



And then, then shall your light, break forth as the light of morning breaketh!

Photo taken from Schooner American Eagle - Sept 2021

From 'Elijah' by Felix Mendelssohn

Merry Christmas from the Klines

December 2021

Cast
thy burden
upon the Lord
And he shall
sustain thee.
He never will suffer
the Righteous to fall;
He is at thy right
hand.

Mendelssohn "Elijah"

In 1973, friends Carolyn and Gary talked me into singing "Elijah" with the Kalamazoo Oratorio Society. It turned out to be an amazing and memorable experience. Directing such a large chorus, Dr. Fry put dynamics to good use, from the powerful "**Help** (octave drop) **Lord!** (decrescendo) **wilt thou quite destroy u--us?**" (sustained to pianissimo). In a single phrase we made Stetson Chapel shake, then hush until you could hear a pin drop.

From the fury of prophets calling down fire, to the solo voice of a child sent to watch for rain, God's Word came alive. "**Is not His Word like a fire?**" Nearly 50 years later I recall the bass line from "Elijah" with little need for music.

Today, our land is torn by cries for freedom or mandates; we weaponize pronouns, turn words into swords, and endlessly debate the very beginning - and end - of life. The rage is amplified by a social media that herds us into opposing camps. "**Help, Lord!**

This has been a tough year. I'm calling it my "grey" year. But this is not the end. "**He watching over Israel, slumbers not nor sleeps.**" "**Blessed are the men who fear Him, they ever walk in the ways of peace...**"

Like that child, let's seek the one cloud on the horizon signaling God's answer to our prayers. Let's follow paths in the ways of peace.

"Through darkness riseth light!" Merry Christmas!

Phil & Tama



Above: Ice fishing in January, goodbye Amanda Skye (she moved to Kokomo this summer)

Below: Face time with Emil in Germany and Tam in Vietnam



Jan 2021 began the winter of grey. Sub-zero temps encouraged ice fishermen, who gathered in record numbers. Church was held on-line, in the loft. Skype & Face time connected us to loved ones, each with stories of lockdowns elsewhere - Emil in Germany, Tam in Vietnam, Phil's parents in Arizona. For the first time in memory we planned no winter travel.

Outdoors was a mask free zone. Phil and friends shivered while celebrating a birthday dinner in a "pod" at the Cove, and shivered some more at workout sessions in a pole barn. Tama & Shelly continued their thrice weekly resort walks. Phil & Skye began weekly meet-ups to walk the Vicksburg rail trail. We were thankful for what we could do.

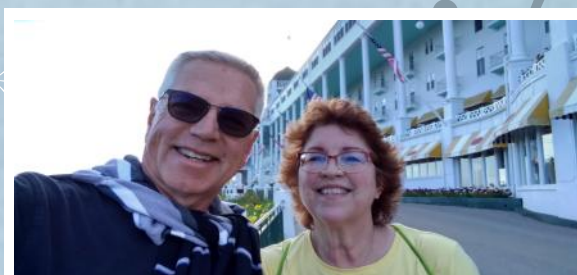
We set our sights on the promised vaccines. When they finally came, we celebrated. First Mom and Dad in Arizona, then Phil, Tama and Joseph in turn. We thought the problem "solved." But the grey never left. The choices became harder as the experts wavered. What now? Mask or no? Travel or no? We wanted it to end.

Decisions at the resort posed challenges as well. We remodeled the office and delayed opening the door to the public, then opened with restrictions. We planned activities outdoors as much as possible, and limited indoor exposure. For the most part, folks understood our cautious approach. Our staff was - and is - amazing; we are blessed.



Clockwise from above:

- Zoo de Mac masked mascot
- On Mackinac Island
- Dad's 94th birthday
- Father's Day with dad
- Bandana Phil
- Dinner at Red's School House, a bike camp tradition.



Spring brings hope...

Alabama bike camp was canceled since Aldo, the owner, was stuck in Canada. But he agreed to let us rent the house for our private group and gave instructions to open it. Matt Liston joined our gang of 4 and learned the ropes of riding a peloton. Recovering from shoulder surgery, Joe B. brought a mountain bike and enjoyed getting back in the saddle. Phil played wounded warrior, wearing a bandana to cover the hole where skin cancer was removed on his forehead (all good) and banged a knee in a bike crash.

Kevin helped Phil's parents fly home in April, and we celebrated Dad's 94th birthday. Nephew Kyle

visited from Virginia Beach and introduced us to his gal, Ebecka. For Father's Day we enjoyed an outdoor service at West Mendon with Phil's folks.

May brought a much needed weekend break, traveling to Petoskey to visit friends and for Phil to bike the Zoo de Mac from Boyne Highlands to Mackinaw City. Then we ferried to Mackinac Island and enjoyed a condo on the north shore.

May into June brought more bike rides, as Phil prepared for a multi-sport adventure trip with Joseph to Utah in July. He biked the Kal-Haven Trail with Shane, Joe and Joseph, experienced heat exhaustion on the Kal Ride with coach Kerry, & biked the Michigan Dragon with Joe. But his favorite was our local Meyer/Broadway trail.

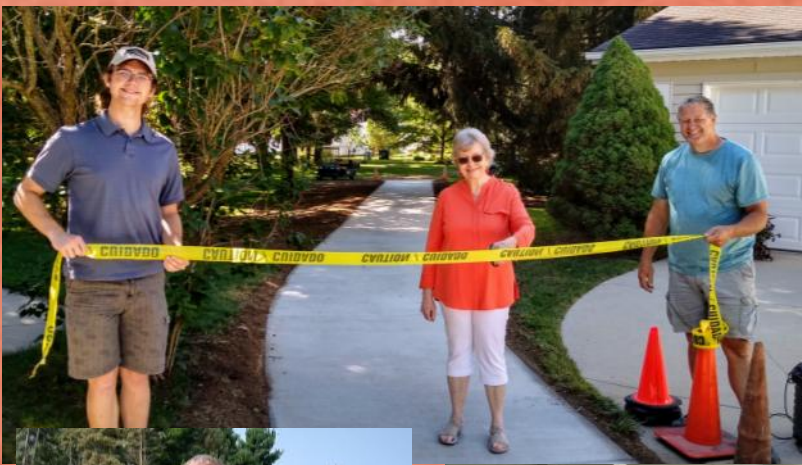
Joseph had a memorable year, but one event overshadowed the rest: a mountain bike accident at Meyer Broadway on July 6 resulted in a broken collar bone and two surgeries. The first put in a hook plate to hold up his shoulder while bones healed. The 2nd removed the plate, and thankfully restored full motion and use to the arm.

Even in a sling, Joseph was a huge help at the resort, earned his water operators license, learned office routines and helped organize computer files. As I write this (Dec. 6) he's helping on the leaf crew. We hope to reschedule our mountain bike trip in 2022...



Clockwise from top: Meyer Broadway trailhead, 1st surgery, water license, 2nd surgery, 25th birthday, leaf blowing, climbing water tower, helping at Appreciation Dinner with Shane & Josh.

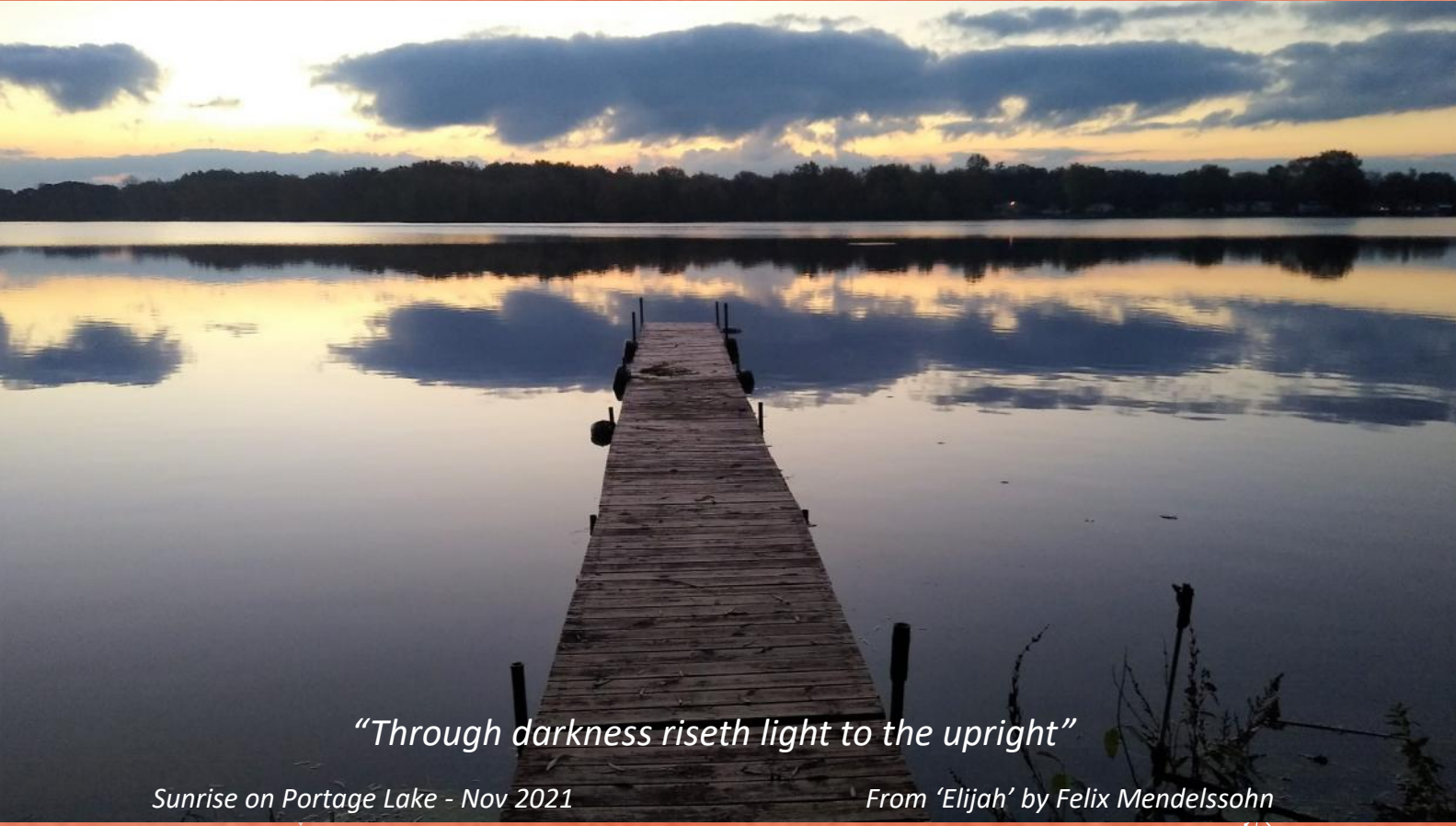




Goodbye city life... Busy year at Resort.

Clockwise from top: Betty Bailey cuts ribbon for new golf cart path, Bob R. drives Grand Marshals Don & Janet Squires in 4th of July parade, Mark poses with summer helpers Kali & Gabrielle, Appreciation Dinner helpers, icy mailboxes (before rebuilding), Mark & Joe install new marina dock, office remodel, new storage units finally ready on Dec. 1st.





"Through darkness riseth light to the upright"

Sunrise on Portage Lake - Nov 2021

From 'Elijah' by Felix Mendelssohn

The days of Elijah were dark. Three years without rain; the people were desperate!

Sopranos: "The deep affords no water"

Tenors: "And the rivers are exhausted..."

B: The infant children ask for bread, (tenors echo)

A: and there is no one (sustained while sopr's sing a high clashing G/F#) "and there is no one breaketh it to feed them."

They blame Elijah, God's messenger. He's been in hiding while King Ahab allows false prophets to fill the land with idols. It leads to a great confrontation on Mt. Carmel, where the prophets of Baal are exposed, then slaughtered after God's power is revealed. The victory is short lived as Elijah again runs for his life. He laments *"it is enough; O Lord, now take away my life."*

From victory to defeat, light to dark, Elijah portrays the human condition and our need to be patient, long suffering, hopeful and expectant for God's plan to be revealed. *"Oh rest in the Lord, wait patiently for Him. "Shouldst thou, walking in grief, languish, He will quicken thee."*

This Elijah is a dark contrast to a praise song we sing called *These are the Days of Elijah*. Its mood is jubilant, repeating *"There's no God like Jehovah!"* Hardships are reduced to a footnote, God's victory is the focus. I honestly don't enjoy singing it since it leaves out so much.

The Christmas story is also one of hardship and darkness: the unwed mother, the iron grip of the Romans (whose tax demands led to the difficult journey, barn yard birth, and fulfillment of prophecy). Herod, alerted by the wise men of the newborn king, slaughters infant boys in an attempt to kill Jesus. The holy family flees to Egypt. Brutal conditions frame a story we celebrate with angels, shepherds, cattle and drummer boys.

"The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death, a light has dawned... For unto us a child is born... Isaiah 9: 2, 6

Perhaps we are living in the days of Elijah. In an increasingly hostile culture that seeks to marginalize our beliefs, silence our participation in the public square, discredit our history, and figuratively send us hiding in a cave*, will this be our song?

"And though these are days of great trial, of famine and darkness and sword, Still we are the voice in the desert crying 'Prepare ye the way of the Lord!'

"Behold he comes, riding on the clouds, shining like the sun at the trumpet's call. Lift your voice, it's the year of jubilee, and out of Zion's hill salvation comes!"

"Days of Elijah" by Donnie McClurkin

Read about Ahab & Elijah in 1 Kings 16:29 - 2 Kings 2:18

**Obadiah hid 100 prophets in caves to protect them from being murdered by Jezebel - 1 King 18:13*

September Adventures in Maine



Our week aboard the Schooner American Eagle was quite an adventure. We bunked in cramped quarters, hoisted sails, ate meals on deck, rowed to shore for a lobster boil, and explored inlets, villages and harbors along the down east coast. We began our trip visiting cousin David Jackson (above center), and ended it exploring Bar Harbor & Acadia National Park.

Kline Family News



Mom spent ten days hospitalized in September with heart problems and complications, but thankfully is home and recovering. My sisters Carol & Kathy have been incredible help throughout mom's illness, staying with her and making sure she and dad have all their needs met. We enjoyed visits with Keith's family, and had our annual Portage Lake swim in July. We picnicked for mom's 89th birthday in October, and last weekend had our Kline family Christmas get-together with 50 family members. Mom & dad are eager to head to Arizona (with Kevin's help) in early January. I'm so thankful!



Sydney Francis Jackson 1921-2021

Uncle Syd passed on Sept. 22, just a few weeks shy of his 100th birthday. Here's a poem shared at his memorial that I liked:

Feel no guilt in laughter, he'd know how much you care.
Feel no sorrow in a smile that he is not here to share.
You cannot grieve forever; he would not want you to.
He'd hope that you could carry on the way you always do.

So, talk about the good times and the way you showed you cared,
The days you spent together, all the happiness you shared.

Let memories surround you, a word someone may say
Will suddenly recapture a time, an hour, a day,

That brings him back as clearly as though he were still here,
And fills you with the feeling that he is always near.
For if you keep those moments, you will never be apart
And he will live forever locked safely within your heart.



Uncle Syd (bottom center) with Larry and grandsons

Unknown



From top:

- Bruce took selfies at our mountain bike weekend near Cadillac in October.
- Tama posing with Spirit of Detroit after our visit to the DIA.
- With sister Mary in Madison this November, our 1st visit in 2 yrs. We also toured Taliesin and House on the Rock.
- Playing Mexican Train with Kline family in December.
- With Mark & Lisa in Mark's ski/bike themed man cave.



Made
for you
with love
from the
Kline Family
~December 2021~



Grandma Taylor's Piano

My grandparents, Vern and Francis Taylor, were married in 1921, and this piano was a wedding gift from grandpa to grandma. When I knew her, grandma was nearly deaf, but she still enjoyed playing. The piano was in a small bedroom; grandma played so loudly the floors shook.

When mom gave it to me, I promised to take care of it, so after a string broke recently I was fortunate to find a knowledgeable repairman. He remarked on its quality and said parts are still available. He plans to remove all the keys and hammers, re-glue the heads and replace the felts - and the broken string, of course. I hope someone will still be playing it after another 100 years!

Fall into Winter brings more grey...

I have a friend who takes meds for bi-polar disorder. He's thankful that they help, but describes feeling like he's in a fog, unable to experience the highs or the lows, neither joy nor sadness. Grey...

That's how I've felt this year. It's like driving in fog; if I turn on my high beams, the light bounces back. So I drive cautiously, half expecting a deer to jump into my path, or brake lights to flash right in front of me. Grey...

"For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." 1 Cor 13:12

From Joseph's bike accident and our canceled mountain bike trip, to hearing of mom's hospitalization as we boarded our boat in Maine, there was a sense of unease. Our two big projects at the resort were plagued with delays, cost over-runs, and problems. By the time the new mini-storage buildings were ready in late November, we had missed our chance to fill them. The permit for a new water well took months to obtain; its cost more than doubled. When we finally sampled the test well, nitrates were too high. We have to start all over.

And then there's covid... I know. Stop whining Phil. "Grey skies are gonna clear up, put on a happy face..."

Truth is, I'm surrounded by everyday heroes. Ben, who worked tirelessly on the mini-storage project, often by himself since they couldn't find any workers to help. Andrew, my well driller, who stuck with me through regulatory hell. Contractors Kip, Art, and Andy, who always came through when needed. Katie from the COA, making sure meals on wheels continues while waging her own battle with cancer. Doug, our plumber, who returned my call for help last week after losing his

co-worker to covid a few days earlier (he was only 35). Resort Mark, always encouraging others, despite losing his mom this fall. The leaf crew, still working today, Dec. 15th, MacGyver Don on the tractor at age 81.

I'm inspired by my parents, who carry on good-naturedly, determined to make it to Arizona next month. Best friend

Joe, giving up weekends and holidays to moonlight as a policeman. My son Joseph, digging in and learning the ropes, teachable, helpful, always ready with a hug. Tama, who just can't stay behind her new office counter window because

she wants to greet everyone warmly, and does. Sister-in-law Linda, working the front lines of healthcare, patiently explaining the value of vaccinations to doubters and deniers.

The promise from Elijah: **"He who shall endure to the end.... Shall be saved."** That's not grey; it's black and white. Definitive. Solid. So is the finale: **"Lord Our Creator, How excellent thy Name is, in all creation."**

One day this fall I arrived at the work site and it was full of contractors - excavators, electricians, overhead door installers. I got so excited I drove my van into the new fence. (True story - it's in the shop for repair now.)

Yep, that's been my year. Hasta la vista, 2021! We're turning on the fog lights and muddling through this murky haze for as long as it takes. And when the cloud lifts, that will be glorious!

P.S. I'm OK—really! But it would be dishonest to sugarcoat this letter. I think it's important to consider the times in which we live, and how we should respond. If you can relate, I hope this letter is good food for thought.

Love you all!

(below: February fog on Portage Lake)

