian family gene pool and culture with people who by nature and nurture respect their elders. But as the generations unfold, life is constantly surprising.

We live in Gramercy Park Lake Shore Drive, a senior cooperative, meaning we are independent-living people in our own activities of daily living (hey, stop snickering, you grandkids!). The concept of the co-operative is that members take on some of the responsibility and work of the community. It is said among us, “Eighty is the new sixty, but 9:00 pm is the new midnight.” We personally do not observe the curfew, but sometimes (one of us) fails to get up until after 10:00 am.

Karin serves our Co-op by heading the card-making and “Sunshine” committees. She helps plan events such as the Activity Fair, which orients all members to the available opportunities to serve. For the past several years she has participated in “Fireside Readings” during holiday season. She leads a Women’s Bible Study in our building and has weekly phone conversations with a Chinese graduate student – in China – via WeChat. Karin serves our church as one of four mentor moms for mothers of preschoolers, now known as MomCo and expanded to support mothers of older kids as well. She has also been teaching Kindergarten (and sometimes Kindergarten- first grade) Sunday School for decades. She keeps up with high school and nursing school classmates. All this with 56 years of type 1 diabetes and longstanding neuropathy leading to amputation 12 years ago and life with a prosthetic leg. Casual observers would not guess, except that now she is temporarily in a wheelchair to heal an ulcer on her real foot. Her endocrinologist is very pleased with her overall management goals. Karin and Ross co-lead a small group of friends from our church which meets twice a month, often in our home.

Take two decades off Ross and you still have “old,” but to do his part for the co-op, he is on the team that does the nightly security walks for a week once every two months. He also helps set up the sound system for board meetings, special events and concerts. He leads a Gramercy Men’s Bible Study and a Bible Study at church called SoulShare. Over many years he has written dramatic monologues which portray a Biblical character talking about the story recorded in Scripture from his/her own point of view. There are now about 130 on [www.rossolson.org](http://www.rossolson.org). Serving many years on the board of Twin Cities Creation Science Association (TCCSA), he has volunteered to do things he has no business trying, (like ZOOM and YouTube) but continues to muddle on as we wait for the younger generation, who know how to do it, to step up. He has tried to interest our neighbors in the scientific evidence for Biblical Creation and the accuracy of the Biblical record. He helps teach grades 1-3 weekly boys clubs at church and the yearly Vacation Bible Camp. For years there was a weekly Papa Day for the 8 home-schooled grandkids, letting their teachers (their mothers), have a day off and Ross getting to do kid things. Since that ended, he has tried to take them one by one for lunch or dinner and get updated on their lives. He does not spend all his time with kids but meets monthly with good friend (and fellow old person) Steve Mondy. This has been going on for at least 30 years. All this activity is not just to fill the time because both Ross and Karin really feel they are responsible to steward the experiences and knowledge they have been given by God and want to share with others.

At the time of Karin’s amputation, we realized we needed to move into a senior building and the timing worked out to provide a beautiful 11<sup>th</sup> floor apartment with a large space for Karin’s crafting and a corner for Ross’s computers in addition to a guest room that has its own bath. We have used this for the grandkids as they have gone with grandma to Bible Study Fellowship from age 3 to 5 and stayed overnight the night before. The room has been used for Chinese students who come to study at the University of Minnesota and need initial housing and sometimes assistance and guidance on other aspects of getting settled. Most recently we hosted Shawn Wang from Taiwan. Some students become long term friends, and some have become Christians. Occasionally Chinese whom we hosted as students also come back to visit. We have used the guest room to house visiting speakers who come for TCCSA meetings. We have also accommodated visiting missionaries and out-of-town relatives. Our large living/dining room has proven ideal for hosting large family gatherings. We also have available to us by reservation without charge “The Gramercy Room” which could seat 140. Karin hosted a bridal shower for Melissa there. God has blessed us with this facility, and we want to use it to bless others.

All in all, we are active seniors. We are able to do some, but not as much as we would like, to help with the youngest grandchild, Adalyn, and are not able to attend ALL the concerts and dance recitals of the others. We also attend weddings and see more on the horizon as the grandchildren grow up. The picture

attached is from the September wedding of Patrick and Melissa who created a new surname from parts of their first names (Melrick). The practice of changing names is actually more Scandinavian than Chinese. The age distribution of the grandchildren is one toddler (Adalyn), two teens (Clara and Esther) and the other 8 are officially classified as young adults. Among them are dancers, scholars, musicians, and athletes (think pickleball). There seems to be an inordinate number going into health-related fields, occupational and physical therapy, maybe PA or dentist, childcare worker or teacher, internet blogger and entrepreneur. Our kids? Three of the four are in their 50s! Enough said! They are beginning to face the issues of aging including a serious foot injury for Jason. Great grandchildren? Kane and Avery (KaWan's stepdaughter) are expecting in February (making us great-grandparents), and after that who knows?

We attend a lot of funerals, some for believers who were ready to go, some for people who were not, whether or not they thought they were. We have heard summaries of interesting and productive lives but were disappointed at what was often missing from the narrative – the eternal perspective. It is true that we have the freedom to believe whatever we want but cannot assume that all opinions are equal.

When Ross's brother Bryan died suddenly in 2023 at age 72, the service reminded us that he did not depend on his own accomplishments and acts of kindness or his unfailingly positive outlook on life to assure his eternal destiny. He knew he was a sinner but was trusting the accomplishment of Jesus Christ on the cross to take the punishment he deserved and had dedicated his life to serving his Savior. What Jesus did on the cross is the reason we celebrate Christmas!

By the way, Jesus is indeed coming back! We are looking forward to that day. Are you?

Ross & Karin Olson

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Back Row: Eric Anderson, Brian Powers, Hayden Durand, Aizec Olson, Avery Piroch, Kane Piroch, Sarah Olson, Christopher Olson, Christina Dotseth, Adalyn Dotseth-Olson, Esther Olson

Middle Row: KaWan Powers, Chris Molitor, Tami Molitor, Melissa Melrick, Patrick Melrick, Jason Olson, Jeff Olson, Christopher Olson,

Front Row: Susan Anderson, Clara Olson, Annika Olson, Ross Olson, Karin Olson, Helen Olson, Laura Olson, Rachel Olson.