

March 2021

Dear Family and friends,

We are writing this update letter from lower BC where we have been resting and recuperating for the past few months.

We are enjoying new friends, three grandchildren (who are a 10-minute drive down the road), a zoo membership, beautiful parks, and Spring like weather in January and February and March!

When challenges hit and chapters of our lives suddenly take a twist (which they did for us), how reassuring to know that God is sovereign, nothing takes Him by surprise, and details that we could never dream or plan, are all worked out by Him and even planned far in advance!

We left home before Christmas, and yes, we drove, and yes, we had terrible weather, and yes, I (Lynn) was scared most of the way! But also, yes, God protected us and saw us safely to our destination in Burn's Lake, BC where we met up with Marc and Annah at their beautiful property and home they are presently renting. It has a beautiful view of Francois Lake, a perfect hill for sledding, and trails to ski and walk on.

We had permission to travel from the NWT government...you know, the whole covid thing, and because the house we were going to had separate living quarters, we were able to be with several of our children during Christmas which was an extra special blessing and privilege for 2020. In fact, even our daughter Ruth, who lives in California, surprised us by coming (which was most unlikely, shocking, and delightful!)

When covid hit a year ago, the NWT went into tight lock down. For us living in Fort McPherson, life certainly changed as it did for everyone. We had the privilege of having our son Joel and his wife Joleen (and sweet little boy Axel) come live with us for a few months. It was such a blessing!! Our youngest son, Jesse, had just left home one month and ½ ago to finish highschool in Edmonton and although it wasn't fun for him to be uprooted suddenly and so soon after he left, I was happy to have him back home for a wee bit longer as well. The 10 of us did life together in our little home and enjoyed the blessing of family as we passed Spring together cutting meat, hauling wood, and having picnics.

By May our small church fellowship was able to start worshipping together again, and the church doors have been open every week ever since. We are very grateful! Even in our absence from town, church has been continuing under the leadership of a local man named Abe and a high school teacher named Dawit. It is reassuring to us to know that those who want to learn and grow are able to even though we are away.

Three of our daughters graduated in 2020: Annah from nursing school in Germany, Ruth from the Master's University in California, and Esther from high school. Our youngest son, Jesse, graduated from high school in February 2021. Two grandchildren were born in 2020: Eden Elizabeth (to Tyler and Sarah Krahn) and Audi Lynn (to Joel and Joleen Hanthorn). Annah and Marc are due with our 6<sup>th</sup> grandchild at the end of June. She and her husband moved to Canada in July of 2020 and as mentioned, are living in BC. They recently changed their last name and are now known as Marc and Annah Van Damm.

Last June a little guy came to live with us. He was only 5 months old. Of course, we fell in love with him. He had already been in several foster homes so sleeping through the night was not one of his better qualities. Paul and I took turns getting up with him every 2-3 hours. Despite the sleepless nights he brought us a lot of joy, and the girls all loved him.

Late last August, we were travelling home from a visit with his family, and I was trying to settle him. I smoothed the receiving blanket down across my chest for him to sleep and while I was doing that, I felt a lump I had never felt before. Later that week I got it checked locally in Fort McPherson. The next week I was in Yellowknife for further checks. The next week in Edmonton and the next week in Vancouver! And unfortunately, yes, the lump was breast cancer.

To be honest, I'm not sure if I was more initially challenged about finding a lump or having to give up my baby. (Foster care grief is real!) Because of covid, I wasn't able to come home between appointments before I would have my next

appointment and so keeping an 8-month-old was not feasible. Additionally, not knowing what the future held, also gave us reservations about our care for him. I must say, we laboured and lamented over that decision and true to His Word, the Lord has given us peace and healing. As it turned out, when I left the NWT for my first appointment, I was gone for 6 weeks (The NWT had, and still has, a quarantine rule about only quarantining in places where there is a hospital.) Thankfully, when I returned, I was given an exemption and could quarantine at home.

I had surgery to remove the lump during that time. I also was able to spend some beautiful days at both of my daughter's houses, as well as see Esther as she lives part time at Sarah's house. Both my parents came to BC as covid took a back burner for a few weeks. I was with Esther on her 16<sup>th</sup> birthday; I was with Sarah for part of her labour for her third delivery, and I was able to help them move into their new home. I was not only truly blessed and provided for during this time of uncertainty but was able to be apart of some significant life moments that covid would have kept me from! God has the most beautiful way of blessing his children in the midst of challenging and uncertain times!!

It was not an easy time for Paul at home, with the needs of the three girls, the full weight of the home and ministry, and not being able to be with me when I really wanted him. Naomi was a huge blessing and took upon many responsibilities such as cooking and becoming a speedy dish washer!

When my next appointment was scheduled for January, we decided to travel together as a family. Back to Vancouver I went to discuss treatments with an oncologist. I have to say that January was an emotionally challenging month. But I also have to say, that during that time God blessed us with the support, the love, the people, the sunshine, the food, the help...everything we needed. I had to make a tremendously hard decision regarding treatment. I was torn up inside....so many voices, so many opinions, so much conflicting information. I just didn't know what to do.

In the end, I decided to take a comprehensive approach to treating the cancer. I had been in contact with several people who had given me some amazing info...people I had never met...never heard of...and God placed them in my path...It just seemed too amazing to be random! There is a lot more to it than that, and it is too long of a story and too convoluted for this short space. I am still figuring out a lot of things, and I am researching as I can and learning as much as I can. Taking charge of my own health to this degree is uncomfortable for me, and I am on a huge learning curve.

I am often asked how I am doing and how I have been dealing with the diagnosis. I wasn't sad or scared, but I was surprised and actually had to deal with embarrassment. That may sound strange (I'm trying to be transparent), but I have tried to live a healthy life. I am not an at-risk candidate for breast cancer having birthed and nursed 7 babies, never been on the pill, and seldom ever eat junk food. But here I was trying to process how this happened, and I could not get any answers. Since that time, I have uncovered some unhealthy things in my life! I uncovered a raging tooth infection for one, a ruined metabolism, low oxygen supply, and poor self care, just to name a few. This past month I have been to the dentist 6 times, and it is so good to take care of these nagging issues that I've ignored for years. I'm not completely at a point of total gratitude...but I'm getting there. I'm learning a lot about myself, and I'm thankful for the lessons, even though some are hard to accept and even change.

Overall, I feel well! I'm so grateful for the people God has put in my path to guide me, help me, and encourage me. There are sooo many!! It really is unbelievable! I have occasional minimal pain at the location of the surgery, but it is ever so slight. I am more conscious about...well, pretty much

everything!!! Ask my kids!! The water we drink, exercising, relaxing, etc....Emotionally, I have times of doubt...did I make the right decision? Am I doing enough? Will it come back? But I chose my path, and I'm committed to it, and my faith is in God and He has the final say in life and death, no matter what decision I felt led to make.



MY GRACE IS SUFFICIENT FOR YOU FOR MY POWER IS MADE PERFECT IN WEAKNESS, THEREFORE I WILL BOAST ALL THE MORE GLADLY OF MY WEAKNESS, SO THAT THE POWER OF CHRIST MAY REST UPON ME.

2 Corinthians 12:9

April 2021

You may have heard for several years now that we have wanted to renovate our home. We talked about selling it and building a new home and we went back and forth on that decision several times, for several years! Last year we finally decided to renovate. The property we were hoping for didn't become available, the prices of lumber skyrocketed, and we really are quite content in our little home which is smack dab in the middle of the community, two houses down from the church, and in a prime location for doing ministry. It has however, seen years of abuse by little people who have passed through the halls leaving marks of their presence whether by regular wear and tear or by working through their Big Feelings by leaving holes in the walls! We had a few helpers scheduled to help in the summer of 2020, but you guessed it...covid put a halt to that. A few weeks ago, my dad, who is not impulsive, impulsively said, "Lynn, lets do this." Although Paul and I were hoping God would send help from another direction (simply because my dad is 80!), we are very grateful, and we ask that you pray for him that God would uphold him as he takes on this task and uphold my mom who did not accompany him and is alone during restrictive lock downs in Ontario.

My dad left his home, North Bay, Ontario, on April 16<sup>th</sup> and Paul left Burn's Lake, BC, on April 19<sup>th</sup>. They met up in Grand Prairie, Alberta, and bought supplies and headed on north together. They were denied access to our home until after they quarantine in Inuvik for two weeks. So right now, they have their feet up after their long trip, (they are at our son and daughter's home (Joel and Joleen)), preparing for some long days of house repairs. Joel and Joleen are also not at home. Joel is in Fort Smith doing his last course for his electrical apprenticeship, and Joleen and the two kids are at her parents in Saskatchewan. So even having this affordable place to quarantine, has been amazing, since quarantine is no longer provided for by the government unless it is essential travel.

My dad left Ontario the evening before the province went into another restrictive lock down, which then it became illegal to leave your home unless for essential travel. His impulsivity was certainly the perfect timing of the Holy Spirit. We are so grateful and marvel how things are coming together.

The girl's and I are in Burn's Lake, BC. Annah's husband is doing two-week stints out in a logging camp off Vancouver Island, so I trust we are keeping Annah company, and we are enjoying the large space here. We are even thinking about getting a few chickens and goats! We will likely head home when the ferry goes in at the beginning of June, do our two weeks in a hotel in Inuvik (since I am on medical it will be covered) and then go home.

The girls are doing well. We are certainly moving in a positive healing direction, although some days are still hard.

We want to thank you deeply for your interest in our lives, in our community, and for supporting us in the ways that God has led you to. We are very grateful and with the psalmist say, "For you, O LORD, have made me glad by your work; at the works of your hands I sing for joy!" (Psalm 92:4)

With Much Love,

Paul, Lynn, Naomi, Hope and Grace



PRAY FOR WAYNE AND PAUL AS THEY BEGIN RENOVATIONS ON OUR HOME. PRAY FOR ONE MORE PERSON TO COME HELP THEM. PRAY FOR SAFETY FOR THE GIRLS AND I AS I TRAVEL HOME BY MYSELF IN ANOTHER MONTH. PRAY FOR OUR COMMUNITY THAT WE WILL BE A LIGHT AND SOURCE OF PEACE IN THESE DAYS OF FEAR AND UNCERTAINTY. PRAY FOR THE SALVATION OF MANY.