

NOVEMBER 1995

Dear

1995 has been one of those years for us as far as Michael's health is concerned. Problems actually started on 4th December last year when he didn't feel at all well, but struggled through 4 services. The doctor told him to rest that week but the following Friday he was no better, slightly worse if anything, so into hospital he went. To cut a long story short he had 4 stints in hospital between then and the end of April with various complaints - low blood pressure, near kidney failure, heart out of rhythm (for which he had a cardiac inversion on two occasions) he lost his appetite, developed a skin complaint and gout probably caused by medication. He was unable to do any church work and as a consequence brought forward his retirement to 31st March. Our farewell party and his last service were planned for 25th and 26th March. He happened to be in hospital yet again that week and it was doubtful whether he would be able to attend either of these events. However, his doctor knew how much they would mean to him so on the Friday did a cardiac inversion even though the blood pressure was so low. It worked, so he allowed him out on Saturday afternoon to return on Sunday. We were overwhelmed by the love shown us both at the party and the following morning when as somebody remarked "There wasn't a dry eye in the house". We were inundated with gifts and cards and couldn't believe our eyes when we were handed a cheque for £2,700 (we later received another cheque for £175). The church and hall were packed with wellwishers, not only members of our congregation, but also people with whom Michael had had contact for various reasons over the years. Again the church was full the next morning. Kathy played the organ, Andy and Nick sang in the choir, Jem and Tim "served" for Grandad. This was one occasion when Colin and Fiona didn't join the choir but sat in the pew with Joy. Although it was Lent when traditionally the church is bare of flowers, Nora, the leader of the flower ladies had, with the help of her "staff" done breathtaking floral displays depicting Michael's work in the parish over the past 11 years. Unfortunately Michael could not conduct the service, but he said a few words, did the Consecration and distributed Communion to us the family, and the members of the choir.

On 31st March Joy moved. Michael came home from hospital to all the chaos the next day. Friends from church had helped Joy clean the house prior to the move. Andy had painted the upstairs rooms including the landing, and Fiona and Joy enjoyed themselves decorating downstairs, Colin helping with the finishing touches. They all, including Melanie, helped on moving day. The sister of a member of our congregation supplied us with a delicious hot cooked meal for our lunch so that we didn't have to stop to prepare food - people were simply wonderful in so many ways. We are now well settled and happy in our new home. It's a very quiet area and our neighbours are so friendly and kind. We couldn't have found a better place to live than here.

Other news, Jeremy in his last year at Junior School played the lead in a play specially written by a teacher about the Co-Op. He now attends a Roman Catholic Comprehensive in Bristol, and plays the violin in the school orchestra having passed a fairly rigorous test for membership. (Taking after his mum, although she played the viola in her school orchestra). Joy, Michael, Andy, Colin and Fiona attended Jeremy's Confirmation in October. Kath has had a few supply teaching jobs. For her birthday she was taken on a surprise flight in a light aircraft piloted by a friend of Nick's - the boys had been in on the secret for days but hadn't let the cat out of the bag, which was pretty good for them! Referring to Jeremy again - he has read the lesson in church on a few occasions this year.

Colin and Fiona passed their first year Sign Language for the Deaf exam. Fiona is working more hours at her job as a hearing-aid technician.

Andy and Mel spent their holiday this year in Turkey. They found the people very friendly (although the driving isn't up to much!) and visited many interesting places. These include Pamukkale, calcium rock formations set high in the mountains inland; the ancient Roman Capital of Asia, Ephesus, where they also spent time at Meryemana - believed to be the home of The Virgin Mary in her last days. Andy enjoyed negotiating at the weekly market in Bodrum and also braved a camel ride. They went on two boat trips, one along the Turkish coast and one "African Queen" style through the reeds at Dalyan where they visited Turtle Beach and Andy had a mud bath!! Back home, Andy has connected his computer to the Internet and can now "converse" with people all over the world via his keyboard - for the cost of a local telephone call. If anyone has a connection, he can be e-mailed on andyc@bournemouth-net.co.uk

Andy and Mel, who announced their engagement in October 1994, have now set the date for their wedding and will be getting married on the 31st August next year (1996).

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

Joy, Michael and Kim spent two weeks on a farm in Somerset in October. They stayed in a cottage which is a converted barn and even had their "own" field with cows. The farm is situated high on a hill with beautiful views and indescribable peace. It was from here that we travelled to attend Jem's Confirmation. Colin and Fiona returned to the cottage with us to spend a few days.

Returning home after two weeks away we found Andy mowing the lawn for us. Because of the warm October weather the grass had grown apace. There's always plenty to do in the garden which isn't small and Joy finds it very therapeutic. Michael is enjoying doing a puzzle of Salisbury Cathedral at the moment. He has helped out at our local parish church, St. Mark's, on a few occasions when his health allows. We are both finding time to read etc and Joy is playing the piano every day. It is also good to have time together.

This comes with our Love and wishing you all the blessings of a joyful Christmas and happiness in the new year.

Michael, Joy, Kathy, Nick, Fiona, Colin, Andy, Mel, Jem and Tim.

Matt. 2.11

*"...they bowed down
and worshipped him"*

