



Joy to the world, the Lord is come!

Greetings!

Christmas 1998

Once again as we prepare for this holiday season, we trust that you all will have a very blessed Christmas full of the Love, Joy, Peace, and Hope that comes with the celebration of our Saviour's birth.

It's always so nice to hear from you all and to share news of our families. We are in our second year of experiencing the empty nest syndrome. It is amazing how quiet our house has become and we do miss the noise and activity that used to permeate our household.

Peter is in his fourth year at the University of Toronto and will graduate in Honours History in the Spring. He hopes to enter the Faculty of Music to study Voice next year. This past summer he went to Halifax for two weeks as a member of the National Youth Choir which also included a concert tour of the Maritimes and lots of lobster! He is singing with a new professional choir called the Nathaniel Dett Chorale which is a choir that is dedicated to the performance of Afrocentric music. We look forward to hearing their Christmas Program which is an eclectic mix of music ranging from Handel's Messiah (a la Stevie Wonder) and soulful carols to spirituals and African folk songs. He also sings with the Hart House Choir and they hope to tour Estonia, Russia, Finland, and Stockholm, Sweden next August.

Margaret is in her second year in the Faculty of Music at McGill studying French Horn. She is living at Presbyterian College, but is in a very nice apartment within the same building. She keeps very busy and seems to have concerts to prepare for every week! We went down for a weekend to Montreal to hear her play with the Brass Choir and the McGill Symphony. It was most enjoyable. Margaret was in the Ontario Youth Choir this summer and enjoyed going on tour with the choir in late September. We went to hear their Toronto Concert, which was wonderful.

As for we old folks, we enjoyed a wonderful 5-week trip to Europe. We started out at Irvinestown, County Fermanagh in Northern Ireland. Angus did a pulpit exchange with the Rev. Ed McDade. Needless to say, it was a mountain top experience. We met so many lovely people at all of the three churches in this Methodist Circuit. We shall always remember the warmth and friendship of all the dear people wherever we went. We had lots of time to tour this beautiful Green Isle with trips to Enniskillen, Omagh, Baleek, Donegal, Sligo, Galway, the Burrens, and Dublin. We had a car rental and Angus fared quite well driving on the 'wrong' side of the road. The hardest thing to do was shift gears with his left hand, and maneuver the 'round-a-bouts' with a wife who put her hands over her eyes and screamed- most of the time!

We flew from Dublin to London and had a quick tour of the city before getting on the Eurostar train at Waterloo Station and traveling through the Chunnel to Lille, France. Wow! Was that ever the fastest we had ever traveled on land! We toured Northern France concentrating on the World War I Battlefields at the Somme and at Vimy Ridge and at St. Eloi. Angus was able to find the grave of his Uncle, Joseph Daniel McGillivray, who died at the Battle of the Somme at age 19, at Courcellette. It was a very emotional moment in our lives.

Then it was off to Sweden via train to visit the land of Kathleen's ancestors on her Mother's side. We were met and hosted by Chris and Sten Noren, who made us feel like we were truly 'family'. We will always remember meeting and visiting with so many of the second cousins and with dear Maud who represented Mother's generation, walking through the Old City, learning so much of the history of Sweden from Sten (who is a first rate tour guide!), the wonderful boat cruise with music by Asa Jinder (courtesy of cousin Matts), Skansen, seeing the Vasa first hand (instead of just reading it in the National Geographic), Drottingham Palace and going to hear "Alceste" in the lovely old theatre, and so much more! Stockholm is certainly well described as the 'Venice of the North'. Many thanks to everyone for their kind and generous hospitality. We hope many of these relatives will come and visit us in Canada.

We then wended our way to Paris where we spent four days sightseeing and of course, eating. We arrived home on August 1, tired but very happy to have finally made this trip which has been only a dream for so many years!

Unfortunately, Kathleen came down with a severe case of Labrynthitis (Inner Ear Infection) in the last week of the trip and has not been able to go back teaching this Fall because of the lingering symptoms. However, she is beginning to have some good days for which she is very thankful. Angus continues to keep very busy- and they are planning to hire a second Minister in the near future. Dilly, the Dog turned 9 this year and seems to enjoy having us at her beck-and-call. She has developed arthritis in her knee just like us which caused Margaret to quip one day that it must be genetic.

Grandpa Pete, who turned 85 last November, arrived to spend Christmas with us. We expect Peter and Margaret on the 16th. So we are looking forward to a happy Christmas together.

May you always have work
for your hands to do,
May your pockets hold always
a coin or two,
May the sun shine bright
on your windowpane,
May the rainbow be certain
to follow each rain,
May the hand of a friend
always be near you,
And may God fill your heart
with gladness to cheer you.

(Irish Blessing)

Love -- from
Angus, Kathleen,
Peter, and Margaret

McGillivray