



Dear Friends,

Merry Christmas! It is good to catch up with you. Just wish we were able to sit down face to face and have a good visit. Hopefully the time is getting closer. Jean's dad is doing pretty well for 105! He is getting weaker so it is harder to take him places, even to the doctor. He isn't up to going out to eat any longer! We feel sad that he can't see Christmas lights or hear Christmas music, things he used to enjoy so much. Pray for Mr. Sheppa...the days must seem long with only his memories for company. And sometimes they get a bit mixed up! Not being able to see or hear leaves him isolated, even though we are with him most of each day. A web camera allows us to monitor him from our house at night. Many times Jim runs over to put him back to bed, or assist him in other ways during the night. We are so thankful he loves the Lord, and has a gentle, uncomplaining spirit. It is so special to hear him pray!

Having the Robert Atkinson family on staff is a joy. Verna is taking over the cards and Member Care. I am going to miss sending notes, but Verna does a great job and is far more creative! I am still doing archives, working on past project lists, and slowly writing a history of Hard Hats, but I keep running out of steam! Maybe I need someone to talk with who can record my memories live...I sure need SOME sort of impetus...

Accompanying Robert and Duane on a pre-job inspection of the St. Helen's Bible Church project (St. Helen's OR) was encouraging. As a side blessing, I was able to introduce them to Bill Amos, an old, retired "hard hat", whose son will be working with us on the addition. Pray for permits and other challenges to be met so the project can get underway.

When Robert and I represented Hard Hats together at the October IFCA Regional, we discovered that one of the host church's mission projects has been sending teams to Casa Elizabeth, an orphanage in Imuris, Mexico. Years ago, Hard Hats project leader Jim Major designed the original building there! He and his wife, Pat, set up their RV on-site to oversee the construction from bare ground up! Lots of things connect over a period of 40 years!

Both Jean and I have had opportunities to speak this year, and I have done other pre-project investigations. The one in Olathe, Kansas in mid-October was enjoyable. Christian Schools International and Deaf International Ministries are two separate organizations which may share resources to build their respective campuses on a piece of property owned by Olathe Christian School.

We were able to find care-givers for Jean's 105 year old father for 14 days in November, so we could celebrate our 49<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary in San Diego. It was fun to stay overnight with Jean's cousin Treva, and later Bernie and Mary Taylor on the way down.

Our first morning in town, we met the folks at TAP for their Staff prayer meeting. Later that day, Jim and Erma Budlove fed us a wonderful lunch and took us on an extended driving tour of greater San Diego. Three nights later we had dinner with TAP's president, Marv Murray and his wife Kay. (I came home with 3 fabulous recipes!) Both these couples have worked on the phone systems at Hard Hats. Except for Jim coming down with bronchial pneumonia, our time in San Diego was wonderful!

We are very thankful for 40 years of special friendships. We are also very grateful for those of you who have prayed faithfully for us, and those who have been able to help with our financial needs over the years. God has kept us going through you! In the process He has blessed us both, hasn't He?

Am sure you've already figured out we are combining our personal prayer letter with our Christmas greetings...will never get two separate letters out by the end of the year...taking an extended trip in November put a kink in the works!!

These are exciting days to be living. Our redemption is surely drawing nigh! The newspapers send us straight to our Bibles...time was when we couldn't quite comprehend how the Lord could put everything together. Now we can really SENSE that He is orchestrating everything—even though we know He has been, ever since He put the world in place! We are safe in His hands, come what may! Live without fear. Keep your heart fixed on Him. Rejoice! Worship our risen, living Lord! Be thankful! Sing to the Lord! Encourage one another! Stay in God's Word. Share the message of salvation with everyone who will listen. Trust in Him and live obediently. Be a faithful example. Look up! Darkness comes before dawn—don't let hard times steal your joy! His promises are sure. In His time, He'll return for us! May you know His peace every step you take in the New Year!

From our hearts,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jim &amp; Jean".

Jim and Jean Hodges