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Greetings to family and friends everywhere! This letter uses my Christmas Letter mailing list to send a rare mid-year update on our lives.

Life during the COVID-19 Pandemic. First, we want you to know that we are alive and healthy during this historic world health event. Our area of Pennsylvania has had a relatively mild outbreak, and most of the complaints around here involve not being able to go to work or out to eat. For me, the pandemic has represented relatively little change in lifestyle since working remotely and Zoom meetings were already a well-engrained part of my life. Twila has done almost all of the grocery shopping for us as well as an elderly shut-in woman she looks after. In addition to my work, I have run various church meetings with my Zoom account ranging from sharing times, to Sunday School discussions to Elders meetings. With the help of a friend, I've started a garden in our community plot. Just this week, I had two "firsts" -- a shopping trip with Twila for groceries, household, and garden supplies and a church meeting of 6 persons.

Retirement. In early May, a new executive director was named for Mennonite Healthcare Fellowship and I spent the rest of the month orienting her to the job (via Zoom, of course) and sorting through materials and electronic files in preparation for a projected special project on the (thus far short) history of the organization. June 1 was my official retirement date, but with church work, office clean-up, and various other projects popping up which harken back to two previous jobs, I still remain busy. I just learned the Board wants to have a virtual gathering to honor me (via Zoom, of course!) on the last Sunday evening of this month. It has been a privilege for me to serve in this way and to hand over the leadership to such a talented young successor!

Devotional Blog. As part of the congregational care during the pandemic, our church elders agreed to each write a devotional one day a week. I decided early on to use the occasion to re-start an old blog with a new emphasis on my personal website at www.companionresources.org. So I'm enjoying writing and plan to continue entries at least weekly. If you want to read back entries and/or sign up to receive email notifications of new entries, point your browser in that direction and sign up. These short articles are also being posted on Facebook and Twitter, in both cases under pdleichty.

Travel??? We continue to talk about whether, when, and how we might travel to Indiana, Illinois, and Southeast Pennsylvania yet this summer. My son, Nathan, would particularly like to see me and even take a train trip to Pennsylvania(!), but plans to even go out that way by car have taken a setback based on Elkhart County entering the top 15 COVID-19 hotspots in the nation during the past month. I'm starting to think that maybe, in order to visit family and

friends, I should organize a virtual vacation for ourselves by having folks sign up the rest of the summer for a Zoom session with us. Anyone interested out there??

Grieving and Thanksgiving. Our hearts are heavy as the ongoing racism in our country is being exposed. I remind myself that these "isms" in our world are not new, but surely God is at work to expose the hatred, racism, and systemic injustice for the world to see. It is painful! We desire to be a part of the repentance, healing, and restoration needed in our communities, our churches, our nation, and our world. How can we use the privileges that we have been given as safe and well-fed white folks on Social Security to further God's movement for justice and shalom/peace in our world? We are grateful for the opportunities we do have and desire to be faithful servants.

Our hearts go out to you whatever your situation and we bless you in the name of the One who sent his Son to demonstrate the ultimate self-giving love and be the Prince of Peace!

Grace and peace to you all!

Paul Swila