

February, 2022

Dear family and friends,

Since 2020 was quite a slow news year for us (along with most people) we decided to skip the annual family letter last year, but it is time to get back to it.

Fermilab has been in "maximum telework" since March 2019, meaning everybody who can work from home has had to do so. As a result, Dave hasn't been there for almost two years. He already did most of his work by computer and Zoom before then, so it wasn't as big a change for him as it was for many other people. It did mean there were no business trips. At church, Dave started another 3 year term as elder in mid-2020, and has also become more involved in IT there because technology has become much more important, as it has at many churches that want to offer people the opportunity to participate remotely.

Ruth's craft business was quite reduced in 2020 with no in-person sales, but 2021 was back to normal and even expanding. She added handworked walking sticks to her product line, which is quite different from her previous products which are mostly based on wool felting. After spring 2020 she started to take a break from leading the Coffee Break women's Bible Study, something she had already decided to do before the world changed in March. Gardening is still a big part of her life although the big yard is starting to be too much and we're beginning to think about downsizing in a few years.

Mark moved to an apartment very close to where he works, along with two coworkers from Business IT Source. That has been working out well, and he enjoys his work. Although the job is mostly about configuring computers, he has also been doing some programming to help the job go more smoothly. His roommates got a cat which he gets to enjoy without having the responsibility.

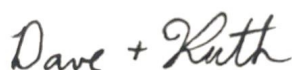
Sarah & Aaron purchased a home this past year in Apple Valley, Minnesota, and moved out of their studio apartment that was in the same Minneapolis suburb. Aaron's work with his first employer finished, but he found another construction management job with another employer that he likes even better. Supply chain issues and escalating construction material costs have been a challenge, though. Sarah likes her work as a graphic designer in a small town print shop about a half hour to the south.

We did manage to go on some trips despite restrictions. In addition to trips to Minnesota, we had Dykstra sibling reunions in Galena, Illinois and Douglas, Michigan during COVID lulls. We went to Door County, Wisconsin in October 2020. In February 2021 we went to the Florida Keys. Under normal circumstances we would have flown, but circumstances weren't normal then so we drove all the way there. We also drove to the Torch Lake, Michigan area in August 2021. We flew for a weekend with our friends in Baltimore in October 2021, and flew for a week in the U.S. Virgin Islands St. Thomas and St. John last month. We love snorkeling with the fishes.

After listening to a book on climate change ("Saving Us", by Katherine Hayhoe, highly recommended) that also talked about how solar energy saves money, we signed up to get solar panels installed on our roof. That is scheduled to happen in a few months. Federal and state incentives will pay for more than half of it, and it should generate about as much electricity as we use, averaged out over a year.

With the children out of the house, we have a guest room available if you're in the area. We hope you are all doing well and wish you God's blessings in 2022.

Love,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dave + Ruth".

Dave and Ruth Dykstra



Ruth in her cape of many colors



Dave after shoulder surgery



Ruth and siblings at their Dad's 90th



Sarah and Aaron with their new house



Dykstra  
reunion