**1968**

Dad has 4 hour session meetings. Mom drives for 4 hours (and more) searching for Rev. Reif. Alan disappears for 4 hours without permission. There are choir rehearsals in all shapes and sizes. Mom dreams of having four children’s choirs, or maybe it’s five, but settles for 2, and ends up with three. I think. Lisa dreams of playing the flute. Dad dreams of a relaxing Thanksgiving with nowhere to go. Rats and guppies die. Lesle is more enthusiastic than ever before. Alan gets his head chopped off. Dad picks oranges and grapefruits and mangos off trees, hopes his plane is not hijacked, and explains why he voted for Nixon.

**1-13-68 – Sat afternoon -** Dear Aunt Clara, Mother, M.J. & Bill, Since I called Mother last week I’ll send the letter to you first, and some of the photographs to Mother. We were glad to hear that you were seemingly over your flu; we hope Mother is feeling better now, and also that Mary Janet is better. We’ve still been pretty well. I have a trace of throat irritation, but I don’t think it will interfere too much with the solo part I have to sing with the anthem in the morning. Ruth will be home in the morning; she has already heard the ministers that are being visited tomorrow. We had several inches of snow last night and this morning, so I guess its good she doesn’t have to go out tomorrow. She has 3-4 more places to visit, even though they are beginning to settle on one man. They feel obligated to hear all of the top candidates. Their goal is still to have someone by around Easter. Thats interesting that Dr. Hall is leaving your church.

Ruth called off her choir rehersals this morning because of the snow. I did some shopping this morning and Ruth is gone this afternoon. We’ll be home tonight and tomorrow. Thursday is Ruth’s birthday. One of her presents will be to eat out and then go to downtown Chicago to see the play “Cactus Flower.” Ruth has been cleaning all of our carpets with a rented electric washer. The girls went to a movie this afternoon with the neighbor kids. Last week Ruth had pulpit nominating committee meeting on Wed night and we had regular choir practice on Thurs night. We ate out last night and I did some shopping while everyone else went to the library. Ruth had circle last Tues noon. A week ago last night some people whom we had known in Decatur dropped in. They live in Wisconsin now and were on the way back home.

The government has announced that 300 of the older prescription drugs will be taken off the market sometime during the next 1-2 years. We, of course, hope that none of the Armour drugs will be involved; we do have, however, a couple that are “shaky.” Last Sun Ruth went to visit a minister. It was very cold last Sun. I have been asked to be an Elder at church. They are the ruling body in the Presbyterian Church, you know. I can’t think of what else we’ve done that special since I wrote last. The Laidigs are OK. Again, hope you Hutchinson folks are all feeling better now. Our last rat (Frisky) died so I’ll have to get some replacements.

**1-23-68 – Tues PM -** We just got back from the annual meeting at church. We all went since there was babysitting for the kids. It was “potluck” like I remember we had as a boy. There were not too many there. I was formally elected an Elder. The Elders meet at least once a month and sometimes more, I guess. Today and yesterday were colder after an abnormally warm spell, which was a relief after our earlier bitter cold. I guess that the last of Jan and the first part of Feb is the coldest time of the year, on the average, in the Chicago area. This coming Fri and Sat is the anniversary of our big storm last Jan. I trust that we will not have a repeat performance. So far, our winter hasn’t been too bad, but we’re only about halfway through. Our car pool is still working OK with the 5 members and 1 day a week driving per person.

We’re home tomorrow night and Thurs night (choir practice has been called off). Not much else until Sat night when we go down to the play “Cactus Flower” we’ll eat out before we go (Ruth’s birthday present). Ruth says “Thanks” for everything which came for her birthday. She used your gift money for a very nice treble clef pin which she had seen at Marshall Fields. On her birthday I surprized Ruth with a plant which was delivered during the day. She is always surprized with flowers since I give them to her so infrequently. Her big present was from the entire family; it was one of these wrist watches with several different colored wrist bands, and cases, so that one can make the color of the watch fit the occasion. Ruth received placemats from her folks. I’ve also promised her an atache case to carry her music in. She’s to pick out what she wants since she knows exactly what she needs.

Ruth will be here this Sun, and she has only two more definite trips out of town. They still hope to have a man shortly after Easter. Last Sat AM was regular jr choir rehersal and in the afternoon I picked up a new unfinished chest for the family room. Ruth has antiqued it this week to match the other family room furniture. Andy ran a fever Sat and was quite tired so I arranged to stay home from church with him Sun AM. He had no fever on Sun and seemed perfectly normal, but I stayed home with him and got some odd jobs done. Ruth left at 6:00 Sun AM for a 3 hr drive into Mich (Hastings) to hear a minister. She got back at 3:30. I sent the kids to church with a member who lives nearby. We ate out last Thurs night for Ruth’s birthday and then went to choir practice. Hope you’re all OK.

Mom adds: As Carroll said, I used your check for a sterling treble clef pin, about 2” long. I hinted and hinted before Christmas, but no one took the hint. So when your check came and the pin was still there I grabbed it! It’s exactly what I’d been looking for for some time. So thank you.

**2-10-68 – Sat 2:00 -** Ruth is just about ready to do the grocery shopping and the kids, except for Andy, are at a movie over at the school. We plan to all go to the movie, “The Happiest Millionaire” tomorrow night. We had regular junior choir practice this morning. Ruth is still maintaining the two choirs. The Crusaders, 7th and 8th grade, have been lax in their attendance recently so Ruth wrote them all (only about 14 of them) a letter about a week ago. She explained the reasons for having the two choirs (they only had one choir) and how this is something they can do for the church. She needs at least 11-12 of them to have an effective group. She especially wants them to notify her if they cannot be at rehersal, so she can plan accordingly. Anyway, she had more out last week, and 11 were there this morning, so she is feeling better. The younger choir (Carol 3-6th) are very good about attendance, and she is thinking ahead to the Cherubs (younger). Youth music is very difficult since the boys voices may be changing (and they are very self-conscious about it), different age voices do not go together well, and they can sing more difficult music as they get older. Ruth is becoming more and more interested in church music, and especially the ministry aspect; she feels that the important thing is not how loudly or well the children sing, but the fact that the children can take part in the worship service, and, therefore, contribute something to the church (since at that age they cannot give much money, etc.)

Last Sun (this about the candidate ministers is confidential) Ruth visited another church to hear the minister from Denver who has been Arthur Millers assistant (I guess he is now retired and this assistant wants to leave so a new senior minister can choose his own staff – Ruth said they have had 5 assistant ministers there, and they have over 3,000 members). This man and his wife flew in a week ago today and Ruth went out in the afternoon with some of the pulpit committee members to show them the church, manse and the general area. On Sunday AM he spoke in a neutral pulpit. This is often done in the Presbyterian Church since, at least in the Chicago Presbytery, a man cannot be considered a candidate for a position if he has preached from the pulpit of the church in question within the last 6 months. Furthermore, you can only have one candidate at a time and the membership does not hear the man and vote on him until he is actually presented to the congregation as a candidate.

Anyway, Ruth said she told him that I played with the Miller children when we both lived on the same block. Bill Miller is a professor at Yale Divinity School, I believe. I guess I have to give him credit for getting me started in magic; I remember how fooled I was when Bill did tricks for me. This man is one of 5 top candidates who have been cleared by the Chicago Presbytery. At their meeting this coming Wed night the committee will select the man they consider first choice and will then begin negotiations. If he turns them down they will go to the second choice, etc. They consider that any one of these 5 men would make a good minister for our church. They have worked hard and have considered the names of over 100 men. Ruth does make one final trip out tomorrow AM (she will leave at 6:30) to hear one of the 5. Some of the members flew to Denver to hear the man from there.

Our interim minister has said he wants to leave right after Easter, so we may have to have fill-ins for awhile. I went to the Session meeting last Tues night. That is the meeting of the Elders. Installation will be a week from tomorrow. Last Tues PM Ruth had Women’s Association meeting at church. Her circle met on Wed night and gave a book review. Thurs night was regular choir practice. Last night we ate out at a restaurant and then came home for our treats, etc.

Last Sun afternoon after Ruth had returned from hearing that minister, we had a baby sitter come and we drove to the Lake Shore Club (about a mile North of the Loop) for the Millikin Choir concert. We got to visit with the Hofflands awhile. Mrs. H has been Ruth’s inspiration for the youth music since she had all the choirs at Westminster in Decatur and is very good at it. In the summer the Hofflands work in a choral clinic which is presented at 4 sites around the country. One is in Minn and one at Denver, both in August, we may try to combine one of these with our vacation so Ruth can attend. Ruth’s brother is in Denver. The fall Pharmacology Meeting is in Minneapolis the next to last week of August.

Why don’t you plan on coming up sometime this spring. We could drive you up to Aunt Margarets if you wanted to stay there a week or so and could then go pick you up. The kids have all been working on Valentines. I’m busy at work, as usual. There was merger talk of Armour & Co (everything) with another co but that has been called off. Our research department is under a lot of pressure at the present time. Glad to have your letter and to talk to you last week. We’re having another cold spell and had a little more snow, but no more slippery roads since a week ago Fri. Thats interesting that Jimmys slightly near-sighted. I’m very much so, Ola was, and our children, but you’re not, and I don’t think Daddy was. There is a definite heridetary component, you know. Boys play most sports with glasses or contacts. Hope Aunt Clara is OK and you’re all completely over your flu, etc. Hope M.J.’s school is OK.

**2-24-68 – Sat 9:45 PM –** I’ll write this tonight and will mail it on the way to church in the morning. We’ve had very good weather recently, cold but no snow, and many clear days. Jan and Feb are usually very dreary months in the Chicago area so the sunshine has been welcome. I’m trying to listen to the KU-K State basketball game on the radio. I think its coming from a Kansas City station and I can just barely hear it. It’s at Lawrence; I imagine Bill is listening. K State is just about to win (they did).

Today has been one of our busier Sats. We had our usual choir practices this morning. The younger Carol Choir sings tomorrow morning for the worship service. All the choirs are working on the Easter music, etc. Easter Sun AM the combined Jr Choirs will sing with the adult choir. On the way home we left Alan at a birthday party for one of the boys in his class. He has another one tomorrow afternoon. All of the children seem to be so grown up anymore. Andy, especially, seems so much older. Andy can talk so well, but recently he has been using baby talk – to get attention, I guess. Unless they change the cut off date (Dec 31st) Andy can go to Kindergarten next Sept. Ruth said she’ll take him over to see the Kindergarten teacher later in the spring and see what she says. He would be the youngest in his class.

This afternoon Ruth took the girls out shopping. The new Sun shoes for the girls, which had been ordered, had not yet arrived. While they were gone Andy took a nap and I got my magic show ready for tonight. I had not worked on it much previously. It was for the Cub Scout Blue and Gold Banquet (I have only faint memories of similar affairs when I was a Cub – maybe you will remember some Cub Scout dinners.) They invited the whole family for the dinner so that was my “pay.” Alan helped me and had his head “cut off.” I guess I never thought I’d have a child of my own as my assistant. Alan and Lisa are very willing to help, but not Lesle – she’s still the shyest. I was the entertainment a year ago for the same banquet. That makes 4 shows here, two for the Christmas Parties, and the two for the Cubs. I’ve had to work up some of the tricks that I never did very much, since these shows have had many of the same kids in attendance at all of them.

Next Mon is a dinner for Christian Education Workers at one of the Chicago Heights Churchs. Ruth and I will go. I was invited since I’ve been helping in the Jr. Dept. Tues night Ruth has pulpit committee meeting. Wed is the first of the Lenten Wed night dinners and services. Thurs is choir practice. Yesterday at work we had Dr. Yanagita visiting from Japan. Our company has a 5 yr contract with a laboratory in Tokyo to do some testing for us. Dr. Yanagita is in charge of some of the testing. I was with the group that went out to eat lunch with him. Yesterday evening Jim (Dr. Bastian) and I took him out to eat. The head of biochemistry, Dr. Sam Yanari (he is Japanese also) was supposed to go along but he wasn’t feeling well.

Last Thurs night was regular choir practice. Ruth went early since the pulpit committee was meeting with one of the top candidates. Although they were enthusiatic about this man earlier, they became disenchanted after this meeting, so they will be contacting that assistant of Arthur Millers. I hope they find someone soon. I don’t have the opening exercises (thats why I can write this tonight) in the AM. One of the classes (there are 6) has it, and it will pass around to the other classes at 2-3 wk intervals. Since I had the show tonight it worked out for the best that I don’t have to do it in the morning.

Next Thurs I’m driving some of the fellows to a seminar at Loyola University Dept of Pharmacology. Its in a Western Suburb. In April I’ll be going to Atlantic City for the regular Federation Meetings. That’s the big one, it was here last year. In May I may go to Miami for another meeting; I’ll hope my plane won’t be hijacked like that one was the other day. Ruth has an aunt and uncle there, you know (Mrs. L’s sister). If you plan on coming up this spring let me know your plans so I can coordinate our schedule. As I’ve said before, weekend drives to Madison or to Aunt Margarets are always possibilities.

We found your pictures and I’ll enclose them. Last weekend the baby sitter we had scheduled for Sat night, so we could go to the Couples Club at church, called at the last minute that she couldn’t come. Since we couldn’t go Sat night we drove up to the Aquarium (across from Field Museum) in the afternoon. I had never been there. Last Sun AM was the installation and ordination service for the new Elders, Deacons and Trustees. Sun AM – Hope you’re all OK and that most of the cold weather is over for you. We’re on the way to church.

 

I don’t have the date for these, but am guessing this is Lesle’s 1968 birthday.

**3-16-68 – Sat 3:00 PM -** We’re having a quiet afternoon at home after another busy week. Today is cloudy and rainy, but it is warmer. I expect we’ll have some more winter but it has sure seemed like Spring is on the way the last few days. The kids have played outside quite a bit recently. We finally got Alan’s bicycle (it was for his birthday) and he is learning to ride – it has training wheels. We have gotten the kids bikes on their 7th birthdays. As you may remember we never finished painting the house last fall so we have that to do when it gets a little warmer.

A week ago yesterday Ruth’s brother Eldon (he’s my age) came out for a visit during the evening. He had been at Northern Ill University at DeKalb (West of Chicago) interviewing for a job. He said it’s not exactly what he wants, but it would be a full professorship if it were offered to him. He would be in charge of some kind of a laboratory school. He has interviewed at the University of Minnesota and other places. He’s currently a jr. high principal in a Denver suburb, but does not want to continue in that type of position. He finished his PhD in Education at the University of Texas last summer, and he could probably easily become a superintendent of schools, but I don’t believe he wants public school administration; he is more interested in the college level. It would be nice to have relatives near us up here. We hadn’t seen him for about 3 years.

Last Sat AM was the usual choirs at church. In the afternoon I packed my magic away and Ruth had a pulpit committee meeting. Last Sun Ruth and 4 others drove to Ind to hear the third choice for minister (after the interview with the original first choice he would probably be considered the first or second choice). Ruth had heard him last fall. After the visit (they got back about 2:00) they invited him for an interview last Thurs night. They made him an offer and he will let them know within two weeks. He is the minister of a church of about 400 members in a small town (3,000) in Illinois (Fairbury, I believe). He’s 37 or 38 yrs old. Last Mon night was Session meeting for me. Tues noon Ruth played the organ for the monthly Women’s Assoc Meeting. Wed night we all went to the Lenten Service; three laymen spoke. Next Wed the Adult Choir has the service and Ruth practiced with a womens chorus, before regular choir practice Thurs night, that will sing at a later Wed night service. Thurs night Ruth had the chorus and the meeting with the prospective minister, and I went to regular choir practice.

Last night Lesle had a slumber birthday party. There were 5 extras. All 7 slept on 5 mattresses in the family room. Ruth let them talk until midnight and then they finally quieted down. They had games and refreshments during the evening. Lesle had her birthday dinner Wed night. She used Mother’s gift to buy a new dress and purse. Ruth’s older choir, the Crusaders (12 members only) sing tomorrow morning, the adult choir also sings.

Ruth’s folks have been gone about a month South into Texas on highway work. We’ve only heard once so Ruth may try to call them tonight. That trip up to Loyola U for the seminar was OK. We got back in time to go in to work for awhile. We haven’t heard yet whether the government will “crack down” on any of our drugs. We don’t expect them to take any of them off the market, but they may want more proof of effectiveness in man. Glad to have Mother’s letter. Lisa is the Brownie. Lesle has never wanted to be one. We’ll send pictures of Lesle’s party etc, later. Hope you’re all well. We continue to be pretty well. My April meeting is Tues-Sat the week after Easter.

**3-27-68 – Wed PM -** Hope you’re feeling OK after your little episode. We’ve been pretty good although Ruth has an infection which she had to go to the Dr. for. We all just got back from the Lenten Service at church; it was a potluck supper, and the program was put on by the high school group. Last Wed night the Adult Choir had a program of music, and two weeks ago 3 laymen spoke. Next Wed night the women have the program and Ruth is leading the special Women’s Chorus. They practice tomorrow night before the regular choir rehersal. Ruth’s choirs are coming along; the Carol Choir sings this Sun (the adults are off). The youth choirs combined with the Adult Choir on Easter Sun. Mom adds: The 2 youth choirs combine on Palm Sunday.

Back to Dad: Tomorrow evening the Dept is having a going away party for one of the women who has quit. She had worked there for several years, but she has asthma and just can’t take it any more at the lab. Pete Luna, the fellow with me, finally bought a house not too far from us. He is having a party Sat night for the car pool members, and the Dept. people, at the Co-op apartment where he is currently living.

Next Tues night the Pulpit Committee Members, and their spouses, are having dinner out at a restaurant. I’m not certain that I’ve told you that last candidate accepted the call to our church. He’s 37-38 and has 2 children. He will preach his candidacy sermon on April 21st. That will be the Sun after I get back from Atlantic City, so I may miss out on any reception they might have on the Sat before (I’ll be coming back that day). I hope your church is making progress on finding a new minister. I was surely thankful that this man accepted here. Ruth was in favor of him from the very start.

Last weekend was warm and spring-like (it is colder today and may snow tomorrow) so I cleaned the car and carport. The kids, of course, all played outside. Sun night I put up a shelf above the washer and dryer so Ruth will have a place to sort clothes. Ruth has painted the cabinets and the shelf in the utility room. I may have mentioned that Ruth’s folks got home OK. We don’t know when they might come by here. I got approval to go to that meeting in Miami, Florida May 8-10. I’ve never been to Fla, except for that time we rode over to Pensacola. The kids bought a couple of small fish (guppies), but they died. We got two more babies. Andy is enrolled in the Trinity Lutheran Nursery School for next year ($28/month). We decided that he is definitely too immature to start in Kindergarten (he was four on the cut-off date). Alan has a spot for piano lessons next year if he wants to take them. He had a choice? Hope you’re all OK.

**4-?-68 – Sat 6:30 PM -** Grandmother gave this letter and the next letter the same date. I better get a letter off as it’s been some time since I’ve written. We had a long letter from the Laidigs today; they are as busy as ever. They plan to take a trip with Eldons this spring vacation, they may go to the Grand Canyon or to Mexico. Eldon interviewed at some place in Minnesota, but he either hasn’t heard yet, or hasn’t made his decision. I guess he definitely plans to leave for a new job somewhere this fall. I got the income tax finished this afternoon, and will mail it when I mail this letter. We should get $150.00 back. We’re home tonight and I have to get the opening exercises for the Jr. Depart in the morning. The regular man should begin coming back before too long. He was on the pulpit committee and their work is just about over. The youth choirs are singing together tomorrow AM in addition to the adult choir. On Easter Sun all choirs sing a combined anthem. I went this AM to help at the Jr. Choir rehersal. Not too much next week except for choir practice and the Good Friday Service.

I leave for Atlantic City on Tues the 16th and will return on Sat the 20th. There will be 14 going from Armour. The meeting in Miami is May 8-10. We brought in pizza last night and had our usual Fri evening at home. Last Thurs night was regular choir practice. Last Wed night we sang at the last Lenten service and then came back for the kids Science Fair at school. Alan had made a volcano and used dry ice and water to make it smoke and erupt. He was quite excited about it. Ruth went to a late circle meeting afterwards. Last Tues night I had a Session meeting at which time the new members were brought into the church. Tues noon Ruth gave the devotions at the Women’s Association meeting. Last Mon night was a long Session meeting. There is lots of business now with the plans for the prospective ministers candidacy, etc. Last Sun was our regular schedule.

A week ago tonight we went to Bye Bye Birdie at Bloom High School (the school in Chicago Heights). We all enjoyed it. We started working outside last Sat as it was warm (its cooler today). Ruth painted some and I started repairing the carport doors. I still have several inside jobs that I just haven’t got to. That was too bad about Dr. King. As you remember, I interviewed for a job in Memphis. I stayed overnight in a motel there, but I believe it was some distance from the one where he was shot. Dr. King was born a week or two before M.J. I expect we drove through areas of Washington, D.C. last Aug on the way to the meetings at Howard University, where they have been rioting. There is a curfew in Chicago tonight. We have not worked out the exact dates for our August trip. Ruth still wants to attend one of the choral clinics (which Dick Hoffland helps direct), either at Denver or at Bemidji, Minn. It was good to talk to you last Sun night. We hope you’re all OK. Glad to have your letter. That is very nice that Jimmy did so well with his talk. The dinner a week ago Tues with the pulpit committee was nice. How is your church coming on finding a new minister? Again, hope you’re all OK; call up sometime.

**4-?-68 – Sat afternoon -** Dear Aunt Clara, Mother M.J. and Bill, I guess it’s about time I sent the letter to you first. I’m writing today since I’ll be gone all next week to the Federation Meetings in Atlantic City. Thats the same meeting we’ve driven to a couple of times, when we also visited Ruth’s brother John in New Jersey. Four of us leave Park Forest Mon AM via rental car to O’Hare; we then fly to Philadelphia, and I suppose a car or bus to Atlantic City. The meetings last all week and we come back on Sat afternoon. The anthem for in the morning (at both services) is for the junior choir and adult choir to sing together. Some of the adults came this morning to practice with the junior choir. We voted this afternoon on the school board members, and on a school bond issue for our district. Ruth then went to the store and I raked in the yard for awhile. Its kinda rainy today. Yesterday evening was our Good Friday Communion Service. I helped serve communion and did not sing in the adult choir. I was off work yesterday so we all drove to the Little Red Schoolhouse and hiked on the nature trails there. The school house was originally used as a school house (its in the forest preserve) and is now used as the focal point of a nature study area.

We didn’t have much last Mon-Wed nights. On Wed night I helped Pete Luna move. He’s the fellow that works for me. He bought a house just about a block from us. Its almost as expensive as our house. He can afford it since his wife works at Sears. They have 2 cute children. One is in kindergarten this year and the other one will start next year. We were glad to receive Mother’s note and the Easter Cards this week. If we get up early enough in the morning we may have an Easter egg hunt for the kids. We have to be at church early for the first service at 8:30. I still have to get my opening exercises for the Junior Department.

Ruth is finishing her new Easter dress. She got some good material at Marshall Fields. Ruth uses Avon Cosmetics exclusively. She likes them because they are less likely to cause allergies. Hope you’re feeling OK, Aunt Clara, Mother said you hadn’t been quite up to par. Congratulations again to Jimmy on his speeches. Sounds like you and Mother are as busy as ever. Our tentative vacation schedule calls for us to go to Denver Aug 4-9 so Ruth can attend the choral school there at which Dick Hoffland teaches. We’ll probably go to Hutchinson after that and then possibly to Minneapolis for the fall pharmacology meeting. Again, hope everyone is OK and write sometime. Mon – Just ready to leave for Phil. Nice talking with all of you.

**4-24-68 – Wed PM -** I better get this letter off so you folks won’t think I’ve forgotten all about you. Its been colder today and we’ve even had some wet snow all day. It may set a record for low temperature tonight. We’ve done some outside work, but not really very much. I haven’t put any fertilizer down yet, and I need to mow the grass. Ruth has washed some of the outside so it will be ready for painting. Mr. Laidig called last night; I guess he was lonesome since Mrs. L was in Topeka at some meeting. He said they were applying for foreign service through Rotary International. I don’t know what type of work it would involve, where it would be, or whether their ages will work against them. I don’t know whether they plan to come visit us this spring or not. I guess Eldon will take the job in Minnesota if he gets an offer. I called the John Laidigs when I was in Atlantic City.

This has been a rather quiet week. We’ve been in both Mon and Tues nights, although Ruth is going out to shop this evening. Tomorrow night is our regular choir rehersal. One of the older men in the bass section died last Friday. We visited the funeral home on Sun afternoon. I’ll have the opening exercises this Sun at the Junior Dept, but will gradually quit as the regular man comes back; he was on the pulpit committee which is now through with its work. How are you coming with regard to finding a new minister? Our man preached his candidacy sermon last Sun and his call was approved by a vote of 218 to 7. He will get $9,000 plus expenses which will be equivalent to $14,000-15,000. He was born in 1931 so we are almost the same age. I’m looking forward to working with him on the sesson.

I go to Miami (I’m the only one going from Armour) Tues May 7th and return that Fri night. That Sat I will do magic shows for the PTA Pow Wow. I’ll donate my services so it will be clear profit for them. When I used to do the same thing in Hutchinson I usually charged, but I’ll make this my donation to the cause. The Atlantic City meeting was fine. We had clear weather all but one day, and it was warm during the days. We flew back on Mon afternoon. The sessions were Tues through Sat, but we came back Sat afternoon. I missed the reception at the church Sat afternoon for the new minister. It was just for the church officers and their wives or husbands. Ruth stayed in while I was gone (didn’t have choir practice that Thurs), except for Fri night when she went with the couples club to visit the temple. Glad to have your letter. Hope you’re all OK.

**5-2-68 – Thurs 10:00 PM -** We just got home from choir practice so I’ll write this before I go to bed. We didn’t have as many at choir practice as usual; we seem to have had a let-down after the Easter music. The weather has been nice, although I guess we could use some more rain. I guess I told you that it was real nice in Atlantic City – sunshine most of the time; sometimes it’s quite cold and rainy there. Ruth has been painting some since it has turned warmer. She let the kids paint on the fence some since its latex and will wash off. I mowed the yard for the first time last Sat.

We, of course, were saddened to hear about Uncle Archie; he was past 80 wasn’t he? We hope you had a good trip out and back. Ruth says she will write a note – she prefers that to sending just a card. We have a new man in the Pathology Department who was born and raised at Ellenwood, Kansas, and went to Fort Hays State College and then to the Veterinary School at Kansas State. He was at Wisconsin getting a PhD in Veterinary Pathology before coming here. Norm Calof is at his home in Canada this week on vacation – he should be back Monday. I go to Miami next Tues. The meeting is Wed-Fri and is about drug evaluation. It is part of the national meeting of the American Pharmaceutical Association. I come back Fri night. The next Sat afternoon I’m giving magic shows for the PTA Pow Wow (I guess I wrote that).

 

Post Pow Wow faces.

Ruth has had trouble getting her choir kids out since Easter. She had the older group meet before adult choir practice tonight and only about half showed up. They all have other things on Sat AM that they rate above choir so next year she may try an after school rehersal. If the after school rehersals work out next year I won’t have to help out. I’m essentially through with my helping out on Sun AM in the Junior Dept. The regular superintendent will be back this Sun, but I may help out again when he goes on vacation. We had a s.s. education meeting at the church last Tues evening. Last Sun afternoon Ruth had the neighborhood women in for a tea; some of the newer ones hadn’t met. Last Fri night we ate out as usual and Sat was as usual – odd jobs, etc. Where will M.J. go to school. Guess thats all the news. Hope you all are OK.

**5-19-68 – Sun PM -** I’ll start this now while we’re all waiting before we go to the girls recital at the Lutheran Church. Like last year they will play a duet together, and each will have a single number. Ruth says they are making progress. She says that Lesle has a good touch, and that she could be real good if she really applied herself. We haven’t pushed them and have been pleased that they have been as interested as they have been. Lesle, especially, doesn’t like to be pushed into anything.

Friday night we ate out, and then went to the Jr. High (7 and 8th only) band concert in Matteson (the suburb west of Park Forest). They have a good sized instrumental music program. It made me think of when I played in the Sherman Band with the yellow sweaters and trousers. We’re back from the girls’ recital and they did fine. Not *very* fine? ☺ Alan will start taking piano this summer or fall – he seems quite interested. I’ve told the girls that they can play instruments if they want to. Lisa said she might like to play the flute. Lesle has not been too interested. Our weather has been quite cool and rainy the last few days. We’ve had a cool spring but it hasn’t been very wet. I guess Kansas missed all the tornadoes the other night. We enjoyed the letter from Aunt Clara. We had a letter from the Laidigs and they plan to come here a week from today. Grandpa had promised the boys that he would build them a tree house. It won’t be entirely in the tree, but part of it will go directly to the ground.

Our interim minister, Dr. Showalter, will preach his final sermon next Sun and his farewell dinner will be that evening. Our new man, Rev. Gordon Reif, will be here June 16th for his first sermon, and his installation service that evening. This morning at church we had a guest minister. I assisted in the service – had the offertory, etc. I stepped back and sang in the choir. Yesterday AM I helped Pete move a piano (6 men) and then mowed the yard. In the evening we went to the Candlelight Theater (nearer Chicago) with the Armour Mens Club group. The play was “Teahouse of the August Moon.” We saw the movie several years ago. Dinner preceded the play. Fri night was the band concert so I didn’t get much done in the way of odd jobs this weekend.

Ruth’s Carol Choir did well at the morning service on Mother’s Day. She still has trouble getting the older ones out. They are supposed to sing the last Sun of this month. The final appearances of the choir will be at Rev Reif’s installation service. We may go to Decatur one of the early Sundays in June. My magic show went off OK a week ago yesterday. Some kids may have gotten in without paying since the high school girls that were in charge of the door did not do a very good job of watching it.

My trip to Miami went fine. Had good flights both ways. I rode back with the head of pharmacology at Searle (I interviewed him about 2 yrs ago) so we got much better acquainted. As a result, 3 of us drove (I drove) up to their labs last Thurs to see how they do certain techniques. Ruth’s Aunt Lenore Williams (she’s 70) picked me up at the hotel on Thurs evening in Miami and I had dinner with them (Uncle Carl sees pretty well now but had serious eye surgery several years ago). They drove me around some – we went by the Orange Bowl. The Laidigs drove down there a couple of years ago to help with their 50th wedding anniversary celebration. They let me pick some oranges, grapefruit, and mangos off their trees. I had not planned to stay all night at their house since I had my hotel room but by the time we were through driving around it was so late that I went ahead and stayed there. Its quite a drive from their house in Miami (they are not too far from the Orange Bowl) to the hotels on Miami Beach. I saw several of my pharmacology friends at the meeting. Ruth bought plants for our hanging baskets with your money and she says “Thank you.” Glad to have your letter and hope you’re all OK.

**5-30-68 – Thurs 5:30 PM -** We’ve finished our work for the day, so I’ll get a letter off to you folks. Today is a little bit warmer although its been cloudy most of the time. It has been cool and rainy for the last week. The Laidigs came last Sun afternoon. We had purchased tickets so they could go with us to the farewell dinner for Dr. Showalter. He preached his final sermon last Sun; they left sometime last week for another interim pastorate in Ky. He is about 68-70 yrs old and has been retired from the regular ministry since he was 65. Dr. Showalter was pastor of our church from about 1932 to 1948. The man that followed him was the one that left after we came. Dr. Showalter was the pastor at a church in Chicago after he left here. We will have fill in ministers for a couple of weeks and then our new man, Rev. Gordon Reif, will be here on June 16th. The choirs will all sing that evening for his installation service. I have a solo part with the adult choir number. That will be the final appearance of the year for the junior choirs. I think the adult choir sings through June. At the dinner last Sun night Dr. Showalter received a bag full of money. I expect it was a good sized gift since everyone liked him, and many of the church members knew him from the time he was there before. There was a big crowd.

Mr. L got lumber Mon AM and has been working hard all week on a fancy tree house for the kids. He just finished it today. The boys had asked Grandpa to build it for them and he finally agreed to come and do it. It is only for younger kids and we have a limit of six up in it at any one time. They have a trapdoor and can climb up steps nailed to the tree, or they can climb up a ladder and go in a side door. It has a roof and we may put some canvas on it later.

Mon night Ruth went to the school meeting concerned with instrumental music. They give music try outs and tests and recommend certain instruments for those that pass the tests. They recommended oboe for Lesle and she came home very enthusiastic about playing. In fact, I don’t think she has ever before been that enthusiastic about doing anything. She can start this summer and I believe she will. Lisa wants to play the flute but will have to wait another year since you can’t start a wind instrument in the fourth grade (because of teeth, etc.)

Tues night Ruth and her Mother went to a coffee for Mrs. Gordon Reif. He had to be up here since he was being presented at the monthly meeting of Presbytery (the local area organization in the Presbyterian Church). Last night Ruth had her Crusader Choir practice. We don’t have any adult rehersal this week because of the holiday. Not much else this week. I guess the Laidigs will leave tomorrow. They will go visit a relative in Indiana before heading home. They want to be back in time to go to Denver to attend college graduation exercises for one of the Musgraves. Our kids finish school sometime this week.

I cleaned and arranged the carport storage area and the storage space over the carport today. It is in the best shape its ever been in. Ruth worked hard last week sorting materials, papers, and everything that had accumulated in the study, so the Laidigs could sleep in there. I put up a new shelf and have another one to put up. They will relieve on book storage. We have to continually add storage space to accommodate all our things. I need to go through the years accumulation in our file. I guess you know how it is with regard to sorting papers, etc.

A week ago Fri night we went with the couples group at church to see the play “How to succeed in business without trying.” It was given by the Chicago Heights Drama Group. We stopped at the church afterwards for refreshments. We were glad to have your letter this week and the anniversary gift. We appreciated Aunt Clara’s recent letter also. The Laidigs are like you, they can’t get around quite as quickly as they used to, because of their arthritis. Although I guess Grandpa could still get around well enough to build a treehouse! At 72! Our church service for the graduates will be a week from Sunday, the day we may go to Decatur. Hope you’re all OK.



Spring in the backyard with Grandpa.

**6-27-68 – Sun 6:00 PM -** Dear Aunt Clara, Mother, M.J. and Bill, This will have to be the general catch up letter to all you folks, and the birthday letter to Aunt Clara and Mother. As I said in the cards, we may have some birthday gifts later. Mr. Laidig’s birthday is June 17th, so we have quite a few in June. We hope that M.J. is still progressing nicely. I suppose she’ll almost be ready to go home by the time this letter reaches Hutchinson. I guess they get almost all surgery patients up and around some as soon as they can after the operation; I guess this helps to reduce the incidence of blood clots. Thanks, Mother, for sending the extra letters.

We’re all in the house now since there is a tornado watch out for our area. We’ve been watching and I think it has passed to the North of us. We could use some rain as it has been fairly dry recently. We just haven’t done much in the yard this summer, although Ruth has worked some on flowers around the edge of the house. I mowed the yard yesterday afternoon. As it gets dryer I don’t have to mow every week like I had to earlier. Ruth has finished painting the patio fence and done more on the house. The undercoat is finished on the treehouse. The kids can finish it when Vacation Church School is finished. Church School was all last week and lasts through Thurs of this week. Thurs night will be the final exercises; we will have our last choir rehersal afterwards. The choir sings for the last time next Sun; it is communion also. Solos and special numbers will be used for the music the rest of the summer. I said I would sing a solo the last Sun of July. We will have a quartet with another couple the Sunday before.

I had the opening exercises in the Jr. Dept. again this morning and will have them for the next two Sundays. This is while the regular superintendent is on vacation for three Sundays. I had promised him earlier that I would fill in for him. He is the one I helped last winter when he was on the pulpit committee. Ruth is teaching our adult class the next two Sundays. This afternoon we drove all the way up into Chicago to the International Amphitheater hoping that we could all visit a big printing exhibit. They wouldn’t let anyone under 14 into the exhibits so we didn’t stay. Adults had to register to get in. It was predominantly a commercial exhibit, I guess, but we had understood that it was open to the general public. We stopped for a cold drink in the famous steak house there, and then drove back home. We had never been there before so I guess it served the purpose of teaching us how to get there. The Ice Capades are there so we may go the next time they come. I think Bill and M.J. have been there to a livestock or 4-H show?

Lisa has enjoyed her Brownie Day Camp. She went Tues-Fri of last week and will go the same this week. She is going to Church School on the two Mondays that she doesn’t have her camp. A bus picks her up and brings her back home. I’m not certain I told you that we bought a new stove. Ruth is enjoying it. It is smaller than the old one, but is of better quality. It doesn’t have the storage for pots and pans like the old one, so Ruth has had to fit them in elsewhere. Lesle has had a week of lessons on the oboe and is playing 3-4 notes. They have a little concert at the end of the summer session.

The kids have been going swimming almost every day so I think we’ll get our $50 worth of swimming for the summer. They may take lessons later. The installation service last Sun night went over fine. Ruth had an adequate number for her choirs, and the adult choir did OK (I had a solo part). I sent the program to M.J. Last Tues night I had a 4 hour Session meeting. The former minister was so weak in administration that there is a lot of work to be done. I’m chairman of a committee to work out a policy for the use of the building and facilities. No formal policy had ever been worked out. Practically all the programs of the church need reevaluation.

Last Thurs night was choir practice. Fri night the Reifs (the new minister) came over. Ruth had invited them over to celebrate their 10 yr olds birthday (girl). They also have a 6 yr old girl and a 12 yr old boy. We bought a new grill in honor of the occasion. Sat I had to have a new muffler and tail pipe installed on the car. In the evening we went to the Couples Club meeting at the church. We all played a card game which was a lot of fun. Next month we co-host the annual picnic in one of the members backyard.

The choral clinic is Sun Aug 4 – Fri Aug 9th in Denver. We will drive from here directly to Denver. The fall Pharmacology Meeting is in Minneapolis from Aug 19th to 23 and I have to be back for Mon 26th. This means we have from Aug 10 to 16th to visit Oberlin and Hutchinson. We should have about 3½ days at each place. Hope you and Mother both had nice birthdays. The party for you, Aunt Clara, sounded real nice.

**7-2-68 – Wed PM –** I’ll write this tonight and maybe it will reach Hutchinson by Friday. We hope you folks have a nice holiday, and that M.J. will feel like enjoying it. Ruth and I were remembering a year ago when we were all at M.J. & Bills for the 4th. I believe it was cool and rainy. The kids had their sparklers; I understand that sparklers are illegal in Ill along with other fireworks. They have a big fireworks display over at the park tomorrow night so we’ll all go over for that. We plan to paint some tomorrow. Ruth has been working hard on removing old paint, etc. The winter caused some of the old paint to deteriorate (where we didn’t get it painted last fall), so Ruth is having to remove a lot of it so the latex will go on and stay on. Latex house paint is harder to put on than oil base paint, but lasts longer. We must get the house done before long.

Everything at work is fine. We’re making progress and I have all I can handle all the time. I finished my 2nd year of work today so I should be reviewed in the next few weeks with regard to my annual (hopefully) increment in salary. Any increment I receive will just about cover the increase in taxes, cost of living, and family expenses for the next year. The big increases for the next year are Lesle’s oboe, Alan’s piano lessons and Andy’s nursery school. Don’t get me wrong, I’m in favor of all these things, but you have to have an annual salary increase or you fall behind. Our trip in Aug will take a lot of money so we’ll have to wait until Sept to see whether or not we can do the patio.

Lesle is doing fine on the oboe, and Alan’s first piano lesson was last Mon. We’ve had some discipline problems with Alan (he walked to the Plaza with some neighborhood boys without asking and was gone for 4 hrs) but hope that he has learned to tell us where he is going. Choir is over for the year. We sing in a quartet 2 wks from Sun and I have a solo 3 weeks from Sun. This Sun will be my last Sun to help in the Jr. Dept. Ruth taught the adult class last Sun and will this Sun.

Last Thurs night was the Vacation Church School final program. Most of it was Ruth leading the various classes in singing. I thought it went over real well. I cooked on our new grill last Fri night. Sat AM I prepared for a magic show in the afternoon at a park. It was for a neighbor who has a handicapped son that belongs to a help group; they were having a picnic. The whole family went. Afterwards I had a Session meeting to prepare for communion on Sun AM. Sun was very hot so we all took the Reif (new minister) children swimming in the afternoon. Glad to have your letter and to hear that M.J. is getting along so well.

**7-21-68 – Sun 7:30 PM –** I’ll write this now and then take it down to mail after a bit. We were glad to have your last letter and to know that everything is fine with you folks. Yesterday and today have been our hottest and most humid days, I believe.

Since the paint we needed for use yesterday hadn’t come in, we took off and went to the Museum of Science & Industry. I guess it was our 3rd trip there. The last time we went was last Nov. They have several new exhibits and we still haven’t been around to see everything. We probably won’t get there again for awhile since we should probably go to the Field Museum next; we haven’t been there as a family. Lesle or Lisa went there once on a field trip. We got there at 10:00 AM and got home about 5:30. They have several places where you can eat at the museum. Aunt Clara, the air conditioner is always a “God send’ on these hot humid days. After supper last night everyone but me went to the pool to cool off.

This morning we were slow getting around since neither of us had any responsibilities at church – it was relaxing. Despite the hot weather there was a good crowd at church, our new minister is fine and I believe he’s already getting more people out to church and he’s taking firm hold in all areas. The hard work of the pulpit committee will pay rich dividends. This afternoon we all went to the pool. I first took the boys to buy a couple of birthday presents, and to buy a ball and mit for Alan. He had been asking for them for some time and we felt he needed the mit, he’s had balls, of course ☺.

The neighbor lady to our North, Mrs. Philips, went to the hospital this afternoon in preparation for her hysterectomy tomorrow morning. Although in very early stages, she apparently has some malignant cells. Tomorrow night we go for rehersal with another couple for our quartet which sings at church next Sun. The kids are now enrolled in swimming lessons. Fri night we ate out and then everyone but me went to the pool. Everyone went to the pool almost every day last week since it was warm.

Last Wed night was our Session meeting, 7:30-11:30 again. Things are getting better organized and future meetings should not be so long. Ruth went to many 4 hr meetings with her pulpit committee. I can’t recall when I wrote last. We went to the zoo (Brookfield) the day after the 4th and I painted some more on that Sat. We hope to finish painting before we leave. Ruth is going to ask for approval for a Cherub choir (the youngest ones). Everything at work is OK. Hope you’re all OK and it’s not too hot for you.

**7-28-68 – Sun PM -** I’ll write once more before we leave on vacation. I just called the Interstate 80 Motel in Grand Island, Nebraska for a reservation for next Sat night. Its a little over 600 miles from here to Grand Island, but its Interstate 80 all the way so we should get in before too late. Ruth has to be in Denver Sun evening for her opening session, and Interstate 80 is not completed all the way from Grand Island to Denver so we felt we had to go more than half way the first day. I’ll write you from Denver and let you know our schedule for Kansas. I assume we’ll go from Oberlin to Hutchinson about Wed. Eldon’s, who live in Denver, will be gone while we’re there, although we may see them in Oberlin, as they are on their way back from a Coast Guard camp which Eldon has to attend. His need to attend this camp came up very suddenly. They offered to let us stay in their house, but that won’t be possible.

It has been a little cooler today, but we all went to the pool late this afternoon after a rest period. We’re all home this evening. We don’t have much on this week, just getting ready for the trip. My solo went OK this morning, and our quartet went OK last Sun. Soloists get paid at our church. Ruth plans to present a proposal to the next Session meeting (I will be absent) for her starting a Cherub Choir (the little ones). I hope she gets approval. She will have to start work on it as soon as we get back.

There is a slight cloud on the horizon with regard to my job situation. Our research budjet is up for approval this week and the rumor is that some of the areas I’m involved in may be cut back. It is unclear whether or not my job would be in jeopardy. They might let some of the technicians go, but keep the senior people. I should know more by the time I see you. My minimum time for considering any change was 2 yrs from now, so I hope we won’t be forced to move.

The house painting is almost done. I painted some yesterday and we then went to the Couples Club family picnic yesterday evening at one of the members houses. They have a lovely big backyard with plenty of room for games, etc; this was the 3rd church picnic we’ve had there; Ruth and I were co-hostessess so I had to help set things up, etc. Lesle’s band is over now. Her final concert was a week ago Fri night; they did fine. The kids have had swimming lessons last week and this week. Glad to have your letter. I expect M.J. is pretty much herself by now? Ruth is taking supper over to the neighbors tomorrow night where the woman had the same type of surgery. Ah, I guess Aunt Jan had a hysterectomy.

**8-7-68 – Denver – Tues PM 3:15 -** I’m at the pool watching our kids and the two youngest Hoffland children; the two older Hoffland children did not come here – they have camp activities, etc. elsewhere. Ruth is at a session this afternoon until about 4:00 when I’ll go pick her up so she can go shopping at one of the big department stores. Her session times are 8:30-12:00, 1:30-4:00 and 7:30-10:00 so she doesn’t have much free time. They cover all types (religious – public school) of choral music and I’m glad we were able to come. You can take the course for college credit so I expect that is one reason they have to put in so many hours. The Hofflands are on the staff so they have to be there for about the same hours as Ruth.

It was a busy time before we left but we got just about everything done. Ruth stayed up most of the night before we left getting things done, etc. She sent in her request for the Cherub Choir and the Session should act on it tomorrow night. We got away in pretty good time last Sat AM and made it OK to Grand Island, Neb at the motel where we had a reservation. We even got there in time for the kids to get in the pool awhile.

Sun we drove the rest of the way here and made it in time for Ruth to attend the opening banquet. I took the kids out for pizza. We are in an apartment in one of the dormitories and have plenty of room, except that we only have 5 beds. The girls sleep in the bunk beds and the boys sleep in one of the single beds. We’re fixing our breakfast and lunch at the dorm and eating out at night. Yesterday AM I took the 6 kids to the Natural History Museum and this morning we went to the Red Rocks Amphitheater up in the foothills. We’ve been swimming both afternoons and to playgrounds in the evening. We go to Oberlin Sat. I’ll write again from Oberlin.

**8-18-68 – Oberlin, Ks, Mon -** Dear Mother, It’s been cool since we arrived in Oberlin, but it is warming up some so the kids may be able to go swimming before we leave. Our duet went OK at church yesterday morning at church (I think I told you that Mrs. L had asked us to sing a duet at church). They had a pretty good crowd since it was communion. Our current plan calls for us to go to Hutchinson Wed (you will probably get this then). We’ll have to leave early Sun since we have to be in Minneapolis by 1:00 PM when the sessions start. I had originally thought that the sessions started Mon AM (there is a meeting in the AM, but I can miss it) so we won’t have to leave quite as early as we had originally thought.

We got in here late Sat night, so this divides the time equally between Oberlin and Hutchinson. We want to see Mrs. Moyes in Kans City, so will not go all the way to Minneapolis Sun night, but will get a motel in Iowa. We had a good time in Denver and Ruth’s course was fine. We went up to Central City (gold mining country) near Denver before we left Sat. Hope you get this before we arrive.



Ready to hit the road. In front of Grammy and Grandpa’s garage in Oberlin.

**8-25-68 – Sun Afternoon -** We got back OK late Fri night so I’ll report in on what we did after we left Hutchinson. It was lucky we got away when we did from Hutchinson because it was almost 1:00 AM Mon when we got into Ames, Iowa. We all certainly enjoyed our stay in Hutchinson and we thank everyone for everything. Maybe we’ll all be able to get together before next summer. As we said, next Aug is the 50th wedding anniversary of the Laidigs so we’ll again try for our vacation at about the same time.

After leaving Hutchinson, we drove North through Inman and got on Interstate 70 near Salina. Its a little farther that way than East to Emporia and the Kansas Turnpike but we thought we would try it for a change. I believe we made just as good time because there is more 4-lane. We got to Topeka about 1:00 (stopped a couple of times) and Ruth called her friend, and also some other people we know, but neither one were at home.

I called the Jim Gleasons (he’s an obstetrician and went to KU when I did) and they were not at home so we drove on to Lawrence and visited Ken Holladay and his family. We had not stopped to see them in 5 years. He practices at Eudora, a little town just east of Lawrence. They are building a big new house. We then drove on to Kansas City and stopped to see Dave Musgrave and his wife whom we have never met. They had just left with her folks so we left a note.

We then drove on Mrs. Moyes and had supper with them. She is doing fine. We missed her last year. We then drove to Ames where we had our reservation at the motel. Got to see a little bit of Iowa State University as we left in the morning. We drove through the town where Dick Searl is South of Minneapolis, but we were so late that we just didn’t have time to stop.

It was hot Sun and all the time in Minneapolis and most of the meeting rooms at the University were not air conditioned. The motel was air conditioned but it was not efficient so we were warm even in the room. The kids did lots of swimming at the motel. Alan swims pretty well now, and the girls are just like fish. I had Tues afternoon off so we did a little sightseeing. We saw the Sibley House which is one of the original houses, and is presently maintained by the DAR. We also saw Minnehaha Falls, and then went to the airport for supper (?).

Shopped some Mon night, walked around downtown Wed night and we all went to Camelot Thurs night. The meetings were quite a ways from the motel, so I usually drove and left the family to swim. They did go to the University once and saw the museum. We left as soon as we could Fri AM and stopped several times on the way to Milwaukee. We stopped at the Wisconsin Dells and Ruth bought me an unusual mortar and pestle for my birthday. I remember being there when we were in Wisconsin. We did not take any boat ride but drove on to the Dr. Bert Lums in Milwaukee. He was on the staff at KU when I was a graduate student. I had seen him at Minneapolis and he invited us to stop on our way back. We had a nice supper there and left about 9:30 and got home about 12:30.

Sat AM Ricka Hoffland (their oldest – she was not in Denver) called and said she could not reach her aunt and uncles in another suburb because of a phone strike and wanted us to meet her. We took about 6 hrs to drive to the loop, meet her, had lunch at the bus station, drive her out to her aunt and uncle’s, visit with them awhile, and drive home. Today was regular church. S school and choir activities will be beginning before long. Our neighbors to the North (5 children) will be moving soon. Again, thanks for everything.

  

Hutchinson – August 17th

**8-?-68 – Mon 6:00 PM -** I’ll start this now since we’ll be having a late supper. The Hugh Burfords were here today and we didn’t finish eating until about 3:00. We had invited them to come about 1:00 and they arrived a little bit late since they had never been here before. They left about 5:30. Hugh was the graduate student to finish next after I did in Kansas City. He went to New Orleans awhile and has been at Bowman Gray School of Medicine at Winston-Salem, North Carolina for the last few years. They are moving to Evanston, since he has taken a job with Northwestern University; he will be at the downtown campus. We now have three families we know in Evanston so we’ll have to make a weekend trip up there. It takes about an hour and a half to go up there from here. The other two families that we know through Ruth. The Burfords have two children, the boy Mark is about the girls’ age and was born in K City, the girl is about Andy’s age.

Sorry I missed your call last Sun afternoon. I had just driven out to mail your letter so I guess you had us on your mind as I was writing the letter. We have no definite information about the budget at work. There will probably be some cuts, but we have no indication that any positions will be cut. It is possible, however, that certain people who quit may not be replaced. For example, two people who just quit will probably not be replaced. One of these was on a temporary position (he knew he was going to quit to go back to Osteopathy School) so I doubt very much if his position will be reopened. We had a going away dinner for these two people last Wed night. It was in Kankakee so Ruth got a baby sitter and drove down so she could go. She had never met some of the people in the department.

We were at home Thurs and Fri nights. Sat Alan and I went to a Cubs-Houston Astros baseball game at Wrigley Field. The only other major league game I had ever been to was in Kansas City before we were married. Alan enjoyed it; it was a long game so we left after 7 innings and got back by supper time. We left at 11:00 AM. We took the train into the loop (the regular commuter train) and then the subway – elevated - to the field. Didn’t we all see Wrigley Field from the elevated train years ago when you took us up to Evanston?



Baseball fan.

Had regular church service and s.s. yesterday. Next Sat night the s.s. class will hold their annual steak fry in our backyard. We usually have it (and the Couples Club picnic) at someone elses house, but they couldn’t have it this time. Ruth’s request for the younger choir has not been acted on yet, but will be next week. She is starting work, announcing meeting times, etc. I have a meeting tomorrow night, Ruth has circle Wed night and we have our first regular choir rehersal Thurs night. Hope you’re all OK. Our weather is cooler now. Hope the worst is over for you folks. The kids go to school full time on Wed.



First day of school. Look at all our little fingers. Mom made the dresses, of course.

**9-?-68** – Dear Aunt Clara, Mother, M.J. and Bill, Since Its only a week since the last letter I’ll send this one to you first. We were glad to have Mother’s letter this past week, and to hear about your family get-together. I think that’s real nice – you should keep it up. Although it’s been warmer here today, and we may have showers tonight or tomorrow, I think most of our real hot weather is over. I think I do a little more work when the weather is cooler. The painting is essentially done except for a few odds and ends. Since we were having the picnic here last night Ruth painted the entire inside of the car port, including the cement floor (dark green). Last Tues night I had a meeting; Thurs night was the first choir rehersal and there was a pretty good crowd. We stayed home Fri night although Ruth went shopping to finish up things for Lisa’s birthday. Yesterday we spent most of the day getting ready for the picnic in the yard. I had to go get tables and chairs from the church. We only had about 20 people but it went well, and the steaks (another fellow and I cooked them) were fine. We had the salads and desserts on a table in the carport with the doors closed to reduce the insects. The tables were set up in the patio area, and the cooking was done on in the back by the swing set. It was the biggest outdoor crowd we’ve had. Most people left by 8:30 so we took the table and chairs back to the church afterwards.

This morning was regular s.s. and church. Afterwards we ate at Howard Johnsons since they give a free birthday dinner and cake to children under 12. We then came home and got ready for Lisa’s birthday party at 3:30. There were 5 extra girls in and Ruth had games, etc. and they all stayed for a pizza supper. Ruth had a birthday cake so with her regular family birthday dinner tomorrow night she will have had 3 cakes plus the cupcakes she takes to school.

 

Lisa’s birthday party in the carport. We are all wearing dresses! Family photo in front of the deacon’s bench.

Thanks for the snapshots. I just left ours at the drugstore today. Haven’t heard any more about our budget. We’re trying to get a lot of reports written so I’m busy. As you can see by the enclosures the Jr. Choirs are getting underway this week. The Session hasn’t decided yet on the Cherub Choir. I have Session Wed night and Ruth has her choir and circle that night also. They have asked Ruth to be president of the Women’s Association (starting in Jan) and I guess she’ll accept. It would be nice to see my cousins sometime. Maybe we can go see them sometime when we’re in Kansas. Hope Mother’s arthritis is no worse. Whats Margaret Westnik doing? Mother, you may send the brush and comb if its convenient.

**9-23-68 – Sun 5:30 PM -** Ruth is going to the store a bit before I cook my birthday steak for supper. Today has been hot and humid and we haven’t had much energy after a big morning. Ruth had to direct the adult choir since the director wanted to be gone. I taught one of the Junior High classes and Ruth came in and led some singing using the autoharp (the class meets where they don’t have a piano). This afternoon we went over to the Park Forest Art Show – we bought an owl wood carving to go on the wall. It was so hot the kids didn’t want to look at many of the things.

Thanks to everyone for the birthday gifts. I’ll use them for a good pair of shoes. I need a new lightweight topcoat but Ruth says I’m getting that for my birthday. Two of the kids have gotten new winter coats already so I guess we’re set for winter. My birthday reminds me that I’ve never picked up the films at the drugstore from our trip.

I may have told you that Ruth got her approval for a Cherub Choir. They will practice for only part of the year and will sing at Thanksgiving, Christmas, Mother’s Day time, etc. Her other choirs are shaping up. She has a special chorale (membership by tryout) made up of 5-8 grades. That gives her 4 choirs but she is only charging for two of them since she had pushed for the extra ones. I guess its just the regular schedule this week with choir practices on Wed and Thurs nights.

Lisa’s dress fits fine and she wore it to church today. She has written a “Thank You” but I’ll say the same. I think I wrote that she had a party and got the usual things. Ruth made Lisa a dress and bought her a jumper. Grammy got her a pair of socks to go with two of her dresses and a glass horse. Lisa collects horses, you know.

It’s now 9:30. I was finishing this letter earlier when the Bastians (boss) dropped in for a little surprize (Dad often spells surprise with a “z”) party. Ruth has done this several times since we’ve been married, but not every year, so I’m usually surprized ☺. There were a few little things that almost gave it away, but not enough to make me really believe that someone was coming the day before my birthday. The Bastians had never been in this house (we moved in 2 yrs ago on the 19th) and we had been meaning to have them over.

 

Dad’s birthday, but no Dad, just white rats and the deacon’s bench filled with gifts.

I finished a rough draft of a policy regarding the use of our church building and facilities. They had not had a formal policy so we have a committee to work one out. It will cover fees for weddings, etc. Ruth has started thinking a little bit about the Women’s Association work. I may have mentioned that it won’t start until Jan 1st, but they usually figure on one for a two year term. Hope M.J. and Bill enjoyed the fair and they had good weather. We enjoyed Aunt Clara’s letter and thanks again for the gifts and card. Hope you’re all OK.

**9-?-68** – Dear Mother and all, Everything is OK - here. Some of the pictures were ruined. I think most of the ruined ones were taken in Oberlin and we got most of the Hutchinson ones. Get any copies you want and please return them.

**10-1-68 – Tues PM -** As usual I didn’t get this written over the weekend but I think the girls have mailed you folks one of their newsletters (which our little ‘club’ wrote at our meetings in our clubhouse, which was located inside the enclosed storage area in the carport). The girls stay busy with their usual activities. I don’t hear them practice much, but I guess they’re getting along OK on the piano. Also, I don’t hear Lesle play the oboe but I guess she’s doing alright. Thanks for the birthday gifts. I used Mothers for a new pair of shoes; they cost about $17 and are a little better quality than the last pair I purchased. Ruth had encouraged me to get a pair now; I guess I’ve always needed a Mother or Wife to prod me into buying new clothes. We applied Aunt Clara’s family gift on an owl that we bought at the Art Fair a week ago Sun. It’s a mounted flat wood carving about 1 foot high and we’ll hang it on the wall in the family room. For my birthday I also got a tie, underwear and socks, a shirt, and my big present from Ruth was a new topcoat; not a real expensive one, but one of these nice waterproof ones – my old one looks quite shabby. I still have a heavier wool topcoat that I wear in very cold weather. I also got a shoeshine kit. My shoes are the new shade like Bill has. Kind of a greenish-brown that goes with black, or the new gold and green shades for men.

Ruth bought a new dress today; she said she didn’t feel guilty since she has purchased very few since we have been married. She was formally elected today as president-elect of the Women’s Assoc. She will be installed in Dec and have the Jan meeting. The officers normally serve for a term of two years. Ruth feels the reason they asked her is that they want someone who is younger. They have so few of the younger women that attend. I guess thats a problem with lots of Women’s Assoc’s. She wants to have occasional night meetings (all the big meetings are during the day) to get some of the younger ones out. Her Cherub Choir starts Wed. Some of the church women have volunteered to help make robes.

Tomorrow night is my Session meeting and Ruth has one of her choirs, so we’ll have to have a baby sitter for part of the evening. Thurs night is choir practice and Fri night I’m going with our minister to a local Presbyterian meeting. This weekend is fairly free and will enable us to again catch up on jobs around the house. Sun is World-Wide Communion. Last week was the regular schedule. Fri night we went out to eat as usual, got my shoes and exchanged my topcoat for the correct size. Did odd jobs around the house on Sat and Sun. We’re having a warm spell now, probably one of our last ones.

Glad to have Aunt Clara’s birthday letter. Hope Larry Creech and his wife make it back to college. He’ll never regret it. Glad to have Mother’s letter, also. I read some of the clippings. Lisa wore her new dress again Sun. It was Rally Day – promotion, etc. I had not planned to send back the pictures. I still haven’t picked up our films – we’ve been short of money – the colored ones cost several dollars you know. Hope you’re all OK.

**10-8-68 – Tues PM 6:00 –** I’ll write this now and mail it after supper. I put some letters out this morning but they weren’t picked up so I’ll mail them also. Today has been a little warmer after a cool spell. I put the storm windows up Sat and Sun afternoons. I’m going to put some weather stripping around them to keep out some of the cold air. We need to have the furnace checked and cleaned. I’ll probably have to mow the yard one or two more times. We went to the library last night and Ruth then bought some material for a cape – she has never had one; she worked on it today since I had the car and she couldn’t go anywhere. Tomorrow night I have an education meeting at the church (I’m on the education committee of the Session). Thurs night is regular choir practice.

Last week I had Session meeting on Wed night and we voted in a group of new members who were welcomed last Sun (World-Wide Communion). On communion Sundays I sing in the choir and then go out in the side room and change into my suit coat for helping serve communion. Last Thurs night was regular choir practice and Fri night I went with our minister to a meeting. The Chicago area (or Chicago Presbytery – which is part of the Synod of Illinois) has now been divided into 8 Mission Councils by geographical area. Each area has 20-30 churches. This was the first meeting of our Mission Council.

Lesle is working away at the typewriter on her homework. She has quite a bit for a fifth grader, although I guess they do more than they did when I was a child. Lisa also occasionally has homework. Alan is doing better all around. I’ve tried to give him a little more attention. Andy loves his school. The kids have good new friends next door and occasionally visit the children who used to live there; they have moved up in the North part of town. Ruth’s choirs are coming along OK and she has some new members. Their first appearance is the end of the month, I believe. Glad to have your letter – Sorry Lelia hurt her finger. Hope you’re all OK – Everything else here is about the same.

**10-17-68 – Thurs PM -** I’ve delayed writing this week since I sent the pictures earlier. We were glad to have your letter yesterday. Tonight is regular choir practice. Our baby sitter charges $1 an hour but I think she is pretty responsible. You can still get younger baby sitters for .50 an hour. Ruth and I and another couple have solo parts in the anthem for Sunday. We’re practicing a number to sing with the youth choirs the first Sun in November. That’s also the Stewardship Drive Visitation Sun on which all the people who have not sent in their pledges will be called on. So much pressure! We’ve always had a separate building fund drive but the’re combining them this year. It has been the experience of other churchs that you don’t raise as much total money when you combine the two drives together, but we’re going to give it a try. Although you really shouldn’t look at it in this way, we give more to the church than Ruth earns with her choirs.

We’re staying home the next two nights. Sat AM – Ruth had a meeting during the day yesterday she was supposed to go to (an all day women’s association workshop in another suburb), but she stayed home with Andy since he had a little stomach upset – he seems OK now. We stayed home last night. The girls stayed all night with Carol Philips the girl that used to live next door. Today is a little cooler but clear and more a normal fall temperature than we’ve been having. I guess its cool enough now to go ahead and put the last two storm windows on. We opened the windows last week when it was so warm. Today we’re doing odd jobs around the house, Ruth is shopping, etc. Tonight I have to finish getting ready for the adult s.s. class which I have for the next two Sundays. Tonight is the Couples Club at church but we’re not going. We’ve been going quite a bit and I have to get ready for tomorrow. Everything at church is beginning to get better and better organized and things are improving generally.

This week on Tues is the Women’s Assoc Harvest Holly Day bazaar where they raise most of their money for the years work. Ruth is beginning to get the new officers lined up for the Association. Last Thurs night was regular choir practice. Last Wed night was the church dinner to discuss the Stewardship Drive. We all went and the kids all were supervised elsewhere why the adults met. Or maybe we were running wild at the other end of the dark empty church? A nominating committee was elected.

The children are all OK and they are busy with their usual activities. I guess Lesle practices quite a bit on the oboe. We were glad to have your letter. KU is doing quite well in football this year; I can’t ever remember them being rated as high as they are in the national pools. Take your time with the pictures. I read where they’re doing more surgery on arthritic joints. Ruth is going to have to take more allergy shots. She is generally better than she used to be, however. Hope you’re all OK.

**11-?-68 – Sat 1:00 PM -** Dear Aunt Clara, Mother, M.J. and Bill, I guess its time I sent a letter to you first. I called Mother last Mon night, but I guess it’s been two weeks again since I’ve written. We just seem to be getting busier and busier – but one shouldn’t offer excuses. Its a little cooler here today after being real warm the last couple of days. The girls just went out with some friends for a picnic lunch in a nearby park. Alan is out with some friends and Andy is still inside. The boys finally cleaned up their room this morning; we said they couldn’t go outside until they had done the cleaning.

Well, we survived Halloween; I expect Jimmy and Jana Kay were as excited as our kids. We got pumpkins for everyone on Tues night and cut them; the kids did a lot of their cutting, although I did most of Andy’s. I had a committee (facilities usage) meeting here Wed night and I let the kids show the people their pumpkins before they went to the back part of the house. Thurs afternoon Ruth let her Carol choir come dressed up and they had a little party. She then took our kids “trick or treating” to the ministers and some other friends and then they came back here to go out in our neighborhood. After that we went to choir practice, so Ruth had a busy day.

 

Candy sorting. Looks like Alan recycled parts of his costume from last year. I think I am a goblin. Carole is a hippy. Is Andy a nerd? Is Lesle a nun? Dad doesn’t say.

Ruth is working on her cardboard chair this afternoon. The cardboard chair appears! I wonder whatever happened to it? It was soooo heavy. She builds it up with pieces of cardboard glued together. We need another chair for the family room and it won’t cost much money. Last night was the first concert in the Kankakee Community Concert series. It was the Washington National Symphony Orchestra with a piano soloist. There are four concerts in the series (like most Community Concert Series, I guess) and the third concert, in February, is James Dick from Hutchinson. Maybe I should go up and meet him afterwards. He’s younger than I am, but I can’t remember by how much?

We are real pleased that the new Interstate 57 South to Kankakee and beyond has now opened up. We have to drive a few miles to get it on it, but its worth it. Being a divided highway its much safer than 54 (the old way to work and Kankakee) which is 4-lane, but not divided. Furthermore, its so much smoother. 54 is very rough and hard on the car. I’m sure the car pool will go the new way all the time.

We were glad to have Mother’s letter this week. We hope that your ministerial candidate was satisfactory. Sorry to hear that J.W. Hamilton is leaving; I enjoyed that talk I had with him last summer. Tell him that I wish him the best of luck in his new position. Glad to hear all the other news. We haven’t heard much from the Laidigs recently.

Last Sun was Ruth’s solo in the choir anthem and then she had her Crusader Choir sing an anthem. It all went very well. My two Sundays teaching the adult class on the Stewardship of Time went OK. The adults are pretty good about carrying on a discussion and all I really needed were a few questions, although I did spend a fair amount of time in preparation

**11-12-68 – Tues PM 6:00 –** I’ll write this and take it out to mail later. Its been quite a bit colder here the last few days. We had just a few snow flurries the other day; did you have a lot of snow? I guess the kids like winter as well as summer, but I don’t care for snow much anymore; I guess its a sign of age. The kids, of course, had vacation yesterday. They are getting along fine at school – they recently brought home good report cards. Lesle is doing very well on the Oboe and the’re all doing fine on the piano; they did not have a lesson yesterday.

We’ve been home last night and tonight. Tomorrow night is Session and Thurs night regular choir practice. Sat night is the Couples Club pot-luck supper at church. I worked some on the church’s music program last week and I’m going to try and get a music committee formed. Sun night I finished writing a revision of a policy covering usage of the church by all groups – church and non-church. Ruth has just about got all the officers for the Women’s Association. She doesn’t take office until the first of the year.

Last Sun Lisa had a birthday party after church and later in the afternoon we all went to a youth concert by one of the local orchestras. It was only a 45 min program. There was an oboe solo which Lesle enjoyed.

I’m looking forward to hearing about whether the land referendum passed. The ballot was confusing (guess they had to word it that way by law) and I imagine many voted the wrong way. I had thrown the band article and picture away before I noted that you wanted it saved. Generally speaking, the election went OK by me. I wasn’t too particular on the president but voted for Nixon mainly on the basis of the need for a party change for a few years. I don’t really consider myself strictly a Republican or Democrat. I voted for the Democratic candidate for governor and I lost. In Kansas I see they re-elected the Democrat Docking.

Too bad that KU lost in football. I imagine M.J. and Bill may be going up to the K-State-KU game Sat (K-State won last Sat). Some of the Chemists at work were taking bets on the game. They have various “pools” and drawings on games etc. but I don’t participate. Last Thurs night our choir practice was at one of the members homes. I can’t think of much else. Hope you’re all OK.

**11-20-68 – Wed 5:30 PM –** As usual, I’m late getting this letter written. Hope you’re all OK. We’re having cold weather now, and we’ve had some light snow although the roads haven’t been bad. We usually don’t have much snow here before the first of the year. I believe our house is staying a little warmer this winter because of the weather stripping I put on. We had a long letter from the Laidigs and they are fine. They bought a new car and are as busy as ever. I think they are going East at Christmas time and may stop here on the way.

Ruth just got home from her Cherub-Choir rehersal and she has her Crusaders at 7:00 PM. The Cherubs (kindergarten – 2nd grade) sing this Sun for the first time. Tomorrow night is regular adult choir practice. Fri night is our second Community Concert in Kankakee. Sat we go up to visit the Duvalls. The’re the (she lived in Oberlin once) ones that live in another suburb that we visit once a year or so. We don’t have any definite plans for Thanksgiving; to just stay at home and relax will be fine with me.

Last night I had a s.s. officers meeting at our house. Ruth served refreshments for us – she is not an officer this time. We were home last Mon night. Last Sun was regular schedule. Last Sat night was Couples Club at church. Ruth had conferences with all the kids teachers last week; they are all coming along fine. They all need to recite more just like I was. Lesle is getting a lot better sound on her oboe. Although we’ve been busy it’s been the usual things.

We were glad to have your letter. I still would like to know if the band was voted out. Murray’s selling his store surprises me a little, but it hard to get a young man to come in and take over. I suppose Gene Stucky is getting along OK up at Katz. Tell him hello sometime if you go in there. Hope you’re all OK. I can’t think of much else for now.

**12-8-68 – Sun PM 2:00 -** I guess I’m doing quite well, it was just a week ago that I wrote to M.J. and Bill regarding the possibility of Hutchinson folks coming this way during Christmas vacation. Our doors are always open to our family, so you folks do what you think is best. Today is clear and nice, but cold. That snow we had is essentially gone. If we can get a baby-sitter Ruth and I may both go to the high school presentation of the Messiah.

Well, we’re well into the Christmas season. The kids are already making lots of things and Ruth is well into her Christmas cards. She’s using block printing this year. We got our first card yesterday. We may get some of the packages mailed this week. Wed night is Session meeting and Thurs night is regular choir practice. Sat night is the Couples Club Christmas progressive dinner and next Sun afternoon and early evening is the big Christmas Cantata (youth choir and s.s. classes) followed by an adult s.s. class sponsored light supper and party for the entire church. That and the Christmas eve service are the big ones for Ruth. I’ve given magic shows the last two years at the Christmas party, but I’m not doing it this year.

I have, at least temporarily, some added responsibility at work so that will keep me a little busier. I guess its best for all of us to have plenty to do. I got the Christmas things down yesterday and we put the Manger Scene (the one we bought two years ago with Aunt Clara’s Christmas gift money) out. We’ll get some of the decorations up this week and will probably get our tree later in the week. I’ve hardly thought about presents that I should buy. I painted some on the tree house a week ago yesterday. Some of the boards inside and at the top are still unpainted. Its very difficult to reach a lot of them. Ruth got all her officers for the Women’s Association and was installed last Tues.

I wrote Mr. Murray asking him to save me a box of old drugs and things, if he could, and to ask you or Aunt Clara to store them until we go to Hutchinson the next time. I wrote about the Millikin Choir concert at our church on Sun morning, Feb 2nd, and got some posters, etc. to help in advertising after the first of the year. Glad to hear that the band will continue on. Hope you’re all OK. I can’t think of anything else right now. Love, Carroll and family



The green velvet dresses repurposed into skirts for new dresses. This dress was very very itchy.

Merry Christmas from 1968!