



"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

1 John 1:9

"He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea."

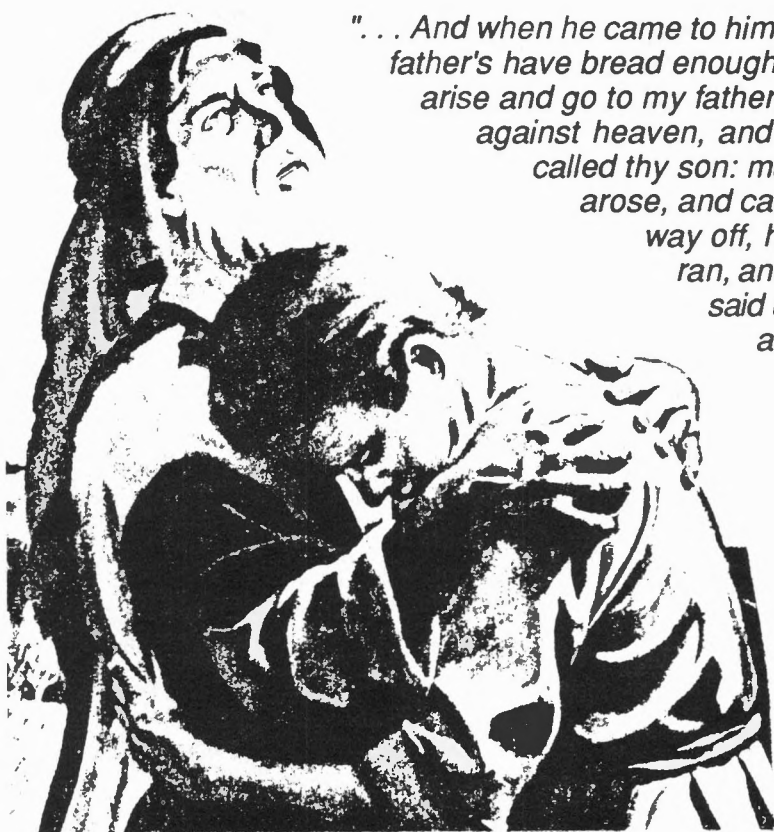
Micah 7:19

VOLUME 39

JANUARY 1989

NUMBER 1

New Year . . . Looking Back To Help Us See Ahead!



" . . . And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: For this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost, and is found."

Luke 15:17-24

The new year is a time well-known for its resolutions, especially those that are easily broken. However, there is value in assessing our situation, especially when it concerns our relationship with our Heavenly Father. Jesus used the story of the prodigal son to portray God as a father who watches longingly in hope that the wandering son will come home. May our prayers for our lives and the lives of all men at this time of new year's resolutions be for broken hearts and contrite spirits, ready not only to resolve, but to repent toward God with faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. (Acts 20:21). Through His grace may there be "repentance to salvation not to be repented of" that there can be rejoicing in the "dead that are made alive" and the "lost that are found."

WORLD RELIEF/WORKS PROJECTS REPORT

REPORT ON JUAREZ, MEXICO WORK PROJECT

Reported by Gerald Fiechter, Bluffton, IN

Community Center for Alcanzando Al Mexicano Marginado A.C.
(AMMAR)

Colonia Granjas de Chapultepec #3, Ciudad Juarez, Mexico

We want to bring everyone up to date on the World Relief Project at Juarez, Mexico. There has been good progress made since the November, 1987, Silver Lining report.

Work teams in February and April of 1988 completed the two buildings to the point that they are functional. The buildings are used as service buildings which include medical and dental assistance, feeding and cloth-

ing the poor, and teaching the children.

The dedication service was held in July, attended by approximately forty Apostolic Christian members and friends. Elder Bros. John Klotzle and Richard Schupbach were in charge of this service. Also there for this occasion were ministering Bros. Edwin Bahler and Carroll Gerber.

Another building (approximately



KINDERGARTEN TEACHER NEEDED IN JAPAN

Our church in Japan has a kindergarten where Sis. Kathy Jo Kieser and Sis. Renee Baurer are now teaching. Sis. Kathy Jo will be leaving the kindergarten next July and a brother or a sister who is qualified to teach kindergarten is needed to replace her. Anyone who has the faith and conviction to apply for this position should speak to his or her elder and if he approves, apply to the missionary committee for consideration.

All expenses involved in the two-year stay in Japan are paid by the church. The brother or sister is asked to give two or more years of his or her life in Japan at some sacrifice of compensation, although we do pay, in addition to expenses, a small monthly salary.

Bible stories are taught every day in the kindergarten. English is the language of instruction, but incoming teachers are encouraged to begin studying the Japanese language before coming to Japan. This is helpful in communicating with the Japanese people and in singing the hymns in Japanese.

The teachers are presently living in a new, modern apartment about a 10-minute walk from the church.

Anyone having any questions may inquire of any of the teachers who have been to Japan, may contact Bro. Ben Maibach, 34050 Ramble Hills Drive, Farmington Hills, MI (phone 313/478-3771); or Bro. Willis Ehnle, 692-2 Shioda, Ichinomiya-Cho, Higashi Yatsushiro-Gun, Yamanashi-Ken, Japan 409-14.

22 x 34) was completed when a work team was there in November, 1988. It is a warehouse and lunch area for children.

There has been enthusiasm shown by our brethren and friends who have helped on this project. The AMMAR people are thankful to God that He has led our World Relief to share with them.

HUNGARIAN TAPES

Two cassette tapes are now available of the singing and playing of the Hungarian churches. The music, performed by choir and orchestra, and "Blest Be The Tie," which has both orchestra and singing, are available at \$6.75 for each tape. For shipping cost on orders of 1-5 tapes, add .75 extra for each tape. On orders of 6 tapes or more, add only .30 extra for each tape. All proceeds from these tapes is being donated to the dis-

(Continued on Page 4)

THE SILVER LINING

Grabill, Indiana 46741
USPS 496780

EDITORIAL STAFF:

David Bertsch
Uriel Gehring
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The editorial staff wishes to acknowledge and thank all of the volunteers from the Leo Apostolic Christian Church who willingly give of their time to handle the many address changes, help mail the monthly issues and spend hours in editing. May God reward you.

Published Montly By the Apostolic
Christian Church of America

Counselors: Theo Beer, Loren Stoller,
David Bertsch, Phillip Stettner

SEND CORRESPONDENCE TO:

The Silver Lining
c/o David Bertsch
11520 Grabill Road
Grabill, IN 46741

Second class postage paid at Grabill, IN 46741. The subscription rate is \$7.00 per year. Send zip number with address. Remember to send changes of address. Send both old and new addresses (with both zips).

IN MEMORY -- EDITORS:
HENRY SOUDER
EDWARD SOUDER



Writings based
on God's Word

Light From The Word

"The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple" (Ps. 119:130).

ABSOLUTE TRUTH VERSUS RELATIVISM

Relativism is a way of thinking which maintains that the basis of all judgment is dependent upon circumstances, personal experiences and cultural forces. It asserts that no moral standard is absolute. According to this theory ethical "truths" are based on the viewpoints of the individuals or groups holding them and the circumstances in which they are being applied. Thus, basic issues which are considered right and good by one person or group may be wrong in the eyes of another person or group. Consequently, truth becomes subjective as individuals look to themselves rather than to God in seeking a basis for their judgments and beliefs. On the other hand, belief in absolute truth recognizes the existence of a source of wisdom from a higher nature than man himself.

The conflict between absolute truth and relativism has existed in varying degrees since the beginning of time. Seeking truth via the reason and experience of man finds root in the flesh while seeking truth via the Word of God finds root in His divine revelation.

A well known proverb teaches that men should look to their Creator God for truth: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding" (Prov. 3:5). Indeed, "it is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man" (Ps. 118:8).

It has been a major error of mankind to trust in self, to rely heavily on personal experience, to do what "seems right," and to depend upon one's own understanding. Although this tendency was born in Eden, it has expanded with great force in our present age. This is due largely to the fact that growing numbers of people no longer believe in the Bible as the ultimate source of absolute truth. Skeptics challenge its infallibility and inerrancy. Even professing Christians have fallen prey to methods of Bible interpretation which lead to twisting of various passages to suit their own

cultural and/or fleshly preferences. A popular perception is that the individual should determine his own religious convictions independently of any church or historical system of beliefs.

Relativism lends itself to individualism, which makes it very appealing to human nature. Choices are based on self-interest rather than submission to authority or concern for the common good of a group or society. This destroys loyalty, commitment and any sense of responsibility to an accepted set of standards. Such attitudes are flourishing in our society and are beginning to infiltrate the church.

The Word of God teaches obedience to His truth, denial of self, and submission to one another within the body of believers (Matt. 16:24; John 14:15; Eph. 5:21). The Word of God also establishes the church as the "pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15). It places all believers under an ordained spiritual authority which must consist of faithful men who are sound examples of selfless servanthood, guided by the Holy Spirit to uphold and preserve doctrinal truth (Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 9:19; 2 Tim. 2:24-25; Jude 3). Unless these scriptural principles are embraced as absolute truth and taught with all diligence in the home and the church, it is only a matter of time until we too will become victims of relativism—who are "lovers of their own selves," as the Apostle Paul declared (2 Tim. 3:2).

Relativism in society has resulted in man's world-view (how he sees life) becoming man-centered as opposed to God-centered. A dangerous situation arises when a believer unknowingly adopts a vision of life that is mixed: partially man-centered and partially God-centered. "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways" (Jam. 1:8). "No man can serve two masters" (Matt. 6:24). When relativism begins to influence religious beliefs and attitudes it be-

comes extremely dangerous. Believers must be on guard against this subtle but powerful influence.

Relativism is so pervasive today that one can easily become desensitized to its influences. The institutions of government, law, education, theology, and publishing once rested firmly on God-centered principles. The effects of relativism and man-centeredness have seen these institutions come to rest on an unstable foundation of secularism. Selfish thinking is rapidly overwhelming proper concern for the common welfare and long term needs of society.

The absolute truth of the Bible is the anchor of the believer. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God..." (2 Tim. 3:16). It comes only by divine revelation from Him. The Word is changeless, inerrant, and is man's primary source of truth (Rev. 22:18-19). God's truth "reacheth unto the clouds" (Ps. 108:4) and is "forever...settled in heaven" (Ps. 119:89).

Spiritual truth does not emanate from man's imperfect intellect but from Almighty God. The Psalmist perceived this clearly when he wrote, "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether," (Ps. 19:7-9).

Believers can rejoice greatly that they have been delivered from the instability and deception of relativism. It is a privilege to serve the unchanging God of absolute truth and to have sound standards on which everyday moral decisions can be based. "He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he" (Deut. 32:4).

tressed church members in the poor country of Romania.

Tapes may be ordered from:

Al Betz
455 Logan Road, Apt. A-2
Mansfield, OH 44907
(419) 756-2756

or

Dennis & Beth Feucht
317 N. Third Avenue
Morton, IL 61550
(309) 266-9498

Make checks payable to the person you order from, either Dennis Feucht or Al Betz.

HEFT (LONG BOOK) TAPES

All three volumes of the Long Book Tapes are now available. Bro. Josef Farkasch, of Salzburg, Austria, has

made tapes from the old "Long Book" beginning at number one and going straight through the book. He plays the classical guitar and other instruments. There is also singing on a few songs. All proceeds go to our needy brethren living behind the Iron Curtain in Eastern Europe.

Vol. I includes songs 1-11, 13-18

Vol. II includes songs 12, 19-31

Vol. III includes songs 33-48

Each tape costs \$8.00. For shipping costs on orders of 1-5 tapes, add .75 extra for each tape. On orders of 6 tapes or more, add only .30 extra for each tape. Make checks payable to the Long Book Tape Fund.

For the complete story about these tapes, refer to the May 1987 and the September 1988 Silver Lining issues.

These tapes may be ordered from either:

Don & Lorna Schrock
100 Forest View Road
Morton, IL 61550
(309) 266-6810

or

Dennis & Beth Feucht
317 N. Third Street
Morton, IL 61550
(309) 266-9498

-- NOTICE --

Repair and Distribution of Worn Bibles, Bible Story Books, Hymns of Zion, Tabernacle or Gospel Hymn Books

In 1984 we read in the Guideposts concerning the unfilled need for 10,000 Bibles. We wrote to the organization and started sending some repaired and some new Bibles. Since that time, we have sent over 500 Bibles, much Sunday school materials and song books.

During this past year, Sisters Becky Knapp (Dave) and Jane Huette (Curtis) from Goodfield, IL, have been helping in this work.

If our churches or individual members have Bibles, Bible story books, Hymns of Zion, Tabernacle or Gospel Hymns that are worn and in need of repair, please let us know or send them to us. We tape and repair the books and obtain names and addresses of people in foreign countries who want and need them, package and mail them in large canvas mailing bags. It costs 55 cents a pound to send books or \$1.10 for printed material of less than 30 pages. On a recent shipment to Africa, the cost to send a Bible was 72 cents.

If you have any questions or wish to send material for repair, please call or write:

Jerry and Arlene Banwart
Box 132
Congerville, IL 61729
Phone (309) 448-2416

NEWS FROM EASTERN EUROPE Bro. Andy Hunyady

Greetings Beloved!

As we enter into the new year of 1989, how thankful and grateful we, in America, ought to be to our God for His innumerable gifts. His gifts include the greatest of all, Jesus Christ,

THE ENDOWMENT FUND OF THE APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF AMERICA

The elder body has approved the formation of The Endowment Fund of the Apostolic Christian Church of America. This fund has been created for better stewardship of assets given to the church for the Lord's work.

In addition to outright gifts, the Endowment Fund would receive gifts from donors who want their gifts used over a period of years rather than immediately. The donor may designate how the gift should be used, or the use can be left to the discretion of the Endowment Fund management committee.

The Endowment Fund can also accept non-cash gifts and can provide advice on compliance with tax laws to provide more funds for the Lord's work than would be possible without following the tax guidelines. An example is a gift of real estate, securities or other properties on which the donor can receive all or part of the income during the donor's lifetime.

The Endowment Fund would use its assets in the following ways:

1. To assist existing church funds such as local and national charity, World Relief, Mission and Bible funds.
2. To provide a source of funds for ongoing projects, unusual or unexpected needs as deemed fit and proper by the Elder-supervised Endowment Fund Committee.
3. To provide emergency loans and grants for other funds or projects within the church.

Questions about the Endowment Fund or contributions to the fund can be directed to any brother on the committee (listed here with their home church) or by contacting the secretary at the address or phone numbers listed below:

James J. Stoller, Chairman -- Eureka, IL
Jerry Banwart, Secretary-Treasurer -- Congerville, IL
Ben Maibach -- Detroit, MI
Bob Walder -- Congerville, IL
Bob Grimm -- Goodfield, IL
Roy Grimm -- Taylor, MO
Jim Hoerr -- Peoria, IL

Jerry Banwart, 2400 N. Main, East Peoria, IL 61611
Office: (309) 694-4251 Home: (309) 448-2416

His only begotten Son, to become our Redeemer and Saviour; the gift of salvation; the gift of freedom to assemble and worship God unhindered; and the gifts of material abundance from the good earth!

But, in many parts of the earth millions of our fellow men suffer daily. Hunger, disease, lack of clothing and shelter and oppression from their fellow men are their portion in life.

Our hearts, our love and prayers go out for them.

Because of your love and compassion, many of these sufferers received help and relief in life and spiritual comfort and encouragement.

"If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not

harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother: but thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth . . . thou shalt surely give him, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him: because that for this thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou putteth thine hand unto."

Deuteronomy 15:7, 8, 10

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Jerry and Arlene Banwart
Box 132
Congerville, IL 61729
Phone (309) 448-2416

APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN BIBLE DISTRIBUTION

Bibles Distributed By Our Churches

First Year -- August 1983 thru July 1984 -- 13,890
Second Year -- August 1984 thru July 1985 -- 10,812
Third Year -- August 1985 thru July 1986 -- 18,247
Fourth Year -- August 1986 thru July 1987 -- 23,048
Fifth Year -- August 1987 thru July 1988 -- 25,969

Bibles Distributed -- Sixth Year

	MONTH	TO DATE
August 1988 --	3486	3486
September 1988 --	1365	4851
October 1988 --	1762	6613
November 1988 --	2655	9268
December 1988 --	1637	10,905

NOTE: Sets of Braille Bibles are available to give to the blind and KJV, Old and New Testaments, on cassette tapes for those who can no longer read the large print. Also, pocket testaments with Psalms and Proverbs are available.

For our brethren in Romania, 1988 was the most difficult year. Because of the ban imposed by their government in December 1987, no food parcels or any other shipments were permitted to enter. Instead of receiving the average of one parcel per month in 1988, as of the end of November only three or four parcels were available to most families. These parcels were assembled in Romania by the government operated Comturist Agency and delivery was delayed as much as 5 or 6 months. One \$65.00 voucher was sent to each family in May, and this too was delayed by the authorities for 5 or 6 months. With the vouchers, our beneficiaries were able to purchase selected food items from the Comturist shops, but most often these shops had very little to offer due to shortages, etc. The last order was placed in the last week of November and parcels will be assembled and air shipped from Pennsylvania, with the hope that delivery will be made near the holiday season. We are hopeful!



Apostolic Christian Children's Home

P.O. BOX 151, LEO, INDIANA 46765

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

1989 CHILDREN'S HOME AUCTION AND SALE

SATURDAY,
AUGUST 19, 1989

APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN
CHILDREN'S HOME
LEO, INDIANA

Cards and letters received recently indicate that all the parcels have been received and each writer expresses gratitude and appreciation. Here are a few excerpts:

"We received the voucher on the 21st of November and were able to buy food from the shop, and our children are rejoicing over it. My wife and I thank each and every one of the brethren for their brotherly love!" J. & M.

"We wish you a blessed Christmas and a New Year of peace and happiness to you and all those who so lovingly support us, we feel so unworthy for it. Our heartfelt thanks and greetings to all!" T. and Family

"Beloved Brother: I want to bring it to your attention that several of our elderly brethren here have received packages in October and November, and vouchers to buy merchandise of free choice from the dollar shop. We want to thank God for this great help and to the many brethren for their love, which we feel we are unworthy of. We pray to God to bless them and replenish them bountifully. I am very weak as I just returned from the hospital after four weeks. I was diagnosed as having the hepatitis and I need a vitamin named Endonal, or

something similar. Please, ask a doctor what would be best, since I also suffer with diabetes. If the Lord moves your heart to help me with certain kinds of medicines, otherwise may it be according to God's will. I wish to thank the Lord and you for everything that you have done for us. May our God reward you and all the beloved brethren with His unchanging promises and life eternal. From all of us here we extend greetings to the churches, to Bros. Bako, Vernon, George and you. If I have been too bold, please forgive me. The peace of our Lord be with you all!" Elder Bro. S. V. & K.

In Budapest, Hungary, construction on the new church is progressing real well. Both buildings are under roof and enclosed. Plastering, electrical and plumbing work are being done by many dedicated volunteers, "who assisted by brethren and friends from other cities, with much zeal and enthusiasm."

The situation in Yugoslavia is not very good. Inflation is out of control and ethnic unrest in certain parts of the country is a good reason for concern. A delegation of five brothers attended a meeting in Washington,

D.C. in the office of Congressman Robert H. Michel, minority leader, on October 4. Present at the meeting was Mr. Jack M. Seymour, Jr., deputy director of the Bureau of Human Rights, Dept. of State. They will try to help alleviate the suffering brought about by imprisonment of 30 of our brethren and friends.

These young men were drafted to serve in the military, but because of their faith, they refused to swear or bear arms. Of the 30 in prison, as of last June, two were serving their third term, nine their second and nineteen their first term. Since then, several of the brothers have been released. Both Congressman Michel and Mr. Seymour assured us that they will take proper steps through diplomatic channels to intercede in behalf of these young men.

Let us, dearly beloved, pray to God, who is able to touch and soften human hearts and minds, that those in power and authority may reconsider and have compassion on those who are unjustly imprisoned and put to suffering. May it all be according to His will!

My sister, Margit, currently is visiting with us and our families from Romania. We are thankful to God for making it possible for her to obtain permission to leave that country for a few months!

She brings many greetings from those of like faith, who receive and benefit from your gifts of love.

SINGLE SISTERS ARE YOU INTERESTED IN:

- Serving the Lord and needy children on a full-time basis?
- Learning more about yourself and others?
- Learning about God's daily provision of grace and strength?
- Learning a Biblical definition of success?

If your heart responded "yes" to the above questions, you may be someone God wants to use, to help meet our need. Please prayerfully consider this opportunity. We presently have an opening for a single sister to serve as a Houseparent in an all-girl house. This is a challenging and rewarding opportunity to work with a dedicated and unified staff of brothers and sisters as they strive to meet the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of troubled children.

Compensation includes a cash salary and living expenses, plus fringe benefits. For more information, please contact either of the brothers listed below.

Your servants in Christ,
The Children's Home
Board of Directors

Bro. Tim Sauder
P. O. Box 151
Leo, IN 46765
219/627-2159, office
219/627-2606, home

Elder Bro. David Bertsch
11502 Souder Road
Grabill, IN 46741
219/627-2923

APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN CHILDREN'S HOME

Tim Sauder

In this time of reflection and rearrangement of priorities, I was moved by a poem written by a friend of mine that presents a challenge for the entire year.

SIX DAYS AFTER CHRISTMAS

There'll be parties, and memories
There'll be laughter and tears
As the world drinks its toast
To another New Year.
From Times Square to New Orleans
In a thousand lonely bars,
No one's thinking about that
manger
Or the star.

Some will drink to remember
 Some will drink to forget,
 Some will drink just to hope for
 What they've not found yet
 New dreams and resolutions
 And singing Auld Lang Syne
 They could be filled with so much
 more
 Than just wine! . . .

And it's a long way from Bethlehem
 To the streets of New York,
 But I can still hear the Son of Man
 Knocking outside the door.
 Six days after Christmas
 Who still believes?
 Who will drink the cup of Jesus
 On this New Year's Eve?

Now the football game's blaring
 Decorations falling down.
 No more Christmas carols ringing
 Throughout the town.
 And though the seasons may
 change
 Yet the choice stays the same
 The cup of death in this world
 Or life in Jesus' name.

And it's a long way from Bethlehem
 To the streets of New York,
 But I can still hear the Son of Man
 Knocking outside the door.
 Six day after Christmas
 Who still believes?
 Who will drink the cup of Jesus
 On this New Year's Eve?

Reflecting back on the past year, we are filled with praise to God for all He has brought to pass at the Home, including the expansion of our facilities, staff and program. We rejoice over the new members He has brought to our team and we're thankful for the joy and challenge of working with new kids and helping them choose and change -- and seeing them change us too. Whatever the blessing, whatever the trial, we are assured that it is the best thing for us if we are properly submitted and walking steadfastly in His will. What a comfort that is!

December was full of excitement including a big (and I mean BIG) Christmas dinner and party put on by our friend, Dee Oliver. It included everything from dinner to songs, lessons from the manger to the cross, along with gifts and pinatas. Many of our children were also involved in

Christmas caroling, the school Yuletide Festival, and the Sunday school Christmas program. These, along with the special individual family Christmas dinners, provide an abundance of opportunities to share the good news of Jesus Christ.

Many of us have had opportunities to meet many of you as our staff and kids fan out across the country to visit friends and family during the holiday season. This includes the slide presentations given by our administrator in Sarasota and Fort Lauderdale, FL. Thanks to all for your interest and support.

We are glad to have two new residents who have joined our growing family. Shannon (16), who comes to us from LaGrange County, lives in the West House, while David (13) from Allen County is in the New House.

As this new year develops and matures, we watch and long for His coming, but in the meantime we are committed to faithful service that when he comes we may be found doing His will. (Luke 12:43).

APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN HOME FOR THE HANDICAPPED

The last two months it seems we have been experiencing more large group activity. Our Fall Festival was a lot of fun. Many of our residents participated in the annual "Talent Show" in November. December is filled with seasonal events -- caroling groups visiting us, Christmas shopping for family, secret pals, etc. The Peoria Sunday school provided us with a meal, a Christmas program and a gift for each guest. It was enjoyed by all.

Janet Worner came to live at our home December 1. She had been living at Hart House in Peoria. Her parents are Kenneth and Betty Worner and they live in Metamora. We now have 99 residents. Bro. David Metz was transferred to Restmor Nursing Home. Because of medical reasons, he now needs a skilled care facility.

Residents who will be celebrating birthdays in February are: John Kamm on the 18th; Lee Anne McKay, 19th; Rosemarie Finlay, 23rd; Virginia Reece, 27th; Guy Masinelli and Bob Tiffan, 28th. (No birthdays at Oakwood for February).

We had two residents in the hospital with pneumonia: Sharilyn Rowell and Becky Huber. Kent Knobloch had a touch of pneumonia also, but did not have to be hospitalized. We're happy to report that they are all doing much better again.

December has been a busy month at Oakwood Estate with shopping trips, baking cookies, writing Christmas cards, caroling, tours of elegantly decorated homes, etc. It is exciting to receive Christmas cards from family and friends. The first Christmas at Oakwood will be spent by having a formal dinner, the menu being selected by the residents. After dinner they will sing carols around the piano, open gifts and conclude with cookies and punch.

All of us at the Home for the Handicapped and Oakwood Estate wish each of you a blessed new year!

APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN PRESCHOOL OF ATHENS, AL Marilyn Walder

"Do not be afraid. I have good news. Today Jesus was born in Bethlehem. You will find Him in a stable." This was the message the angel brought to the shepherds during our Christmas play December 12. The story of Jesus' birth was presented to our children's parents, family and friends. The children did a wonderful job and the parents were well pleased. We wanted the children to know the real reason for Christmas and it was more real to them because they acted it out.

We ask that you pray for our Preschool. May God's name be glorified and His will continue to be done.

ALABAMA, ATHENS Marilyn Walder

We want to thank Bro. Elmer Schrenk (Alto, MI) for the message he brought to us recently when he and his wife, Sis. Delilah, visited. We have had other visitors from Peoria and Bloomington, IL.

We enjoyed our adult Christmas dinner December 10. Our Secret Pal group revealed names and redrew for another year. We went caroling to several of our older sisters December 14. The Sunday school had their program December 18.

Many gifts are given during Christmas but there is no gift that can compare with the gift that God gave to all mankind when He sent His only Son to earth. Jesus knew He would die for sinners. This gift of salvation is free and unearned, but only can be obtained if we take it. It is not forced on anyone. We cannot comprehend the depth of God's love. Have you asked for this free gift or are you still without the most precious gift in the world?

ARIZONA, PHOENIX

Ron and Ev Hoerr

One of a believer's most sacred events is recorded in Matthew 26:26, 27. We were served holy communion November 20 by Elder Bro. Richard Schupbach and Bro. Jon Kokanovich.

Many single brothers and sisters came to Phoenix for fellowship over a long weekend around Thanksgiving time.

The Lord has directed five hearts into the love of God (II Thessalonians 3:5) and now His peace has come (II Corinthians 1:2). Stephanie Tooley, Stacy Baum, Terry Baum, Chris Frautschi and Bob Dotterer are awaiting baptism.

Our deepest sympathy is extended to Sis. Josephine Martin (late Bro. Glen) and family at the death of Bro. Elmer Martin November 18. We also sympathize with Bro. Gene and Sis. Marge Fehr and family as his mother, Sis. Sally Fehr, passed away December 8. These two dear souls visited us often.

Bro. Ken Lawson (Minneapolis, MN) and Bro. Lawrence Luthi (Lamar, MO) came to serve the Lord in the Phoenix pulpit, and we thank them both.

The Phoenix chorus had a Christmas program for the folks at Glen-croft Retirement Center. Their beautiful message in song was surely appreciated.

December 11 was the wedding of Bro. James Emch and Sis. Gina Huber in Francesville, IN. There will be a wedding reception in Phoenix December 17. Bro. Jerry and Sis. Cathy Emch (Phoenix) and Bro. Gene and Sis. Barb Huber (Francesville, IN) are their parents. May the Lord be the center of the happy couple's home.

December 16 was a special fun

time for those who wished to go caroling. It is a joyous event for Christian fellowship. A chili supper preceded the caroling.

The Sunday school Christmas program will be December 18.

We rejoice in the birth of two babies. Kailey Jean Sharley arrived December 8. Her parents are Robin and Steve Sharley. Bro. Bob and Sis. Betty Lemons are first-time grandparents. Dennis and Sis. Jenny Hand are first-time parents with the birth of Jacob Lee December 10. His grandparents are Bro. Ed and Sis. Shirley Zollinger.

Needing your prayers are hospital patients, Sis. Doris Kokanovich and Sis. Emma Sanders. Jim Zollinger was in for a tonsillectomy.

We wish for God's loving care to be with Bro. Jay Fehr as he leaves for the Rockville, CT, area.

New offices will be filled by the following: Trustee chairman - Bro. Howard Maurer; S. S. superintendent - Bro. Bill Sanders; Ass't. S. S. superintendent - Bro. John Dotterer; Usher - Bro. Ellsworth Niemeyer.

A thank you: We want to thank everyone for your prayers, cards and gifts of love during Gene Fehr's illness and the death of his mother. God bless you.

Gene and Marge Fehr

Notice: Your Silver Lining offering of \$7.00 is due in March. Your correspondents will take your offering at church or by mail.

ARIZONA, TUCSON

Lisa Knapp

The Lord has seen fit to add two brothers to the ministry in Tucson. Bro. Nate Lehman and Bro. Curt Kaufman have felt the Lord's direction in their hearts and are now ministers of the Word. They and their wives, Sis. Yvonne Lehman and Sis. Caroline Kaufman, have our love and prayers that the Lord will grant all the grace and strength they need as they start a new chapter in their lives.

We also have a new group of brethren who will be serving the church in other capacities. Our business meeting resulted in the following: Bro. Dean Sinn, three-year trustee; Bro.

Steve Bauer, one-year trustee; Bro. Jay Knapp, chairman of the building committee; Bro. Don Bauer and Bro. Fred Funk, building committee; Bro. Brad Bauer, assistant superintendent Sunday school; Bro. Dean Sinn, head usher; Bro. Steve Bauer, usher; Sis. Liz Martin, grade school Sunday school teacher; Sis. Diane Funk, preschool-first grade teacher; and Sis. Gloria Bauer, kitchen chairman. These brothers and sisters need our prayers and support in their new duties.

We also want to thank our Elder Bro. Richard Schupbach and Sis. Barbara for their time and effort as we sought out our new ministering brethren. Bro. Richard was with us as the Lord worked through him to add Bro. Nate and Bro. Curt to the pulpit. We can always feel Bro. Richard and Sis. Barb's love for our little church.

CALIFORNIA, ALTADENA

Lisa Steiner

It was with sadness that we bid farewell to four loved ones this past month. Sis. Elizabeth Feldman, who was hospitalized for a time, has moved to Restmore Nursing Home in Morton, IL. Sis. Elizabeth has lived in California for many, many years and will be greatly missed. Also leaving our midst are Bro. Todd and Sis. Kim Moser and daughter, Heather. They will be returning to Minnesota, as Bro. Todd has been discharged from the Marines. May God be with each of these dear people.

We were shocked and saddened to learn of the death of Sis. Nancy (Bro. Fred) Witzig's father, Bro. Elmer Martin (Princeville, IL). Our sympathy goes out to his wife, Sis. Janet, and his children, Sis. Deb Givens (Bro. Eric), Sis. Nancy Witzig (Bro. Fred) and Michael Martin.

We are thankful to have had several visiting ministers over the past two months: Bro. Gene Marti (Lamar, MO), Bro. Leroy Messner (Winthrop, MN) and Bro. Doug Wagenbach (San Diego, CA).

COLORADO, DENVER

Marlene Leman

It has been nearly a year since Bro. Bill Geyer moved to Colorado. Shortly thereafter he was injured in

a car accident and since then has had numerous tedious, painful surgeries. He has just recently gone through another one. Through all this he remains pleasant and unshaken in his faith; a real lesson in patience to us all. We pray that God will continue to be with him and that one day soon he can assemble with us regularly.

Our hearts were saddened as we learned that Bro. Tim and Sis. Diane Roecker were moving to Peoria, IL. But knowing that this was a decision made through prayer, we rejoice that they followed God's will for them. We shall miss them but know that they will be well received into the church family in Peoria. We pray that they will be blessed and will continue to draw near to Him who directs their life.

Our sympathy is extended to Bro. Tom and Sis. Diane Ebert and family in the death of Bro. Tom's dad. We realize that we always miss our loved ones when they are gone and pray that God will be their comfort.

We have recently held elections in our church for Sunday school teachers and trustee. Bro. Rod Schmidt, Sis. Kathy Leman and Sis. Lorraine Hohulin have been chosen to replace Bro. Tim and Sis. Diane Roecker and Sis. Cindy Schmidt in Sunday school and Bro. Mike Martin has been chosen to replace Bro. Rod Schmidt as trustee. We pray that God will bless those whose terms are ended and ask that He put into the hearts of the new ones the importance of serving well in whatever capacity they are serving.

CONNECTICUT, ROCKVILLE
Martha Hany

Another year of dawning,
 Dear Master, let it be,
 On earth, or else in heaven,
 Another year for Thee.

Frances R. Havergal

Two couples made a new beginning in their lives as their marriages were solemnized; Bro. Steve Maibach, Smithville, OH (Bro. Roy and Sis. Mabel, Rittman, OH) and Sis. Dawn Luginbuhl (Sis. Charlotte) November 27 and Bro. Doug Schneider (Bro. Roy and Sis. Joyce) and Sis. Jane Gerber (Bro. Everett and Sis. Phyllis)

December 4. May the Lord bless their lives together.

Elder Bro. Edward Lanz (Oakville, IA) was here the weekend of December 10 to assist Bro. Corbin Bahler in the reading and discussion of the memorandum. We received many good teachings on the importance of being aware of the inroads that present day society and structure of the world are making upon our precious faith and how to deter these influences even as the Lord stated, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." John 17:16. Our thanks to Bro. Ed and his wife, Joan, for taking time out to be with us.

How we rejoice when we see those turning to the Lord in repentance. Kim Kloter (Bro. Keith and Sis. Mary) and Cherinne Luginbuhl (Bro. Daryl and Sis. Norma) are both seeking a better way than what the world offers; a restoration of innocence and peace through repentance and knowledge of our sinful nature. Kim and Cherinne are seniors in high school and we encourage them to continue in their conversion as surely, "Living for Jesus will bring thee to joy everlasting, Daily and hourly His great and eternal love tasting; This shall suffice! But on the pathway of vice, body and soul you'd be wasting." (Zion's Harp #168, vs. 4).

Those who have been hospitalized and are now recuperating at home are Sis. Julie Bourque, Sis. Caroline Hartmann, Bro. Ronald Treub and Bro. Werner and Sis. Esther Kupferschmid. Our thoughts and prayers are with them for a complete recovery as well as others who are under a physician's care.

The innocence and sincerity of young children were especially touching to our hearts when our Sunday school presented a Christmas program commemorating Christ's birth the evening of December 18 in which the various age groups sang beautiful songs.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA,
WASHINGTON
Catherine Klopfenstein
Rebecca Germann

Visiting ministers since the last writing have been Bro. Kenneth Indermuhle (Sardis, OH), Bro. Gary Maibach (Smithville, OH) and Bro.

Kevin Ryan (Rockville, CT). We sincerely appreciate their efforts and the blessings brought to us through their ministry.

Total attendance has averaged sixteen per Sunday since the end of the tourist season (about 30 during the summer).

The Ken Belsley's have returned from a month's vacation in Hawaii. The Germanns spent Thanksgiving weekend in Philadelphia. The Klopfensteins spent Thanksgiving week in Illinois. Sis. Lydia Meyer (Peoria, IL) is enjoying a visit with her daughter, Henrietta, which will extend through the holidays. Kurt Anliker returned to Purdue University at the end of his semester here. He has our best wishes and we look forward to his return next spring and summer.

The major industry in Washington, D.C., of course, is the Federal Government. There is a noticeable feeling of apprehension until the new administration is installed and develops its style of management. This is a time for believers to pray for our rulers, to be thankful for the many elected and appointed officials who do rely on prayer, and to show the steadfastness of our faith, trusting that God's will will prevail. We pray for a smooth transition and that the blessings of freedom, family and faith will be preserved and extended.

We assemble on the first and third Sunday of each month, at 10:30 a.m. at Tyson's Westpark Hotel, on Route 7, about 1 mile west of I-495. For information, call Ralph Klopfenstein, 703-979-3476 or Doug Germann, 703-481-5163. Visitors always welcome.

FLORIDA, FT. LAUDERDALE
Terri Huber

It is wonderful to see the familiar faces of our winter residents and visitors! We would like to thank Bro. Glenn Hackenjos (Altadena, CA) for ministering to us in November. In December, Elder Bro. Joe Stoller (Princeville, IL) and Bro. Dave Wiegand (Urbana, IL) were our visiting ministers.

Again this year we, as a church, had the privilege of volunteering for bell ringing duty for the Salvation Army. More than once we have heard people say, as they dropped coins in the bucket, that the Salvation Army

"saved Christmas" for them as a child.

What a blessed weekend our small congregation enjoyed as we heard testimonies and witnessed the baptisms of Bro. Doug Sauder and Sis. Amy Sutter. Elder Bro. Joe Braker was on hand for the occasion and we had the added opportunity to fellowship at a church supper and singing that Sunday evening.

A Christmas program was presented by the Sunday school classes. We certainly pray that the beautiful message the kids rendered will live on in their hearts until the Lord calls them into His service. This time of year is filled with so many plans and activities. We have to remember our priorities and not get overloaded and worn out or we will forget the true meaning and love that fills the Christmas season.

We had a good turnout for Christmas caroling. It's a little bit different down here. In the interest of "getting in the spirit of Christmas" I wore boots and a bulky sweater (no mittens, though!). It was definitely too warm for that kind of clothing. One of these years I'll learn!

FLORIDA, NORTH FT. MYERS Kay Eisenmann

We are so thankful for such willing workers in our little church here in Fort Myers! We enjoyed a Christmas program, with some help from the congregation, as our Sunday school is small. We all helped with the singing. A special thank you is given to Bro. Ivan Stoller. For those of us who are missing our grandchildren and children at this time of year, it was just a special day.

Now the new year is here. May we all with prayerful hearts pray for a better year. 1988 is history and whatever we have done can't be changed. How happy are you with what you did for God and others? We are all so concerned with our job record and how we get along with our bosses. How much more important it is to have our heavenly Father know us as His children! After all, He made it possible at such a great price!

May the leaders of our country learn to pray and search God's Word, for there's where all the answers are. We hear many people say, "I can't understand the Bible." With that

attitude we will not understand. God tells us He will provide. Who are we believing? God gives us what we need to be saved, not what we want to hear. May we all in this coming year try to do more for others, asking ourselves what we can do, instead of what someone can do for us!

Visiting ministers were Bro. Dave Wiegand (Champaign, IL) and Elder Bro. Joe Stoller (Princeville, IL). We thank them for bringing God's Word to us. May God richly bless them.

FLORIDA, SARASOTA Suellen Ott

"God knows the way, He holds the key, He guides us with unerring hand; Sometimes with tearless eyes we'll see; Yes up there, we'll understand Then trust in God thro' all the days; Fear not, for he doth hold thy hand. Though dark thy way, still sing and praise, Some time, Sometime we'll understand."

Tabernacle Hymns #82

Our congregation has been reminded of the untimely visitation of the death angel. Our love and prayers go out to Sisters Elda, Vera and Mary Martin in the loss of their dear brother, Bro. Elmer Martin (Princeville, IL). Our prayers are extended to his wife, Sis. Janet and children, Sis. Deb, Mike and Sis. Nancy, as well as the other family members. May God be near each one and comfort as only he can.

Our winter resident, Bro. Eli Anliker, was hospitalized in the past week and is anticipating further care this week. We want to remember Bro. Eli in our prayers. Sis. Lydia Vonja is still unable to attend services.

We have been reminded in the past weeks of an earthly home in Sarasota that was once a very lavish home, one of great worth that is showing signs of age and decay. We were reminded that when we lay treasures up on earth they will only decay, just as this mansion, but we were told to lay up treasures in heaven, a place that decay is unheard of. We are ever so thankful for the visiting ministers that bring us the Word of Life. They were Bro. Gene Lehman (Wolcott, IN), winter resident and minister,

Bro. Homer Reineck (Toledo, OH) and Elder Bro. Dale Eisenmann.

The Sunday school children blessed us with their annual Christmas program Sunday, December 18. They reminded us of the Babe's humble birth in the manger and the true meaning of Christmas. Even the smallest children told of their love for baby Jesus in the manger.

GEORGIA, ATLANTA John Brewer

In November and December, we were blessed by the many visiting ministers who came to share the Word with us. On November 27 Bro. Ken Schneider (Remington, IN) visited our congregation. In December, Bro. Doug Sabo (Sarasota, FL) and Bro. Jack Bollier (Leo, IN) were here to minister to us. We appreciate the time and energy they have taken to visit here in Atlanta.

In December we said goodbye to Mike Gruich as he went back home to Akron, OH, to start work in the chiropractic field. He will be missed here in Atlanta, but we pray that the Lord will bless him in his field of practice and every endeavor.

Services are now held every Sunday at the Ramada Renaissance Hotel here in Atlanta. The hotel is located by the airport off I-85 on Riverdale Road. For more information, call either Bro. Linn or Sis. Brenda Stoller (404-631-4554), Bro. Don Sellers (404-923-0721), Sis. Nancy Foltz (404-451-9191) or myself (404-254-1664).

ILLINOIS, BLOOMINGTON-NORMAL De Anderson - Karen Brummitt

On Saturday, November 26, Tom Vogel (Bro. Stan and Sis. Nate) and Terri Vance (Jim and Dale, Galesberg) exchanged marriage vows. We pray God's blessings upon them as they establish their home together.

With grateful hearts we wish to thank Elder Bros. Dan Koch (Tremont) and Art Bahler (Fairbury) for sharing the memorandum with us December 7. May God give us much grace to live by His holy Word.

We are also thankful to Bro. Wayne Laubscher (Cissna Park), Bro. Paul Gasser (Akron, OH) and Elder Bro. Robert Beyer (Naumburg, NY) for

bringing us God's Word. Elder Bro. Dan Koch is also giving much of his time to work with our converts. For this we are truly grateful.

We rejoice with Jay Nussbaum (Ann) as he has turned his heart to the Lord. May God grant him grace as he makes this new beginning.

We extend our sincere sympathy to Bro. Bill Denick in the death of his mother, Sis. Elsie Denick (Fairbury).

We also express sincere sympathy to Walt Fehr in the passing of his mother, Sis. Salome Fehr (Eureka).

Our congregation enjoyed an evening of caroling for the elderly and less fortunate December 17. It was followed by a lunch at church.

ILLINOIS, BRADFORD

Karen Ringger

Acts 2:38 -- "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

We are rejoicing with Sis. Deanne Stahl, Bro. Jeff Kieser and Bro. Mitch Leman as they each brought a testimony of a new life in Jesus and were baptized the following day. Their parents are Sis. Charlotte Stahl, Bro. Loris and Sis. Martha Kieser and Bro. Marvin and Sis. Jane Leman. Elder Bro. Edwin Ringger (Gridley) and our Elder Bro. Joe Stoller (Princetonville) were with us for this special occasion.

Also ministering to us this month were Bros. Don Manz (Junction, OH), Elmer and Tom Schrenk (Alto, MI). We thank each visiting minister for his labor of love and all our visitors for blessing us with their fellowship.

Two couples have announced their engagements and forthcoming marriages in the new year. Joe Kieser and Geri Argellyes are both from San Jose, CA. February 25 has been set for their special day. Joe is the son of Bro. Jerry and Sis. Wilma.

Daryl Knobloch (Bro. Marvin and Sis. Dianne) and Debbie Gudeman (Bro. Ralph and Sis. Carolyn) from Congerville, are planning a summer wedding. May God bless these two precious couples as they make plans to live the rest of their lives together.

Sis. Emma Knobloch (Bro. Clarence) spent some time in the hospital again this month. We are thankful she wasn't there too long and that she can attend church with us again.

On December 18 our Sunday school presented their Christmas program. It is always such a joy to watch the children do their best for their parents and teachers. May God bless each one of them and their teachers for all their efforts to make it such a blessed evening!

ILLINOIS, CHAMPAIGN

LaRae Dill

Two families in our congregation have been blessed with babies to love and raise. Mark and Mary Jo Rieger are thankful for their second daughter, Jacqueline Elizabeth Jo, born November 20. Jacqueline's sister, Jenna, and grandparents, Fred and Jane Rieger and Bro. Bill and Sis. Jean Aberle (Forrest) welcome her also. Likewise Bro. Ron and Sis. Louise Walder give thanks for a healthy son, Gabriel Alan. Gabriel was born December 5 and joins his brother, Caleb, and sister, Olivia, in the Walder family. His grandparents are Bro. Wayne and Sis. Lucille Unsicker (Peoria) and Bro. Dale and Sis. Dorothy Walder (Cissna Park).

Many parents in our congregation extend a big thanks to our college students for organizing the annual Christmas babysitting service December 2.

"What can I give to the King?" This question was asked and answered by our Sunday school students as they presented their Christmas program December 11. Many suggestions were given in verse and song -- Give Him . . . a heart that's opened up wide, a life that's got nothing to hide, all honor, all glory . . . At the Christmas season we reflect on God's gift to us, the Christ Child. Let's pray that throughout the year we can keep this question in mind, "What gift (or talent) can we give to Him?"

We thank these ministers who shared their talents in bringing us God's Word: Bros. Ken Dietz (Bradford), Ed Alt (Cissna Park), Vernon Wettstein (Congerville) and Elder Bro. Bob Walder (Congerville).

ILLINOIS, CHICAGO

Kathy Schlatter

As we left the Bible study on the second floor of Division 3 (women), Cook County Jail, we stepped into a small room by the elevator and the door clicked shut, locking behind us. For a moment we all just stood silently; then one suggested that we had better press a button or we would be stuck where we were. That seemed logical and simple enough, so we pushed the indicator to call the elevator and were shortly on our way down to the first floor and then out of the jail. How many times do the circumstances of life seem to corner us into pretty small spaces? We may feel alone and unable to function, but if we call on our Lord, He will provide a way of escape from the clouds of anxiety and whisk us to a line of duty where we can march forward for Him.

We are thankful to Bro. Ron Schambach (Elgin, IL) who gave of himself, believing he was only doing that which was his duty to do (paraphrase Luke 17:10). We need to be ever mindful of the efforts of our ministering brethren.

Saturday evening, December 10, our Sunday school children thoughtfully reminded us of the approaching Christmas season and its appropriate focus. "O Sanctissima," God's most Holy One came as a Babe, died as our Savior, and, as we were also reminded, has promised to return again for those who await His coming. Saturday, December 17, the Sunday school children, teachers and others carolled at various older members' and friends' homes, at Cook County Hospital, and several halfway houses. The carolling experience is often more important for the carollers than for those who listen. We, as carollers, are taught how many the Lord has His hand on and how few our own troubles really are.

Bro. Darl and Sis. Cindy Schieler, Jeremy, Rachel, Marla, and Matthew are now part of the Wolcott, IN, congregation. Bro. Darl is now working in the Lafayette, IN, area. We miss them, having found it difficult to say goodbye. Their radiant faces and warm smiles have been a special blessing to us all. We thank Bro. Darl for his months in Sunday school and appreciate Bro. Brent Stoller who was appointed to take Bro. Darl's place.

We sent our love and prayers with the Schielers, for they have part of our hearts as well. May the Lord bless and keep them always in His tender care and enfold them in His arms.

Jill Getz, originally from Franceseville, IN, has come to our area via Lafayette, IN. She is enjoying her work as a nurse at Hines V.A. Hospital and living in Glen Ellyn. We are happy to have her worship with us, and we wish her our love and His blessing as we welcome her into our church family.

"For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried." Psalm 66:10. Sis. Sara Adam and Sis. Winnie Lehman have been in pain for quite some time. Each is now going through even more physical difficulties, involving hospitalization and bed rest. They are in our prayers. We know they are His saints and plead that the Lord can grant them grace and peace in the midst of these difficulties.

"Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do . . ." Luke 23:34. How could Christ have said that? They may not have known He was the Savior of mankind, but they did know that they were condemning a man to crucifixion, a torturous death. Yet Christ forgave them and was again our perfect example. When family makes plans and we are not able to make them work for us, we are to forgive, even if we are hurt at not being consulted. When the boss gives someone else credit or suggests we be more like someone we trained, we are to forgive him/her and let go of our frustration. When those under us do not appreciate our patience and continued help, we are to forgive them, only to try harder with them next time. When friends misunderstand, our spouse is angry, our children are ungrateful, when we can forgive, we are free. If pride, disgust or vengeful thoughts hold us captive, we are bound by the actions of others. As He hath loosed us from our sins, He can cut the chains of negative emotion which may threaten to bind us again. "Shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee?" Matthew 18:33. Lord, help us to more quickly forgive and forget.

ILLINOIS, CISSNA PARK

Elaine Sauder - Mary Knapp

How quickly the fall season passed and Thanksgiving was here. We are privileged to live in a country where we may observe these special times with families and loved ones, enjoying our freedoms that we sometimes take for granted.

Sunday, November 20, the Bloomington choir joined us for the day with a church potluck following in the evening. It was an enjoyable day and we do appreciate their having shared of their talents and time.

Many of our congregation gathered the eve of December 13 for our annual Christmas caroling, splitting into three large groups and returning to the fellowship hall for refreshments. It was time well spent to see the joy and happiness in the eyes of those we visited.

December 21 the Sunday school and Bible classes will present the Christmas program for us. The children are so earnest as they give readings and songs about the Christ Child and the true meaning of Christmas. We truly lose if we cannot attend the program.

Those on the sick list this month have been Bro. Charles and Sis. Wilma Walder, both medical patients. Surgical patients have been Sis. Ellen Hofbuer, Bro. Walt Kaufmann, Bro. Urb Bauer, and Bro. Lynn Knapp. Our wish would be for God's healing touch for each one. We also need to remember the shut-ins. As we are now in the Christmas season when all about us is merry and bright, consider setting aside a little more time each day to do a good deed and fulfill our commitments. Then continue right on throughout the coming year!

Visiting ministers this month have been Bro. Bob Beebe (South Bend, IN), Bros. Dennis Kaufmann and Ron Heiniger (Bloomington) and Elder Bro. Art Bahler (Fairbury). We extend a special thanks to each of them.

The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen nor touched but are felt in the heart.

Author Unknown

Give Your Address Changes
To Your Reporter

ILLINOIS, CONGERVILLE

Susan Zobrist - Sandy Knapp

Kevin and Peg Balducci gladly welcome Shane Michael into their lives. We are thankful that God has given them a healthy little miracle. The grandparents are Bro. Vernon and Sis. Judy Wettstein and Art and Trudy Balducci of Eureka.

Laura, Jared, Elizabeth and Hallie also welcome a miracle into their family. Harold Lee is the little miracle born to Bro. Mike and Sis. Mary Schieber. His grandparents are Bro. Frank and Sis. Elma Wackerle and Bro. Lee and Sis. Velda Overmyer.

We are praying for Pete Reel who was hospitalized this month. May God's healing hand touch his ailing body and heart.

This past fall, Jeff Schrock and Rose Sizelove were married. May they look to God for guidance as they begin their life together. Parents of the couple are Bro. Steve and Sis. Gerri Schrock and Cary and Liz Sizelove (Eureka).

Our prayer for you throughout the new year is that no matter if joy or sorrow comes your way, it will bring you closer to God and His will.

ILLINOIS, ELGIN Elizabeth Schambach Betty Bachtold

Lord, with the angels we do rejoice,
Help us to sing with heart and
voice,
Glory to God in the Highest,
Peace on Earth, good will to men.

This old, but ever new story, was portrayed in song and verse by our dear Sunday school children December 18.

May God bless and comfort Bro. Fred and Sis. Libby Wahl in the passing of his father, Otto Wahl (Arizona).

Our congregation is blessed by the birth of three little girls. Jennifer and Garrison Gudeman are "all smiles" about the birth of little sister, Ashlyn Nicole, born November 21 to Bro. Tom and Sis. Elaine. Grandparents include Elder Bro. Wendell and Sis. Marcella Gudeman (Franceseville, IN) and Bro. Bill and Sis. Cora Schambach (Elgin).

Little Hannah Marie was born

December 10 to Bro. Ted and Sis. Heidi Schock, and was welcomed home by big sister, Naomi. Helping grandparents are Bro. Richard and Sis. Lyla Schock, and Bro. Howard and Sis. Patricia Schifferer.

Bro. Kevin and Sis. Denise Kilgus are happy to receive their third daughter, Kirsten Leigh, born December 17. Eagerly awaiting their coming home are big sisters, Amber and Natalie, as well as grandparents, Bro. Richard and Sis. Jeannette Kilgus, and Bro. Leland and Sis. Laurene Zimmerman (Eureka).

Our loved one, Florence Feucht (Bro. John) has been a hospital patient. We are thankful she could return home, and we pray for God's continued mercies. Also we wish God's healing power upon Sis. Evelyn Gudeman (Bro. William) and Melody Schambach (Bill) who have both undergone surgery.

"... Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: and he changeth the times and the seasons: . . ."

Daniel 2:20 - 21

ILLINOIS, EUREKA
Kathy Leman

Another year is dawning,
 Dear Master, let it be,
 In working or in waiting,
 Another year for Thee.

Frances Havergal

Another year is coming to a close, and another year will soon be upon us. May we rededicate our lives to Him and strive to live a more submissive life unto Him.

Our hospital patients this past month were Maury Crawford, Elder Bro. Leroy Huber and Bro. Tim Carr. May God grant healing as He sees best and may we remember those who suffer afflictions of the body and cannot go in and out as those who enjoy good health. Our good health is certainly a blessing from God.

Bro. Ervin Knecht (Lamar, MO) was our only visiting minister this past month. May God bless him for his willingness to come and be spent in our behalf.

Bro. Duane and Sis. Eileen Blunier welcomed Kayla Ann into their hearts

and home this past month. Kayla's brother, Marc, and sisters, Beth, Becky and Crystal, are anxious to get to know their new sister. Grandparents are Bro. Bob and Sis. Marie Hohulin (Roanoke) and Bro. Sam and Sis. Elizabeth Blunier (Eureka). May God bless this family circle.

We held our annual business meeting December 7. We thank those whose terms have ended and pray that God will bless those who will assume duties so that everything that is done will be done in Godly order.

Our Christmas program was Wednesday evening, December 14. What a blessing to be reminded through song and scripture reading of the lowly birth of our Lord and Saviour. May we have that childlike faith shown by our Sunday school children, as we live each day in the Lord.

Our dear Sis. Sally Fehr was able to lay down her cross and enter that eternal rest for which she was striving. Our sympathy goes to her daughters, Sis. Helen Belsley (Bro. Bill) and Sis. Madeline Cawley (Dallas) of our congregation. We will certainly miss Sis. Sally in our assembly for she was such a joy to meet.

Reminder: January is Silver Lining collection for Eureka. Also, if you have an address change, please give this to your reporter.

Elder Bro. Leroy and Sis. Clara Huber want to sincerely thank everyone for their prayers, love and kindness shown to them since Bro. Leroy's surgery and return home. Everything is sincerely appreciated and they pray that God will bless you.

ILLINOIS, FAIRBURY
Jean Bachtold - Crystal Fehr

Our Christmas program, December 18, was a reminder to all that Jesus Christ is King of Kings and of how much our lives should be dedicated to serving Him.

"Take time to be holy, the world rushes on;
 Spend much time in secret with Jesus alone --
 By looking to Jesus, Like Him thou shalt be;
 Thy friends in thy conduct His likeness shall see."

"Take Time To Be Holy"
 W. D. Longstaff

In this new year, 1989, may we "take time" to set ourselves apart from the rushing world.

"Thus saith the Lord, In an acceptable time have I heard thee and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee."

Isaiah 49:8

We "preserve" our faith when we bow before our Lord God in prayer, pray for direction and guidance, and then humbly follow His bidding for our lives. We were privileged to have Bros. Dave Wiegand (Champaign), Marshall Heinold (Washington), Ed Alt (Cissna Park), Wayne Anliker and Gary Brown (Forrest) with us. Their messages were wonderful, stirring our hearts to a greater communion with our Lord. We pray God's richest blessings on those brothers who are called to serve as vessels for God in our behalf.

We were privileged to witness the testimonies and baptisms of two dear souls. Our new brother and sister-in-faith are Bro. Alan and Sis. Linda Walter. Their parents are Bro. Richard and Sis. Colleen and Nancy and the late Sam Eaton. Elder Bros. Edwin Ringger (Gridley) and Perry Zimmerman (Forrest) came to assist our Elder Bro. Art Bahler in this sacred work. May God's blessings be upon this couple in their Christian walk.

We entreat God's grace and blessing upon Mark Edelman (Bro. Walt and Sis. Rosie) and Jeff Moser (Bro. Lloyd and Myrna), who have heeded the Saviour's invitation and are seeking their soul's salvation in their youth. May God supply their every need and help them build on the Solid Rock, Jesus Christ.

Babies bring a new joy into the home when they arrive. On November 22, Bro. Roger and Sis. Kathy Wiegand were blessed with Brandon Richard. He has Nicole and Justin to welcome him. Grandparents are Sis. Lena Wiegand (Roanoke) and Bro. Rich and Sis. Rachel Leman (Roanoke).

Evan Douglas is the first little blessing for Bro. Doug and Sis. Jean Greiner. Grandparents are Bro. Howard and Sis. Vi Greiner (Cissna Park) and Bro. Albert and Sis. Virginia Hunziker (Morton). We share their joy over their new bundles of love.

"They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

Isaiah 35:10

Sis. Elsie Denick (late Edwin) was able to lay down her cross and be relieved of her sufferings. She passed away November 25. Surviving are two sons, Bill and Eugene; two sisters, Sis. Alene Broquard and Sis. Louise Bach and one granddaughter, Robin Denick.

Loved ones hospitalized have been Bonnie Young, Julie Young, Dana Banwart, Clara Bender, Sis. Lydia Wiedman and Sis. Dorothy Steffen.

The families of Bro. Joe Slagel and Bro. George Zimmerman wish to extend a thank-you for prayers, cards and deeds of kindness shown over the loss of their loved ones.

The family of Sis. Elsie Denick wishes to express their heartfelt thanks for all the lovely deeds of kindness and the prayers and support rendered to her during her illness and death. Their thanks go to the Bluffton, IN, congregation for the tapes which she enjoyed.

ILLINOIS, FORREST
Sherri Kelson
Sandra Schneider

We appreciate the ministers that came to visit us. May the Lord reward Bros. Glenn Dill (Tremont), Neil Widmer (Wolcott, IN), Ken Schneider (Remington, IN) and Virgil Metzger (Chicago) for their labors.

Bro. Brian Waibel (Bro. Eldon and Sis. Marge) and Sis. Wendy Zehr (Bro. Warren and Sis. Delores) of Fairbury became one in the Lord November 20.

On December 10, Roger Steidinger and Sheila Kaeb (Cissna Park) were united in marriage. Their parents are Bro. Ivan and Sis. Kathryn Steidinger and Bro. Steve and Sis. Bonnie Kaeb (Cissna Park). May the Lord's love dwell in these couple's new homes, for we know that the most essential element in any home is God.

Amy Ricketts and Mark Shackley (Minot, ND) have announced their engagement. Bro. Nick and Sis. Jean Ricketts and Leo Vince and Rosemary Shackley (Kokomo, IN) are their parents.

The engagement of Bro. Kent Zimmerman (Bro. Allen and Sis. Carolyn) and Sis. Paulette Schmidt (Bro. Elmer and Sis. Hazel) of Winthrop, MN, was made known to our congregation. We rejoice with these young people and their families.

Bro. Les Roth (Sis. Ruth), Sis. Dorothy Bachtold (Carol), and Sis. Lydia Sohn have needed to spend some time in the hospital. Our thoughts and prayers have certainly been with them and we look forward to having them assemble with us again soon.

As the New Year begins, may we ever "strive aright" to live a life pleasing and acceptable to our Father in heaven.

ILLINOIS, GRIDLEY
Perry A. Klopfenstein

"Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ."

Galatians 6:2

Our congregation recently fulfilled the above verse during the death of two dear souls, both young and old. The grieving families testified to the outpouring of support from the brethren.

Bro. Carl Schlipf, 79, passed away suddenly November 25. His funeral was Sunday, November 27. He is survived by his dear wife of nearly 32 years, Sis. Lola. Also surviving are two sons, Bro. Richard (Milford, IN) and Bro. Jacob (Gridley); one daughter, Sis. Mary Stoller (Gridley); one brother, Bro. Adam (Gridley); two sisters, Sis. Ida Pfaufer (Eureka) and Esther (Portland, OR); and six grandchildren.

Bro. Carl's kindly disposition will be missed in our congregation. He and his wife were able to enjoy the many earthly benefits of converted life together for two years, both being baptized in June, 1986, and thus making their family circle complete in the Lord.

"But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Matthew 19:14

On December 9, little Jeffrey

Romersberger, 1, was called to rest. His funeral was held Sunday, December 11. Jeffrey was born October 28, 1987, and had suffered from a rare blood disease since his birth. He is survived by his parents, Bro. Ron and Sis. Gail; two sisters, Ashley, 7, and Allison, 5; and his grandparents, Bro. Alvin and Betty Hari (Cissna Park) and Bro. Bill and Sis. Lucille Romersberger (Gridley).

In the last few months of his life, little Jeffrey suffered much pain and distress, and his death was a merciful act of God. Truly, as his grandfather said, "He has gone on before us." This was the great comfort of his parents and loved ones. His short life, featured often by pain and physical discomfort, is now crowned by eternal life in the joyous presence of God.

As the overflow crowd at this funeral watched his casket and family walk into church to the refrain of "Jesus Loves Me," the moving of God's Spirit caused many tears to flow. It was indeed a touching moment!

On Tuesday evening, December 13, more than one hundred persons, parents along with children ranging from kindergarten to teenagers, gathered to go Christmas caroling. The throng divided into three caroling groups and several widows were visited. Later, everyone gathered at the fellowship hall for a prayer, treats and fellowship. It was a wonderful evening of family fellowship!

On December 18, our Sunday school children presented their annual Christmas program.

Bro. Wes Knapp (Goodfield) preached at Gridley, December 18.

ILLINOIS,
ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY
Brenda Huber

At the start of the new year, the average citizen of America considers some serious questions. First, he asks himself what his successes and failures have been during the past year. He then turns his back on the record book and asks himself what resolutions he should make for the following year to make his successes far outweigh his failures.

Likewise, we, as citizens of the heavenly kingdom, need to humbly examine our spiritual lives. First, how in the past year has Satan caused

us to fail our Lord? Do we have hidden sins shadowing our witness? We need to erase the record book as far as the East is from the West by confessing our faults and repenting for our failures. Then, upon our knees, let's make the most sincere resolution, to surrender within the warmth of His grace to do His will daily.

Bro. Jaye Rinkenberger (Goodfield, IL) recently spoke about his precious gift of forgiveness at our annual "Invite A Friend" Bible study. He reminded us of the story of David, how he too failed the Lord but was forgiven when he humbly acknowledged his sin and prayed, "O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity and cleanse me from sin." (Psalms 51:1-2).

ILLINOIS, MORTON

Phyllis Farney - Cheryl Wuthrich

The beginning of a new year often gives us hope for a "new beginning" in life. Most of us reading this article have already made our real "new beginning" when we repented, surrendered our lives to Jesus Christ, and were converted. This was made possible when Jesus wiped the slate of our past life clean by sacrificing His precious blood and by giving His life for us. yet those of us who have been in Christ for some time yearn for yet a closer walk with Him. The question is: How can we become more Christ-like in this new year of 1989? The answer is: We can, by knowing His Word (II Timothy 2:15) and applying it to our lives. (James 1:22). Let us pray for God-given diligence and discipline to this end in 1989.

Bro. Kevin Leman (Bro. Howard and Sis. Gloria) of Morton and Sis. Elizabeth Schleiter (Helene and the late Richard) of St. Louis, MO, made a new beginning together when they were united in holy matrimony November 20. We pray for the full measure of the Spirit's guidance in their lives. We wish to thank our neighboring Washington congregation for letting the ceremony be held there due to repairs still being made on our church.

For some, this past year and the

new year will require making new beginnings out of sorrow. Our prayers and sympathy are with Andy and Kathy Pflederer in the loss of their daughter, Anna Lise, who was still-born and whose funeral was held November 25. May God's comfort be over her parents, her brother, Zachary, her grandparents, Bro. Bob and Sis. Eleanor Pflederer (Morton) and Bro. John and Sis. Sara Diggie (Roanoke), and her great-grandparents, Bro. Sam Pflederer and Sis. Stella Zimmerman (both of Morton).

Our annual Sunday school Christmas program was held December 11. Once again the young people presented us with the Christmas story. Our Sunday school programs are another opportunity for us to reach out to unbelievers. In many of our churches we have children attending our Sunday schools whose parents do not attend church. Let us make sure they are invited and made welcome to our programs.

Our all-church Christmas caroling was held December 18. It is always one of the highlights of the Christmas season. Not only do families, singles, old and young get together in fellowship to sing praises of our Saviour's birth, we also get an opportunity to go to the homes of our loved ones who are not able to carol anymore themselves. It is a good opportunity for our children and all of us to reflect on the true reason for the season.

We would like to thank Bro. Greg Rassi (Chicago, IL) and Bro. Wes Knapp (Goodfield, IL) for ministering God's Holy Word to us. May they be richly blessed for their labors of love.

May a personal goal for all of us be, that we should be more Christ-like by December 1989 than we were in December 1988. The tools are prayer, knowledge of His Word and application.

In memory of Steve Zimmerman:

MY FIRST CHRISTMAS IN HEAVEN

I've had my first Christmas in heaven --
A glorious, wonderful day!
I stood with saints of the ages
Who found Christ the Truth and the Way,

I sang with the heavenly choir;
Just think! I, who long so to sing!
And oh, what celestial music
We brought to our Savior and King!

We sang the glad songs of redemption,
How Jesus to Bethlehem came,
And how they called His name Jesus,
To us, our Savior, He became.

We sang once again with the angels,
The song that they sang that blest morn,
When shepherds first heard the glad story
That Jesus, the Savior, was born.

Oh, how I wish you had been there;
No Christmas on earth could compare
With all the rapture and glory
We witnessed in heaven so fair.

You know how I always loved Christmas
It seemed such a wonderful day,
With all of my loved ones around me,
The children so happy and gay.

Yes, now I can see why I loved it;
And oh, what a joy it will be
When you and my loved ones are with me,
To share in the glories I see.

So dear ones on earth, here's my greeting:
Look up till the day dawn appears,
And oh what a Christmas awaits us,
Beyond all our partings and tears.
By Albert Simpson Reitz
Submitted by Bro. Russ & Sis.
Alvina Zimmerman

ILLINOIS, PEORIA Joe and Jackie Herman

"I will bless the Lord at all times:
his praise shall continually be in my mouth."

Psalms 34:1

It was a blessing to gather together December 11 with our dear Sunday school children as they told,

in word and song, of the birth of our blessed Lord and Savior. We thank all the teachers, parents and grandparents for making this program such a blessing.

We offer our humble thanks to the visiting brethren who imparted many blessings unto us. With us this past month were: Bro. Noah Herman (Tucson, AZ) and Bro. Gerald Sutter (Taylor, MO).

Our hospital patients were Fred Aeschleman, Sis. Emma Messer, Sis. Anna Sutter, and Bro. Otto Kinsinger. May they feel God's love and concern in their time of need.

Two sisters who had assembled with us for many years will no longer walk among us. Sis. Ruth Yoder and Sis. Barbara Hoerr have been called to their heavenly home. We know they will be missed by their families and friends. Our sympathy is shared with those who loved these two dear ones.

"I wish to thank everyone for their prayers, cards, gifts and flowers while in the hospital."

Sis. Clara Metz

God has granted us the arrival of a blessed new year. Let us all strive to walk closer and serve Him more sincerely this year!

LET US HAVE A GARDEN THIS YEAR

First, let have give rows of peas --

Preparedness

Promptness

Perseverance

Politeness

Prayer

Next, let's have three rows of squash --

Squash gossip

Squash criticism

Squash indifference

Then, let's have five rows of lettuce

--

Let us be faithful

Let us be unselfish

Let us be loyal

Let us love one another

Let us be truthful

No garden is complete without turnips --

Turn up for church regularly

Turn up with a smile every day

Turn up with a new idea

Turn up with real determination.

Author Unknown

ILLINOIS, PRINCEVILLE Marjean Lehman

"God is in every tomorrow, therefore I live for today,

Certain of finding at sunrise,
guidance and strength for the way;

Power for each moment of weakness,
hope for each moment of pain,

Comfort for every sorrow, sunshine
and joy after rain."

Special thanks go to our visiting ministers: Bro. Clifford Grimm (West Bend, IA), Elder Bro. Chuck Hemmer (Peoria), Bro. Rick Plattner (Peoria), Bro. Mike Rieker (Peoria) and Bro. John Steiner (Oakville, IA). May God bless them for their service to Him and to us. We also want to thank our own ministers for their faithful service to God and to us during the year. May God bless them and their families.

We have heard the tapes of the brotherhood conference on two Friday evenings. May we strive more diligently in our walk of faith to allow the true light to shine forth in the examples we radiate.

On October 22, Rodney Stahl and Cathy Cable were united in holy matrimony. Parents are Bro. Lyle and Sis. Betty Stahl and James Cable and Janice Grayson. May they seek the help of the Lord in establishing their home.

"Jesus loves me this I know for the Bible tells me so . . ." Two couples have opened their hearts and homes to a little child. On November 15, Sis. Pam and Bro. Bruce Graham welcomed little Joshua Michael. Grandparents are Bro. Lawrence and Sis. Elaine Wagenbach and Bro. Dick and Sis. Jeanette Graham. On November 25, little Devon Nathaniel joined the family of Sis. Lisa and Bro. Keith Knobloch. Grandparents are Sis. Gladys and Bro. Nick Knobloch and Sis. Norma and Bro. Bob Pfledderer (Francesville, IN). May God bless them as they bring them up in the fear and admonition of the Lord.

Sis. Doris Christ was a surgical

patient. John Hager was a hospital patient. Sis. Lillian Stahl underwent foot surgery.

Sis. Marie Musselman wishes to thank all who remembered her with visits, cards, gifts and prayers during her recent hospital stay and since returning to the home.

Sis. Lillian Stahl also wants to thank all those who remembered her in prayer, with a card, visit or gift while she was in the hospital and since returning to her home.

Our entire congregation has felt in some measure the keen pain of loss in the recent passing of our dear Bro. Elmer Martin. Bro. Elmer passed away November 18. Funeral services were held November 21. We have tried to express our sincere sympathy to the family and realize we do not fully understand the depth of their loss. Where words have failed us, we trust God to provide. We especially extend sympathy to our dear Sis. Janet Martin and the children, Sis. Debbie Givens, Mike Martin and Sis. Nancy Witzig (Altadena, CA). Also our prayers are with his mother, Sis. Louise Martin. To the entire family, the brothers and sisters, as well as all the relatives, we express our sympathy. May God provide and care for each of them as we remember them in our prayers.

"Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen."

Jude 24, 25

ILLINOIS, ROANOKE Sandy Leman - Patsy Kaeb

As another New Year dawns, we can all look back and count our many blessings. God has been good to us.

We welcome our new Bro. Andy Hodel (Bro. Dave and Sis. Maxine), who gave his testimony of faith and was baptized December 11. May the Lord ever be near him.

We were privileged to have Bro. Kent Heimer (Taylor, MO), Bro. Earl Ringger (Gridley) and Bro. Everett Hari (Bloomington) to share their love of God and His Word with us. May God bless them and their families.

On November 12, David Knapp and Melissa Rusk were united in marriage. Bro. Ken and Sis. Judy Knapp and Earl and Sandy Rusk (Geneseo) are the parents of the happy couple. We pray God's richest blessing on their marriage.

Bro. David Fischer has a new little grandson. Blake Ian was born November 21 to Bob and Kelly Fischer (Daytona Beach, FL).

Bro. Roger and Sis. Debbie Bertschi are the parents of Elias William, born November 28. Nicole, Jennifer and Christopher welcomed Elias home. Grandparents are Bro. Eugene and Sis. Dorothy Bertschi and Bro. William and Sis. Lydia Hohulin (Goodfield).

Bro. Duane and Sis. Eileen Blunier (Eureka) were blessed with a new baby daughter, Kayla Ann November 29. Grandparents are Bro. Bob and Sis. Marie Hohulin and Bro. Sam and Sis. Elizabeth Blunier (Eureka).

Our sympathy is given to Sis. Ruth Ann Hodel in the recent death of her brother, Gary Roecker (Morton).

Also, our congregation extends our sympathy to the family of Sis. Sally Fehr who passed away December 8. Sis. Sally worshipped with our congregation for many years and we will all miss her kind, sweet ways.

We offer prayers of healing for our loved ones: Sis. Angela Rassi (Bro. Joe), Sis. Marie Aeschleman (Bro. Orie), Sis. Lavina Leman (Bro. Wilmer), Bro. Walt Fehr (Sis. Arlette), Bro. Rudy Hoffman (Sis. Mary), Bro. Jerry Getz and Seth Hodel (Bro. Brad and Sis. Patty) who have been hospitalized this month.

May the Lord bless Sis. Judy Luginbuhl for her time and efforts put into writing the Silver Lining for the past few years, as she passes on these duties at this time.

ILLINOIS, TREMONT
Carolyn Bolliger
Marsha Koch

We were again privileged to sit and enjoy a blessed evening listening to our Sunday school children present their annual Christmas program. We thank the children and their teachers for their efforts.

We wish to offer our sympathy to the David Beutel and Alvin Beutel families in the loss of Sis. Eunice and

Sis. Carol's mother, Sis. Sally Fehr (Eureka).

We are thankful for the two new sisters who recently gave their testimonies and were baptized. A loving welcome is given to Sis. Michelle Holmes, daughter of Marshall and Sis. Phyllis Holmes, and Sis. Colleen Beutel, daughter of Bro. Alvin and Sis. Carol Beutel.

We always appreciate the efforts of our visiting ministers. We were happy to have with us Bros. John Steiner (Oakville, IA), Vernon Wettstein (Congerville), Greg Rassi (Chicago) and Elder Bro. Bob Grimm (Goodfield) who assisted Bro. Dan Koch in our recent baptisms.

ILLINOIS, WASHINGTON
Carol Schick

"Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet,
 and a light unto my path."

Psalms 119:105

We are such fortunate people to have so many willing servants of God stand before us every Wednesday and Sunday and read God's Word to us. Do we stop to realize what a blessing that is? Do we pray for them daily? Do we encourage them and let them know we appreciate the time they give for our spiritual benefit? As a church we are as a stack of logs in a fire burning brightly. If we separate ourselves or others, the fire in the separate logs will soon go out. May we strive to stay close to each other and to unite in prayer for our ministering brethren. This past month God has directed several visiting ministers to Washington and we thank them each for sharing the Lord's Day with us. They were Bro. Greg Rassi (Chicago), Elder Bro. Roy Grimm (Taylor, MO), Bro. Loren Schrenk (St. Louis, MO), Elder Bros. Joe Braker (Morton) and Don Sauder (Roanoke), and Bro. Marvin Schmidgall (Eureka).

Bro. Dave Wiegand (Urbana) led our congregation in a Bible study on the topic of the conduct of a believer. The evening was a blessing and it was apparent that it was the Spirit of God speaking to all who had ears to hear. God bless you, Bro. Dave, for your time and fellowship.

We are all praying for God's healing powers to be evidenced in the life

of Ernie Pfaffman (Sis. Ida) according to His divine will. Ernie has been a hospital patient for several weeks and we pray for him and his family during these trying times.

Our Sunday school classes presented us with a beautiful and touching Christmas program this year. To learn so many lines and songs takes a great deal of effort on the part of the students, the parents and teachers. May God bless their efforts.

May everyone have a spiritually abundant New Year!

INDIANA, BLUFFTON
Jean Moser - Becky Isch

On Saturday evening, November 19, we were privileged to hear the report of the brotherhood conference presented by Elder Bros. Ed Schwartz, Phil Stettner and Bro. Bob Meyer. We need to observe and imitate our Lord's pattern and footsteps so that we become better children of our heavenly Father.

On Thanksgiving Day, Bro. Lynn Stieglitz shared God's Word with us. May he and his family be richly blessed for this labor of love.

Four homes in our congregation have been blessed with new babies this month. Bro. Tim and Sis. Susie Tonner became first-time parents as they welcomed Travis William November 29. His proud grandparents are Bro. Bill and Sis. Dianna Tonner and Bro. Vernon and Sis. Dorothy Gerber (Bluffton North).

Benjamin Scott arrived December 7 to Bro. Scott and Sis. Melinda Gerber. He has a brother, Mick. Bro. Larry and Sis. Pauline Gerber and Mr. and Mrs. John Cowens are his grandparents.

On December 9, Bro. Bruce and Sis. Nancy Bedwell became the parents of Kristen Jo. Excited helpers at home are Corey, Tracey, Shaunda and Ryan. Her grandparents include Herman and Sis. Phyllis Fiechter.

Bro. Don and Sis. Suzie Fiechter were blessed with their fifth daughter, Holly Marie, December 18. Her happy big sisters are Heidi, Janon, Amy and Shauna. Bro. Carl and Sis. Mary Fiechter and Bro. Earl and Sis. Pat Gerber are her grandparents.

May the Lord bless all of these families and give the parents grace

and understanding to teach and guide their children in His ways.

The engagement of Sis. Jeanne Bertsch (Bro. Walter and Sis. Lillian) and Bro. Wayne Steffen (Bro. Terry and Sis. Gloria) was announced to us on December 18. We wish them God's richest blessings as they share their lives.

Also, on Sunday evening, December 18, our Sunday school children presented our annual Christmas program. As we listened to the real Christmas story in song, we were inspired to follow their example and be "as little children" as our Lord has instructed us.

We wish a fond farewell to Bro. Frank and Sis. Gail Szabo and their children, Pierre and Moonlight. Bro. Frank is employed in Michigan City, and they will be assembling with the LaCrosse congregation.

Our prayers have been with our hospital patients, Andrew Bertsch (Bro. Allen and Sis. Terri), Sis. Sherry Snodgrass (Walter), Bro. Paul Dotterer (Sis. Phyllis), Bro. Gerald Fiechter (Sis. Eunice) and Bro. Steve Reinhard (Sis. Renee). We wish them renewed health and our Father's healing touch.

A NEW YEAR'S MEDITATION

Give us through the coming year
 Quietness of mind
 Teach us to be patient
 and always to be kind,
 Give us reassurance
 When everything goes wrong
 So our faith remains unfaltering
 and our hope and courage strong --
 and show us that in quietness
 We can feel Your presence near
 Filling us with joy and peace
 Throughout the coming year.

Helen Steiner Rice

INDIANA, BLUFFTON NORTH

Lois Drayer

Debbie Aeschliman

Our Sunday school Christmas program was held Sunday afternoon, December 18. It is always a joy to listen to our children sing about the birth of Jesus. It reminded me of a huge sign I saw in someone's yard, saying, "Happy Birthday, Jesus". I wondered how many people on Christmas day would even think of Jesus, or

would it just be a day off of work and a day to receive presents. I'm thankful that our children are learning the true meaning of Christmas, as evident by their joyful voices singing in unison about Jesus.

Bro. Marvin Leman (Bradford, IL) visited us this past month. We appreciate him coming and spending time with us and welcome him back.

What a nice ending to the year 1988, as we have two souls who have turned their back on the world and are repenting. Our new converts are Brad Lane (Bro. Roger and Sis. Carol) and Russ Mounsey (Bro. Rod and Sis. Rosemary). May God richly bless them as they turn their lives over to Him.

Valerie Zimmer (Bro. Jim and Sis. Cheryl) and Tom Werling (Wilmer "Butch" and Jackie) were united in marriage before God and many witnesses December 10. We wish them joy and happiness as they begin their married life.

We extend congratulations to Bro. Walter and Sis. Imogene Aeschliman in the birth of their new little grandson, Clayton Eric, born November 29 to Bro. Eric and Sis. Norma Aeschliman (Valparaiso). Bro. Vernon and Sis. Dorothy Gerber also became grandparents November 29 with the birth of Travis William born to Bro. Tim and Sis. Susie Tonner (Bluffton). Andrea Nicholle brightened the home of Jack and Carol Wenger with her birth December 3. Congratulations are given to grandparents, Bro. Herman and Sis. Mary Baumgartner. A son, Andrew Mark, was born December 14 to Bro. Mark and Sis. Susan Harris. Big brother, Bruce, and big sister, Beth, along with grandparents, Bro. Sherman and Sis. Lucille Steffen, welcome Andrew home with open arms. May God bless these parents and grandparents as they watch these little children grow from tots to adults. We hope that they will someday learn to know the Lord.

Our sympathy is given to Bro. Ben and Sis. Arlene and their children in the loss of her mother, Sis. Emma Bahler (Bro. Jacob, Remington). We hope that the family of Ted Fiechter can feel our love and heartfelt sympathy reaching out to them. Ted was killed in an automobile accident at the age of 47. He was the son of the late Bro. Walter and Sis. Gladys, who survives. He is also sur-

vived by his wife, Kathy; two sons and two stepsons; and three sisters, Sis. Linda Dubach (Bro. Mike), Sis. Cathy Bussel (Bro. Dave) and Judy Dubach (Pat). May God be with the family and grant them peace of mind.

Hospital patients this past month were little Lucus Gerber (Bro. Steve and Sis. Gayla), Philip Bertsch (Bro. Lonnie and Sis. Becky) and Sis. Rhonda Rupel (Bro. Fred). We hope that they will recover soon.

We welcome Sis. Elaine Steffen (Bro. Ken and Sis. Roberta) back home. She had been living in the Chicago area.

Sis. Helen Smekens (Muncie Health Care Center) wishes to thank everyone who remembered her with cards, prayers and gifts during her recent hospital stay.

INDIANA, FRANCESVILLE

Jackie Huber

We rejoice with four souls who have found peace with God and await baptism. They are Kevin and Connie Wuethrich and Dave and Julie Westfall. What could be a better way to begin a year than to know God has accepted us?

On November 30, many gathered to share holy communion. We especially thank Elder Bro. John Klotzle (Altadena, CA) who assisted Elder Bro. Wendell on that evening.

On December 4, we witnessed the marriage vows of Bro. Mike Putt (Bro. Wayne and Sis. Paulette) to Sis. Donna Gudeman (Bro. Willis and Sis. Margaret). We're happy to have a newly established Christian home here and wish them God's continued nearness.

A Christian home has also recently been established in Phoenix, AZ. On December 11 Sis. Gina Huber (Bro. Gene and Sis. Barb) and Bro. James Emch (Bro. Jerry and Sis. Cathy of Phoenix, AZ) were united in marriage. We'll miss Sis. Gina assembling here with us, but wish them both God's richest blessings in Phoenix.

Thom and Sandy Salyers are the happy parents of a baby girl, Chalene Dani, born December 4. May God bless their family.

On a recent Sunday afternoon, we listened as our children recited verses and sang songs about Jesus' birth. In the evening many again gathered to

sing Christmas carols to friends and neighbors.

Sis. Verna Stedman (Bro. Morris) has returned to the Parkview Haven Retirement Home after extended stays in the hospital. We pray for God's healing hand to touch her in His will.

Visiting ministers this past month have been Bros. Neil Widmer (Wolcott, IN), Steve Ringger (Bluffton North, IN), Elder Bro. Roy Grimm (Taylor, MO), Bros. Arnie Gerst (Taylor, MO), Harold Gramm (Morris, MN), Glenn Price (Sarasota, FL), Carl Wyss (Washington, IL), Todd Feller (La-Crosse, IN) and Vernon Schwab (Wolcott, IN). We're thankful to God and each of them for their service to us.

INDIANA, INDIANAPOLIS

Kathy Freed - Gail Bradford

Visiting ministers, Bros. Gary Tonner (Bluffton), Edwin Bahler (Remington), Lynn Stieglitz (Leo) and Wayne Lehman (South Bend) shared the Word with us. We appreciate their service on our behalf.

The Sunday school gave us a gift of their talent and energy as they presented their Christmas program about Jesus, the Light of the world. We appreciate the extra effort of teachers and song leaders in bringing us this special kind of worship service.

Why should we be humble? The characteristic of humility is the opposite of the trait of pride. Worldly pride calls attention to the proud person. Christian humility calls attention to Jesus Christ through the words and deeds of a believer. The exhortation - "Let your light shine" could be said another way, "Let Christ's light shine through you." Pride obscures the Light, because self gets in the way.

Following Christ's example of humility is certainly not following the call of the world, with its emphasis on material possessions, physical beauty, self-indulgence and winning.

However, if we call ourselves Christians, we must consider humility as an important witness in the world.

Jesus was free of worldly pride in appearance, "success," reputation, riches and rank. We need to follow His example. Our witness may be quiet, but we are assured that it will be effective.

"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me: for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

Matthew 11:29

We joyfully welcome two beautiful babies into our congregation. Born December 6 to Bro. Ardie and Sis. Leann Bucher was Katlyn Suzanne. Katlyn's grandparents are Bro. Ed and Sis. Elsie Hohulin (Goodfield, IL) and Sis. Esther Bucher (Valparaiso). Born December 16 to Bro. Eric and Sis. Ginny Zeller was Suzanne Elizabeth. Her grandparents are Bro. Elmer and Sis. Marjorie Witzig (Gridley) and Bro. Henry and Sis. Norma Zeller (Morton, IL). We rejoice with these families!

INDIANA, LACROSSE

Sandy Heinold

On December 11, we enjoyed hearing the Sunday school children tell the true meaning of Christmas in their poems and Christmas songs. It's always encouraging to see our youth willingly stand and tell that sweet story of old.

Our congregation is very pleased to welcome Bro. Frank and Sis. Gail Szabo and their children, Pierre and Moonlight, to LaCrosse. They have recently moved here from Bluffton and we hope we will all receive a blessing as we worship together. Their new address is 1010 Wabash Street, Michigan City, IN 46360.

Our thanks go to our visiting ministers, Bro. Marshall Heinold (Washington, IL) and Bro. Bill Schlatter (Junction, OH).

As a new year dawns, we are afforded another opportunity to prove to our Lord that we love Him in sincerity. We're thankful that the Word of God clearly shows the way:

1. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment." Matthew 22:37-38

2. "And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also." I John 4:21

3. "If you love me, keep my commandments." St. John 15:15

It doesn't take a new year
To begin our lives anew,

God grants us new beginnings
Each day the whole year through --
So never be discouraged
For there comes daily to all men
The chance to make another start
And begin all over again.

Helen Steiner Rice

INDIANA, LEO

Doug Kellenberger

January 1 . . . a new year . . . an appropriate time to begin anew. Some of our past experiences are discouraging. It would feel so good to start over. In Christ that's possible every day.

How do we deal with our unsuccessful past? It can't be done over. Then, why do we continually agonize about it? Somehow it's natural to think that we have to get our life in good order before God will accept us. But God says that He is the only one who can get our life in order. We need to accept that and let Him do it.

Our Lord must be a God of "starting over." He says His compassion is new every morning. (Lamentations 3:23) He must have known that we would fail because He commands, "forget those things which are behind and press forward . . ." (Philippians 3:13).

Our success with God does not depend upon our own performance, but upon our willingness to let Him "start over" and perform in us. That surrender and trust can start new with His compassion every morning.

Our little church at Leo has some new beginners in the Lord. Some are young and some are older. We appreciate the Lord's Spirit drawing their hearts to Him, and their willingness to surrender.

Our sympathy extends to Sis. Janice Pfister in the passing of her mother, Sis. Emma Bahler, at Remington, IN.

Everyone regrets the fall and subsequent broken arm of Sis. Anna Steiner yesterday at church. She's very tender but up and around at home. At her high age of 99, Anna has asked the Lord, "what do you still have for me?" His reply was, "prayer." It is so wisdomful of God! At a time when the activity of the experienced elderly is decreased, their opportunity for interceding prayer is increased. We're so glad to have Sis. Anna and

her helping sisters still interceding on our behalf.

We have listened to the conference tapes in the past few weeks.

Ministering Bros. Gary Tonner (Bluffton) and Randy Gasser (Detroit, MI) have visited us also.

INDIANA, MILFORD

**Marguerite Hoerr
Sue Schieler**

Our visiting ministers recently were Bro. Ray Sinn (Latty, OH), Bro. Tom Troxel and Bro. Curt Frank (La-Crosse). Also Elder Bro. Alfred Bahler (Wolcott) and Bro. Bob Beebe (South Bend) came to help in the reading of the memorandum.

Our sincere sympathy is given to Bro. Rich and Sis. Kathy Schlipf at the death of his father, Bro. Carl Schlipf (Gridley, IL).

Little Simon Beer, son of Bro. Steve and Sis. Connie, was a patient for eight days at Riley Children's Hospital in Indianapolis. We are happy they are home again and that he can be back in church.

Bro. Maurice Beer was hospitalized recently and we are happy to see him back in church.

Todd Beer, son of Bernie and Peg, is stationed at Grissom Air Force Base near Peru, IN. It's so good having him close to home where he can assemble with us again.

INDIANA, SOUTH BEND

Sue Beebe

Another year of mercies,
Of faithfulness and grace.
Another year of gladness
In the shining of Thy face.

"Another Year Is Dawning"
Frances R. Havergal

Our congregation has certainly felt the mercies, faithfulness and grace of our Lord recently as five of our dear loved ones were involved in a serious automobile accident December 2. We are so thankful their lives were graciously spared. Treated and released was Bro. El Schumacher. Released to recuperate at home was Sis. Ernestine Meister. Hospitalized were sisters Mae Schumacher, Pauline Laidig and Mildred Meister. All are slowly im-

proving. We pray that each one will feel the healing touch of God.

On Saturday, December 10, we met with the Milford congregation for the reading of the summary of the brotherhood conference. The song, "Heart's Wish," (Zion's Harp #173) was sung during the evening. What is our heart's wish? Is it not as it written in verse four, "May each one then in his own place on Him, the Rock, be grounded; by His good Spirit, Word and grace At all times be surrounded; May all be hallowed by God's might; He is our star and shining light."

On December 11 our Sunday school joyfully presented a Christmas program to us. It is always so inspiring to see their eager faces and listen to the songs so sweetly sung. Following the program we all went Christmas caroling for our shut-ins and then enjoyed a chili supper in the church dining room.

Our annual business meeting was held December 14, with the following chosen to fill the various positions: trustee - Bro. Richard Gramm; sound system - Bro. Don Lehman; ushers - Bros. Scott Schafer, Don Lehman and John Schuch; head song leader - Bro. Steve Stoller; real estate aid - Bro. Don Lehman; Home for the Handicapped Rep. - Bro. Marty Langhofer; assistant food committee chairman - Sis. Lavilla Langhofer; assistant vacation Bible school director - Sis. Gigi Schafer; Silver Lining reporter - Sis. Sue Beebe.

Bro. Pat and Sis. Annie Meyer have joyfully added 2 1/2-year-old foster baby Justin to their family. Also enjoying Justin are Amanda and Jennie.

Another year is dawning,
Dear Master, let it be,
In earth, or else in heaven
Another year for Thee.

Frances R. Havergal

INDIANA, VALPARAISO

Beth Heinold - Trish Bucher

Once again our congregation had the opportunity to partake in holy communion. We would like to thank Elder Bro. Dale Eisenmann (Chicago, IL) and Elder Bro. Aaron Steffen (Alto, MI) for giving of themselves to be

used in the Lord's service during our communion.

Our church family is enjoying a blessed holiday season. We have so much to be thankful for. We recently held our annual Christmas dinner, and had the privilege of singing carols to several local homes. We so appreciate the loving fellowship of the brethren.

We give thanks to God for blessing our congregation with two of God's precious lambs. We're rejoicing with Bro. James and Sis. Amy Paarlberg in the birth of their son, Ryan James, and Bro. Eric and Sis. Norma Aeschliman with their new son, Clayton Eric. May God richly bless these two families and give them grace and guidance to nurture these precious souls.

We are thankful for our visiting minister, Bro. Carroll Gerber (Bluffton North, IN). We pray God will bless him for sharing the Word with us.

INDIANA, WEST LAFAYETTE PURDUE UNIVERSITY

Lynn Martin

"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God." Romans 13:1. Our wonderful Lord and God knows what is best for our country and has ordained certain people to lead our nation. We, as citizens and Christians, should pray for these leaders of ours, that they may faithfully execute their positions and maintain our freedom and liberty for which our forefathers so diligently fought.

We also need to pray for the leaders of our church. We would like to thank Bro. Walt Rager (Toledo, OH) for sharing God's precious Word with us at our Thursday evening services. Also, Elder Bro. Wendell Gudeman (Francesville, IN) came and shared the wonderful Christmas story with us at our Christmas program.

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." II Corinthians 5:17. We, from Purdue, would like to wish everyone love, happiness and peace in this new year. We welcome anyone to come and worship with us every other Thursday evening at the Naza-

rene Church on Soldiers Home Road. Also, if anyone is thinking about attending Purdue and would like more information, you can contact either Bro. Kent Rager at 214 W. Wood Street, Apt. 4, West Lafayette, IN 47906, (317) 743-6386, or Sis. Lynn Martin at Earhart Hall, Box 224, West Lafayette IN 47906, (319) 495-6307.

INDIANA, WOLCOTT
Lynell Blume - Lorna Knapp

As the new year starts and the old year ends,
There's no better time to make amends
For all the things we sincerely regret
And wish in our hearts we could somehow forget . . .
We all make mistakes, for it's human to err,
But no one need ever give up in despair,
For God gives us all a brand-new beginning,
A chance to start over and repent of our sinning --
And when God forgives us, we too must forgive,
And resolve to do better each day that we live,
By constantly trying to be like Him more nearly,
And to trust in His wisdom, and love Him more dearly,
Assured that we're never out of His care,
And we're always welcome to seek Him in prayer.

Author Unknown

Our prayers and sympathy have been with Bro. Alfred, Sis. Frances Bahler and family and Bro. Lowell, Sis. Karla Bahler and family since the passing away of their dear mother and grandmother, Sis. Emma Bahler (Remington, IN).

On December 3, Bro. John and Sis. Ruth Ann Lehman became happy, first-time parents of Randy Curtis. Also rejoicing over the miracle of birth are grandparents, Bro. Elvin and Sis. Janet Nuest (LaCrosse, IN) and Harold and June Lehman.

We were sorry to hear that Sis. Emma Furrer had the misfortune of

breaking her hip. May she feel the Lord's nearness as she continues to recover.

Our congregation was richly blessed with visiting ministers this past month. We wish to thank Elder Bro. John Klotzle (Altadena, CA), Elder Bro. Perry Zimmerman (Forrest, IL), Bro. Jim Hoerr (Peoria, IL) and Bro. Gary Brown (Forrest, IL). May God bless these brethren who were willing to lend themselves that His Word could be brought forth.

On December 16, a group from our congregation caroled to the elderly and shut-ins. It was indeed a blessing to bring joy and happiness to others.

IOWA, BURLINGTON
Karen Schulz - Deyona Massner

We were thankful to have several visiting ministers with us this past month. They were Bros. Uriel Gehring (Leo, IN), Russel Wuthrich (Pulaski, IA) and Merle Kaisner (Fairbury, IL). We pray the Lord will bless each one for their willingness to labor on our behalf.

Our sympathy is extended to Bro. Tom and Sis. Diane (Woodward) Ebert (Denver, CO) in the loss of their father, John Ebert.

As we enter a new year, may we each pray for grace to keep ourselves free from all the sin and evils of this world. May we always strive to do and accept His will in all things.

IOWA, ELGIN
Gloria Frieden

Recently while reading the familiar story of David and Goliath to my daughter, I had to think of the giants that we also meet daily. Although we can't see them, they are just as real and are frequently in our way to distract us from the narrow path. As we meet these giants, may we remember David and meet them "in the name of the Lord" and with the same faith, "this day will the Lord deliver thee into my hands."

As we are beginning another new year, let's take courage to face our battles knowing that God is with us and has promised His provision.

"... My grace is sufficient for thee:

for my strength is made perfect in weakness . . ."

II Corinthians 12:9

His call we obey, as Abram of old,
Not knowing our way, but faith makes us bold,
Where're He shall lead us, the way He doth guide.
He knows best who rules us, "The Lord will provide!"

Zion's Harp #86

Our thanks is extended to our Sunday school children for presenting the story of Christ's birth through poems and songs at our Sunday school Christmas program.

Since 1988 was our year for electing new Sunday school teachers for the three smallest classes, we are happy to turn over our duties to Sis. Karla Moore who will be teaching the Intermediate class, Sis. Leona Schmidt, the Secondary class and Sis. Anita Nester, the Primary class. Also at our year end election, Bro. John Schupbach was elected trustee.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Dan Lehman who is currently in the hospital as a medical patient. He also testifies of peace with God and is looking forward to baptism.

IOWA, IOWA CITY
Bonita Frank

We have just had our annual Christmas carollings this week, when our entire church sings together. We go to homes, planning to give a blessing, but, no matter how hard we try to give away a blessing, we come home with many more. The blessing of having done something for someone else, the blessing of fellowship with His saints, and being reminded how warm, healthy and safe we are, all are pleasant gifts God grants us.

Bro. Jaye Rinkenberger (Goodfield, IL) and Bro. Duane Metzger (West Bend) were our visiting ministers. May God bless them and those that came with them to share the day with us in worship and fellowship.

Dwight Mogler, who has been assembling with us for about a year, has received word he will be transferring to Minnesota. We will continue to pray for him as his life's journey leaves us.

The engagement of Susan Fehr

and Mike Rocke has been announced. Susan is attending college in our area and is the daughter of Bro. Marvin and Sis. Charlotte Fehr of West Bend. Mike is from Sabetha, KS. We wish them God's blessings on their union.

IOWA, LESTER

Kathy Metzger - Mary Knobloch

Our hearts are filled with thankfulness to God since hearing the news that another soul has begun the journey to Zion. Ruth Nester (Bro. Wilhelm and Sis. Elizabeth) has surrendered her heart to the Lord. We pray that God will grant her much needed grace to work out her soul's salvation.

On Thanksgiving Day, Bro. Kent Mogler (Minneapolis, MN) shared the Word of Life with us and on December 11, Elder Bro. Wayne Fehr (West Bend) ministered to us. May God continue to bless those who feed us spiritual manna.

This past month Janet Metzger (Bro. Art and Sis. Kris) was a surgical patient and medical patients were Bro. Albert Knobloch and Miranda Metzger (Kevin and Dawn). God has again answered many prayers and has restored our loved ones to reasonably good health. Hospitalized at this time is Sis. Linda (Jim) Moser.

WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH THIS YEAR THAT'S SO NEW?

As we start a new year untouched
and unmarred,
Unblemished and flawless,
unscratched and unscarred,
May we try to do better and
accomplish much more
And be kinder and wiser than in
the year gone before --
Let us wipe our slates clean and
start over again,
For God gives this privilege to all
sincere men
Who will humbly admit they have
failed many ways
But are willing to try and improve
these "new days"
By asking God's help in all that
they do
And counting on Him to refresh
and renew
Their courage and faith when
things go wrong

And the way seems dark and the
road rough and long --
What will you do with this year
that's so new?
The choice is yours -- God leaves
that to you!

Helen Steiner Rice

IOWA, OAKVILLE

Debbie Wagenbach

Kaylee Jean is the first little daughter of Bro. Monte and Sis. Kelli Lanz. Kaylee is welcomed home by her big brother, Orrin. Bro. Rob and Sis. Emma Jean Lanz and Marvin and Dorothy Austin (Wapello) are Kaylee's grandparents.

Thanksgiving Day and the following weekend brought three visiting ministers home to our Oakville congregation. Bros. Arnie Gerst, Kent Heimer (Taylor, MO) and Bro. Duane Metzger (West Bend, IA) each brought forth the wonderful message of salvation. May God bless them for their diligent service.

December 11 we held our annual Sunday school Christmas program. As we watch the sincere desire of our little children to tell the message of Jesus' humble birth, we realize that except we become as these little ones and sincerely serve our Lord, we cannot enter into the heavenly mansions. Let us be encouraged to a more dedicated service to our heavenly Father.

IOWA, PULASKI

Teresa Schock
Ginny Wuthrich

In the past month we were thankful to have Elder Bros. Ed Lanz and Leo Moser with us to hear the testimony of Roy Metzger, Jr. We thank them for their labors of love and welcome Bro. Roy into the fold.

As Christmas is fast approaching, let us take time for the true meaning of this season and not let it get all wrapped and tangled in the tinsel and bows.

Several from our congregation have gone Christmas carolling this season. It doesn't seem to matter how cold and blustery it is, there is always a warm blessing in the heart when you see the joy it brings to the elderly and shut-ins.

IOWA, WEST BEND

Polly Zaugg - Phyllis Banwart

We were blessed with a number of visiting ministers and are always thankful for their labors in expounding the Word to us. With us were Bros. Dale Wulf (Lester), Wes Moser (Lester), Jim Knobloch (Elgin, IA), Dale Moore (Elgin, IA), Sam Anliker (Lamont, KS), Joe Gerst (Iowa City), Harvey Grimm (Bern, KS), Nathan Stoller (Bradford, IL) and Dave Kieser (Princeville, IL).

Our thoughts and prayers are offered in behalf of the many loved ones that have been hospitalized. May the strength from above carry them through these many weeks. They are Darrell Zaugg (Julie), Sis. Tillie Mogler (Sam), Isaac Mogler (Bro. Chuck and Sis. Beth), Justin Mogler (Tim and Gloria) and Bro. Mike Tapavica (Donna).

"At Home tis well! There palms of peace abounding, Are gently cooling us, hot from the strife; O'er-come now are all pains of pilgrim life; The cries of fear give way to psalms resounding. Zion's Harp #70, verse 3.

Our sympathy is extended to the family of Bro. Eli Grimm, Sr., 91. He served the Lord many years and was a pillar in our congregation. Survivors include his wife, Sis. Lena and children, Sis. Elaine Kellenberger (Lester), Bro. Clifford (West Bend), Sis. Edith Kellenberger (Algona), Sis. Eleanor Steffen (Peoria), Sis. Loraine Martin (Edelstein, IL), Arlo (Algona), Delano (Algona), Edward (Ottosen), Dean (West Bend), Eli, Jr. (West Bend), Sis. Carole Fehr (Whittemore, IA), Sis. Lavonne Kieser (Buda, IL) and Sis. Diane Knobloch (Bradford, IL), as well as 67 grandchildren, 75 great-grandchildren and two great-great-grandchildren.

The engagements of the following couples have been announced: Susan Fehr (Bro. Marvin and Sis. Charlotte) to Mike Rokey (Bro. Joe and Sis. Lila, Bern, KS) with a June wedding being planned; Tammy Fehr (Elder Bro. Wayne and Sis. Kathy) to Cameron Knobloch (Bro. Alfred and Sis. Lucy, Lester), with an April 15 wedding being planned. We wish these young couples the rich blessings of God as they walk the pathway of life together.

JAPAN, SHIODA**Kathy Kieser**

Shioda church brethren and friends plan to sing Christmas carols together for neighbors and friends on December 24 and 25. We plan to worship and then have a tea together on the evening of December 24 to remember and be thankful and joyful for the birth of our Lord Jesus. Let's rejoice each day of the year because God loves us and sent His Son.

The kindergarten children plan to tell the story of Jesus' birth to their mothers, other relatives and friends through songs and a Christmas play. The angel choir sings so jubilantly!

Elder Bro. Willis and Sis. Lois Ehnle's daughter, Jewel, and her husband, Robert Maeda (Chicago, IL), Sis. Kathy Sauder's brother, Joe Klotzle (Altadena, CA), and Sis. Kathy Kieser's sister and brother, Sis. Jana Kieser and David Kieser (Bradford, IL), plan to visit Japan. We're looking forward to spending the holidays with them.

Recently in Sunday school, a teacher was telling her students the story of Daniel in the lion's den. This story is especially meaningful in Japan because it brings out the point of praying only to the true God. Many Japanese children grow up praying to many gods, including mountains, the sun, trees and deceased relatives. The teacher asked them if it is good to pray to the above-mentioned things and people. Because they had just heard about Daniel, they very assuredly answered, "No. Pray only to God in heaven." However, the teacher saw a look of confusion on one boy's face that seemed to reflect a tearing of his heart between home and Sunday school teachings. She heard him whisper to his friend in a tone that seemed to question rather than tell, "It's not good to go to temples either!?" It tore her heart to see his confusion.

This is a part of what draws us to this country and makes us thankful to be able to live and work here. We are daily surrounded by people whose lives are so empty (although they may not be aware of it) -- because they worship gods who aren't alive. Our living God makes our lives so full that we want to share and give to others all that we've been given. Wherever we live, may our lives re-

flect the purity, hope, and love of our heavenly Father, whether the false gods around us happen to be visible stone gods or in the invisible form of other gods, such as materialism.

JAPAN, TOKYO**Frank and Kathy Sauder**

This year, Christmas Day is extra-special for us in Japan because we will be able to go to church to worship. In previous years, we haven't always been able to do so, because Christmas is not a national holiday; it's simply another working day. But this year, December 25 is on Sunday.

To most Japanese, the true meaning of Christmas is rather vague. They know it is a Christian holiday to celebrate Christ's birth, but they have no idea who Christ's father is, who the shepherds and wise men are, etc. Unfortunately the real Christmas is overshadowed by Santa Claus, Christmas bargain sales, and gifts. Some people know that the Christmas story can be found in the Bible, but sadly enough, some think Santa Claus can be found there, too.

We hope and pray that with Christmas falling on a Sunday this year, many friends and neighbors will be able to come to church to hear the true meaning of Christmas through the Christmas program which the Sunday school children are busily preparing. May the true message of Christmas be impressed on many hearts this year.

KANSAS, BERN**Lori Baumgartner****Kathy Strahm**

We appreciated having the Sabetha brethren, along with many visitors, assemble with us at Bern for services Thanksgiving Day. Bro. Mark Bahr (Detroit) spoke the fitting message as he was prompted by the Holy Spirit. Also filling the pulpit with Bro. Mark were Bros. Roger Aberle and Ben Wysong (Sabetha). We appreciated the efforts of Bro. Vernon Leman (Eureka, IL) who was with us November 27, and Bro. John Hartman (Fairbury, IL) who was in Bern, December 4. May God richly reward these brothers.

As Bro. Lester Hartter ministered

to us on the afternoon of November 27, we were aware that he would no longer serve us from the pulpit. Bro. Lester began ministering March 4, 1945, and was ordained elder, December 11, 1960. May God bless Bro. Lester and Sis. Ella for all their years of faithful duty in His service. As a nephew and co-laborer in the Lord, Bro. Mark Bahr spoke of the twelve stones the Israelites set up as a memorial after they passed over Jordan, as he thank Bro. Lester for his service.

"Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep."

Romans 12:15

Our congregation does indeed rejoice with the three dear families God has blessed with precious babies. Born to Bro. John and Sis. Lori Baumgartner November 29, was Maria Lynn, a special first baby. Her grandparents are Les and Leora Baumgartner (Bern) and Bro. Roger and Sis. LaVonne Aberle (Sabetha). Also born November 29 and bringing joy to his six brothers and sisters, along with parents, Bro. Wayne and Sis. Linda Edelman, was Jeffery Wayne. Jeffery's grandparents are Dan Edelman (Bern) and Otto and Marian Sinn (Silverton, OR). Joining her three brothers and two sisters December 4 was Michelle Elizabeth, born to Bro. Curtis and Sis. Ellen Strahm. Grandparents are Bro. Alpha and Sis. Mamie Strahm (Bern) and Richard and Dorothy Zaugg (West Bend, IA). May God provide for these dear ones as they endeavor to raise these little souls.

December 11 was a day of rejoicing as we welcomed Bro. Adrian Strahm into the fold, having heard his testimony Saturday evening and witnessing his baptism Sunday afternoon. Adrian is the son of Bro. Wayne and Sis. Claudia Strahm. Elder Bro. Gene Marti (Lamar, MO) and Elder Bro. Sam Huber (Sabetha) were with us to assist Elder Bro. John Leman in this work. Bro. Pat Zaugg (West Bend, IA) and family were also with us as Bro. Pat brought us the Word on Sunday.

Bro. Melvin and Sis. Florence Rokey rejoice as their son, Garry, of Kansas City, MO, has made the all-important decision to turn to the Lord

in repentance. We wish Garry God's much-needed grace.

It was with joy we heard the engagement of Sis. Beth Plattner (Bro. Eldon and Sis. Wanita) to Bro. Dave Hartter (Sabetha, Bro. Virgil and Sis. Marie). May God be with them as they make their plans.

We do weep with those that weep as we offer our sympathy to Bro. Wayne and Sis. Claudia Strahm and family as Sis. Claudia's father, Alfred Scott, passed away in a Topeka convalescent center.

Sis. Lena Strahm passed away November 29 at the Apostolic Christian Home for the Aged, Sabetha, where she had been a resident for several years. Our sympathy is extended to her family, Bro. Alpha and Clayton, both of Sabetha, Waymer (Independence, KS) and Sis. Arleta Waibel (Remington, IN).

We always enjoy listening to the Sunday school children as each Christmas season they stand before us and sing the songs and hymns of rejoicing of our Saviour's birth in Bethlehem. As they sing, we need to give earnest heed to the words of these familiar songs.

KANSAS, FORT SCOTT
Karen Sinn

With sadness, we bid farewell to Bro. David and Sis. Joleen Sinn and their children, Joel, Amy and Breona. They have moved to Fredericktown, OH, and attend the Mansfield church. We will miss their lovingkindness and faithful support.

Christina Kraft (Roger) and Nicole Smith (Joyce Sinn) were hospitalized this month. We are thankful their stay was short and they can worship with us again.

Our Sunday school Christmas program was held December 18, when the children told the true story of Christmas in verse and song. May God bless the hearts of the little children for their eagerness to learn about Jesus.

May each one enjoy God's goodness and grace throughout the New Year.

KANSAS, GRIDLEY
Vola Young - Judy Kraft
 This undoubtedly has been an ex-

citing and hectic time for ministering Bro. Tim and Sis. Barbara Zimmerman and family. The Lord has blessed them with a new home and new baby. Kristina Ann is the forth daughter born to Bro. Tim and Sis. Barbara. Grandparents are ministering Bro. Lloyd and Sis. Nadine Kraft (Gridley) and Bro. Orville and Sis. Lula Zimmerman (Carlock, IL).

Sympathy is extended to the family of Sis. Sarah Beyer, who died December 5. She was a long-time resident of Gridley. Since 1980 she had been residing in the Apostolic Christian Home in Sabetha.

Bro. Joe Somerhalder was hospitalized for a few days. Our prayers and thoughts are extended to him and his family.

KANSAS, KIOWA
Darcy Kisling - Janice Bahr

To leave the old with a burst of song;
 To recall the right and forgive the wrong;
 To forget the things that bind you fast
 To the vain regrets of the year that's past;
 To have the strength to let go your hold
 Of the not worth while of the days grown old;
 To dare to go forth with a purpose true,
 To the unknown task of the year that's new;
 To help your brother along the road,
 To do his work and lift his load;
 To add your gift to the world's good cheer,
 Is to have and to give a Happy New Year.

Author Unknown

May we all have the strength and resolve to put on the mind of Christ and go forth with a purpose true in this new year.

We celebrate Christ's birth with a Sunday school program and caroling in the community. We appreciate the special efforts of all those who help with these special celebrations.

Many prayers went up this month for our hospital patients. They were Bro. Arnold Ott, Lowell Stucky, Sis.

Lydia Circle, and Sis. Dorothy Brown. Sis. Myrtle Rathgeber is residing at the rest home because of illness.

We were truly blest this month when visiting minister Bro. Max and Sis. Judy Reimschisel (Wichita, KS) lent themselves to our congregation. We appreciate their efforts and pray for a special blessing for them as they continue their mission for the Lord.

A bundle of joy has been handed down from heaven to the home of Randy and Joanie Allenbach (Bro. Ron and Sis. Lois). Great-grandparents of Geoffrey Taylor are Bro. Richard and Sis. Florence Guthrie and Alice Allenbach.

KANSAS, LAMONT
Mary Isch

Another year is dawning,
 Dear Master, let it be,
 In working or in waiting,
 Another year with Thee.

Another year of mercies,
 Of faithfulness and grace
 Another year of gladness
 In the shining of Thy face.

Frances R. Havergal

Sis. Eva Emch, residing at the A. C. Home in Sabetha, had the misfortune to break a hip and is in the hospital in Topeka. May our most gracious and loving heavenly Father be near her through this hour of trial.

KANSAS, SABETHA
Charleen Hartter - Nita Grimm

"TO ANY PARENT"

There are little eyes upon you,
 And they're watching night and day;
 There are little ears that quickly
 Take in every word you say.
 There are little hands all eager
 To do anything you do;
 And a little child who's dreaming
 Of the day he'll be like you.

You're the little person's idol,
 You're the wisest of the wise,
 In his little mind about you,
 No suspicions ever rise.
 She believes in you devoutly,
 Holds that all you say and do,

She will say and do in your way
When she's grown up like you.

There's a wide-eyed little darling
Who believes you're always right;
And her ears are always open,
And she watches day and night;
You are setting an example,
Everyday in all you do;
For the little child who's waiting,
To grow up just like you.

Author Unknown

In the realm of parenthood today, it often seems an awesome responsibility to guide our children aright. The pressures and evils of a sin-filled world are lurking about us in every way. Then, when a parent can look into the eyes of a little, innocent child, there is a beautiful teaching for us in remembering the words of the Lord, "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 18:3.

A tiny blessing was added to the hearts of Tim and Margaret Edelman at the birth of their first-born son, Kyle Ray, December 4.

Bro. David Hartter (Bro. Virgil and Sis. Marie) was recently engaged to Sis. Beth Plattner (Bro. Eldon and Sis. Wanetta) of Bern, KS. May God be with them as they plan and mold their lives together!

Hospitalized this past month were Bro. Dan Sinn, Elder Bro. Sam Huber and Sis. Eva Emch.

It was again our privilege to have visiting ministers, Bros. Ed Bahler (Remington, IN), Mark Bahr (Detroit, MI) and Elder Bro. Art Nohl (Morris, MN) share God's Word with us.

We were reminded of Christ's birth December 18 when the Sunday school children told us the blessed story in word and song.

KANSAS, WICHITA

Emma Miller

Bro. Arthur Wullschleger was hospitalized for four days in early December. Last Sunday, December 11, he was in church and offered the closing prayer for the afternoon service. Bro. Art has a gift for poetic expression. It is a blessing to hear his prayers and we thank God for sparing him so we may be uplifted.

Helping plan the Sunday school

Christmas program has been a new experience for me. It has been rewarding to see the reactions of our students. They are accepting responsibility for their parts and many of them are eager to do more. What a lesson in cooperation!

The theme of our current Bible study is "Principles For Abundant Living." Through this weekly study, we are comforted by the Word and we are exhorted to exercise our faith more completely.

KENTUCKY, LEXINGTON

Glendoris Huber

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

John 3:16

As the Sunday school children related the Christmas story of long ago, so real and true, it touched our hearts as we commemorated the lowly birth of our Lord Jesus Christ and the miracle of God's plan and wonderful gift to all the world. On Sunday evening, December 18, there were 21 of us (young and old) who enjoyed Christmas caroling and heralding the glad tidings with gifts and cheer. We all received a blessing.

We are thankful to the Lord for the safe traveling of Mrs. Maurice Huber, who recently visited her mother and family in Viet Nam. It was very heart-breaking for her to see the poverty and unfortunate situation there, but a joy for her to be with her mother and family after many years.

Again we express appreciation to all our ministering brethren who so faithfully have come and shared God's Word with us. May God bless each one, their families and all the visitors, relatives and friends who have come. It is a blessing to the Lexington church.

Let us ever be thankful for the love, joy and peace that Jesus, our Lord and Saviour, brought into the world. May His Spirit be alive in us that the reality of it all can linger in our hearts throughout this coming New Year. May we be found faithful, watchful and prepared for His soon coming.

MICHIGAN, BAY CITY

Pam Schlatter

The parental love we have towards our children can better help us understand the Father's love toward us. Bro. Lee and Sis. Alice Ruegsegger have experienced the beginning of parental love for little Audry Leigh, born December 8. May the bond of love between the earthly parent and child, as well as between the heavenly parent and child, continue to grow. Grandparents are Bro. Glenn and Sis. Margaret Ruegsegger and Clarence Schlipf (Congerville, IL).

Visiting ministers this month include Elder Bro. Paul Butikofer and Bro. Jim Knobloch (Elgin, IA). Bro. Paul assisted Bro. Andy in the reading of the memorandum. We pray for receptive, as well as perceptive, hearts in being able to recognize the symptoms of spiritual complacency in our lives. May God grant each of us the grace to rededicate ourselves to His will and service.

On December 18 we heard the story of the birth of our Saviour as told through the mouths of our Sunday school children. We appreciate our young people and hope that the simplicity of Christ's birth and life would impact them and they, too, will choose a life of simplicity and dedication to the Father as did the lowly Jesus as a boy.

MICHIGAN, DETROIT

Donna Hartzler

We appreciated having Bro. Don Gudeman (LaCrosse, IN) and his family with us for Thanksgiving eve services, and thank Bro. Don for ministering to us.

We remember those who have been hospitalized and ill the past months. Sis. Ruth Gudeman was in the hospital for surgery and Sis. Mary Pentek fell and had to be hospitalized. But we are happy to report both are now home from the hospital. It is a joy to see Sis. Ruth back in church. Also our thoughts and prayers go out for Sis. Perseda Wieland who has been ill and not always able to assemble with us. May God grant each one their needs and be a comfort and help to them.

Our congratulations and very best wishes are extended to Steve and Patti Belsley on the birth of their new

daughter, Courtney. Their other children are Joshua and Amanda. Grandparents are Bro. Ben and Sis. Lois Belsley.

The theme for our annual Christmas program was the "Messiah." How appropriate, as it is not just the birth of the Lord Jesus which we celebrate but also His death and resurrection that gives us the opportunity for eternal life, if we believe and do His will. We trust God's blessings will be upon all who helped to make the evening so inspiring.

MINNESOTA, MINNEAPOLIS
Carol Strassheim

Each little snowflake reminds us of God and His beautiful creation as it covers the ground and trees for a special winter wonderland in cold, chilly Minnesota.

We share in their joy as Shelly Lawson (Bro. Ken and Sis. Sharon) has turned her life to the Lord in repentance. We will pray for her in this important step in her life.

We came together on a Wednesday evening this month for our first Bible study, "Feeding on the Word." We are thankful to be able to share in the Word of God and to know there is a common bond of love for Jesus in our hearts.

On December 11, Sis. Paulette Schmidt (Bro. Elmer and Sis. Hazel, Winthrop) was announced to be engaged to Bro. Kent Zimmerman (Bro. Allen and Sis. Carolyn) from Forrest, IL. We are thankful when God brings two together in His time.

Many of us were able to get into the Christmas Spirit as we went Christmas caroling at Gillette Children's Hospital. It really makes one thankful to have happy and healthy children.

We hope this Christmas will be your most fulfilling one because you have taken the time to come, to behold and to adore Jesus Christ.

MINNESOTA, MORRIS
Christa Sauder - Ruth Nohl

Editor's Note: We apologize, but two paragraphs from the Morris article in the December issue were misprinted. They should have read as follows:

Our hearts rejoice, as do the an-

gels in heaven, whenever a soul turns to the Lord in repentance. We are happy to report that Rachel Knobloch (Bro. Jack and Sis. Nancy, Bradford, IL) has turned her heart to the Lord. May God's rich grace be with each convert sincerely seeking a new life in Him.

To the repentant heart, that has made confession of sin and restitution, God sends that precious peace which passes all understanding. It has been announced that our convert, Mark Knobloch (Bro. Jack and Sis. Nancy, Bradford, IL), has found that peace. May we cherish the peace of God and walk closely with Him to maintain that peace.

Another year is dawning,
Dear Master, let it be,
In working or in waiting
Another year with Thee.

Frances R. Havergal

We rejoice with our new convert, Julie Messner (Bro. Beirne and Sis. Joyce), who has answered the Lord's call and surrendered her life unto Him. May God lead and guide her.

Adam Zeltwanger (Bro. Dale and Sis. Rachell) has professed peace with God and man, and is waiting for the day when he can give his testimony. We are thankful for Adam and want to encourage him as he continues down the pathway of righteousness.

Bro. Stan and Sis. Bev Schaefer welcome their new son, Brent Douglas, born December 10. He has two brothers to welcome him home. Grandparents are Bro. Anton and Sis. Verna and Virgil and Mildred Sauder.

Annie Mae was born to Bro. Beirne and Sis. Joyce Messner December 17. She has three sisters and a brother to welcome her home. Grandparents are Bro. Frank and Sis. Gladys Messner and Bro. Phil and Sis. Lydia Mogler (Lester, IA).

On December 11, quite a large group gathered at the church to join in caroling for many of our loved ones. It is a blessing to share the words of the beautiful carols with those we love so much.

Bro. Robert Reuter has gone to his eternal rest, where he can now be "present with the Lord." Our heartfelt sympathy is extended to Sis. Lena Lou and Bro. Jim and Sis. Carolyn and their family in the loss of their

beloved one. May God comfort them in their time of sorrow.

We give thanks to our visiting ministers, Bro. Gene Lehman (Wolcott, IN) and Bro. Steve Martin (Eureka, IL).

Our thoughts and prayers are with those who have been hospitalized. Sis. Anna Nohl was a medical patient.

As we listened to the Sunday school children tell the beautiful Christmas story in song and verse, we were again reminded of the miracle of God's love. We thank the children and teachers for the efforts they put into the program.

MINNESOTA, WINTHROP

Ella Mae Schmidt
Georgia Messner

Our hospital patients have been Sis. Melva Messner, Sis. Bernadine Messner, Bro. George Messner, Sis. Pearl Lienemann, Sis. Jamie Schmidt and Sis. Rose Alice Howk. May God ever be at their side.

We rejoice with Sis. Paulette Schmidt (Bro. Elmer and Sis. Hazel) and Bro. Kent Zimmerman (Bro. Al and Sis. Carolyn) of Forrest, IL, as their engagement was announced.

On December 11, we went caroling to three area nursing homes and the elderly in our congregation. It is hard to tell who enjoyed it more, the hearers or the singers. When done, we enjoyed a chili supper.

On December 18 our precious children said pieces and sang songs of our precious Savior's birth. A time of fellowship was held afterward. It was an enjoyable event for all.

We want to welcome Bro. Todd and Sis. Kim Moser and their daughter, Heather, to our Winthrop congregation. Bro. Todd has finished his time with the Marines.

Benjamin Franklin's suggestions that are 200 years old are good to use today as we start the New Year.

The best thing to give to an enemy is forgiveness;

To an opponent, tolerance;

To a friend, your ear;

To your child, good example;

To a father, reverence;

To your mother, conduct that will make her proud of you;

To yourself, respect;
And to all, charity.

MISSOURI, LAMAR

Carol Braker - Becky Marti

Several of us enjoyed travelling to Silverton, OR, for the wedding of Bro. Bill Luthi and Sis. Kris Kuenzi, December 18. We pray that they will establish their home with Christ as the head of it. Their parents are Bro. Rich and Sis. Rosa Lee Kuenzi and Bro. Ray and Sis. Marilyn Luthi.

Bro. Gene and Sis. Linda Banwart have a new daughter. They, along with their sons, Gary and Jason, have lovingly welcomed little Andrea Sarala into their family. She was born August 2, 1987, in India. Grandparents are Bro. Wayne and Sis. Juanita Sinn (Fort Scott, KS) and Bro. Art and Sis. Ruth Banwart (Lamar, MO).

Bro. Rex and Sis. Vera Frieden have been blessed with a baby daughter. Katie Lyn was born December 6. Her grandparents are Bro. Virgil and Sis. Bernice Frieden and Bro. Ray and Sis. Marilyn Luthi.

Bro. Noah Schlupp has been in the hospital much of this past month. Our prayers are with him that he can feel the nearness of the Lord through his trials.

MISSOURI, TAYLOR

Loida Hodel - Lori Marquart

"As we think of all He's done for us, may we all become what He wants us to be!"

"What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits?" Psalms 116:12. Once again we have been blessed by visiting ministers Bro. Art Bauer (Princeton, IL) and Bro. Ben Wysong (Sabetha, KS) and extend our thanks to them and their families for coming.

"To be loved is to know happiness and contentment --

To give love is to know the joy of sharing oneself;

For it is through the miracle of love, That we discover the fullness of life."

An early spring wedding is being planned by Sis. Dawn Haerr (Bro. Norman and Sis. Sally) and Bro. John W. Hoerr (Bro. John and Sis. Dorothy, Peoria, IL). We extend our best wishes

for God's blessings during this happy time.

"No burden need be carried alone,
For God is always near
To comfort us and hear our prayers
And fill our hearts with cheer."

Barb Plank (Buddy) was a hospital, medical patient this month and Becky Huber (Vernon and Sis Judy) is at this time a medical patient in a Peoria hospital. Becky lives in Morton at the "Home for the Handicapped" and we are hoping for good news of her recovery soon.

Progress on our new church is again in full swing, and Lord willing, we hope to be in it by Spring of 1989.

John Gerst (Bro. Arnie and Sis. Marge) graduates from W.I.U. in Macomb, December 17, with a B.A. degree in Industrial Technology. We wish to extend our congratulations on this achievement.

We are in the "holiday season" of another year and may we remember the most important part about Christmas, the first six letters. We are anticipating the annual Christmas Sunday school program this Sunday, December 18. Afterwards plans are to carol at two local nursing homes with a soup supper at the fellowship center following.

"Wise-Men" still seek Him.

Collection for Taylor Silver Lining dues will be in February.

NEW JERSEY, UNION CITY

Sally Dotterer

"And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you."

Luke 22:19-20

On November 13, Elder Bro. Corbin and Sis. Virginia Bahler (Rockville, CT) travelled to our congregation to serve the communion supper. Bro. Ed and Sis. Nancy Aschleman (Philadelphia, PA) were also here to assist in the service. Other ministers who have come to share God's Word with our congregation in the past few

months include Bro. Ken and Sis. Darlene Hoerr (Peoria, IL), Bro. Ronald and Sis. Nancy Schambach (Elgin, IL), Bro. Vernon and Sis. Viola Leman (Eureka, IL), Elder Bro. Ed and Sis. Geralene Ringger (Gridley, IL), Bro. Ralph and Sis. Lynn Garber (Morton, IL), Bro. Glenn and Sis. Marilyn Dill (Tremont, IL), Bro. Wes and Sis. Mildred Knapp (Goodfield, IL), Bro. Lee and Sis. Maxine Bahler (Rockville, CT), Bro. Dan and Sis. Diane Stoller (Rockville, CT), Bro. Tom and Sis. Kathy Hoffman (Roanoke, IL), Bro. Al and Sis. Gladys Schneider (Rockville, CT) and Bro. Everett and Sis. Phyllis Gerber (Rockville, CT).

NEW YORK, NAUMBURG

Rachel Snyder

The Christmas season has come once again, reminding us of our blessed Lord Jesus who was so willing to come and live among man and then die that we might live forever.

We are making plans to visit the "shut-ins" to help bring them a little Christmas by singing a few songs. Also, the little ones are preparing a little program.

Bro. Leland and Sis. Bernice Hirschey visited Kitchener, Ontario, a couple weeks ago.

We laid to rest our beloved Sis. Neomi Clare, Watertown, NY. She had two daughters, Mrs. Constance Taft, Baldwinsville, NY, and Mrs. Jayne Carson, Oswego, NY; and several grandchildren. Sisters Ella and Agusta Einbeck were her aunts. Elder Bro. Robert Beyer and Bro. Leland Hirschey had the services. A dinner was served after the funeral. Burial was in Watertown cemetery.

OHIO, AKRON

Joyce Gasser

"Have ye understood all these things?" Jesus asked this question in Matthew 13:51. Since Jesus wants us to understand, he goes on to explain that we can be His householder with His treasure. He said: "Every scribe instructed into the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old." Matthew 13:52. A scribe learns, teaches, or interprets the Word. Ezra

was a good example of a Bible scribe. The people would learn, three hours at a time, how they could take the Word and apply it to every situation. We become a scribe as we study the Word, and the more we get in the Word, the more we are like a householder, a holder of the treasure of God's Word. The Greek word for householder means the head of a clan, and God's Word can make us the "head and not the tail." As we study the Word and apply it to our lives, we have the treasure in us. "Out of the treasure he will bring forth new and old." The householder will bring forth something just learned or maybe something learned previously and spread it everywhere. We have Ezra's example to take the Word, apply it to our situations, become householders, bring the treasure or the Word forth, and share it with everyone.

Bro. and Sis. Marshall Heinold and others spent a weekend with us, and we were blessed with Bro. Marshall's inspirational messages.

Sis. Fredda VonGunten passed away. She was the widow of William VonGunten, and is survived by sons, William, Carl, Lee; nine grandchildren; four great-grandchildren; and a sister, Sis. Alma Emch.

Mickey Walters passed away. Her husband, Carl, preceded her in death. Surviving are three sons, Robert, Regina and Wayne.

This past year we have had two weddings, two new members and four funerals.

OHIO, COLUMBUS

John Grimm

We want to thank Elder Bro. Andrew Virkler (Bay City, MI), Elder Bro. Eugene Pamer (Akron, OH) and Bro. Mark Ramsier (Sardis, OH) for ministering God's Word to us. Also, we want to thank our visitors who made the special effort to visit.

We welcome everyone to visit our small congregation. We meet every Sunday at Griswold Christian Academy, 860 Griswold Street, Worthington, OH. Worship services are at 10:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.

OHIO, JUNCTION

Les Manz

Bro. Henry Dotterer (Rittman)

brought us the Word of Life as inspired by God's Holy Spirit. How thankful we are that God's Word comes to us not by those with the most degrees from the best of schools but by humble servants from congregations across the land that empty themselves so that God's wisdom can come to us through them. Our own Bro. Sam Schlatter is worshipping with us again though not yet on the pulpit after having bones broken in both legs in a farm accident.

We have missed the cheerful countenance of our Sis. Della Manz as her health is not good enough for her to be in church with us. We trust God will stand by her and help her as He sees fit.

January is collection month in Junction.

OHIO, LATTY

Marlene Reinhard Rhonda Stoller

"The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes."

Psalms 19:8

The ministers sharing with us were Bro. Vernon Leman (Eureka, IL), Bro. Doug Grimm (Sabetha, KS), Bro. Hartzell Kaisner (Detroit, MI), Bro. Ed Aeschleman (Philadelphia, PA) and Elder Bro. Nate Steffen (Elgin). We thank the brothers for allowing God to use them to teach us.

Terry and Patty Offerle are the happy new parents of a baby girl. Lauren Kay was welcomed home by her two brothers, Lucas and Marcus. Grandparents are Elder Bro. Loren and Sis. Esther Stoller.

We are glad Sis. Martha Stoller and Bro. Alvin Klopfenstein (Sis. Ellen) are doing well after their stay in the hospital. We are continuing to pray for their health.

The reporters would like to apologize to Eli Laukhuf's family for failing to report the death of Eli. Our prayers continue to go to Eli's wife, Lola; his two sons, Bro. Bill Laukhuf and Doug Laukhuf; and his daughter, Barb Boulelear. We know how much their husband and father must be missed by each of them. The members of the church miss Eli also.

We pray the Lord will continue to fill their hearts with hope and peace.

OHIO, MANSFIELD

Linda Morrison

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." Psalms 46:1. Sis. Sarah Rice is finding her refuge and strength in God with the death of her dear husband, Bro. Byron Rice, whom she cared for so lovingly these many months. Our sympathy and prayers are extended to Sis. Sarah and their daughter, Marcia Rice. Elder Bro. Aaron Steffen (Alto, MI) conducted the funeral services for his uncles.

Funeral services were conducted for Sis. Emma Bucher. Sis. Emma was over 100 years old. She has a number of nieces and nephews in the Mansfield area. She had lived at the Rittman Home for a number of years.

Elder Bro. Aaron Steffen was also here for Thanksgiving Day services. We were reminded of our rich heritage and abundant blessings. "I will sing unto the Lord, because he hath dealt bountifully with me." Psalms 13:6. Would we still sing if our daily blessings of food, clothing and shelter were not as abundant as they are today?

Hospitalized have been Sis. Dora (Bro. Ora) Sauder and Sis. Ruth (Carl) Weiss. Sis. Dora has been moved to the home at Rittman. "Comfort me, my Consoler; Comfort me." Zion's Harp #152, vs. 5.

"Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness. Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such thing, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless." II Peter 3:11-14. As we enter into the new year, may we walk each day expectantly knowing that Christ's return is as sure as the Christmas which we just celebrated.

OHIO, RITTMAN**Stephanie Baltic - Diane Gasser**

We experienced a blessed week-end November 19 and 20 when four dear souls gave their testimonies of faith and were baptized. Our new sisters and brothers-in-the-Lord are Lisa and Mark Acker (Boyd and Barbara), Amy Beery (Bro. Everett and Sis. Carol) and Lisa Stoller (Bro. Harlan and Sis. Jean). May they ever feel the love and guiding hand of our dear Saviour throughout their lives. We were happy to have Elder Bros. Jesse Beer (Milford, IN), Eugene Pamer (Akron, OH) and Andy Stoller (Smithville, OH) assisting Elder Bro. Joe Ramsier. Other visiting ministers who have spent time with us this past month are Bros. Pete Baltic and Fred Domka (Mansfield, OH), Eugene Fetter (Toledo, OH), Ray Sinn (Latty, OH), Ron Palitto (Akron, OH), Nelson Beer (Milford, IN) and Walter Anliker (Eureka, IL). We give them our heartfelt thanks for serving us. May God be their rich rewarder.

We rejoice with Scott Stoller (Bro. Everett and Sis. Marge) who has turned to the loving Saviour in repentance. We pray that he will be given grace and strength from on high to build his spiritual house on a firm foundation.

I now have found the firm foundation
Where evermore my anchor grounds!
It lay there ere the world's creation,
Where else, but in my Saviour's
wounds?

Foundation which unmov'd shall stay,
When earth and heaven pass away.

On this foundation I, unshrinking,
Will stand, while I on earth remain;
This shall engage my acting,
thinking,
While I the breath of life retain.
Then I will sing eternally
Unfathomed Mercy, still of Thee!
Zion's Harp #221

We extend a warm welcome to Bro. Scott Gerber (Roger and Sis. Eunice, Latty, OH) as he will be making his home in our area and attending services with us here.

Bro. Dick and Sis. Karen Hartzler were blessed with the arrival of a new son, Lane Joseph. Also welcoming him home are brothers and sisters, Bradley, Tonia, Scott and Jody. Happy

grandparents are Bro. Ernest and Sis. Pauline Hartzler and Glenn and Sis. Ella Miller.

Doubly blessed with the arrival of twins are Bro. Ken and Sis. Lori Stoller. Their new son and daughter have been named Jason Donald and Julie Marie. Big brothers are Matthew and Bradley. Pleased grandparents are Bro. Don and Sis. Luzelda Stoller (Smithville, OH) and Bro. Carl and Sis. Carol Steiner.

May God grant guidance, patience and love to all who are parents in this great responsibility we have of raising the precious children He has given us.

Those who have suffered in the body this past month are Sis. Ruth Ingold, Amy Young (Rex and Carol), Sis. Irene Gasser, Sis. Beth Beery (Bro. Karl and Sis. Ruth) and Sis. Mary Lynn Stoller (Bro. Steve). May we think on these dear ones and pray for their recovery.

We enjoyed the evening of the Christmas Sunday school program December 18. It is so uplifting to listen to our children singing songs of praise. May we ever keep in mind the true meaning of this blessed season.

December 16 our dear Sis. Elizabeth Widmer, age 97, passed from this life into eternity. She had been a resident of the Apostolic Christian Home here for the past several years. She is survived by seven step-children; Sis. Margaret Everhard, Sis. Jean Stoller, Joseph, Bro. Robert, Bro. Harold, Addison and Dale; 25 step-grandchildren and 28 step-great-grandchildren. May our heavenly Father comfort those who are in sorrow.

Greetings dear ones all! We have certainly experienced the love of the brotherhood following Eric's accident. We deeply appreciate the cards, gifts and especially prayers on our behalf, many from those we haven't even met. We offer our sincere thanks to anyone who remembered us in any way. Eric seems to be adjusting well. Thank you again.

The Richard Steiner family

OHIO, SARDIS**Linda Indermuhle**

We've enjoyed singing Christmas carols many times this past month. We've visited loved ones in their homes and at nursing homes. Sunday, De-

ember 18, was our Sunday school program. How uplifting it was to those of us who listened to hear and see our young people singing and taking part in the program. One of the caroling books had instructions written by each song. The instructions were: calmly with reverence, with majesty, quietly, joyfully, with quiet joy, tenderly and joyously.

Bro. Paul Berger passed away December 18. Paul had been living in a nursing home at Moundsville, WV, for several months and died quietly there. Sympathy and love is felt for Paul's wife, Gail, during this time of sadness.

OHIO, SMITHVILLE**Kim Stoller - Gwen Stoller**

"... Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

Acts 2:38

God has again given sufficient grace for a soul to turn from a life of worldly pleasures to a life in preparation for heaven. Tom Stoller (Bro. Harold and Sis. Luella) has heeded God's call for laborers. We wish him much grace for each day as he learns to follow the Lord.

Our love shall not diminish
Nor fade nor wax away;
Bind us till life we finish . . .

Zion's Harp #137

On November 27, Bro. Steve Maibach and Sis. Dawn Luginbuhl were united in marriage in Rockville. We extend a warm welcome to Sis. Dawn as they make their home in this area.

Ellen Johnson (Richard) spent time in the hospital. We are glad to see that she has recovered and can assemble with us again.

On December 11, we gathered for our Sunday school Christmas program. Each year the singing seems to be more beautiful than the year before. We thank God for so many young people to keep the faith until the Lord's return.

This year has been a real time of growth for our congregation and we praise God for it. We've experienced

the birth of children and the rebirth of souls. God has provided marriage to continue the growth of families and has also blessed our church with an elder to guide us. We pray that these blessings will continue in the new year as the Lord's second coming draws nearer.

OHIO, TOLEDO
Josephine Rehklau
Frances Laidig

No matter what the new year holds for us, God will be our refuge and our strength and give sufficient help in every situation. God always opens a door to us to show us He cares. We need to realize that God is by our side and we need to live one day at a time.

Elder Bro. Ben Maibach (Detroit, MI) with the help of Bro. Walter Rager read the conference conclusions and meditated on those Bible passages that help us to more fully develop a spiritual mind.

We extend our congratulations to Sis. Edith Fetter (Bro. Eugene and Sis. Marilyn). She is a recent graduate from the University of Toledo with a bachelor's degree in education. We wish her God's blessings in her chosen profession.

Our hospital patients in December were Sis. Clara Beard and Sis. Lois Newman. Sis. Clara had surgery and appears to be making a good recovery. She is now recuperating at home. Sis. Lois was sent to the hospital for a medical problem. We wish them both a good recovery.

January is the month to renew our subscriptions to the Silver Lining.

OREGON, PORTLAND
Jane Rocke - Brenda Knobloch

As we count the blessings of 1988, Thanksgiving weekend quickly comes to mind. The Oregon single group invited their families to share Thanksgiving weekend with them. Since half of the group's families live out of state, we were very grateful that 26 came, representing all but two of the families of those who have moved to Oregon through the years. The visitors joined the Oregon families for sightseeing along the Oregon coast, singing and fellowship at Restless

Surf (the church cabin). On Sunday afternoon a potluck was enjoyed by the visitors and both churches.

We are thankful that among our visitors were Bro. Jim and Sis. Myra Leman (Roanoke, IL). May Bro. Jim be blest for allowing God to use him to bring forth the precious message of salvation. Thanks also is extended to Bros. Ed Knecht and Art Metz (Silverton, OR) for ministering to us.

We miss Bro. Paul and Sis. Ann Rumbold who have left Oregon to enjoy the Arizona sunshine during the winter months. Bro. Ray Banwart is home after a hospital stay, but still unable to assemble with us.

OREGON, SILVERTON
Rosa Lee Kuenzi

For the past six or seven years our young member group has invited young groups from other congregations across the country for the Thanksgiving Holiday but this year they came up with a new idea. Since so many of our young members are from various churches in the mid-west, they decided to invite their parents and brothers and sisters from "home" to come to Oregon for Thanksgiving. The response was excellent, six families came from four different states: Arizona, Illinois, Iowa and Kansas. Thanksgiving dinners were prepared and attended in several different homes, but Friday and Saturday all the visitors, the Oregon young group and their Oregon families spent together at Restless Surf. A good share of a nearby motel was needed for overnight space but all the meals for the sixty-some people were shared together at Restless Surf. The usual coastal scenes were visited Saturday morning, and the usual clam chowder lunch at Mo's was suddenly and overwhelmingly changed to Galuccio's Pizzeria! Saturday afternoon was free time for each family to choose their activities; some went crabbing on Newport Bay, some to Marine Science Center and some took a leisure drive back to the valley. Sunday afternoon there was a BBQ chicken supper at the Molalla Senior Center for all visitors and both Silverton and Portland congregations with a singing in the evening.

Bro. Jack and Sis. Janet Kuenzi

were pleased to welcome a newcomer to their family just in time for Christmas. Baby Jaclyn Rose was born December 5 and weighed an even nine pounds. Her big brother, Justin, thinks she's pretty special. Grandparents are Bud and Rose Rush (Gervais, OR) and Bro. Rich and Sis. Rosa Lee Kuenzi (Silverton).

Rejoicing that the Lord has led their lives together, Sis. Kris Kuenzi (Bro. Rich and Sis. Rosa Lee) and Bro. Bill Luthi (Bro. Ray and Sis. Marilyn, Lamar, MO) were joined together in holy marriage December 18 at Silverton. We will greatly miss Sis. Kris but trust that even though we may be many miles apart, we shall, with God's grace, still be close in heart. May God richly bless them as they begin their journey together.

We have been blessed with several visiting ministers during this past month. Our heartfelt thanks to each one: Elder Bro. Leo Moser (Lester, IA), Bro. Jim Leman (Roanoke, IL), Bro. Lloyd Kraft (Gridley, KS), Bro. Bill Emch (Lamont, KS) and Bro. Lawrence Luthi (Lamar, MO).

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We wish to thank Elder Bro. Norbert Steiner and Bro. Floyd Graves and their wives (Croghan, NY) for the time they spent with us and for ministering God's Word to us. May the Lord be their greatest rewarder.

As a new year has begun, may each of us keep in mind what our real goal is in life. "The world crowns success, but God crowns faithfulness."

Sermon . . .

(Continued from Page 32)

those sins, we look for an answer and we look for help. We pray to God, "Who art Thou, Lord?", and we feel as Saul felt and heard here, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." Acts 26:15.

The love, compassion and the mercy of God is spoken in the hearts of everyone that turns to Him. It goes beyond telling, beyond comprehension and beyond understanding when we stand in the light of the Truth!

When we are burdened and con-

demned in the light of that guilt, it speaks to us as to Saul, "But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee," Acts 26:16.

There is no less a commission given to us, than there was given to Saul on the way to Damascus, for we are all ministers. We are all called upon to go forth and to praise God with our lives, to be a light and an example wherever we are . . . to brighten the corner where we are and to do His will above all else.

It's not just on Wednesday night. It's not just on Sunday. It's not just when we think we might meet one of our brothers or sisters. It is all the time. It isn't something that we can slip off like a jacket or coat when the day gets a little bit warm. It's not an encumbrance at all.

It is a precious and wonderful opportunity. We must realize that God in His infinite love and mercy, as we stood condemned, spoke this wonderful command to us through Jesus, His Son.

Paul was told to go forth . . . "To open their eyes, (of the Gentiles), and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me (Jesus Christ)." Acts 26:18.

I have heard with my own ears those who say, "I cannot repent; I have sinned too much. I have gone too far." What is impossible for God? What sin did He not know of in the lives of individuals, that He did not send His Son to die for? Though our sins were as scarlet, though they were red like crimson, the blood of Jesus Christ, in the everlasting covenant, can make them white as snow.

Paul got up, blind though he was, and was led into Damascus. There an individual was called upon by God to go and lay his hands upon him. That individual was told he would find Saul in prayer.

That is one of the best things to do, when you find yourself at this juncture. Whenever that might be, by the grace of God, pray and there will certainly come, according to the prom-

ise of this Word, a new day of light, a new day of truth and a new day of beauty.

From the time of Paul's conversion throughout his life until he was martyred, it did not matter what he faced. There was that driving force of the Holy Spirit within him so that he did not turn back and never renounced it. But he was glad and willing all through his life. Dear ones, think of his writing where he said that he never felt as if he had attained, but was continually pressing "toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, (his Lord)." Philippians 3:14.

That's how we're to go, pressing towards that mark of our high calling through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Paul said, "I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision." Acts 26:19. He showed them "that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance." Acts 26:20.

May God grant us the grace to hold that close to our hearts and realize that the commission that was given to Paul was the commission given to all of us. May our lives show forth what is necessary and what we found so wonderful, so beneficial, and so precious in our lives.

Paul was undoubtedly addressing a room full of people, guards, courtesans and what not. But essentially, there were two very, very powerful men here. I believe that Festus was a great deal like Pontius Pilate was with Jesus. I believe that they, in their knowledge of Roman law and their desire to carry it out, were much more impressed with the simplicity of the testimonies that were given to them than they would really wish to admit. They felt that in such an admission they would be losing favor in the ranks of their fellow Roman citizens.

I feel that King Agrippa was schooled in these things, aware of these things and knew what Paul was talking about. I believe he felt much more deeply moved than he was willing to admit.

Precious friends, I would like to speak to you personally, right now, wherever you are. I don't know who some of you are in this congregation tonight. But, I would tell you that often we would like to come and just be able to shake you a little bit and

show you just how wonderful it is to serve the Lord. After all the experience you have made in your life, after all the preaching you have heard, after all the times you have had to read the Word, after all the precious fellowship that you have witnessed or experienced, after all that has been sent your way by the blessing of God, there comes a time when we would just like to know, "Don't you believe?"

We know you've got to believe. Paul said to Agrippa, "I know that thou believest." Acts 26:27. Then, beloved ones, would you say, like Agrippa said here, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian?" Acts 26:28.

Well, when we sing that hymn in the Hymns of Zion, I get tears in my eyes, because almost is not enough! "Almost cannot avail, Almost is but to fail!" And the very last words of that hymn are, "Sad, sad, that bitter wail, Almost, but lost!"

Paul said together with us, as we weep for our friends, pray for them and want the very best for them, "I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds." Acts 26:29.

In other words, we would wish for them . . . the blessings of abiding in Jesus, the blessings of sharing a hope of an eternal life and the blessings of being one with Jesus, as children of God, not almost, but altogether.

Brothers and sisters, what's the best way for us to wish that for them and to be useful for the Lord that this might even come to pass? It is to be true, faithful, joyful and happy in the Lord in our precious faith.

The sub-heading here said, "Paul's conclusion." The conclusion to everything that we do should be that it points the way to the Lord. The conclusion, beloved ones, of every action, every word and every thought should be that the Lord Jesus is glorified, praised and honored through our life.

The wish that we share for all of God's creation is that they might come to the knowledge of the truth and live. We believe it is God's work and God's alone. It cannot be our work, but our part, our instrumentality in that great and wondrous plan of God will be more fully completed.

May God grant us the grace to that end.

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SERMON BY BRO. GARY MAIBACH OF RITTMAN, OH

Text: Acts 26

What would have happened if Paul would not have appealed unto Caesar? This is purely in the realm of speculation, but this we know, he was a great lion of God.

Paul was a servant in the hands of God and as he went and wherever he would have gone, he would have done the will of God. He would have served the Lord with gladness. He would have listened to the still small voice which so often came to him. He would have listened to the prompting that came to him and he would have followed that, no matter what. Up until this time, he had certainly suffered much. There were times when the Scripture tells us that he was very nearly dead, was beaten or in prison. He was despitely used simply because he told the truth and because he brought the Word of Life and Light to those in whose midst he found himself. He treasured that which he had received there in Damascus.

We find, beloved ones, that as he began his testimony here before these noble personages, he told about what he had been. According to the old law and anything that it might have contained, he was a perfect individual. But he counted those things as dung. They were as nothing to him because they did not secure for him any hope of eternal life. It didn't really matter how perfectly he had accomplished all the things that were contained in the old law. He was zealous . . . but he was zealously wrong.

Many times we come to that time in our life when, even though we thought we were zealous, we had to admit from our heart in all humility that we were zealously wrong. We were zealously going the wrong way! Those things that we lent ourselves

to, engaged ourselves in and pursued with such vigor were wrong for us. We were, in fact, going exactly opposite the way that God wanted us to go. Often we have ourselves so caught up in these things that we have persuaded ourselves that we are right, when we are wrong. Of course, the enemy of all righteousness delights in such a state of mind and does all that he can to keep us from coming to the knowledge of the truth that we might live.

Here was a man who was given great authority, and he, by his own admission, caused people to blaspheme, threw them into prison, and consented unto their death. The coats of those who stoned the first martyr, Stephen, were laid at the feet of this same Saul. He was consenting unto that death. He admitted persecuting the church.

Then we might ask, "Could that be my lot? Can it be that I am persecuting the church of Jesus Christ the way that Paul said he did?"

If any of us would have been able to look at Jesus on the cross, looked into His eyes, or met His stare, I don't believe that we could have said anything else but that in our life without the Lord, in a life of sin, we persecuted Him!

For God loves us so much that when we were yet in our sins, He sent His Son to die for us.

The experience that Saul made on the way to Damascus is really, though profoundly moving, most wonderful and precious! It is an experience that everyone must make if they are to have a living hope of eternal life in their heart.

Paul went to Damascus with authority. He was going zealously according to the dictates of his own

mind and his own heart. He was going like every sinner everywhere has always gone: . . . the way of destruction . . . the way of the world . . . the way of self.

I had a dream once where I was standing by my own grave, weeping and weeping and weeping. I knew that if that was my grave, I was gone and had no hope. I awoke a troubled young man but I couldn't see or understand. I couldn't perceive truth because I let myself get in the way. There were other things that I wanted to do. I was still in high school . . . I had friends to consider . . . I had things to do . . . I had places to go. There were other times when the call, the pricks and the prods came. There were times when I very nearly didn't make it, but God was good!

Every experience is different. Every experience is an experience unto itself because we each seem to be grounded just like Paul was. In his life as Saul, that light shone around him there and asked, "Why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." Acts 26:14.

Can we really imagine what it was like there as that light was around him and he was blinded? I don't doubt he was terrified because flooding over him was the realization of what he had been doing.

Every individual at this juncture, when the full weight of the guilt of sin floods over them, has got to feel totally and completely -- lost. When we realize what we have really done with Jesus and what we have really done with our great God in heaven, we ask, "Who art Thou, Lord?"

When we feel our burden and guilt, the debt of sin and the sentence of death we are worthy of because of

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