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A view at seaside in Helsinki

**We wish you a blessed time of Christmas and New Year of 2025!
With warm greetings the Palmus of Ethiopia, Anna-Kaarina and Matti**



The Palmus of Ethiopia celebrated 2024 their shared birthday of 150 years (75+75) on the day of Second Advent. They preached at the Sunday Service and then offered Birthday Cake to the participants at the “Church Coffee” time.

Vantaa, Finland, December 24, 2024,
the Christmas Eve

Dear friends,

Warm greetings from Southern Finland. The White Christmas became true in most parts of Finland this year. Sadly, we have had rains in these days, thus the snow is decreasing day by day.

Family Ministry in Nepal We **visited Nepal a year ago, in November-December 2023**. We have been supporting the Nepal Family Ministry programme since 2010. That 7th visit of ours was most probably the last one to Nepal. As mentioned in the first page, we celebrated (in December 2024) our shared birthday of 150 years (75+75). We requested our friends (instead of giving us any presents) to support financially the Family Ministry in Nepal through our previous employer, the Felm (Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission). We are getting old - but the work is going on!

Family Ministry elsewhere The mission of our working years, the Felm, used to support Family Ministry in various countries, where we also have served, like **Ethiopia, Tanzania, Nepal, Cambodia, Russia**. In these countries (churches) the Family Ministry has been going on. In addition to those, we did also pay Family Ministry visits to Taiwan, Hongkong, Thailand, Singapore, Israel, and Kenya, but there the family ministry hasn't continued in a way we would have desired.

Out of "our" countries mentioned the Family Ministry has been "a success story" in at least Ethiopia, Tanzania, Cambodia, and Nepal. There the Family Ministry is not "our" work but it is the ministry which has been in the hands of the local leaders for many years. We really thank God for this since it is His work!

In country travels

Astonishingly enough the covid pandemic is NOT over. We keep often hearing of relatives and friends who have got the virus again. But it seems that the multiple vaccinations have helped in a way that mostly the sickness has been quite easy.

In Finland we have travelled very little. We have visited our youngest son's family in Tampere (180 km. from here). At the end of August, we participated the annual Felm Seniors' Gathering at the Felm centre Päiväkumpu in Orivesi (north from Tampere). Otherwise, our travels have been in or around Helsinki.

Family

Our firstborn is **Outi** (Osaye in Hadiya language in Ethiopia), the Psychiatric nurse. She is living at Espoo, near Helsinki, and working in various places around Helsinki. She is living alone.

Lauri (Fasika in Amharic), the Pastor, has been serving with his family in Japan since 2005. They started their present working period in August 2023. Two of the Japan family's grown-up children study now at the University in Finland. - Lauri's wife Asako graduated last May as Deacon from University of Applied Sciences in Helsinki.

Our second youngest, the Electrical Engineer, is **Jouni** (Senbetu in Amharic). Jouni's family at Kuopio has grown smaller, too, since two of their grown-up children have already finished their High School. - The youngest daughters of both Lauri and Jouni are now High School students, one in Japan, the other one in Kuopio.

Sauli (Tamiru) is our youngest child, the Paediatrician at Tampere University. Sauli's family lives in Tampere. The two boys are at grades 9 and 7, active in sports.

We the old ones are settled here at Vantaa, 15 km. from Helsinki City Centre. During this Christmas season the family is quite scattered. One family is in Japan, Jouni's family is coming to see us only around Epiphany. Sauli's family visited us on December 23, 2024.

Cycling, exercise, health

Anna-Kaarina has been regularly **water-running** (in the swimming hall) after the summertime. In 2024 **Matti has cycled** 5.300 kilometres.

Anna-Kaarina had her knee operation in May, 2024. She got an artificial knee-joint. - Since 2009 we have had a small Allotment Garden Cottage nearby, about two kilometres from our home. We spent again the summer (June-July-August) there.

Congregation

Our Local Church is Vantaa-Myyrmäki (part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland). Our main Church building was closed for renovations 2019-2024. In September 2024 we finally got the renovated church back. The church is now very actively used for various activities.

In 2020 and 2021 all the local congregations learned to stream online their Sunday Services to the internet. Many local churches have continued the streaming on Sundays, but in many places not every week. This kind of hybrid-system is one of the positive outcomes of the past covid pandemic. This is what we heard also in Nepal, how they went online with Family Ministry trainings. Thus, there the covid became partly a blessing!

Meeting missionaries

We have two kinds of monthly meetings of missionaries here. In the beginning of each month the Ethiopia-missionaries gather in an Ethiopian Restaurant for a meal in Helsinki. God willing, next time we gather on Thursday, January 2, 2025. The other monthly one is the gathering of any-country-missionaries living within our local congregation area here in Western Vantaa.

We wish you a peaceful Christmas season of 2024 and a really blessed New Year 2025. Thank you for the friendship – let us stay connected!

Yours in Christ, *Anna-Kaarina and Matti*, the “Palmus of Ethiopia”



Ethiopia Missionaries at Palmus, from left Anna-Kaarina, Ritva Olkkola-Pääkkönen with her husband, Mirja Saksa, Tuula Sysimies, Maija Hakulinen, Elsa Sysser, Kirsti Viitasaari, Eeva and Ernst-August Gutt.



Other Missionaries visiting the Palmus in December 2024. Work countries (from left) Ethiopia, 3xAngola, 1xNamibia (and her grandchild from Belgium), Ethiopia, Russia and Estonia.