

December 16, 2010

Greetings from Karen & Harold in Virginia and in the love of God who called us here.

This last year we went through both the most trying time of our life together and some of our most enjoyable times.

Right before Easter an aggressive form of breast cancer was diagnosed in Karen's body. The love of God and his people have surrounded us through 4 months of chemo (intravenous poison that especially zaps fast-growing cells like hair and cancer), a lumpectomy and a re-lumpectomy, and then 6 weeks of Mon-Fri radiation (zaps all cells it's aimed at, but the cancer cells are unable to repair themselves). Today the 6 weeks ended! Now follow 5 years of hormone therapy and periodic checkups with the oncologist.

Now for the blessed parts of the year!

We enjoy our house next to the Trissels church with its view of mountain ranges, its nice garden, its perfect size, its neighbors with their even nicer garden and peach trees and apple trees. Seldom do any cars go by, and when they do we can hear them a quarter mile off in the quiet country -- great place for Karen to walk with our dog Burnie. The church parking lot and a stretch of road make great laps for Harold to jog each night.

We delight in how well we fit with the Trissels congregation -- biblically, theologically, socially. The more we get to know the congregation and its people, the more we appreciate them. And God has been adding some amazingly-gifted new families. Go to trisselsmc.org for some pictures, sermons and what-not.

Our great joy has been times with our kids. God called us to a church only 15 mins from EMU and April & Rachel's apartment in Harrisonburg. Close enough that the kids often pop in during the week. Of course, since Fall we don't see Daniel often; he's in Baltimore for a year working with N Baltimore Mennonite Church and an inner-city after-school program. But God gave us two others who feel more and more like our own: Scott who's marrying April in Oct, and Briana who's marrying Darrel in May. That gives us 5 "kids" in the area and most Sundays most of them can be found at our house. Rachel has extra occasion for coming here: in September she became a member of Trissels. She and Darrel help lead the junior high youth group and attend a Mon evening young adult Bible study. Darrel's at the house the most, living with us since Aug. He works for Shenandoah Growers, a large fresh herb distributor, buying \$70-80,000 worth each week from growers from Florida to California to Hawaii. Rachel teaches 3rd grade in Elkton. April continues to love her job at JMU's library. Scott substitute teaches and plays amazing sax in an established band that does danceable classic tunes. Briana is a senior nursing major at EMU.

But the greatest joy in life for the two of us is the warmth and security of our constant companionship with each other. And with our God who sent his Son that first Christmas. We feast on the love of God that is deeper and higher and wider and longer than anything in all of life.

Harold & Karen

