December 2020

Dear Family and Friends,

For the longest time, I thought I wouldn't write a letter this year. But this is my 35th Christmas letter. My letters have been a history of our family. I've written them in the hope that our children will share them with their children and their grandchildren.

However, this letter will be very different from the ones I usually write. With that said, I will begin to muddle through.

The year 2020 has not been like any other year in our lives. And I know this year is not like any other for all our friends and family.

On December 16, 2019, we tragically lost Adam. Losing a child is a great sadness that cuts deep into the heart. It is almost more than anyone can endure.

One blessing that we had, is that so far, we have not been stricken with COVID, as many thousands were across the U.S and the world. I pray for all those families who have dealt with the pain of the sickness and the pain of loss.

Adam's wife, Oanh, is a nurse and she was worried that she might bring the virus home from the hospital to her children, so on March 12, 2020, Olivia and Gemma came to live with us. Just like most people we hoped that everything would be better in a couple of months.

It wasn't and IT WASN'T!

The infection rate of COVID 19 didn't get any better.

The terrifying scare was that Oanh got deathly ill. The doctors checked her for COVID, but according to the tests, she didn't have COVID. This wonderful, loving, woman was in the hospital for over a month. It wasn't cancer, but she did receive chemotherapy, six months of recuperation, and now, thank God, she has recovered.

It was both sad and wonderful that the children were with us for eight months. It was sad because they desperately missed their mother. Yet it was wonderful, because we got a chance to get even closer to them.

We miss Amira, Matt, Siena and Jada. It's been a year since we've seen them. Nasr and I haven't and are not taking any chances of getting the virus by boarding a plane. I don't know what we and most of the world would do without Facetime or Zoom. The is one technology that saved the sanity of many across the world.

Jasmine has been at home taking care of us. Both her high school and the University require that she teach from home. Again, a blessing in disguise.

I am sure that there some cute anecdotes that I could come up with, but this is not the year for it.

This Christmas, we all need to pray for the ones we lost, pray that the vaccines work, and pray we don't lose anyone else from COVID.

I can't wish anyone a Merry Christmas or Happy New Year because we all know that it won't be a happy celebration. But I can wish that everyone's 2021 is better than 2020.