



Merry Christmas!

December 2004

Life is sometimes unpredictable. After a few years of carrying on in the same routine, the year 2004 has been full of changes and challenges.

But before telling you about the changes---between teaching summer school (Sharon) and SSP (Matt), we didn't have much time for a vacation this year. We spent a few days in San Diego as a family and then Dale and I went camping for a week at June Lake with all my relatives and had a wonderful time!

We had a sad time over Memorial Day weekend when we lost our sweet dog Frisky to cancer. She was 13. I got so lonesome for a dog that I got an Australian cattle puppy just after July 4. This has not been a popular decision in this house. Sheila is a very high energy, playful dog who requires a lot of attention. She is smart but her sense of humor (?) keeps her from being well-trained. I hope that she will settle down in time, and in the meantime I enjoy watching her catch balls in mid-air when we play fetch. And I am not lonesome for a dog any more!

Dale is still working at Kawasaki as a systems programmer. He worked with IBM testing the z890 mainframe before product introduction. He also still runs sound for concerts on occasion, filling in when the soundman at Living Traditions can't be there. This year he sang a wonderful solo for our church choir's June concert and then a shorter one for the Christmas concert. He has also provided special music during worship, keeping those guitar-picking fingers going!

Now for those changes!

Matt went off to college at the end of August! He is going to Sierra Nevada College in Incline Village (Lake Tahoe), majoring in computer animation. He has enjoyed his first semester classes. It has been very different around the house, as you can imagine! Dale and I both had some adjusting to do. When he came home in October, Jennifer, his girlfriend, also came for a visit, requiring even more adjustment from Mom.

As for me, well, I hope you're sitting down. After ten years of teaching special education and feeling called to that vocation, I have been called to something else. After months of meeting with my pastor, in the spring I made a decision to leave my teaching position. This fall I have been job-sharing so that I could go to school full-time. At the end of January, I will resign from teaching so I can devote more time to my studies at Claremont School of Theology, where I am in the 3-year long MDiv (Master of Divinity) program. I have been called to full-time ministry. My goal is to be ordained as an elder (full-time pastor) in the United Methodist Church.

As we celebrate the birth of our Redeemer, may you know the reality of God's love for you. My prayer is that you will accept the gift of that love with an open heart. May 2005 bring you hope and peace. May it bring the world hope and peace as well.

Love from Dale, Sharon, and Matt McCart