

## Looking Backward at 2021

Next week I will be on vacation, therefore, this is my opportunity to write an “end of the year” article. As Solomon wrote, “That which has been is what will be, That which is done is what will be done, And there is nothing new under the sun.” (Ecclesiastes 1:9) Or as someone else said, the only thing constant in life is change. The world has faced pandemics, floods, tornadoes, and civil unrest before. While our experiences in 2021 were unique to us, they were not unique to mankind.

Mask, mandates, and COVID19 once again dominated the news. Mask mandates were up in place, later removed only to be reinstated again. The death total of COVID in 2021 actually exceeded the deaths in 2020. The following was written in November; thus, the total continues to increase. “There were [385,343](#) Covid-19-related deaths in 2020, by the CDC’s count, which when subtracted from John Hopkins University’s [Covid-19 death count](#) shows that there have been 385,437 Covid-19-related deaths so far this year.” Personally, Regena and I have known more to get and die from COVID in 2021 than in 2020. It seems as if COVID will be with us much longer if not forever yet life must go on and we must adapt.

In January we saw the not so peaceful transfer of power in our nation’s capital as some stormed the capitol building in protest of the election. While I personally did not like the outcome of the election, I am confident God is still in control from heaven above. As Habakkuk wrote, “But the LORD is in His holy temple. Let all the earth keep silence before Him.” (Habakkuk 2:20). Sometimes being silent is hard but faith in God gives us confidence in the future.

Throughout 2021 we saw a nation in turmoil as it appears it is at a crossroad; Capitalism or socialism, more police or defund the police, law and order or lawlessness. Murders have become common place in many major cities, robberies of the smash and grab variety have also increased. The role of government is to protect the innocent and punish the criminals. “For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. For he is God’s minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God’s minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil.” (Romans 13:3-4). Let us hope our leaders will fulfill their duties. A society of lawlessness cannot last for long.

In March, Regena and I had COVID19 as did a number of our members here at Lilac Road. Thankfully we all recovered but a number of our brethren in other places did not. The same can be said for those in our community. It is truly strange how it affects people differently. There are those who recovered that we often thought may not and those who died we thought would recover. But such is the nature of life and the reason we all need to be ready to face God on the day of judgement. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.: (2 Corinthians 5:10)

Our family expanded in June as Luke William Tucker came into this world on June 1<sup>st</sup>. As grandparents Regena and I are enjoying our three amigos with Thomas, Theo, and Luke. It has been a joy to see Noah and Jon as parents as well as Eli and Laura. By the way, I agree that being a grandparent is special as you can send them back home when you get tired.

The 2020 summer Olympics were held in 2021. Get back to me if that makes any sense. It was strange seeing all those 2020 banners this year but at least the games were held. Some athletes had to train a year longer than they planned and some were able to qualify who would not have been able to do so a year earlier. All had the opportunity to do their best.

September was a hard month for us as Regena fell and required shoulder replacement. She has improved a lot since then but still has a way to go. Like the folks on Gilligan's Island, we started on a three-hour adventure but ended with a longer experience.

Of course, the year has almost ended with a massive tornado hitting a number of places Regena and I are familiar with. Places like Trumann, Ark., Mayfield and Bowling Green, Kentucky. It is at times like this Solomon's words again come to mind. "I returned and saw under the sun that—The race is not to the swift, Nor the battle to the strong, Nor bread to the wise, Nor riches to men of understanding, Nor favor to men of skill; But time and chance happen to them all. For man also does not know his time: Like fish taken in a cruel net, Like birds caught in a snare, So the sons of men are snared in an evil time, When it falls suddenly upon them." (Ecclesiastes 9:11-12). Why were some spared and others were not? One house destroyed while another house next door has no damage. Of course, we could ask the same question when it comes to an accident, or cancer, or some other illness which some have and others don't. The answer is, we live in an imperfect world,

one with sin and death. As a child of God, we walk by faith and know there is something better for His children on the other side of the grave.

Hope has tried to keep Regena and I out of trouble in 2021. She has been a blessing as she took care of us during our bout with COVID19. When her mom got hurt our plans of a vacation were cancelled but Hope did not complain. She has help us in many ways and we are thankful. She has been my walking buddy many days.

Finally, our time at Lilac Road continues to be a blessing to us. We have laughed, prayed, and cried together. Regena and I are thankful for your fellowship and love.

–Dennis Tucker