



# Merry Christmas 2021 from The Lahns



It's hard to believe that 2021 is drawing to a close! Where did the year go? We're nearing the end of another year of Covid craziness and we hope that it's not been too stressful for you and your family.

2020 ended with a number of changes that didn't make last year's Christmas letter. In that letter we told you that Nancy's job with Chapel Ridge Funeral Home had been mostly remote in 2020, providing telephone support and spiritual care to Shepherd Village residents during the lonely days of the complete Covid lockdown. She returned onsite in September only to be laid off by Chapel Ridge due to Covid pressures in late December. That same December day, however, the Lord had a surprise in store for her as she was hired on by Shepherd Village to work as a Resident Assistant in the Spiritual Life Department! She now works 4 days per week, visiting and praying with residents, and leading two Bible Studies. Nancy loves this work, and also is so grateful that she can frequently visit with her Mom who lives onsite.

2020 also ended with our family Christmas being cancelled due to Covid restrictions. We figured we'd be able to celebrate it in February on Family Day, but even that was postponed! In the end, we celebrated Christmas in April on Easter Weekend—or as we like to refer to it now... "Eastmas" or "Chreaster". With the whole family together for the first time in a LONG while, it made for wonderful chaos as the grandkids were

old enough to enjoy so much of the excitement. It was a little odd, mind you, having the Christmas tree and decorations all up while celebrating Easter, but hasn't this whole year been odd for us all?!

However, delaying Christmas until April did mean that we had an additional guest at the table who would not have been present at for a December celebration... On March 10th, 2021, Aaron Dexter Lahn was born to Tim and Rachel, their second child, a little brother for Arya, and number 6 grandchild for us! Aaron is amazing! He has the ability to smile almost all day long, however, when he does get upset, it happens instantly—and loudly! He and Arya get along so well too, which is wonderful to see!

Tim continues to enjoy his work as a chiropractor in Barrie, and Rachel has discovered an amazing new talent while on maternity leave—cake decorating!



The cancelling of Christmas celebrations in December also resulted in changed plans for Bethany and Ty. When the family was unable to get together for Christmas, they ended up making a special trip to see us on January 2nd to surprise us with the news that they were going to have a baby in July 2021!! And sure enough, on July 19th, Josephine Grace Douwes entered the world—the first child of Bethany and Ty, and our 7th grandchild in less than three years! She couldn't be more of a sweetie-pie if she tried!! And Bethany's MS has been dormant throughout the year—Praise the Lord! Another blessing—new Dad, Ty was given a great promotion at his job at Best Buy in Hamilton. He is now the Team Lead of Sales / Sales Manager!



The other surprise in 2021 was that Murray's company—Clockwork—was bought out by Deloitte at the end of July. Instead of spending the first weeks of August relaxing at the cottage or at home, Murray spent most his days (and nights) learning "the Deloitte ways" through many online courses. Leaving the Clockwork family after 17 years was hard, especially when he turns 65 in 2023 and so was looking forward to retirement from Clockwork rather than undergoing extra stress from a late career pivot. However, so far things have gone okay, once he got over the initial transitional humps. He's grateful that the two major projects he was working on at the time of the transition went ahead smoothly.





For Jordan and Rachel, 2021 is bringing on a number of changes. Melody and Oscar continue to grow like weeds and it so fun to have them around when they come here, or we go to Simcoe. It's been a stressful year for Jordan, who you may recall teaches a class of autistic kids. While he loves the kids and the teaching, the combination of the behavioural issues, the lack of support from the other support professionals, and some other issues with the school staff, has meant that he has elected to take some "stress leave" to decompress and feel out his options. On the other hand, Rachel, who has been a stay-at-home Mom for the past three years, was offered a position in a dental office in Simcoe (a position very similar to the one she had in Brantford before the kids came along) and she began this work at the beginning of December. We are sure that this was God's doing as it came about so suddenly as a wonderful answer to prayer.



Daniel and Jess, Landon and Isla surprised us in August with an announcement of their own. In mid-February they will be welcoming baby #3, a little boy, into their family!! This will make grandchild #8 for us and will even the score at 4 boys and 4 girls... for now. © Landon is too busy adding Spanish words to his vocabulary (thanks to "Dora,



The Explorer") and Isla is too busy walking and climbing to notice that they'll soon have a new sibling! Daniel came off his paternity leave after Isla's birth and now works for Wireless World in Limeridge Mall in Hamilton. With the impending addition to the family, they have sold and moved out of their trailer and into a spacious apartment, and have even succumbed to buying a mini-van!

Over the past year we have been becoming more involved in our new church—Cedarview Community Church in Newmarket. It's been hard with lockdowns, and masks, and social distancing, but things started to open up a bit in the fall. Nancy has been involved in a couple of weekly Bible Studies for women, and Murray has started to be involved in the monthly Men's Fellowship Group, and along with Nancy, a monthly Study on Proverbs. Our Married's Group has been meeting on Wednesday nights over Zoom, but in September we were able to host a "Games and Ice Cream Social" night on our property. It was so good to actually meet with new friends in person and without masks! And above all, we love our pastor's in-depth Bible teaching on Sunday mornings and evenings as it challenges us all and sets the tone for all that goes on at Cedarview.

For Nancy's Mom, this year has been one of declining physical and cognitive health. Thus, it became necessary to move her from the Assisted Living section of Shepherd Village (the Terrace) to the Long Term Care section (the Lodge). Fortunately the move was unremarkable and smooth, and we don't think Mom was actually aware of the changes in her environment. She continues to have 'good days' and 'bad days', but in November we were able to have a small celebration for her 97th birthday in the Shepherd Village Café along with Nancy's brother, Steve, and two of his girls. A very 'good day' for sure!



And of course, the pets—Chloe, Trinket and Gizmo continue to rule the roost and are looking forward to the Christmas mayhem and running off with various Christmas decorations at all times!



In December of 2020, did ANY of us think that by December of 2021 we would STILL be masking, social distancing, constantly sanitizing? Where do we turn for hope, as these days continue and human wisdom is so often shown to be lacking? King David, who also lived in perilous times, wrote these words some three thousand years ago:

**"Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart, all you who hope in the LORD." (Psalm 31:24)**

Notice that he does NOT say, "all you who hope in medical science", or "the government", or in any other form of human wisdom or ingenuity. "Hope" is not wishful thinking, or a desire that something you want will come true.

**HOPE was born that first Christmas night**, when God came to live among us in this dark world. Jesus is "Emmanuel, God with us" and it is only when we place our trust in Him that we can know the peace that only He can bring.

**Praying for the joy and peace of Christ to fill your hearts this Christmas, and throughout the year to come.**

