

JD Ritchey Christmas 2020 Letter

First, we want to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. This year has been filled with challenges, losses, family time, and yes, some new places to visit and enjoy, even with our masks on.

In early February, before COVID, we traveled to Atlanta, Georgia. While Joe went to the ASTM meeting, I was able to visit President Carter's Library and Museum. We took an extra day to visit Tybee Island Lighthouse near Savannah, Georgia. While in Atlanta, we found out that we needed to move my mom from assisted living to a nursing home, so, as soon as we got back, I flew to Ohio to make that happen. We were able to get her a room almost next door to my Aunt Theta. While I was in Ohio, Joe learned how to make a Dutch baby pancake, which has become a breakfast favorite. I was able to meet Tim, Gavin and Shaelyn in Columbus for a visit to the zoo.



In April, my Aunt Theta went home to be with the Lord and my mom followed in May. We drove back to Ohio with a short stop in Iowa for her funeral. We spent some time with Tim and Rachel and was there with the kids on their last day of school. Joe and I flew back to Iowa at different times to spend a little more time with John, Mandy, and Lilo before taking Amtrak back home. We love our train traveling.

Here is a picture of James hard at work in Moab, Utah.



Tim and family came out in late June on the train. Here is a picture of us visiting the animal place at the mall. What fun! Joe and I went as far as Fraser, Colorado with them on their return trip and took the train back to Junction the next day. Joe got to share the story of his great-grandmother's 44-star flag that she made in 1892, at our July 4th church services. I knew there was a reason we have been keeping it around. This is a picture Joe took of the wildfire nearby that we could see from our patio.



August found us going back to Ohio. Our nephew, Joshua was married first and two weeks later, his twin sister, Courtney was married. It was great getting to visit with family, even in the midst of COVID. We rented a house at

Peek-N-Peak ski resort in western New York and enjoyed a relaxing week of playing games and taking walks in between the two weddings. We also ventured out to the Erie, Pennsylvania zoo.



For our 43rd anniversary we took a quick trip to Leadville, Colorado to ride, yes, another train. We decided to go to Washington DC for the Prayer March with Franklin Graham at the end of September, spending a couple days first with Lora and Rich going to Great Falls National Park. I forgot to mention the new member of our family. John added a new puppy to their family, her name is Taffy.



The mesa was beautiful this year, the colors were unbelievable. The end of October found us back in Iowa for a visit. I was able to spend a few days with our friends, Charlotte and Larry Crosley. We spent Thanksgiving week with Tim, Rachel and kids. Playing "Ticket to Ride" and helping put up Christmas decoration were highlights, along with a trip to Entertainment Junction, in West Chester, Ohio near Cincinnati, to see a virtual Santa.

We have so much to be thankful for. Everyone has been able to keep and work their jobs, either from the office or from home. Same for the kids with school.



Joe continues to enjoy flying his drone and has been learning more about astrophotography. I have been learning about being more of a minimalist. It has been a hard year with the loss of my mom, aunt and my Uncle Ronnie who passed in September. I would also ask for prayers for my Uncle Rich, who had a stroke in October and is working hard with his physical therapy. I realize that life is always changing and we need to appreciate each day. We have been blessed to spend so much time with our family this year. The grandkids are growing. Gavin will be 8 next week (December 21st), Shaelyn turned 6 in September and Lilo turned 5 in May. They are so much fun and we enjoy every minute that we have with them.

We hope you and your family the best for this next year. We can only hope that things will get better and we will be able to say goodbye to our masks. You are in our thoughts and prayers and we thank you for the joy that you have been in our lives. God Bless and Merry Christmas!