

Merry Christmas 2019 and Happy New Year 2020!

This year was both challenging and wonderful.



Challenges

- Sharon began 2019 with the pain of a herniated disc. Injections at the end of 2018 helped gradually. Receiving a prayer quilt at church in February sped up the process and she was suddenly out of pain.
- Shortly after that, our little dog Elsie was diagnosed with an aggressive form of mast cell tumors. She has bullied that cancer into being less aggressive. As of now, we still have her, but every week brings a new concern. There are still more good days than bad. Today she is eating very well and feeling happy.

Highlights

- Sharon has a new project coming up, combining her love of the deaconess community with solidarity for the people of the Philippines. She will be working with Deaconess Emma Cantor, who is the Regional Missionary to Southeast Asia, documenting the work that deaconesses are doing in the Philippines and building bridges between Philippine deaconesses and U.S. deaconesses. She is excited because she will get to meet deaconesses all over the Philippines and learn about their ministries! She might even get to go to the beach!
- Sharon spent 13 days in the Philippines in August. The Solidarity Team she has gone with for three years joined a team from the World Council of Churches on a Pilgrimage to investigate human rights violations, which was both tense and exciting! It was a privilege to get to know the WCC representatives---powerful and dedicated Christians from Asia and North America. At the end of this trip, she was the keynote speaker at the first-ever Disability Consultation in the Philippines Central Conference!
- Dale served on the Annual Conference Audio-Visual Team again this year. He also serves on our church's Trustees Board, which keeps him busy taking care of the church.
- We both went on our annual mission trip with our usual team. We went to Slidell, Louisiana to repair homes that had fallen through the cracks after Katrina and were now very close to falling apart. Without the work of teams like ours, these homeowners would be homeless. Our team worked on two houses. One almost completed when we left. The other (the one Dale and I worked on) went from



being hazardous to walk through to being ready for flooring and paint. We enjoy this work serving people we don't know in the name of Christ.

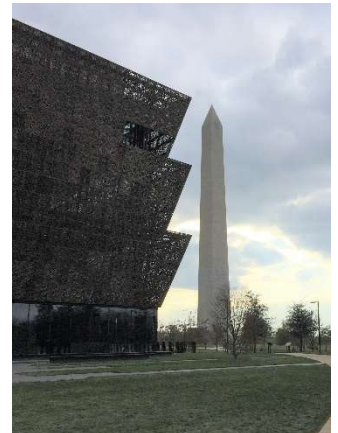
- We cherish a family trip to Mammoth in October, hiking and eating with my extended family and having a lovely baby shower for Carsen, our new great-nephew! He is due any day now and is loved very much already!
- Our last trip of the year was to Baltimore and Washington DC. In Baltimore, I attended an all-day meeting to work out details of the DisAbility Ministries Committee partnership with the United Methodist General Commission on Religion and Race (GCORR). This will be a great home for the committee as ableism is added to the other "isms" (racism, sexism, heterosexism) that GCORR works to counteract! As I leave the committee in 2020, it is going to be better off than it ever has been! I am grateful to God for that!
- When we got to Washington, DC, we were excited to have an appointment with one of Senator Feinstein's aides to talk about ending U.S. funding for the Philippines government, which commits egregious human rights violations.



Unfortunately, we missed the appointment because on the way I tripped and fell very hard.

Despite this, we were able to see the Newseum and the new African-American History Museum the next day. We highly recommend both! The Newseum (left) has, in addition to many other excellent exhibits, part of the spire from the World Trade Center and 8

sections of the Berlin Wall with a guard tower. The African-American History Museum (right, next to the Washington Monument) has an amazing music exhibit and we were disappointed that we didn't have time to see the rest of the museum!



May 2020 be a year of love, joy, peace, and hope for all of us!

Dale and Sharon

(At Disneyland on December 19)

