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## Family in the Spotlight

*May Family Newsletter*



### Peek into the lives of our kids and their mother

We received requests from some of our supporters that news of the family would be appreciated at this point. We will therefore take a short break from spotlighting our students. The family is of course mom's favorite topic, so I gladly share what is happening in everyone's life. Since I shared my husband's news in last month's letter, I will cover the rest of us here.

We got to spend couple of weeks as a family after our much delayed arrival to America. We packed up Maggie's belongings, because she had now concluded her high school years in Minnesota, and moved her to her grandparents' house in Ohio. During these weeks Tristan took his little brothers fishing at every river and lake that happened by. We were able to see friends, especially when we organized the second graduation party for Maggie. We were delighted to have many good friends and family members who had not been able to attend the official graduation to come. Before moving to Canada we organized Maggie's room and helped her sign up for her college classes.

Maggie has begun her first year studies in Ohio's Tri-C Community College. She chose to do her basic studies there to cut down the college fees. She is planning to work as school counselor and / or deaconess and has applied in Concordia University Chicago to specialize in those fields. In the course of this coming spring she will probably send applications to other universities as well.

To her great disappointment all Maggie's courses are offered only online. This has caused difficulties to meet new people and make friends. Reactions to Corona-virus have led to canceling church's youth activities and also clubs that the college usually offers are banned. Maggie has a three-day week job in Panera Bread restaurant. That has provided some social interaction but not up to friendship level. Our daughter feels quite lonely. It does not make matters easier, that she had planned to see the rest of us often during our time in Canada. The whole family was extremely excited about the fall semester in North America, because we live only four hours from Pastor James' parents and Maggie. But Corona



restrictions closed the USA - Canada border for leisure travel and none of us has been allowed to cross over ever since we arrived. Some consolation to the sad situation have been our family evening devotions that we have held via FaceTime calls now when we live in the same time zone. Nearly every evening Maggie, Tristan, and his girlfriend Abby join us on TV screen.



Tristan has reached his final year in Mayer Lutheran High School. His school performance is applaudable and in addition he has time for cross country, hunting, trapshooting, and girlfriend. Recently Tristan and his band classmates had to revert to online classes for couple of weeks after one of the band members tested Covid positive. With a few other positive results from other grades, 40% of the students were working from home. Thankfully the

school is doing its best to continue the in-person learning through these challenging times. Looks like everyone can return back to school after Thanksgiving since all isolation periods will be completed by then.

Our son is in a process of making decisions for next year. This far he has applied to Bemidji State University in northern Minnesota to acquire bachelors degree in criminal justice. He is planning to work as a fish and game warden. He will probably send out couple of more applications. Quite big decisions to make at a young age! Being a dual citizen and having to figure out the laws for military duty are adding to the challenge.



Sarai and Sofia work diligently on their online high school at home. Since they began their school year already in the first week of July, their daily work load is lighter than usually. The girls have met other Lutheran youth and especially Sofia has been eager to have daily chatroom conversations with them. She has connected with her old friends as well now when we have an unlimited, working internet connection. Face to face with our wonderful family friends we get to meet once or twice a week. We hike, play outside games, work together, and eat together. Other times the girls play piano, read



eagerly, go for walks, and work out. Sarai draws and Sofia keeps a diary.



In the beginning of next school year, Sarai will enter Mayer Lutheran High School for her final two years of school. She wants to follow her big siblings' footprints, even though both of them have had periodical hard times away from family. They have tried to warn Sarai of this, but change in life is attracting her. I do understand that pull so well, because I am the same way; always excited about change. In a similar manner, our youngest daughter has decided that she absolutely cannot live at home after Sarai moves out. She claims that life is not possible with only little brothers around. Sofia dreams of living with her grandparents in Finland.



Jonas and Matthew are healthy, active boys. This is of course a positive thing, but occasionally I find myself yearning for somewhat calmer behavior. Quite unexpectedly they may feel the urge to chase each other around in the house. But all in all I am satisfied with our homeschool progress and impressed how much boys learn despite of the number of times they need to be returned back to



their books. We have studied the world history during Middle Ages, musical eras, famous classical composers and their pieces, and also famous artists and their work during those same periods. Latin translating skills are commendable and boys are learning Finnish as their third language. They have come to enjoy writing little more due to choices in their essay topics. Literature books are engaging, although vocabulary and reading comprehension questions are not favorites. In Biology we have studied plants and have had great opportunities to take a closer look at them in a nearby forest. Both boys like Math, and Pre-Algebra with its variables is fun area to teach, too.

We have taken Jonas and Matthew fishing for a few times, but unfortunately they have not caught anything from Niagara River nor Lake Ontario and Erie. Tristan has promised to take his little brothers ice fishing if lakes have frozen over before we fly back to Kenya. Because of the border control we were not able to travel to Ohio to spend Thanksgiving there, but we are eagerly looking forward to celebrating Christmas together. Thankfully Tristan got to fly in to be with Maggie





and grandparents now and he will travel again to join all of us for Christmas.

Hopefully you feel now satisfactorily updated about our recent past and upcoming moves. To me this Canada period has provided refreshing change. I have loved spending time with friends, loved the ever cooling weather, and nature so similar to the one in my home country, Finland. I have kept constant contact with our LST students and staff. It is heartening to receive messages from them that begin with, "Hello Mum" and hear everyone's news from their countries. In January, God willing, we get to see each other again, if Kenyan borders and educational institutions may be open.

Please pray with us especially for:

1. The future studies of our older children; they would get into universities where they will receive sound teaching and find good friends.
2. Strength for Maggie in her loneliness; she could find friend or at least uplifting things to engage in.
3. No dramatic changes would be enforced in the end of this year and we will actually get to be with all our children.
4. Our return to Kenya in the beginning of the year.



God's immaculate Blessings and Light to your days,  
even to those darker ones!

*James Tiina Maggie Tristan Sarai Sofia Jonas Matthew*

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