

Christmas 2011



Dear Family and Friends:

“Immanuel, God with us,” took on new meaning for our family this year. And so did the 23rd Psalm. It is true, that God delights to be with us in our darkest hours.

You probably know of our son Ken Jr.’s death on July 19, following emergency surgery for brain tumors. We had prayed and hoped for his recovery and healing, and even though we knew that each new tumor was more aggressive we weren’t fully prepared for his death.

We are thankful beyond words that Ken, Sheila and their family had over a week’s vacation together in Colorado, including a Stoltzfus family reunion, shortly before his passing. Wonderful memories!

It’s hard to know what to say when people ask “How are you doing”. We haven’t been down this path before and don’t have anything to compare it with. We’ve heard it said that time heals, but that the loss of someone so close is like losing a part of your body. We heal but we’ll always be conscious that part of us is missing. That really resonates with us. We miss our son a lot!

We have chosen to trust God’s “call” in this. There is peace in “Nevertheless, not my will but thine be done.” Comfort in knowing that Ken Jr. was spared from a lot of suffering. Satisfaction in knowing that his life, and his death, challenged many others in their walk with God. And joy in the absolute confidence of his presence with our Lord, and his waiting for our arrival in heaven. Most of our family had read the little book “Heaven is for Real” and it gave us a new sense of how delightful heaven actually is. So, if it’s okay for us to still choke up or tear up at times, and it is, then “we’re doing okay”.

Sheila, Colby, Austin and Danae are facing their new challenges courageously. Colby is working in Sales at Preferred, and Austin is an apprentice aircraft mechanic at Priority Air Charter. Danae is working in Inventory at Preferred and is planning toward a mission’s trip early next year. Our family has been upheld by the prayers and encouragement of friends around the world. Your support is felt. Thank you so much!

Elaine has served at the Pregnancy Care Center for 25 years now, and plans to continue. It is so rewarding to encourage the woman there and see some of them making good choices.

Ken just recently got back to working on his web site, www.john2031.com, after taking a several month break. “More Like Jesus” is a recent workbook that can be downloaded free for personal study, S.S. classes or small groups, and several Christmas related articles can be linked from the home page.

Our church recently completed a small-group study of the NOT A FAN series. It’s about being a follower, not just a fan of Jesus. It is the most challenging study we have ever been part of and we were personally, deeply affected. We are more serious than ever about being about our Father’s business.

As we celebrate our Savior’s birth we are reminded of the good memories we’ll take into the New Year:

- Through the year, the privilege of partnering in several Bible translation projects with The Seed Company and Wycliffe Associates. It often doesn’t take a lot of money to make a big difference!
- January, more than a week in VA to celebrate our 51st anniversary.
- March, a trip to Gatlinburg, TN; over to see Greg and Kahly; and down to JAARS at Waxhaw, NC.
- April/May, to AK for Preferred. It became a 10-day trip and we visited family in Homer and Soldotna.
- July, Stoltzfus family reunion in CO
- August, Elaine’s Mast Cousins’ Reunion at Slate Run, PA
- November, Thanksgiving with the family at the cabin

Brian and Sandi spent a lot of time in Kenya this year, and he is there as we write. The needs are great. Greg and Kahly have bought a home in Hickory, NC, near where he is working as a Physical Therapist. Kahly is carrying their first child, our first "great," and is due in mid-March. Isaak is working as a waiter at a restaurant in Wooster and is well liked by customers. Abbie is working for a florist and Kelsey is at Preferred. In January he will start on a two-year degree at Reformation Bible College, in FL. Chelsea is a second year nursing student at Cedarville.

With Ken Jr.'s death, and Brian investing so much time in Africa, Brian has hired Mark to manage Preferred Airparts. Mark has things running smoothly at AFM Hardware and can spend most of his time at Preferred. Jodie continues to work at AFM; Tanya is a Junior at Indiana Wesleyan; and Garrett is a freshman at Case Western Reserve, with his eye on the medical field.

Preferred and Priority have had another good year. Their current project is another turboprop DC-3 they are modifying for response to critical needs "In Jesus' Name" anywhere in the world. Its FAA registration ends in "KS" in memory of Ken Stoltzfus Jr.

Ken has posted a series of photos of Ken Jr. and other family members through the years, and you can see them from the link "Remembering Ken Stoltzfus Jr." in the right column at <http://www.john2031.com/>.

We look forward to hearing from you, and wish you and yours a meaningful Christmas season and a blessed New Year. May God be with you in every way!

Yours, and His,

Ken + Elaine

We live in Kidron but our mailing and Google address is:
Ken & Elaine Stoltzfus, 115 Heritage Green Lane, Dalton, OH 44618
Tel. 330-857-6312 Email: ken-elaine@flyinghigher.net



Ken/Sheila's family and Austin's friend Kristi in Colorado on July 10. We took the train ride at the Royal Gorge while there.