

Today is the first day of the month of Poush. This is the 9th month of the year of 2076! Happy December 17! I had good intentions to send this letter before the last minute Christmas rush – but, here we are!

It is a beautiful morning – I can see the sun on the Himalayas from my window as I write. We are thankful for the beauty of this place around us – the colors of the morning sky are amazing!



The Annapurna Range seen from behind our house. The Tansen "White Lake" which covers the valley

Last evening, we had our 3rd annual Christmas meal for our househelpers. All year long, these wonderful ladies work in our homes – doing laundry, cleaning, baking, and just helping us in so many ways! We now have 11 ladies who are working in our homes and gardens, plus we included the 3 ladies who work at our guest house, so we were serving 14 people. It is the one chance a year we have to serve them – as they do for us all the rest of the time! We baked chickens, made twice baked potatoes, veggies and yeast rolls. Pumpkin pie, ice cream and cookies was dessert. It was a fun evening. I was challenged in my baking skills – doing pumpkin pie from scratch – making the pie dough and the filling without

anything from a can.



Our wonderful "didis" and my pies!

On Friday the Hospital Christian Fellowship group will do its annual tea and snacks day for all the hospital staff. So – that is around 400 people! They are divided up by departments and come throughout the day. It is a nice chance to share about the reason we are celebrating Christmas. That evening, we will all go caroling around the hospital wards and give out oranges to the patients.

Christmas here is so much different still than in the west. It is not a national holiday (it was for awhile, but is not at this time) and people are not always aware of the season. The churches do various outreach programs, but it is lovely to have a very non-commercial Christmas. It helps us to focus on the real reason we celebrate - the birth of Jesus.

August, Sept, and Oct were busy months for the hospital. Our patient numbers continue to stay high, and lots of training goes on, as well. We made a quick trip to Pokhara in September to help a friend move there for work, we enjoyed having many visitors as it is one of the nicest seasons in Nepal (after the monsoon rains finish), and we enjoyed continuing to be active in church and various fellowship groups. We were encouraged to be part of panel discussions about marriage and parenting at the church – in spite of cultural differences, it is amazing how many similarities there are in these areas.

In late October, we were very excited to visit Hannah and Nathan in England for a few days. It was wonderful to see them together and happy in their little flat. They are working hard and very thankful for Hannah's visa which is good for 2 ½ years...



We went on to the U.S. for a one month home assignment. This is the first time we are trying this "short" version of a home

assignment. We were able to visit several new churches in Michigan and Ohio, which was great. It was wonderful to meet so many new friends and to share the word about God's work at the Mission Hospital in Tansen, Nepal. We also enjoyed visits with old friends and family – our granddaughters grow more wonderful every day! 😊 We were also very happy that it worked out for Les to help Rachel (our oldest) in her move to Las Vegas where she started a new job on Dec 2. (They drove a UHaul for 3 days..)

She is a social worker – and she wanted to move somewhere warmer than Ohio – so she was pleased to get this job in Vegas. We are happy that it is only about 3 hours from Debbie's sister, and just a bit further to Les's mom. A new place for us to visit on our next time in the U.S.



We have been concerned about our visa situation as our current hospital agreement expires on January 15. Just a few days ago, we learned that the government has given us a 6 month extension, so the hospital can continue running as we try to sort out a new agreement with the government. A big change seems to be that the visas for the expat workers at the hospital are going to be more difficult to get – and probably more expensive. We are waiting now to see what happens. We pray that the visa applications for us will be renewed quickly so that we don't have to switch to tourist visas on Jan 15. If we do go onto tourist visas, that means we will be unable to work (as Les will lose his Nepal license as well with no proper working visa). We know this is all in God's hands, but it makes planning for the future very difficult! Thanks for your prayers for this.

As we think at this time of year of Jesus coming as a tiny baby, it brings to mind many stories of babies either born here, and brought here for help. One little girl, RT, was in and out of our hospital and other hospitals at least 5 times before she turned 2. She struggled with many diagnoses, and during a month long stay here, her parents gave up hope. However, little RT recovered, and was able to return home with her grateful parents. They were recipients of the medical assistance fund (free care for poor

patients) as they are homeless, and even though the father works as a van driver, he only makes about \$120 per month, and the mother is unable to work due to poor health. The cost of care for their little girl and time the dad couldn't work really stressed their finances. We are so thankful for many of you who have supported the fund for the hospital, and also our salaries so that we can be here.

In the meantime, we pray that you will enjoy your Christmas and that your new year will be filled with blessings!

Thank you again so much for your prayers and support for us – we cannot tell you how much we appreciate it. Here are a few more highlights of our time in the U.S.



A wonderful meeting with Robert and Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth (Revive Our Hearts) A great visit with Les's mom in CA



A wonderful Thanksgiving meal with Luke, Laura and family and Debbie's parents.

*Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!
Love, Debbie & Les*