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Christmas letter 2008

Dear

Seems like a long year! (I thought the years speeded up when you got older?) It has had its high points but this year has been a lot of hard work. Still we rejoice in opportunities and joys. Some of the high points:

Dan got engaged to Jenn Perrett and they are busy planning a wedding late August/ early September, 2009. We are delighted.

Jon did well in his "A" levels and was accepted at University of Kent, Chatham Campus to do Music Technology. He is really enjoying the course even though it clashes with rugby practice and matches. He is living in a student building in the middle of Chatham, close to the shops, getting used to managing money, shopping and cooking. We, on the other hand, are getting used to being 'home alone'!

Visits from or to Becky and family in Plumstead or Tim and family in Doncaster (actually they were in Stokenchurch on one occasion and Luton airport on another). Joshua is now at Nursery, we are growing up!(Well the grandchildren are!)

As is our custom/tradition, (help we can't possibly get stuck in one of them) we had two summer holidays. First a trip with Liz's Dad around Normandy visiting Bayeaux, Honfleur, and Arromanches while staying in Rouen. Then we had a thatched cottage on main street, Nassington near Peterborough and chilled out (what else could you do this summer?) doing little - wandering around Rutland Water, Peterborough, etc. When we were at home Phil's grand summer project was to build a drive for the car in the front garden. The task is now complete and to the amazement of the neighbours, we now park the car on a front lawn (using 'Grass Block' technology). Very green!! Still anyone want 4 cu. Metres of soil or half a cubic metre of MOT Type 1 Gravel? (just call and collect!)

As to employment, we are grateful to have jobs (5-6 of our small fellowship are without jobs or redundant from 1st Jan.) Liz found the demands of school quite hard this year – they insist on lesson planning on the computer now! She ended up with a bad wrist (RSI), so was ordered by the doctor not to do computer work (bliss!). The new school is growing. Ofsted was complimentary (although Liz was not observed).

SRCF got stuck into 'HOPE 08' In the early summer we abandoned normal service and had a series of Sunday mornings based on the 9 responses to the love of God in our 'Vision for Mission'. – a morning of worship, a prayer labyrinth, car boot sale evangelism, serving the community by litter picking and offering practical help (mainly gardening), serving one another by having worship meetings in the homes of housebound and committing ourselves to specific acts of service to each other. It certainly was different! Some were a little unsure, others excited by the challenge to what 'church' is about. We had an Alpha course, which went well and has encouraged St. Mary's (local C of E) to have an Alpha course and we see other fruit as well. Razzmatazz (for 5-12years) has gone well, Teddy Bear Club is busy, and Phil enjoys serving at Tuesday Focus. That with lots of visits and admin and preparation keeps Phil busy. He does get office help, which has been much appreciated.

Well, Christmas is rushing up, so we must stop, send this off to you and find time to rejoice in the Saviour who has come. May you rejoice with us in this most glorious event in history.

Happy Christmas,

Phil Liz and family