

Dear ,

Eagle News:

Happy New Year! I hope this letter find you very well and filled with His peace and joy!!

My mom continues to do well, and her hair is growing in curly – looks quite beautiful! Art's brother continues to do very well in his T-cell treatments with all good results from the follow up appointments. My niece and her husband have fully recovered and are doing very well. Link and his fiancée got COVID and are nearly returned to pre-conditions. My dad has had one cataract surgery and will be having the 2nd eye done this week. He has vein surgeries scheduled for the next month, so we will be taking turns driving him to his surgeries and follow up appointments. Please keep him in your prayers and remember to praise Him for all the other answered prayers!!

Our vacation at the Great Wolf Lodge in Scottsdale with our grandchildren and my children (full adults – most of the time) was incredibly fun! It exhausted Steve and me. Our responsibility was to try to keep up with the youngest (2 years old). We went to pizza one night for dinner (Barro's Pizza) and there was a great horned owl sitting on the sign above the entrance. It was beautiful!!! After we order our pizza, I took our youngest out with me to look at the owl. We made hooting noises and the owl was responsive. It was fun!

My children's grandmother (on their father's side) died last week, so my daughter and 3 of her children are coming here this week for the memorial service. She is a Christian and is now in heaven. I rented a room at the Great Wolf Lodge for me to stay with my daughter and her 3 oldest for Thursday and Friday night. The memorial is on Saturday and they will have dinner with her husband's family that night, then we will meet her for breakfast before they head back to Colorado.

Steve and I made our annual trip to Kohl's Ranch and worked on jigsaw puzzle for a week. Our plans were to come home several days in a row, but Steve was exposed to COVID and needed to stay away from others.

Well, that's a lot of news about my birth family, now on to my Christ's blood family!

Kirk came home while we were away at Kohl's Ranch. He spent Christmas day with his dad and brother and from all accounts had a great time. His first week home, he got a car and job. I think that may be the record for getting both of those. We always do our best to be home for the guys when they come home, but we missed it this time. (We also missed Sekou and Mel's homecoming several years ago). Kirk had surgery to correct his hernia Thursday. He is feeling good. His brother, Erik, had an emergency brain surgery a couple of weeks ago. Kirk says he is doing well and has rededicated his life to the Lord!!

Mike, Art, Kevin R, Steve B, Kirk, and Eric put in landscape at the Taylor house. Mike has been in landscaping all his life, so he gave his experience, design, and labor. Kevin R, Luis, Kirk and Jimmy helped with the design (because they live there). Because of it taking me too long to finish this letter, there is more Taylor news. This weekend we put several tons of granite into the backyard. It is now a functioning parking area. The Taylor house is a witness to God's love for his men and to their stewardship with His resources!!

Jeff Starr will be coming home in 10 days and Johnathan Susua will be coming home a month later. We are excited for their homecoming!! Jeff will be staying in our home and Johnathan at the new Grant house (details later in this letter). It has taken me so long to finish this letter that Jeff is already home. We took a trip to Cottonwood with Jeff to see his nephew and his Mom's home. It was a good trip. Shortly after our trip, Jeff, Art and I came down with a cold. We are all mostly recovered now, but we seem to have given it to Eric and Bob. OK, there was another delay, so I have more Jeff information. Jeff went to Wilcox this weekend to celebrate his birthday with friends. He had a great time, but I'll let him tell you about it in his newsletter. He also has a new (old?) job in Braille. Jeff told me you have requested that the pictures be more face centric, so you can identify everyone. Here is our first attempt at that...



From left to right, front to back: Sekou, Art, Steve B, Kevin Y, Jeff, Link, Aurelia, Henry, Luis, Eric, Bob, Kirk, Deb, and Kevin R. This picture was taken for our celebration of Henry's birthday (again this year, he is 25 – as are we all...we got stuck). Steve S has been out for a while now. He fell and hurt his back, so he is in pain. He is improving and will start physical therapy soon.

Currently our church meets in the Hadley house. Sekou and Link live there. Link is getting married to Natalia in April. We had our dedication of the Hadley house last month. The funny thing about that is that I found a property around the corner (11th Avenue and Grant) the same week as our dedication. That property (we'll call it Grant) has a commercial building, a 3 bedroom/2 bath house, and a large parking lot. The commercial building has been a grocery store and a bar in the past. Most recently it was gutted and loaned to a group for Bible Study. It will be our church/fellowship building. We made an offer and after some haggling it was accepted. It will close in February. Again, because of delays, the church sale closed and it is now ours! 😊 So far, it looks like Art, Bob, and John will be moving to that house. We have a lot of work to do, but we got it for an excellent price and God has provided abundantly. There have been several wonders...let me tell you about them.

The building is on the corner beside a train track and has a metal roof. Those features speak specially to my heart and to Sekou. After the offer was accepted, I got fearful. We are using part of our 401K to purchase it and we have been saving that for our retirement all our lives, so it is in my mind – don't touch that!! 😊 We had received a statement (when it was not due). The balance was considerably more than we expected, so we decided to use it. I was praying and telling God how scared I was... I heard a voice saying that I would have a sign that the 401K balance would go up by an astronomically impossible amount. I quickly told God that was ridiculous and that the idea had not come from me... The next day (again off schedule) another statement arrived and it had increased by the amount I had heard. God knows how many times during this process I would get scared and have the opportunity to back out of the purchase. This set of buildings are His and they are in His plan for this ministry, so He made sure that I had no doubts. It was scheduled to close on 2/3, but moved to 2/10 – John comes home on 2/22! God of the schedule...

A commonality between men scheduled to come home is anxiety... it is difficult to relax and trust. That's OK, I hope it helps to build their trust in our Lord... Men we are currently expecting to come home in the relatively close future are Johnathan, John, Mark, Jonathan, and Ray. Please keep them in your prayers and us as we prepare for their homecoming!! I don't think anyone can imagine the excitement and anticipation we feel with each homecoming... It's almost the same anticipation that we greeted Christmas morning as children – so exciting that sleep eludes...

So...how can you pray? Our prayer requests do not change but are so especially important to us! Thank you for praying and not growing weary. God answers these prayers (like you don't already know that) and they are essential to our well-being and success. In addition, please pray that those of us who are married will continue to grow in our relationships. Marriage is intended as a reflection of our relationship with God. We face many challenges, and your prayers are essential.

Please pray for God's people, that they will focus on God, listen carefully and always obey. Pray that we will all love Him with all our hearts, souls, strength and minds, that He will make us feel and see what He feels and sees and that we will all represent Him VERY well!

Please pray that in addition to loving and supporting each other, we reflect Our Lord so that those not already in relationship with Him will be drawn to Him.

Steve and I are feeling VERY blessed! God is faithful. God is more than capable. Please pray that we keep our focus on Him and that He receive all the praise and glory!

We want to be exactly where God wants us, doing exactly what He wants us to do – all the time.

Blessings!

Steve and Deb Schmidt