

The Silver Lining



I Now Have Found The Firm Foundation...

December 1996

“GOD IS GREATLY TO BE PRAISED”

Sermon by Bro. Max E. Reimschisel of Wichita, KS

Psalm 48 and 2 Corinthians 4:16 - 5:21

We realize, brethren, this wonderful Word is there to remind us of our life and to remind us of God's greatness and great power that He has on the earth. We know that even the Apostle Paul, the writer of the Corinthians, was reminded of his life many times and reminded of his lot as he was going about, he thought, to do God a service to destroy the church, but we know how God turned him around and used him. Here he reflects what was in his heart and in his life.

Are we any different in our life? I just have to think how it is that so many times we go about our own way and direction that we think is right, but we were brought down, too, weren't we? What did it say? That we were sinners? Because of Jesus Christ, we have a hope.

In the fore reading we read, and it was so encouraging how it says, "God is the LORD, and greatly to be praised." (See Psalm 48:1). So many times we realize how good He has been to us, how He has helped us, how He has encouraged us, how He has directed us and just to experience how good it is. That is the part that every one of us, as we acknowledge God and His greatness, want to give Him that praise and honor.

Here he brings us to the reality of life. It even helps us to understand that we are just mere mortals here upon this earth. We have no certain dwelling place. We have a life, but we have a wonderful opportunity to live for Jesus and to take what He tells us in His Word to use it within our hearts and lives.

Here in this chapter, he reminds us of this earthly house—this body. This body, that we know what happens when it is dissolved, when this body becomes diseased and things

happen to it. Death comes, we don't know why. We don't understand all that, but I believe we can grasp the love of God. We can grasp what He wants us to cleave to, to hang onto, and to know what is the strength in God's Word.

He said that though this house were dissolved, "...we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." (2 Cor. 5:1). That is something, as we think of our life, what we can do, what we have done and realize that He tells

us that, "Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away." (Luke 21:33).

When we think of God and heaven, we think of the beautiful places we read about in Revelation that He has provided for those, as He says, eternal in the heavens. We have a house there. We have a provision that is there and we know what the provisions are. We have our cupboards filled with groceries and we can go there and partake to satisfy our bodies.

Those provisions are there in heaven, He says, eternal in the heavens. We know that they are so great and so mighty there, but we have no need. What does He tell us? There will be no need for the various things we have in this life. No tears. No sorrows. We can just really think of God and His greatness and His love.

But he brings us back and reminds us of our life. Perhaps the reality of life as we go from day to day and every one of us experience that life. But think about Jesus Christ is there for that help and strength for us and to give to us grace. We are reminded that the Lord's mercies are new every morn-

ing, and great in faithfulness. (See Lam. 3:22-23).

"For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven:" (2 Cor. 5:2). We have that desire to be in heaven and to go there to be with Him. Oh! How it would be! Then he reminds us of just how frail we are and how we walk from day to day. He says, "If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked." (2 Cor. 5:3). Oh! How it would be to be clothed with Jesus! We want to be clothed with His garment of righteousness which He provides for us.

He even says, "For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit." (2 Cor. 5:4-5). As God knows so well our heart and our lives, He knows how we groan. He knows how we feel in heart and soul. Does He know our desire to be in heaven?

Sermon continued on page 44

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

Light From The Word



Writings based
on God's Word

December 1996

For Unto Us a Child is Born

For approximately four thousand years, God's people were looking for the fulfillment of the promise made in the Garden of Eden that the head of Satan would be bruised and that Satan would ultimately be defeated (Gen. 3:15). The promise of the coming of the Messiah, the one who would judge the nations in a manner that would cause them to "...beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Isaiah 2:4), was anticipated with sincere longing.

The prophets, by the inspiration of God, wrote of the signs of the coming of the Son of God. "...A virgin shall conceive, and bear a son,..." (Isaiah 7:14). "But thou, Bethlehem...out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be a ruler in Israel;..." (Micah 5:2). "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt" (Hosea 11:1). "...He shall be called a Nazarene" (Matt. 2:23). Meeting all of these conditions seemed nearly impossible to the mortal mind.

Not only were the prophesies about His coming a mystery, so also were the prophe- sies concerning the purpose of His coming. "...The government shall be upon his shoul- der..." (Isaiah 9:6). "...He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles" (Isaiah 42:1). "...A King shall reign and prosper, and shall exe- cute judgment and justice in the earth" (Jer. 23:5). "...The God of heaven set up a king- dom, which shall never be destroyed:..." (Daniel 2:44). "...Because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken- hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives..." (Isaiah 61:1). "...He hath no form nor comel- iness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him" (Isaiah 53:2).

Would this Messiah come to rule the world in an earthly sense? Would He come as a harsh judge who would bring judgment upon all who have sinned? Would He come as a powerful and rich ruler who would set up a kingdom that would last forever? Would He come to bring good news and a better life for the poor, the oppressed and the down trod- den? From studying the writings of the proph- ets, it seemed as though He would do all of these things.

For those who lived before the coming of the Messiah, the writings of the prophets seemed confusing. How could all of these things come to pass, and how would He save His people?

Those of us who have lived after His birth have a tremendous advantage. We can see that it was a very small thing for God to cause Caesar Augustus to make a decree that would prompt Joseph to take Mary to Bethlehem at precisely the right time to enable Jesus to be born there. Likewise, it was not difficult for God to allow Herod to be jealous of Jesus and to fear that he would lose his power to this obscure infant. And finally, it was easy for God to permit Herod to make decisions that would cause Joseph to take Mary and Jesus to Egypt and, later, to Nazareth.

Also, it is now easy to understand that the Messiah did not come to set up an earthly kingdom to free the children of Israel from the oppression of wicked rulers; He came to preach "...the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

This freedom is now available to all who are willing to recognize that they have a need to be set free by the shed blood of Jesus Christ. Those who refuse to recognize that they are in bondage can never be set free. There were those among the Jews who said, "...We...were never in bondage...", not recognizing that "...Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin" (John 8:33-34) and is under the most oppressive bondage possible. In explaining this to the Pharisees who ques- tioned their blindness to the bondage of sin, Jesus said, "...Now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth" (John 9:41).

The world is still questioning the mission and ignoring the message of Jesus Christ. Confusion is rampant and faith is weak. Many do not really want to understand His mes- sage. There is a reluctance to submit to the simple message of Jesus Christ: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:15).

In our very materialistic society, many are willing to celebrate His birth, but they are not so willing to acknowledge His death and res- urrection. Many weeks are spent in preparing for the day we celebrate His birth; however, little time and effort are spent preparing our

hearts for His second coming. Those who were hard of heart did not recognize Him at His birth. Likewise, the unrepentant will not be prepared for His second coming.

Certainly the birth of Christ is a significant event in the life of a Child of God. However, it is far more important that we understand the significance of His death and resurrection. The Bible emphasizes this difference: the four gospels all dwell upon the death and resurrec- tion of Jesus Christ, but only two mention His birth.

Although Scriptures which tell about the first coming of the Saviour are now clear, often we hear concerns from faithful children of God that they do not understand the prophesies about the end times. Many ex- press concerns about a lack of understanding of the prophetic writings which address Christ's second coming. Some fear that they will not recognize nor be prepared for His second coming. Certainly we encourage the study of God's Word because we need to understand the mission of Jesus Christ. Per- haps it is not so vital that we understand every detail surrounding His return. It is highly un- likely that the shepherds fully understood the prophesies of Christ's coming. Early in the evening they probably could not have an- swered many questions about His birth nor about His mission. Yet, because the shep- herds were faithful and submissive to God, after hearing about the birth of the Saviour, they did not say "Let us go to see IF this is come to pass." They believed and said "...Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing WHICH IS COME TO PASS, which the Lord hath made known unto us" and "...re- turned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen,..." (Luke 2:15, 20). There was no doubt in the minds of the shepherds that the Messiah had come.

The faithful will also be prepared and recognize Christ at His second coming. As we celebrate another Christmas, let us all pause and reflect upon the love that God has show- ered upon us. His love is made so clear to us as we read in the Scripture, "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).



APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN Mission Committee

... The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest. Matthew 9:37-38

East European Assistance Continues

The European Board, functioning under the auspices of both the World Relief and Mission Committees often receives questions about our ongoing efforts in Eastern Europe. We want our brethren and friends to know we appreciate their interest and support, without which we could not function.

It would be good to be able to report that things are improving, but they really are not. Instability of government, the presence of organized crime, and high inflation continue to plague believers in the countries once a part of the Communist bloc. We have constant contact with the brethren there, with messages going back and forth virtually weekly as we try to find ways to help them not only materially, but also spiritually.

Old churches in Yugoslavia

Last month, we reported on a trip made by three of our elders into Yugoslavia. In this article, we want to inform you of our efforts to help them repair old churches, build new ones, and provide transportation.



Many Yugoslavian churches are over one hundred years old, and have become very dilapidated. The picture above shows a church built of unfired clay blocks, which was abandoned during Communist years. Many such

churches have fallen into disrepair, and some have been sold. However, interest in the faith is increasing, and the brethren have decided to repair existing buildings and build new ones.

New church dedicated

The congregation at Banatsko Novo Selo requested and received support to construct a new church to meet the needs of their growing congregation. There are still many young people, who, although life is difficult, are trying to remain in the country and teach their families the gospel truth. Our elders met with a group of these young believers, and were encouraged to see the possibility for the faith to survive in this land of great turmoil.



On September 15, the new church was dedicated. The congregation is largely Romanian, so a Romanian elder conducted the dedication service in the morning, with the afternoon service in Serbian. There was a large crowd, and our brethren were impressed with the spiritual atmosphere which prevailed, and although they could not understand the words, they felt that the brethren who spoke were inspired with the Holy Spirit. The singing of well known hymns from our "Zion's Harp" broke down the language barriers. As is often the case in Europe, several different languages were used in the lyrics, but the old familiar melodies moved the soul.

Several hundred thousand dollars

came from the American brethren to help erect this building, and the Yugoslavians express the deep appreciation for this aid. There is still a lot of work and expense ahead to provide for the spiritual needs of our suffering brethren, and we want our American brethren and friends to know how much their assistance means, not only to the European Board, but far more to the recipients of this aid. There is no way this can be repaid, but our great God will certainly bless the loving cheerful givers.

Getting people to church

One of the big problems facing the churches in Yugoslavia is providing transportation for their scattered people to get to services. Also, the elders and ministers often must visit the sick and conduct funeral services. Public transportation does not reach all the isolated areas, so they need vehicles.



We have responded to this need by providing vans for transportation. The picture above shows the type of vehicle we have furnished the Yugoslavs. The vans are equipped with only the bare essentials and no extra accessories. They serve the purpose of moving people from place to place, and we are satisfied with them. We feel there is a need to provide additional vans. In all of these projects, we need the support of our brotherhood. Your interest is sincerely appreciated. Please pray for the work.



APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN
World Relief

As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith. GALATIANS 6:10

A Glance Backward

As another year fades into the annals of history, it is always good to look back over the events and activities it contained. 1996 was a year in which countless souls in many lands and languages benefited by the efforts of a great number of our brethren.

How projects begin

At the World Relief Review Meeting in Mansfield, Ohio on November 9, a group of interested brethren and friends gathered for the purpose of learning about recent projects as well as what is planned for the future. One of the speakers addressed the subject of how projects begin. He noted that in the four years he has served on the national World Relief Committee, no projects have been initiated from within the committee. Rather, interested and dedicated brethren have found needs, not just abroad, but far more often right at home, and brought them to the World Relief Committee for discussion. Most of them have been approved. This year, funds are up approximately 20% over last year, and still are not enough to meet all the needs that are presented.

Where do we begin?

To continue the Lord's work in our day and time, it is well to begin where Jesus did, in Jerusalem. Jerusalem is the place "where we are", beginning with our front doorstep.

On the day this article was written, there was an editorial in the daily newspaper talking about the situation of the needs of our local poor. Health care costs continue to soar, the government is fighting to cut back on welfare, and the poor around us find themselves in a steadily worsening position. It can easily be said that many of these people have self-inflicted wounds.

But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

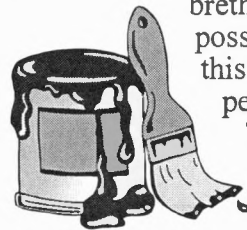
MATTHEW 9:12

Needs in the home community

Some examples were given in the meeting in Mansfield of opportunities close to home. To encourage one another to look for needs in our own communities, we would like to repeat some of them here.

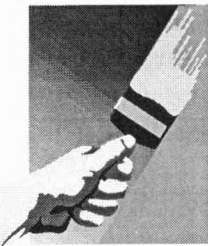
Painting a house

In one community, an elderly widow lived in a large house with peeling paint, and general disrepair. Local brethren discussed the possibility of painting this house with young people from church.



The lady could hardly believe anyone would do such a thing.

They approached merchants to buy paint and supplies, and received discounts from them. One firm allowed them to use good scaffolding at no cost. The entire Sunday School group from age 12 and up assembled

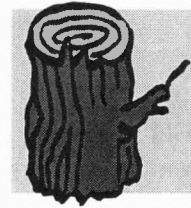


on one Saturday, and by the end of the day, the huge two story house was painted. Naturally, some of the children were also painted, but it easily washed off.

One of them spilled paint on the sidewalk, and when an adult asked the widow for forgiveness for this, she said, "After what you did today, I could forgive you for anything."

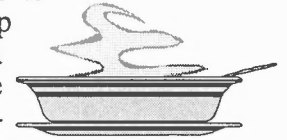
Cutting firewood

Another time, brethren learned of the dire need of a single mother living in a mobile home under pathetic conditions. She also had a handicapped child. One day a group of brothers got together, cut and hauled firewood, plus did some insulating to make it go farther. She was deeply touched and encouraged that strangers would care enough to assist her.



Distributing food and caring for our neighbor

Many brethren are working with local food pantries. One congregation furnishes people to work in a soup kitchen once a week. This type of dedicated community service has



resulted in the following projects that our brethren are involved with: Woodford County Heart House; Faith, Hope, and Love; Habitat for Humanity; Empty Tomb; Navaho Indian assistance, etc. The list of opportunities is endless.

Medicine assistance

In every community, there are those who are not really poor enough to be



on the welfare system, yet they can't afford adequate health care or medicines. Nearly any doctor's office or druggist can direct you to

such needs. Those who want to help can always find someone who needs assistance. We encourage one another to look for opportunities to reach out to those in our home towns.



**APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN
World Relief**

Work Team Dates

HAITI



January 10-18, 1997
HAITI-MEBSH
Les Cayes Area

Coordinator: Craig Emch
11856 Miller Road
Sterling, OH 44276
330-939-4591

January 31-February 8, 1997
HAITI-MEBSH
Les Cayes Area

Coordinator: Glen Hackenjos
10564 Haverly
El Monte, CA 91731
818-442-4957

February 14-22, 1997
HAITI-MEBSH
Les Cayes Area

Coordinator: Jim Walter
26 Timber Ridge
Fairbury, IL 61739
815-692-3158
815-692-2851 fax

February 21-March 1, 1997
HAITI-PALM GROVE

Coordinator: Tim Butikofer
RR # 2 Box 69A
Elgin, IA 52141
319-426-5486 home
319-426-5585 office
319-426-5586 fax

February 28-March 8, 1997
HAITI-PALM GROVE

Coordinator: Tim Butikofer
RR # 2 Box 69A
Elgin, IA 52141
319-426-5486 home
319-426-5585 office
319-426-5586 fax

March 7-15, 1997
HAITI-MEBSH

Coordinator: Phil Isabell
16746 S 380 W
Remington, IN 47977
219-261-3541
219-261-2860 fax

JAMAICA



January 2-10, 1997
JAMAICA-CCCD
At Montego Bay
This work team is filled.

March 7-15, 1997
JAMAICA-CCCD
Kingston
(Scheduled for spring break at many colleges)

May 16-24, 1997
JAMAICA-CCCD
Deaf Village
(Scheduled for end of terms at most colleges)

For information call:

Harold Witzig
308 N 2nd St
Morton, IL 61550
309-266-6263
309-266-8575 fax

WORK TEAM DATES - JUAREZ, MEXICO CONSTRUCTION TEAMS

February 15-22, March 8-15, March 15-22, March 22-29

Summer '97 *(Date not set at this time)*

For information call or write to:

Mark Fiechter, 6630 E 700 N, Ossian, IN, 46777 (219)597-7330

APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN HOME FOR THE HANDICAPPED

"And all went to be taxed, every one to his own city."

Luke 2:3

And so it was that our Saviour was born in Bethlehem as it had been prophesied many years before.

For God's plan to be fulfilled, there could be no compassionate ruler to excuse those with child from the taxation process. Despair over the happenings in our nation should not overtake us, as God is still in control of the destiny of men and nations.

The Christmas season holds many traditions for our Home for the Handicapped family. The Christmas shopping for friends and

family is in full swing, with assistance from staff who help in making just the right choice. Caroling groups have been calling to schedule times to come and sing with us. Remembering Christ's birth musically is an activity which we all enjoy!

Peoria church has again graciously invited us to a Christmas party at their Fellowship Hall which they have held annually for our resi-

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Hymns of Zion, Tabernacle or Gospel Hymn Books**

We're distributing more used Bibles in the United States now, although some are still sent overseas. Thanks for your continued support. You may get your books to either of us or Wing or Bluffton World Relief Centers.

Jerry and Arlene Banwart
Box 181 C, 307 W. First St.
Congerville, IL 61729
(309) 448-2416

APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN BIBLE DISTRIBUTION

Bibles distributed by our Churches

| 1996 | MONTH | YEAR TO DATE | TOTAL — 13 YEARS |
|-------------|--------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Nov. | 4,829 | 32,574 | 334,050 |

* Repaired Bibles Shipped = 180

NOTE: A new listing of Bibles and Testaments available for distribution can be obtained through a note or call to:

David Bertsch
11520 Grabill Road
Grabill, IN 46741
(219)627-2923 (fax the same number)

dents for many years. We are planning a drive through the East Peoria Festival of Lights, which is right next door to Morton, but thousands of people drive many miles to view. The Resident Council has scheduled their Christmas party at Doc's Mt. Hawley Inn, another long-standing tradition. Central Illinois Riding Therapy will be hosting a Christmas party for the people who are involved with that program.

Some of the residents are participating in a cooking class "Create Christmas Candies with Carol". Maybe they'll share some of their creations! A highlight of the season is our own resident Christmas party here, with gifts presented to the residents from staff who have drawn their names. A Christmas dinner is also held for the employees of the ACHH facilities, with a program planned by a different department each year, and a gift presented to each staff member from the Home.

We welcome three new faces to

our ACHH family. Chad Gerber has moved into our Hazelwood home. Jay Felton and Gail Kennedy are new residents at the large facility.

Those who will be celebrating birthdays in January are: ACHH - Stephen Penn (8), Edith Wagenbach (8), Karen Blunier (14), Bruce Steffen (19), Jackie Willett (19), John Eddy (27), Tom Sides (31); OAKWOOD - Max Honegger (22), Laverna Zobrist (25); LINDEN - Mary Schramm (13); 650 DETROIT - Rhonda Gerst (12).

Season's Greetings to all of you! Your continued prayerful support is a great blessing — thanks!

**GATEWAY WOODS
APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN
CHILDREN'S HOME
Jeff Schumacher**

We talk often about being "faithful". What is it? What does it mean? Since it is an adjective, do we have to do anything to get it, or be it? We

CASSETTES FROM EUROPE

We still have a supply of the cassette tapes produced in Austria containing beloved hymns of our old Heft (Long Book).

All profits from the sale of these tapes go to Europe, where the money is distributed among our very needy brethren in the Eastern European countries of East Germany, Hungary, Romania and others.

The Heft or Long Book tapes were recorded by Bro. Josef Farkasch, who is a music professor near Salzburg, Austria. He plays the classical guitar and many other instruments on three tapes of songs from the Long Book. Some include singing.

The Heft (Long Book) tapes include three volumes. Volume I includes songs 1-11, 13-18; Volume II includes songs 12, 19-31; Volume 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 for Long Book Tape payable to the Long Book Tape Fund.

Long Book tapes may be ordered from:

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

Dennis and Beth Feucht
317 North Third
Morton, IL 61550
(309) 266-9498

know that the Lord calls us to it, "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" (I Cor. 4:2). There are passages in Scripture that record times when people gave up "things" like possessions or their life (Rev. 2:10) in order to be found faithful. We know that after the nation of Israel was split into two kingdoms, Jeroboam (king of the northern kingdom) started worshipping idols and encouraging the ten tribes that the Lord had

given him to do the same. The Levites and priests, knowing this was an abomination to the Lord, left all their land, homes and possessions behind and went to seek refuge in the southern kingdom of Rehoboam. Think about it, they picked up and left everything behind (houses, crops, possessions) and went to Jerusalem all because they knew they needed to be faithful to the Lord.

Now this brings up some very obvious and sometimes disturbing questions for me and hopefully to all of us as Christians today: What are we willing to give up in order to be faithful to the Lord? Is there anything in our life that has come between us and the Lord? A car? A job? A promotion? A house? A lack of faith? Do any of these "things" keep us from doing what the Lord wants us to? I pray not, but if there is one of these things between us and the Lord, then I hope that we will seek His will in removing this hindrance. Remember that the Lord will always provide a way out from under all things, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." (I Cor. 10:13).

The Lord continues to be faithful to Gateway Woods. The Lord continues to bring families and children for us to serve. Jesse S. came to live in the Graf home. Alisa C. came into our Foster Care program and lives with Bro. Walt and Sis. Sherry Snodgrass.

**APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN
PRESCHOOL
Athens, Alabama
Tricia Tucker**

"In every thing give thanks..."
I Thess. 5:18

Thanksgiving was one of our monthly themes in November. We discussed Pilgrims, Indians, and turkeys, but what we have tried to stress most was that we should be thankful to God for all He has given us. While learning about Thanksgiving, the children were asked what they were thankful for. Many of the students were thankful for God, Mamas and Daddies, siblings, and pets, but one three-year-old boy announced that he is thankful for steak and pickles! We can all be thankful to our Lord for making each one of us uniquely different but loving us all the same.

In November we studied the letters J-L, the color brown, and nutrition. To celebrate Thanksgiving and to reinforce our lessons about nutrition, we had a Thanksgiving feast. Each class dressed up as either Indians or Pilgrims and acted out the first Thanksgiving meal — complete with popcorn and apple juice.

With the Christmas season quickly approaching, we anticipate our annual play about the birth of our Saviour. All the children are excited about their part, be it Mary, Joseph, or one in the herd of camels. What could be more important than teaching the true meaning of Christmas to our youth? As we teach our children, please remember that Christ is the reason for CHRISTMAS.

**ALABAMA, ATHENS
Pam Moore**

We were thankful to have Elder Bro. Andy Stoller (Smithville, OH) and the other Preschool Board Members with us on the last weekend of October. We also thank Bro. Lynn Klopfenstein (Leo, IN) for leading Sunday School that Sunday.

We would also like to thank Bro. Carroll Gerber (Bluffton North, IN) for coming to Athens the first weekend in November to fill a need for a minister that Sunday.

Sis. Nancy Sizemore has been hospitalized, undergoing knee surgery, and rehabilitation following. Please pray that her surgery is successful and her recuperation period smooth.

As always, we invite everyone to fellowship with us in Athens, whether you may be coming through on a trip, or planning a special weekend to come visit us. Church services are every Sunday at 10:00 a.m. and every Wednesday night at 7:00 p.m.

**ARIZONA, PHOENIX
Ron and Ev Hoerr**

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved..."

Mark 16:16

On October 19, we heard the testimonies of Jeremy and Jennifer Ebert (Bro. Tom and Sis. Diane). Deacon Bro. Loren Knapp (Tucson, AZ) assisted Elder Bro. Jon Kokanovich with their baptisms on October 20.

Their grandparents came from Iowa, other relatives from Illinois, and friends from Colorado.

A church supper, hymn singing, and slides of a World Relief Work Project were shown by Bro. Dick Beery.

Bros. Tom Leman (Denver, CO), Andy Moser (Valparaiso, IN) and Curtis Kaufman (Tucson, AZ) were our visiting ministers.

Our Sunday School picnic was on October 27. A cool 64 degrees made the activities and cook-out enjoyable. The children's singing later in the evening was lovely. Thanks to the teachers for another job well

done.

Our sympathy to Bro. Gaylord Blunier on the death of his mother, Sis. Marie Blunier. We also extend sympathy to her grandson, Bro. Ray Blunier. They attended the funeral in Roanoke, IL.

One of our sisters was nominated and chosen by the Governor's Council on Aging for "inspiration to others" to represent Arizona.

Sis. Ella Harmon is unable to come to church on a regular basis and is retiring to Mansfield, OH. We pray God's blessings on her.

His love and healing touch was felt by many this past month: Sis. Geraldine Beyer (broken hip), Bro. Mark Dotterer (broken arm), Sis. Martha Elsasser (tests), Sis. Linda Zollinger was in the hospital, Sis. Ruth Baer had a fall, Sis. Josephine Martin is not able to be up and about. Sis. Gladys Fisher also needs our prayers.

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee."

Isaiah 26:3

Robin Lemons (Bro. Bob and Sis. Betty) has this peace and trust and is waiting to share her testimony and be baptized.

Two Saturdays in November was devoted to cleaning the interior of our church and exterior maintenance. Thanks to everyone who could help.

We welcome our winter residents and all visitors. May the Lord bless us as we celebrate our Saviour's birth.

ARIZONA, PRESCOTT

Jane Hodges

"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory

to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

Luke 2:13-14

At this time of the year, we remember that God fulfilled His plan, by sending His only Son as a sacrifice for our redemption. The miracle of Christ's birth reminds us that "with God nothing shall be impossible." (Luke 1:37). May we as the angels in Heaven bring our honor, glory and praises to our great God and worship Him forever.

Bro. Henry Volz has been ill and unable to fellowship with us. May God grant him returning health and strength according to His will.

We praise God that He provides us ministering brothers willing to come and bring us His Word and teachings. May God bless Bros. Peter Petrovic (San Diego, CA) and Loren Knapp (Tucson, AZ) and their families for serving us this last month.

We would appreciate the prayers of our brothers and sisters in the Lord, as we seek the Lord's direction in our desire to have our own place of worship. We are thankful that He has blessed our congregation with growth in the last year and pray for His continued guidance and blessing as we seek to serve Him and be a light in our community.

ARIZONA, TUCSON

Lisa Knapp

Tucson experienced a real taste of winter "southwest style" in late October as cold weather swept through the state leaving us with temperatures in the high 40's; that's as wintry as it gets around here! It also left a beautiful snowfall on Mt. Lemmon, just a 45 minute drive from Tucson. And what a beautiful drive it was as we bundled up and headed for the snow covered pine trees. Having lived here quite awhile we

soon found the snow to be cold and wet—imagine! It was a brief taste of real winter weather and although it was beautiful, our pictures will be all the reminder we will need of it for quite some time!

A note to our winter visitors: the seldom-used gloves and heavy jackets have been put away and our beautiful warm, sunny days have returned. Our temperatures recently have been in the high 70's and low 80's with no change in sight.

Elder Bro. John Klotzle (Altadena, CA) and Bro. Bill Dotterer (Phoenix, AZ) visited us this month and shared God's Word with us. We thank them both for remembering Tucson in their travels. It is always good to see Bro. John and Sis. Lois and Bro. Bill and Sis. Sharon in our midst.

CALIFORNIA, ALTADENA

Christmas! The joyful time! Jesus Christ was born! A time to rejoice!

"Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice: and let men say among the nations, The Lord reigneth." (*I Chron. 16:31*)

"Let the heavens rejoice and let the earth be glad;" (*Psalms 96:11*)

"The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous;" (*Psalms 118:15*)

Surely the cause for rejoicing at Christmas time is because of the gift of Jesus Christ who God has given to all who will seek Him. A joy-filled heart comes from the realization that "...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 we herald the Christmas season, our joy can be expanded as we look back over the past year and

count the many, many gifts God has shared with us. Babies have been born. Souls have turned to the Lord in repentance. Couples have been married in the Lord. And yes, we rejoice at the entry into Heaven of those who have been called Home by the Lord. So, may this be a joyous Christmas because of Christ's birth and the gift of His peace and love so freely given!

We rejoice with Bro. Joe Klotzle (Elder Bro. John and Sis. Lois) and Sis. Sue Wagenbach (Bro. Don and Sis. Marie, Washington, IL) as their engagement was announced. May they feel the richness of God's presence in their lives as they plan for the blessed union of pure and upright hearts.

As we enter into a new year, let us daily be grateful for God's divine love and mercy. Let each day begin with a prayer of thanksgiving and ~~the assurance, by God's grace, to go forth with determination to serve and obey Him!~~ A joyful Christmas greeting to all!

CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO Rose Huette

"When they had heard the king, they departed; and lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star they rejoiced with exceeding great joy."

Matthew 2:9-10

Babies are a precious gift from God. Abigail Gingi was born August 23 and her happy parents are Tibor and Migdalia Bozzay (Chicago, IL). Her grandparents are Bro. Tibor and Sis. Pearl Bozzay from here. Migdalia's mother is from Puerto Rico. May God richly bless this little one and her family.

A warm welcome is extended to Trent Runyon (Fairbury, IL) and

Pat Gutwein (Francesville, IN) who have both been stationed at Camp Pendleton. We appreciate their friendliness and desire to worship with us and participate in our church activities. We wish them many rich blessings. Pat was with us for only one weekend while stationed in Camp Pendleton and then transferred to a base in Alabama.

Our congregation was blessed with a visit from four Elder brothers returning from Mexico. They were Elder Bros. Chuck Hemmer (Peoria, IL), Wendell Gudeman (Francesville, IN), Dave Wiegand (Champaign, IL) and John Klotzle (Altadena, CA). A church dinner and services was enjoyed by all. Elder Bro. Wendell had the service with a theme of "Jesus Will His Promise Keep!" It was also our privilege to have ministering Bro. Dan Stoller (Rockville, CT). We enjoyed his visit and welcome him here any time!

The Sunday School children are busy learning their parts for the upcoming Christmas Program. The theme this year is "Is there any room for Jesus in your heart?" May both teachers and children be richly blessed as they prepare for the program.

ONTARIO, KITCHENER CANADA Laura Baxter

Heart with heart in love united,
Seek upon God's heart repose.
Let your love, to flames ignited,
To the Saviour upward flow.
He the Head and we His members;
He the light and we the glow;
He the Master, we His brethren,
In true fellowship we grow.

Each should stimulate the other,
Childlike, tractable and meek,
In the steps of Christ to follow,
Who in death our life did seek.
Let us ever be awakened,

All our powers day by day,
Willingly to give in service
And His kindness to repay.
Zion's Harp #33

In a recent sermon we were reminded of our need to stimulate each other within our brotherhood. When we gather together with our brethren, we should encourage and stimulate each other to a closer walk with our Lord. Although there are times we need to talk about our daily activities, isn't it wonderful to turn our thoughts and our conversation with our brother or sister heavenward?

"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

Proverbs 22:6

The Lord has blessed Mike and Barb Ursu with a precious little boy, Jakob Timothy. His brother, Jesse, and sister, Naomi, also welcome him into their family. May God be with Mike and Barb as they strive to train their children in the way of the Lord.

We are thankful for our many visitors this past month. We have been encouraged and blessed! We thank our visiting ministers, Bros. Don Manz (Junction, OH) and Bill Gerst (Alto, MI) for their labors in the Lord on our behalf.

We welcome anyone who is interested in visiting us to come anytime. Please call Bro. Jim Baxter (519) 699-5081 or Bro. Tim Tomic (519) 634-9796 for directions and more information.

COLORADO, DENVER Chuck and Naomi Wiegand

Christian greetings across the mile! Our little congregation has much to be thankful for! Thomas Sulentic (Marissa) has decided that he has been held in Satan's bonds

long enough and has found the grace to repent. Sarah Lasnier (Paul) has also turned her back to sin and now feels at peace with God and man. We plan to hear her testimony on January 4. We rejoice with both of these dear ones and also ask for prayers for others who are struggling with the choice of salvation.

Chuck and I have also felt God's rich blessings as we welcome Demetrius Alexander into our homes. Demetrius' grandparents are Dale and Sis. Freidora Wiegand (Eureka, IL) and Herman (the late Sis. Sharon) Braun (Union, IL).

We wish you a blessed holiday season and hope that we can share the true meaning of this time with all that are around us.

CONNECTICUT, ROCKVILLE Cherie Galat

We were so lovingly instructed once again as we listened to the reading of the Memorandum from the Brotherhood Conference on October 26. It is so beneficial to be reminded of how we are to live. Elder Bro. Charles Sinn (Ft. Scott, KS) assisted Elder Bro. Kevin Ryan. We appreciate their labors of love in instructing us to live a holy and pure life. May we daily ask for God's help to apply these instructions to our lives and strive to rid ourselves of those things which do not edify us or our brethren.

Other ministering brethren were Bro. Tom Leman (Denver, CO), Bro. Fred Domka (Mansfield, OH) and Bro. Mark Masters (Mansfield, OH). Let us continue to pray for these brethren who bring forth the Word to us.

Ron and Sheila Gerber welcomed home their little blessing, Emily Rachel, on October 19. She joins her sister, Leah. Her grandparents are Bro. Edwin and Sis. Beverly Gerber and Art and Anne Rowe.

October 24 was a joyous day for Robert and Janet (Kupferschmid) Binkowski. A son, Austin Robert, was born and joins his brother, Nicholas, at home. His grandparents are Walter and Maureen Binkowski and Bro. Eugene and Sis. Ellen Kupferschmid.

Timothy Edwin was born to Bro. Tom and Sis. LaNae Bahler on November 12. He joins twin brothers, Michael and Robert, at home. His grandparents are the late Bro. Lee and Sis. Maxine Bahler and Bro. Edwin and Sis. Beverly Gerber. May each family prayerfully raise their children up in the Lord.

Let us remember Sis. Louise Balasy in our prayers as she recovers.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA WASHINGTON Henrietta Meyer

"And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them."

Luke 2:20

When I read this verse, I picture them telling everyone the good news. Do I do the same?

Our visiting ministers last month were Elder Bros. Don Sauder (Roanoke, IL) and Ed Aeschleman (Philadelphia, PA) and Bros. Jerry Isch (Philadelphia, PA) and Glenn Dill (Tremont, IL). We are thankful for these brothers, their families and others who traveled with them for visiting us. Elder Bros. Don and Ed shared the Memorandum with us. May we all heed those words. Other visitors were from Rittman and Smithville, OH; Stockholm Sweden; and Alto, MI.

Services are usually held the first, third and fourth Sundays of the month at Tysons Westpark Hotel, located about one mile west of the

Beltway (I-495) on Route 7. Services are at 10:30 and 12:30. There are several Sundays the next few months when we will be unable to use the hotel. Please contact the brothers listed below to find out where we will be meeting the Sunday you are in the area. If there is an interest expressed by our visitors, we gather Saturday evening for fellowship and/or singing.

PLEASE NOTE: We will not be holding services January 5, 1997, because of the wedding of Sis. Doreen Gudeman and Bro. Barry Steffen in Francesville, IN.

For more information, assistance, or just to let us know you are in the area, please call Bro. Matt Fetter (703) 860-5749 or Bro. Ken Martin (703) 724-4470.

FLORIDA, FT. LAUDERDALE Nancy Rocke

Be not content this babe to know,
Nor stay at Bethlehem,
But go with Christ to Calvary's
brow,
Beyond Jerusalem.
'Tis there men learn to know the
Christ,
For there He bore man's sin.
Then open wide the door of heart,
And let the Saviour in.
Hymns of Zion #36

May we not only remember the birth of our Lord, but also His suffering and death on the cross which paid our debt, and now we can have a hope of eternal life in Heaven with our Lord and God. We must build on Christ the Solid Rock if our spiritual house is to stand against the trials and storms of life.

Our congregation bids farewell to Bro. Brad and Sis. Dahyls Troxel and children, Brandon, Douglas, and Stacy, as they relocate to Bluffton, IN. We will greatly miss their presence in our small congregation.

May they feel the Lord's nearness and love in their new home.

We failed to mention that Terry Baer was transferred here from Princeville, IL earlier this year. We welcome him and appreciate his assembling with us.

The soul that on Jesus hath
 leaned for repose,
 I will not, I will not desert to his
 foes;
 That soul, though all hell should
 endeavor to shake,
 I'll never, no never, no never
 forsake,
 I'll never, no never, no never
 forsake!

Hymns of Zion #11

On November 4, the Lord brought Micah Christian Sauder to Bro. Seth and Sis. Dawn and then took him to Heaven. Grandparents are Bro. Roger and Sis. Judy Sauder and Bro. Dan and Sis. Jane Plattner. May they all feel the love and prayers of the brethren, and the Lord be their comfort and help.

Note of Thanks:

We would like to express our thanks to you for your cards, love, and especially your steadfast prayers during the loss of our precious son, Micah Christian. We take comfort in knowing he is with the Lord. May our Lord bless you! "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." (Psalm 116:15)

Seth and Dawn Sauder

FLORIDA, NORTH FT. MYERS
Kay Eisenmann

Once again we celebrate our Saviour's birth, the greatest of all gifts! He gave himself; we need to give up self and serve our Saviour daily. Some try to give gifts which is okay, but if we go overboard so we don't feel guilty for not taking time to be there, we must realize that time is

God's gift to us also. Listen to the children, for by listening to them we soon see where their minds and hearts are. Then we try to help them realize that by giving and living for God, their lives will ever be blessed here, but even more so in eternity. Some parents even had to help their child face death. It always saddens us when God calls a child Home. That's when faith is so important. We read in Revelation 22 what God has prepared for His own! It is so much more than this earth with all it's beauty that it has.

As Jesus said, "let the little children come unto me, for such is the kingdom of God." For God does see to the end of our life and knows what is best for our soul. May we all pray for more trust and may the new year make us all more dedicated to the will of God!

Bro. Ralph Yergler (Sis. Jeanette) spent some time in the hospital for surgery on his hip. He then spent some time in a nursing home learning to walk with help and a walker. He is home now, but sorry to say it looks like at this time his problem will or has returned. They want to thank each and every one for the gifts of love, cards, etc., but mostly for their prayers. Please keep those prayers coming for there are some very depressing days for them and their family. May God always hold them all in His ever loving arms.

Paul Blough (Sis. Maira) has been home with severely sprained ankles. We trust that they will be back soon. Please keep them in your prayers also.

Bro. Vic and Sis. Dotty Beer had a potluck supper at their home. We all looked forward to this and we had a blessed time; good food and good fellowship.

FLORIDA, SARASOTA
Vera and Mary Martin

And so we come again to Christmas with all its color and joy, its magic and wonder, its spirit of good will and warmth. But how do we come to Christmas? What it means to us depends on what we bring to it, not in gifts and outer display, but in the inner offerings of love and faith that abide in the heart.

—*Esther York*

We always enjoy the approaching holidays in Sarasota especially when we again have our brethren from the north return to their southern homes. There is a special joy to come to church to join in the larger fellowship and greet old acquaintances. We have received many spiritual blessings listening to the Word that was explained so clearly by Elder Bro. Dale Eisenmann (Chicago, IL).

Our prayers are with Sis. Minnie Nuest who has been hospitalized and is now recovering with therapy.

CHRISTMAS, is love in action...When you love someone, you give to them, as God gives to us. The greatest gift He ever gave was the Person of His Son, sent to us in human form so that we might know what God the Father is really like! Every time we love, every time we give, it's Christmas.

—*Dale Rogers*

GEORGIA, ATLANTA
Peggy Camp

November 17 was a special day for the Atlanta congregation as services were held in our recently purchased building. Over forty people were in attendance and we thank all those who came to worship with us. That afternoon we solemnly partook of Holy Communion, served to us by Elder Bros. Wendell Gudeman (Francesville, IN) and Bud Klopfenstein (Ft. Lauderdale, FL). May the

Lord richly bless them for their labors of love.

We also thank Bros. Dennis Rassi (Fairbury, IL), Mark Steiner (Smithville, OH) and Paul Gasser (Akron, OH) for ministering to us this past month. We appreciate these brothers, their families and others who travel many miles to assemble with us.

Our annual cookout was held October 19. We enjoyed an evening of good food and singing around the campfire. It was also a time to bid farewell to ministering Bro. Jeff Streitmatter III, Sis. Lynne, and baby Jeff as they have moved back to Sarasota. We thank them for all their efforts and deeds of love the past two years. Our prayers go with them and we hope they visit often.

The Atlanta church is located south of the city. From Atlanta, take I-85 South to Exit 13 (which is approximately seven miles south of I-285. Exit 13 is State Route 138. Go right (or west) four miles. The church is on the left, shortly after State Route 138 turns into State Route 92. It is a ranch style brick building. The address is 6225 Campbellton - Fairburn Rd., Fairburn, GA. Our services begin at 10:20. Please contact Bro. Linn Stoller (770) 631-4554 or Bro. John Brewer (770) 502-8629 for further information.

ILLINOIS, BELVIDERE Millie Jepson

"A little child, a shining star,
a stable crude, the door ajar,
but in that place, so crude, forlorn,
the hope of all the world was born."

"For unto you is born this day in
the city of David a Saviour, which is
Christ the Lord."

Luke 2:11

As we make preparations in our homes and church to celebrate Christ's birth, we marvel at the love of God in allowing His Son to be born in that crude stable and then to die for our sins. Even as there was no room for Him in those Bethlehem inns, there are so many times we become too busy to give Him room in our hearts and lives. We appreciate our Sunday School children and young people who with their songs and recitations bring us back to that manger and the real meaning of Christmas in their beautiful Christmas program.

Our dear Sis. Louise Knecht has not been able to attend church for the past few months. She had been hospitalized and is now a resident at the Alpine-Fireside Nursing Center in Rockford, IL. Sis. Louise is one of God's jewels who brightens every corner where she finds herself, and she has been a special blessing to our congregation in Belvidere Church. We all love you and really miss you, Sis. Louise!

Bro. Larry Gramm is now working in the Chicago area and has moved there. Bro. Larry had been living near Belvidere for the last few years and had been very supportive to our congregation. We appreciate his help and pray for God's blessing and direction on his life.

Bro. Clint Heinold was elected to help Bro. Dave Jepson teach the high school Bible class. The eighth graders are now included in the Bible Class and meet during the afternoon service. We thank God for this young brother and his wife, Sis. Stephanie, as they fill in the gap left by those who have moved away. God does provide!

As we near the end of 1996, we want to thank each minister, brother, sister and friend who visited us this past year. And a very special "thank you" to our Elgin relatives and friends for their faith-

ful support. The visiting ministers over the last month were: Bros. Steve Sauder (Tremont, IL), Richard Plattner (Peoria, IL) and Elder Bro. Nate Steffen, Bro. Gary Anliker and Bro. Ron Schambach (all from Elgin, IL). We appreciate their willingness to bring us God's Word and fellowship with us. God bless you all for your kindness to us.

ILLINOIS BLOOMINGTON-NORMAL Janice Horner - Carol Sauder

An all-church potluck supper and hymn sing was held October 20. We thank all the special groups who sang.

We were blessed to witness the baptism of Bro. Matt Kaufmann on October 27. His parents are Bro. Dennis and Sis. Bonnie Kaufmann.

On November 6, Elder Bro. Everett Hari gave a special Bible study on "Prayer and Fasting". We have evidence in the Scriptures that fasting and prayer were very important to the early church. Bro. Everett gave four guidelines for those who would consider doing this: a clearly defined Scriptural reason, an attitude of holiness and reverence, consideration for others, and a private place without interruptions or outward show. "...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (James 5:16). May the implementation of Biblical teachings to our lives ever draw us closer to Jesus. Thank you, Bro. Everett, for enlightening us on this topic.

On November 9, our Bible class planned and prepared an elegant dinner to raise money for a mission trip they are planning next summer. It was a very enjoyable evening with several groups from the Bible class singing praises to our Lord. Thanks to all who participated and donated to this worthy cause.

We want to thank our visiting

ministers: Elder Bro. Earl Ringger (Gridley, IL), Bro. Art Baurer (Princeville, IL), and Bro. Mark Gerber (Bluffton, IN). We appreciated their efforts and labors of love.

Bro. Bill and Sis. Mary Masters have reason to rejoice. They are thankful grandparents of Rachael Elizabeth who was born November 11. Rachael is the first child of Cory and Lydia Masters from Des Plaines, IL.

Sam Koehl was hospitalized this month and is at home now recuperating. May the Lord continue to heal him.

THE BABE OF BETHLEHEM

The blessed story of the Christ,
The babe of Bethlehem,
Is worthy of our song and praise,
And stirs the hearts of men.

The fullness of God's love divine
Surrounds the Christ so mild.
Alas, how many only know
The Saviour as a child.

Hymns of Zion #36

As we remember the wonderful story of the Christ Child's birth this holiday season, let us be thankful for our many blessings.

ILLINOIS, BRADFORD **Brad & Cheryl Kupferschmid**

"And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS."

Luke 1:30-31

Our prayers are with Richard Slutz and his family as he recovers from open-heart surgery this month. May God bless him with a quick recovery and restore him to a full measure of health.

Bro. Jim and Sis. Helen Knobloch

are in our prayers as they grieve the loss of Sis. Helen's father, Bro. Edwin Staub (Peoria, IL). May the Holy Spirit bring them special comfort in the days to come.

Bro. Walt Herrmann (Princeville, IL) visited us in Bradford last month and preached the Word. May God bless him and all our ministering brothers for their willingness to edify us.

"And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

Luke 2:7, 14

This should be our thought every day when we consider the love Jesus must have for us. He left His Father and a place of beauty unimaginable to us, to live as a man and to be tempted and tried as we are, only to die for us later in one of the most painful deaths known to man. Yet, if we repent of our sins and become converted, we can call Him our brother! "Glory to God in the highest" indeed! May the blessings of God rest on you all this Christmas season.

ILLINOIS, CHAMPAIGN **Samuel and Pamela Furrer**

The Virgin Mary and Joseph. We've all heard about, read about, and sung about them since before we started Sunday School. We know about the annunciation, the blessed virgin birth, the shepherds, and the wise men, but have we really thought about what was happening to these two people as individuals? In simple terms, they were supposed to be getting married when Mary announced to Joseph that she was going to have a baby. Joseph knew

that he was not the father of this child, and wondered what to do about his dear Mary. One option he had was to "put her away" or divorce her. Another available option would have been to have her punished, possibly stoned, as an adulteress. Mary, on the other hand, knew that she was a virgin who was carrying a child — obviously a mind-boggling concept. Joseph and Mary surely must have worried more than a little bit what their family, friends and neighbors would think of this whole situation. While some people around the neighborhood would be accepting of the accounts of angelic visits and announcements, some would not buy it as any more than a big story. This was obviously gossip waiting to happen, adding more weight to an already burdensome emotional load. Perhaps the only person who understood and could appreciate what was happening was Elizabeth, Mary's cousin. Their shared experience of carrying miracles no doubt brought them closer to one another and to God. Meanwhile, Joseph, being a righteous man, did the only thing he could rightly do and turned to God for strength. In a dream, the Lord sent an angel to explain the recent happenings to Joseph, and he went ahead and took Mary as his wife. Mary, we are told, accepted all of this quietly and said "be it unto me according to thy word" and then went to Elizabeth's.

Joseph and Mary obviously had much faith. Could we even come close to this level of faithfulness? These individuals were faithful followers of God who must have felt more than a little dazed and confused for a period of time. They made sense of the situation and found comfort in their deep faith and took comfort in the calmness that God can bring to even the most confusing of times. This Christmas

season, as we're running about making sure we have every gift purchased, wrapped, and to the right family Christmas, and we're feeling like we don't need any more stress, let's remember Joseph and the Virgin Mary and the lessons they can be to us.

"Faith makes all things possible. Hope makes all things bright. Love makes all things easy." (Anon.)

Bro. Keith and Sis. Joan Hanson have yet another marriage coming up as their son, Ethan, is engaged. Ethan has lived in the Phoenix, AZ area for a number of years now where he is a supervisor in a bank. Ernestine Dinesto, also of Phoenix, will be his bride in February. We wish all of them the very best of the Lord's blessings on this union.

In the rush of welcoming all the new students here in September, one new person who moved here for employment slipped past the notice of this column. Bro. Chad Keever, formerly of Mansfield, OH, now lives here (at 1009 S. Mattis, #4-2, Champaign, IL 61821) and works at Covenant Hospital in Urbana. We welcome Bro. Chad to our congregation and hope that he finds ample love and fellowship with our church. As we had one move here for a job, one of ours, Sis. Darla Stock, has moved away to the Leo, IN area for a new job. We wish her well in Leo. Sis. Krista Banwart has taken to the road and moved to a warmer climate just as it is getting cold here. For the next three months, she will be working as an occupational therapist in Yuma, AZ. Our thoughts will be with her as she is so far from home but still with other believers and the love of Jesus.

Our Elder Bro. David Wiegand was under the weather for a brief time as he sought medical attention for kidney stones. He is now doing very well and has become more thankful for the good health he nor-

mally enjoys. We wish him continued good health.

Visitors have been making their way to Champaign-Urbana on a fairly regular basis. We had a special group in mid-November as many of the students invited friends down for the weekend. Ministering Bro. Ted Hirstein (Morton, IL) was our sole visiting minister this past month. We do sincerely thank each person who stops by to spend some time with our congregation.

ILLINOIS, CHICAGO

Kathy Schlatter

Surely goodness and mercy
Follow me all the days of my life
And thus shall I dwell in God's
holy house
Now and forevermore...
Zion's Harp #212

It has been a quarter of a century—twenty-five years—since my brother and I were baptized. For some of us, that no longer seems so long, for others it looks like almost an eternity. I think about that sacred day, December 12, 1971, every year; but he and I have seldom spoken specifically of it. Nevertheless, it is a date to celebrate. We had been saved by grace, and that day we followed Christ's example to be baptized physically to show symbolically our deadness to sin and arising to a new life. Once we were consecrated in the prayer of "the laying on of hands", the church which had heard our testimonies the night before filed by to encourage us, as did numerous friends and relatives. My brother now ministers to that same church, which has grown both older and younger, as changes take place. My mission field is elsewhere, here in the Chicago area, where I came somewhat reluctantly, I must admit, within a year of our baptism though in faith—and

I have been mightily convinced of my placement here many times over. Truly our cups overflow, for the Lord is so faithful in fulfilling His part of the covenant, and though I stumble far too often, He is willing and "...able to keep that which I've committed unto Him against that day." (Hymns of Zion #109, chorus). There is nothing silver nor worth money here on earth that can be compared to the joys He has already given—and as my other brother has been known to say, heaven will be "better than that."

We are almost tearfully grateful for those who have given of themselves through the Spirit of the Living God: Elder Bros. Joe Braker (Morton, IL) and Marvin Leman (Bradford, IL), and Bros. Curt Rassi (Tremont, IL), Dennis Rassi (Fairbury, IL), Dean Steffen (Belvidere, IL), Gary Endress (Bradford, IL), Loren Schrenk (St. Louis, MO) and John Grimm (Columbus, OH). May their reward be Elijah's mantle now and heavenly mansions then. Recently we have had young men visiting our church, and one in particular has remarked on the numbers of greetings given from the brotherhood, Sunday after Sunday, often from outside the state. We have been blessed by a wealth of fellowship and joy.

The holiness of Communion is precious each time we partake. Elder Bro. Marvin Leman lent himself to share in this divine work with our Elder Bro. Dale Eisenmann on Saturday evening, October 26. Once again, we were refreshed by the Spirit's cleansing, comforting power.

Bro. Andrew Rassi (Bro. Greg and Sis. Carla) gave his testimony on Saturday evening, October 19, and was baptized Sunday, October 20, as Elder Bro. Joe Braker assisted our Elder Bro. Dale. For a church to listen to the experience of one or

more souls, remembering for each his own holy night, brings renewal and spiritual energy. Bro. Andrew has returned to his studies at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, and he takes with him the love and prayers of his church—for guidance, for chastening if needed, for uplift and support.

I was visiting with a young friend who had been told to be careful of "kinfolk salvation". I was intrigued because his explanation was that one had to follow the Word. No relative nor friend could be used as an example (particularly for inexpedient or sinful ways), nor was one released from telling even one's mother what the Spirit had revealed as wrong. I am thoughtful, though fortunate to have the mother, relatives, and many of the friends I do, because the comfort and "pull" of one's background and family is strong—but salvation is individual and only by the Word made flesh—also our sole perfect example. Christ himself said: "For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother." (Mark 3:35)

A young convert recently spoke of reading the Word to "get traction." As we see the snow flurries begin in our area, this analogy boldly captures attention. If we are not reading the Word faithfully, we have no sure standard to hold onto, no meaningful verses to sound in our minds as we struggle, no absolutes to help us move out of the slick spot of life.

...God with man is now residing;
Yonder shines the infant light:
Chorus: Come and worship, come
and worship,
Worship Christ, the newborn King.
Saints, before the altar bending,
Watching long in hope and fear,
Suddenly the Lord, descending,
In His temple shall appear...
"Angels from the Realms of

Glory" (verses 2 & 4)

ILLINOIS, CISSNA PARK
Beth Steffen - Joyce Bauer

On November 3, our church was filled with many visitors as we hosted an invite-a-couple potluck. Our visitors that day included ministering Bros. Jim Byrd (Roanoke, IL), Vernon Wettstein (Congerville, IL) and John Hartman (Fairbury, IL). We thank them for sharing the Word with us that day.

"...He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life..."

John 5:24

The weekend of November 16 and 17 was the time for the testimonies and baptisms of Tracy Rudin (Bro. Arlyn and Sis. LaNae), Bethany Frank (Bro. Bruce and Sis. Bonita), Valarie Rinkenberger (Bro. Rob and Sis. Sally), and Alicia Maul (Bro. Fred and Sis. Joan). We welcome them into our church family. Ministers who shared their time and talents with us that weekend were Elder Bros. Ray Sinn (Latty, OH), Wayne Anliker (Forrest, IL), Dave Wiegand (Champaign, IL), and Bros. Dale Frank (Oakville, IA), Joe Gerst (Iowa City, IA), Lennie Meyer (Chicago, IL) and Bob Beebe (South Bend, IN). May God bless their willing service.

Bro. Dan and Sis. Carol Heinold have taken newborn Devon into their home as a foster child. He joins his one year old brother, Walter. May God be with them in this undertaking.

Grandparents, Sis. Rosie Martin and Ron and Sis. Shirley Krumwiede are happy to share in welcoming grandson, Landon Blake. His parents are Jay and Dawn Martin of Mahomet.

We were sorry to hear that Sis.

Eulalia Eisenmann had a short stay in the hospital. We are happy to report that she is home from the hospital and doing well.

We always appreciate it when God provides us with visiting ministers. We thank Elder Bros. Dale Eisenmann (Chicago, IL) and Alfred Bahler (Wolcott, IN) for sharing the Word with us.

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory...)"

John 1:14

As we prepare to celebrate Christmas, may we recognize its true meaning and share it with others.

ILLINOIS, CONGERVILLE
Linda Knobloch
Missy Banwart

And finally 'bove all we pray
That in this house no spirit stay
But only Thine own Spirit;
Our conduct here to regulate,
And perfect order to instate
In holy, God-like manner.
Amen! Amen! Come draw near us,
Sun of clearness, Truthful witness,
Shine in heart and soul with
clearness.

Zion's Harp #160

We are thankful for the visitors we've had with us. May God bless Bros. Kenneth Weerts (Cissna Park, IL), Ed Fritz (Washington, IL) and also Elder Bro. Andy Virkler (Bay City, MI) who was with us for our Communion service.

Jesus, thou alone canst govern
Thy assembly as its sov'reign,
Bless me then, Thy humble child!
O, infuse in me new merit
To obey Thy Holy Spirit;
Strengthen me with blessings mild!

Zion's Harp #189

After a very meaningful and so-

bering Communion service, may it be our prayer that the Lord would infuse in us new merit to diligently strive to live, love and forgive as He does ask of us.

ILLINOIS, ELGIN
Peggy Heiniger
Norma Schambach

God Sent Us a Saviour

If our greatest need had been information
 God would have sent us an educator.

If our greatest need had been technology
 God would have sent us a scientist.

If our greatest need had been money
 God would have sent us an economist.

If our greatest need had been pleasure
 God would have sent us an entertainer.

But our greatest need was forgiveness
 So God sent us a Saviour.
 —author unknown

While men seem to strive for more information, technology, money, and pleasure, may we not lose sight of our goal which is forgiveness and eternal life.

October 20 was the wedding of Bro. Matt Schambach (Bro. Tom and Sis. Connie) and Sis. Renee Anliker (Bro. Gary and Sis. Edie). May God bless this union of hearts.

Once again our congregation rejoices with Bro. Tom and Sis. Connie Schambach's family as Sis. Jolene's engagement to Bro. Tom Young of Forrest, IL was announced. His parents are Bro. Terry and Sis. Peggy.

Our new church building is progressing quite well in spite of the early onset of winter weather. It is

exciting to see the roof ready for shingles and many of the walls in place. We pray that God will continue to protect all of the construction crew and the faithful volunteers.

Visiting ministers this month were Bros. John Stoller (Leo, IN), Joe Gerst (Iowa City, IA), Dean Steffen and Art Mueller (Belvidere, IL), Ken Eisenmann (Cissna Park, IL), Loren Schrenk (St. Louis, MO), Marvin Dotterer and Elder Bro. Wayne Anliker (Forrest, IL). We always appreciate their willingness to serve us.

God was watching over Natalie Martin (Bro. Dave and Sis. Jean) who was hit by a car when crossing a busy highway, but escaped with no injuries.

Our dear ministering Bro. Bill Gudeman is home from the hospital after having surgery. We are thankful that God, the Great Physician, is able to return our loved ones to good health.

Do we appreciate every opportunity we have to attend church? Let's remember our aged and those who are shut in who cannot worship with us.

As a congregation, we extend our deepest sympathy to the family of Sis. Louise Schifferer who went to her eternal reward on October 29. May her children, Bro. Tom, Jerry, and Wayne, and sisters, Sis. Julia Graf and Sis. Nina (Morris) Willaert, and their families feel God's comfort along with our prayers.

Sis. Carolyn Haas was saddened by the sudden death of her little 21-month-old granddaughter, Rebecca Haas, of Scottsdale, AZ. We pray that her parents, Dan and Rita, can bear the bitter grief and try to understand that God wanted her for a tender bud in His bouquet.

At this Christmas season, may we all experience the real joy of God's promise—the gift of His Son.

The Promise

To a world wrapped in darkness,
 God promised a light...
 To those who are frightened,
 an end to the night.
 To those who are hurting,
 God promised a friend
 who'll catch every teardrop,
 whose love has no end...
 God kept every promise,
 fulfilled every one,
 with one single gift—
 the gift of His Son.

—author unknown

ILLINOIS, EUREKA
Dori Blunier

"O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!"

Isaiah 40:9

Christmas is a time to rejoice in the good tidings that were brought unto all people.

We have had many blessed weekends in this last month. Our Bible Class invited several visiting Bible Classes to spend a Sunday with us on October 20. We appreciated the messages from Bro. Glenn Dill (Tremont, IL) and Bro. Jaye Rinkenberger (Goodfield, IL) who helped to make it a special day. The weekend of November 3, Elder Bro. Art Bahler (Fairbury, IL) and our Elder Bro. Ervin shared with us the Memorandum. May we always be willing to listen to their sound counsel and advice.

We welcomed four new sisters in faith into our congregation on Sunday, November 17. Shari Martin (Bro. Steve and Sis. Vicki), Becky Bradle (Bro. Roger and Sis. Ila), Paula Stoller (Bro. Tom and Sis. Edie), and Angie Schmidgall (Bro.

Paul and Sis. Kris) gave their testimonies of faith and were baptized. It was a renewal of faith for everyone who sat and listened to the story of salvation as each testified of God's Spirit working in their life. May His Spirit guide each one throughout their life and lead them to His kingdom. The ministers who shared that weekend with us were Elder Bro. Bill Schlatter (Junction, OH), and Bros. Bill Hodel (Roanoke, IL), Mike Rinkenberger (Congerville, IL), Bob Stoller (Lamar, MO), and Ed Knecht (Silverton, OR).

We were saddened by the death of Bro. Virgil Roche who died on October 19. We extend our sympathy and prayers of comfort to his wife, Sis. Pauline; and to his children and grandchildren. His children are Bro. Curtis (Eureka), Bro. Merle (Philadelphia, PA), Bro. Nelson (Tremont, IL), and Sis. Jane Wiegand (Minneapolis, MN). We also sympathize with his brothers, Bro. Ray and Bro. Harry (Eureka), Bro. Orval (Sarasota, FL), his sister, Sis. Alvina Roche (Eureka), his foster brother, Bro. Orttie (Oakville, IA), and his foster sister, Sis. Viola Herman (Peoria, IL).

There have been several brethren from our congregation recently who have had surgery and we are thankful that they are now doing well. They are Bro. Harold Hodel (Sis. Mick), Bro. Norman Roche (Sis. Doris), Sis. Nelma Eastman (Bro. Dick), and Bro. Lester Martin (Sis. Ruth). May God continue to bless them and their families.

Bro. Kent and Sis. Betty Getz, feeling the leading of God's direction, have recently moved from our congregation to Elgin, IA. We wish them God's blessings in their new home and will miss them assembling with us.

Note of Thanks:

"Words fail to thank for the over-

whelming love and kindness from our entire brotherhood and many friends in the past years since Bro. Virgil's stroke and now at his passing. Pray God reward each of you."

Love in Him,

Sis. Pauline Roche and family

ILLINOIS, FAIRBURY
Sally Fehr - Thelma Slagel

God's plan fulfilled as He had willed,

Then came the Christ on earth
The star so bright in deepest night
Foretold His blessed birth.

The angel's throng with joyous song

Appeared to shepherds meek
The angels word the shepherds heard

Then went they forth to seek.

Hymns of Zion #35

May we be mindful of the wonderful plan God has for us, by sending His only Son that we may find salvation.

We are looking forward to our Christmas Sunday School program. We pray for God's guidance, for their Sunday School teachers who so lovingly teach them.

We wish to thank our visiting ministers who brought God's precious Word. They were: Bros. Bill Hodel (Roanoke, IL), Marvin Schmidgall (Eureka, IL), Jaye Rinkenberger (Goodfield, IL), Mike Rinkenberger (Congerville, IL), Greg Stoller (Forrest, IL), James Hoerr and Ken Hoerr (Peoria, IL) and Elder Bro. Earl Ringger (Gridley, IL).

Tracy Steffen (Bro. Albert and Sis. Karen) and Mike Fogarty (Rod and Kathy) have announced their engagement to be married on January 25. We wish them God's blessings.

Carol VanScoy (Caroline), Chenoa, and Jeff Stoller (Bro. Dale and

Sis. Sandra) have answered God's call to repentance. We are rejoicing with them, and our prayers are that God's grace will be felt by them.

Sis. Tillie Rinkenberger has taken up her residency at Fairview Haven. We pray that God will comfort her in her new surroundings.

First-time parents, Troy and Teresa Cottrell (Chenoa), have been blessed with a precious baby boy, Benjamin Matthew, born October 9. His delighted grandparents are Larry and Doris Cottrell (Chenoa).

Bro. Cory and Sis. Beth Steffen have been blessed with a precious little boy, Ryan Dean, born October 25. His sisters, Tiffany and Tami, are delighted. Happy grandparents are Bro. Tom and Sis. Diane Steidinger and Bro. Albert and Sis. Karen Steffen.

We extend our heartfelt sympathy to the family of Leona Goodart, 95, who passed away October 24. Her sister, Ruth Goodwin, Dallas, TX survives, and also nieces and nephews.

Those who have been hospitalized recently were: Sis. Dorothy Hoffman, Ben Kaisner (Kathryn), and baby Logan Fehr (Bro. Todd and Sis. Cynthia). We wish all of them a speedy recovery.

ILLINOIS, FORREST
Marlene Walter -
Mary Bachtold

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

Luke 2:14

At this Christmas season as we remember the birth of our Saviour, may our lives be filled with peace, joy and thankful hearts.

We were happy to hear of the engagement of Bro. Tom Young (Bro. Terry and Sis. Peggy) and Sis.

Jolene Schambach (Bro. Tom and Sis. Connie, Elgin, IL). May God continue to guide them as they make wedding plans.

“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him...”

Rev. 3:20

It is our prayer for Derek Babbs that he will feel God's abundant grace as he turns to Him in repentance.

We thank ministering Bro. Nelson Beer (Milford, IN) for sharing God's Word with us. May God richly bless him for his willingness to be used in His service.

Sis. Wilma Bachtold, Sis. Irene Traub, and Bro. Rich Rieger have been hospital patients this past month. We are thankful they have been able to return home and pray that God will continue to bless them with health and strength according to His will.

May God grant Bro. Joe Koehl much grace and wisdom as he has been chosen as our new Sunday School teacher. He will replace Bro. Jim Schneider whose term will be ending soon. We thank Bro. Jim for his willing service and know that God will bless him.

A little bundle of love has arrived in the home of Bro. Karl and Sis. Bethany Edelman. Karla and Trevor are happy to have a new baby brother, Tyler Joseph. His grandparents are Bro. Levi and Sis. Donna Edelman and Bro. Lloyd and Joyce Honegger.

Note of Thanks:

A sincere thank you to the many relatives and friends who remembered me with cards and gifts on my 80th birthday. God bless each one of you for your thoughtfulness.

Bro. Clarence Koehl

ILLINOIS, GRIDLEY Perry A. Klopfenstein

Harvest is past and our local farmers were blessed with a bountiful one. Our brethren here in Gridley, and those in other farming communities, are to be commended for their ongoing willingness to observe Sunday as a day of rest, even when the harvest beckons. This at a time when more and more farmers are ignoring Sunday as a sabbath (a day of rest), and instead working seven days per week during the harvest season as weather permits.

God surely blesses those who follow His commandments as attested by the fact that a rural six-day workweek is as productive as a seven-day workweek.

On November 3, Bro. Doug Ulrich was announced to be married to Sis. Trista Gerst (Goodfield, IL). Her parents are Bro. Steve and Sis. Bonnie Gerst. He is the son of Douglas James Ulrich and Mary Lockart, Eureka.

On November 10, Bro. Mark Funk was engaged to Sis. Becky Winn of Morton. She is the daughter of Jack and Nancy Gould of East Peoria. He is the son of Bro. Virgil “Bud” and Sis. Shirley Funk of Congerville.

May God richly bless these couples who have sincerely sought His guidance for their future marriages. We, as a church body, should highly value the concept of seeking a lifetime helpmate through the sure avenue of faith.

Sis. Celia Harroun was taken into the faith on November 20. Her conversion (and baptism) is the work of God, and we praise His name for her changed life. We rejoice with her.

Bro. Mike and Sis. Peggy Stoller were blessed on November 17 with the birth of their third child, a girl, named Lexi Lyn. She has two broth-

ers, Derek, 4, and Dustin, 3. Grandparents are Elder Bro. Earl and Sis. Dixie Ringger and Bro. Don and Sis. Vyra Stoller.

Three of our members were hospitalized this past month: Bro. Paul Zehr, and Sisters Hulda Meiss and Vi Hany. May God heal and comfort them according to His will.

Elder Bro. Doug Schock (Pulaski, IA) was a visiting minister on November 10.

ILLINOIS, MORTON Phyllis Farney Cheryl Wuthrich

The Morton congregation rejoiced to hear the testimonies and witness the baptisms of three young men on November 9 and 10. They were Matthew Kaiser (Bro. Dave and Sis. Beth), Aaron Rassi (Bro. Gary and Sis. Debbie) and Eric Zimmerman (Bro. Joe and Sis. Barb). We wish them God's grace as they continue to grow in the Lord.

Our congregation had another occasion to rejoice with the announcement of the engagement of Sis. Becky Winn (Nancy and Jack Gould, Morton, IL) and Bro. Mark Funk, Gridley, IL (Bro. Virgil and Sis. Shirley Funk, Congerville, IL). We wish them the Lord's richest blessings during their engagement period and their life together.

We wish to thank our visiting ministers and their families for being with us this month. Our visitors were Elder Bro. Ron Messner (Washington, IL) and Bros. Roger Sauder (Ft. Lauderdale, FL), Greg Rassi (Chicago, IL), Curt Rassi (Tremont, IL) and Dennis Rassi (Fairbury, IL).

ILLINOIS, PEORIA Cara Nussbaum

It's hard to imagine that Christmas will soon be here again. I hope

that we can all stop and pause to reflect on the true meaning of Christmas. I think sometimes in the busyness of the season we forget why we're really celebrating. "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will toward men." (Luke 2:14)

We rejoice with Sis. Angie Suttor, now living in Bremen, IN and Bro. Jeremy Zimmerman (Roanoke, IL) who have announced their engagement and plan to be married June 1, 1997. Their parents are Bro. Steve and Sis. Jane Suttor and Rick and Sis. Raylene Zimmerman (Roanoke, IL). We pray that God will bring many blessings their way.

We want to thank Elder Bro. Charles Sauder (Tremont, IL), Bro. Roger Sauder (Ft. Lauderdale, FL) and Bro. Jeff Grimm (Goodfield, IL) for visiting Peoria recently. May God bless them for being willing to be a servant of our most high God.

Those hospitalized recently were Bro. Luke Heller, Bro. Ivan Thomas, Sis. Caroline Schmidgall and Bro. Art Herrmann. May we each be reminded to lift them up in prayer for God's healing touch.

Bro. Edwin Staub has taken up a new residence in his Heavenly Home. He will surely be missed, especially for his willingness to perform so many of the outdoor chores at church. He seemed the most happy when he was mowing the lawn, raking leaves, pulling weeds, shoveling snow or just in general making sure everything was kept in order. May God comfort all of his family.

Another dear soul, Bro. Bill Hofstetter, passed away recently. We extend our condolences to those he left behind.

ILLINOIS, PRINCEVILLE
Joanna Herrmann

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

Isaiah 9:6

We read in Genesis 2:18, "And the Lord God said, it is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." God has worked in several lives this past year, bringing souls together in Holy Matrimony. Again this past month we witnessed the wedding of two souls. Bro. Bill Wade and Sis. Lisa Kieser (Sis. Martha and the late Bro. Loris) were married November 3. We were thankful to have Elder Bro. Joe Braker (Morton, IL) with us.

We also had two engagement announcements on November 17. They are Sis. Tonya Wieland (Bro. Bob and Sis. Nancy) to Bro. Kevin Stoller (Bro. John and Sis. Patricia) of Leo, IN; and Sis. Stephanie Chalacomb to Bro. Craig White (Sis. Gloria). We wish them God's richest blessings as they begin their life together.

We are thankful to see that souls are still seeking the Lord in repentance. Virginia (Harry) King has recently begun her walk with Him. We pray she feels God's nearness as she grows in faith.

On November 8, Bro. Dennis Rassi (Fairbury, IL) held a Bible study titled, "It takes a family." We were encouraged to take time for our children, and to be the proper and consistent example for them. Also, to focus on the strengths, the positive, rather than the weaknesses or negative, in our relationships, as a family. We want to thank him, and pray that God will richly bless him.

We are always thankful for our

visiting ministers. This past month we had Bros. Ted Hirstein (Morton, IL), Paul Messner, (Winthrop, MN), Ken Weerts, (Cissna Park, IL), and Greg Stoller (Forrest, IL).

We rejoice with Greg and Jan Siebenthal at the birth of their son, Trent. Trent was born November 4. Thankful grandparents are Bro. Gene and Sis. Kay Siebenthal. May God bless them as they raise this little child given unto them.

I needed the quiet, so He drew me
aside,
Into the shadows where we could
confide,
Away from the bustle, where all
the day long
I hurried and worried when active
and strong.
I needed the quiet, though at first
I rebelled,
But gently, so gently, my cross He
upheld,
And whispered so sweetly of
spiritual things.
Then weakened in body, my spirit
took wings
To heights never dreamed of when
active and gay.
He loved me so greatly He drew
me away.
I needed the quiet, no prison my
bed,
But a beautiful valley of blessing
instead,
A place to grow richer, in Jesus to
hide.
I needed the quiet, so He drew me
aside.
*(Author Unknown, borrowed
from 1973 Silver Lining)*

We have had several in the hospital or laid up with an illness this past month. They are Sis. Lucille (Bro. Edward) Knobloch, Sis. Grace Strettmatter, Sis. Adele Martin, Sis. Emily (Bro. Joe) Stoller, Sis. Bertha Kieser, Bro. Jim (Sis. Diane) Gerst, and Sis. Cheryl Herrmann. We pray they can feel God's healing power, as well as a peacefulness during this "quiet" time.

ILLINOIS, ROANOKE**Jana Gastman - Lisa Leman**

"And as you go, preach, saying,
The kingdom of heaven is at hand."
Matthew 10:7

We are so thankful to have brethren visit and share God's Word with us. May He bless Bros. Erik Givens (Princeville, IL) and Lynn Stieglitz (Leo, IN) for being with us this past month.

Our prayers have been with those who have been hospitalized this past month: Sis. Mardell Bowald (Bro. Dick) and Bonnie Benders. May the Lord be ever near them.

After many years of faithful service to her family and the Lord, Sis. Marie Blunier was laid to rest. Our love and prayers are extended to her children: Bro. Harlow, Bro. Wilmer, Bro. Edward, Bro. Gaylord, Robert, Sis. Erma Moser, Sis. Mardell Bowald, Sis. Ann Sauder, Sis. Rachel Leman, Sis. Dorothy Leman, Sis. Mary Lou Grimm, Sis. Gladys Haefli, Sis. Melba Hangartner, and Phyllis Schacherbauer.

Note of Thanks:

I want to thank everyone for the prayers, cards, gifts, and visits that I received while I was in the hospital and since returning home. May you be richly blessed.

Larry Aeschleman

*A Tribute and farewell
to Marie Blunier:*

Dear Marie,

Many times I pondered about when this day would come. The final day to bid you our last farewell. As we slept, the angels came to carry you Home. Think of you and how happy you must be there in the realms of glory. For us, a comforting

thought. We yearn to be worthy of meeting you there when our earthly work is done.

You have weathered many storms. The most heartbreaking, to lose Elmer, your life's helpmate. What a blow to suddenly realize your lot was to be both mother and father to your dear family. Courage took you through many hardships during these adjusting years, as did your patience and sincere prayers. God never forsook you; your children grew and the years rolled on. There must have been times when you bubbled over with joy and thankfulness, as you observed the results of your teaching efforts.

It was so worthwhile to celebrate your 102nd birthday and sing Happy Birthday one more time. As I reflect to my younger years, our families were good friends, often together, enjoying many happy times.

Elmer was a fun person—happy, easy going and likeable. Your babies were beautiful, lots of dark hair. The new one, more beautiful than the last, very precious.

Your life will go down as an inspiration to many. We appreciate the years spent with you as a resident in this wonderful home and the contact with your children.

You were a very very special person who touched the lives of a score of folks who adored you, who now sorrow, since we will see your face no more.

I have precious memories tucked in my memory album. Tis there I will go to relive moments of happiness shared with you.

We love you. Thanks, Marie, for being a good example.

Until we meet again, where we will never say goodbye.

*Farewell, Gus and Alma Baum
The Staff, Housekeeping, The
Nurses, The Kitchen, The Aides,
The Residents*

ILLINOIS, TREMONT
Barb Dill - Barb Kaeb

"And she shall bring forth a son,
and thou shalt call his name JESUS;
for he shall save his people from
their sins."

Matthew 1:21

Our visiting ministers this past month have been Bros. Ron Heiniger (Sis. Kay, Bloomington, IL), Gary Brown (Sis. Jane, Forrest, IL), Fred Eberhardt (Sis. Kathy, Burlington, IA), and John Steiner (Sis. Carol, Oakville, IA). We pray God will bless them and their families for their willingness to come and labor in our behalf.

We extend our sympathy to Bro. Nelson, Sis. Kathy Rocke and their children in the passing of Bro. Nelson's father, Bro. Virgil Rocke, of Eureka, IL; and to Jerry, Sis. Melba Hangartner and family in the passing of Sis. Melba's mother, Sis. Marie Blunier, of Roanoke, IL. May God fill those sorrowing with His comfort and love is our prayer.

Engaged are JoAnne Prather (Bro. Warren and Sis. Carolyn) to Jeffrey Cleasby of Augusta, WI (Richard and Donna). We congratulate them and pray God will grant them much happiness.

"In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion."

Psalms 71:1

We have many loved ones who have spent time in the hospital this month: Sis. Edna Getz, Sis. Ruth Frank, Sis. Elsie Sinn, Sis. Lee (Bro. James) Pfloderer, Roberta (Clifford) Schweigert, Sis. Jody (Bro. Kevin) Dill, and Sis. Emma Greiner. May we ever remember our loved ones with our visits, cards and prayers.

We rejoice with Bro. Kent and Sis.

Jane Miller with the adoption of a daughter, Whitney Jayne, born October 15. Her sister, Mikaela, and grandmothers, Sis. Phyllis Lang and Sis. Pearl Miller (Sabetha, KS) welcome her into their family circle. Royce and Sis. Sharon Risinger are happy and thankful parents of a little girl, Sydney Marie, born November 13. Her big brother, Tyler, and grandmother, Sis. Alma Bolliger, and grandparents, Harold and Sandy Risinger, welcome her home. We are thankful that God has blessed their homes with one of His little angels.

ILLINOIS, WASHINGTON
Sue Ruppert
Denise Romersberger

“Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers,”

Ephesians 1:16

Take a pencil and make a list of people who have touched your life in a special way. Perhaps your list will begin with the name of parents, teachers, ministers, friends, or co-workers. Think about the people on your list. What made or makes them so special to you? Have you ever told them about the influence they have had on your life? This might be just the time to send a note or card that expresses your gratitude. Take time to offer a prayer of thanksgiving that the Lord has brought each of these special people into your life.

Are you making a difference in someone's life? Add to your list the names of those persons you will strive to influence for good. Pray that opportunities will be opened to bring that influence to pass.

While we were yet sinners, Jesus chose us to be His special people. We need to give thanks for Jesus' coming and dying to take away our sins.

Also, Jesus provides for us in so many ways we could never repay. The hardest thing is to be on the receiving end. We want to do it ourselves but the blessing goes both ways in accepting help as well as in giving.

Guest ministers were Elder Bro. Phil Stettner (Bluffton North, IN), and our own Bro. Marshall Heinold, who has returned from Mexico for a few weeks. We thank you brothers for your willingness to allow the Spirit to work through you.

We welcome Bro. Marshall and Sis. Jan back as they gather with us. It is always good to have them home, and we miss them when they are gone. Bro. Marshall reported that the Spirit is touching souls in Ixtlan. Six souls were baptized a few weeks ago, and Sis. Jan and Bro. Marshall have begun teaching youngsters in school work, which also provides an opportunity to teach from the Bible. We are thankful for what the Lord is doing and wish them God's continued blessings in their mission field.

Hospitalized this month was Seth Teubel, son of Bro. Mark and Sis. Marty. We pray the Lord continues to heal his body as he recovers at home. Also recovering at home is Sis. Emily Simon. We thank the Lord for continuing to provide for her.

Bro. Herb and Sis. Lori (Wyss) Leman are the thankful parents of Kandace Leigh Leman. She was welcomed home by sister, Kendra, and brother, Clayton. Grandparents are Bro. Carl and Sis. Lydiann Wyss of Washington, and Bro. Jim and Sis. Myra Leman of Roanoke. Congratulations!

Sis. Abby Steffen (Bro. Keith and Sis. Cathy), and Bro. Daniel Messner (Elder Bro. Ron and Sis. Pam) were baptized. We welcome them to our church family. It is so wonderful to hear how the Lord has worked in

their hearts.

We rejoice with Sis. Susan Wagenbach in her announced engagement to Bro. Joe Klotzle. Sis. Sue is the daughter of Bro. Don and Sis. Marie from Washington. Bro. Joe is the son of Elder Bro. John and Sis. Lois from Altadena, CA. Their wedding is scheduled for February. We wish them God's blessings.

Our deepest sympathy goes to Sis. Cheryl (Huber) and Bro. Jon Ricketts on the death of Sis. Cheryl's father. Bro. Wilbur Huber of Phoenix died Tuesday, November 19. We wish them and the rest of the family God's presence in the coming days.

INDIANA, BLUFFTON
Brenda Bertsch - Kim Maller

“To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven.”

Eccles. 3:1

We extend our sympathy to the family of Bro. Russell Steffen who passed away on October 22. May God give grace to his wife, Sis. Alice; and children, Bro. Bill Steffen and Sandra Moffett.

Our prayers are also with Sis. Ida Steffen and Sis. Imogene Isch in the passing of their husband and father, Bro. Wilmer, on October 30.

We also extend sympathy to the family of Bro. Mike and Sis. Deb Snider in the passing of Bro. Mike's father, Thomas Snider.

We are thankful to God who has sent a bundle of joy into the home of Bro. Tom and Sis. Rose Rohr. John William was born on October 30. His grandmother is Sis. Marie Steffen.

Sis. Cindy Cox welcomed another granddaughter on October 30. James and Tobi Hough (Indianapolis) welcomed Isabella Jane. She joins big sister, Victoria.

Little Darien Elaine joined Eric

and Lori Gerber on November 10. Grandparents are Bro. Lee and Sis. Jenny Gerber.

Barb Baumgartner (Bro. Ralph and Sis. Jeannie) has recently accepted God's call to salvation. We wish her grace to walk the path of life in His will.

October 26 was the wedding day for Shane Gerber and Jennifer George. Parents are Bro. Mike and Sis. Cheryl Gerber.

On Sunday, November 17, Sis. Jami Schwartz (Bro. Jack and Sis. Diane) and Bro. Ben Maller (Bro. Ed and Sis. Rhonda, Bluffton North) announced their engagement. May they seek God's direction as they make future plans for this important step in life.

On Sunday, November 17, Elder Bro. Ben Maibach (Detroit, MI) shared the Word with us. We appreciate his willingness to be used.

"And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it."

1 Cor. 12:26

We have had many in the hospital this month. They are Sis. Elizabeth Pfister, Bro. Glenn Graber (Sis. Evelyn), Sis. Elizabeth Schwartz (Bro. Ken), Bro. Ezra Reinhard, Sis. Alice Aschliman (Bro. Millard), Bro. Alvin Gerber (Sis. Helen), Sis. Hilda Steffen, Matthew Reinhard (Bro. Gene and Sis. Darlene), Sis. Esther Kipfer and Bro. Richard Reinhart (Sis. Phyllis). On Saturday, November 16, Rick Schwartz (Elder Bro. Ed and Sis. Jeni) suffered a very serious head injury. We beg for your prayers on their behalf.

INDIANA, BLUFFTON NORTH Kay Steffen - Lori Steffen

"All scripture is given by inspira-

tion of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:"

II Timothy 3:16

We are thankful for our ministers and visiting ministers who teach and instruct us and are truly inspired from God's Holy Word. Our visiting ministers this month were Bro. Hartzell Kaisner (Detroit, MI) and Elder Bros. Earl Ringger (Gridley, IL) and Ed Schwartz (Bluffton, IN). We were reminded how many material things in this life are referred to as "awesome", but there is only one true "awesome" being, and that is God.

We rejoice with two new converts in our congregation. Ryan Heyerly (Bro. Arlen and Sis. Roxanne) and Megan Anderson have made a new beginning in the Lord and we wish them God's love and grace.

On November 9 and 10 we heard the testimonies and witnessed the baptisms of six dear souls. They are Carissa Geisel (Bro. Stan and Sis. Cindy), Jenni Frauhiger (Bro. Steve and Sis. Irene), Micah Rauch (Bro. Jerry and Sis. Kathy), Tara Byerly (Sis. Susan), Aimee Meyer (Bro. Bob and Sis. Ann) and Tiffany Cupp (Bro. Mick and Sis. Connie). It was so refreshing to hear that God is still convicting and calling souls to repentance and that we who are converted should diligently continue praying for souls who are still outside the fold.

We were happy to hear the engagement of Bro. Ben Maller (Bro. Ed and Sis. Rhonda) to Sis. Jaime Schwartz (Bro. Jack and Sis. Diane). May God bless them as they begin this important step in life.

Bro. Jon and Sis. Tammy Leman were blessed with a daughter, Lillian Claire, on November 1. She joins a sister, Elsie, and grandparents, Wally and Sis. Marilyn Leman and Bro. Gary and Sis. Nancy Stol-

ler.

We were saddened to hear of the sudden death of our dear Bro. Elmer Steffen on November 4. We extend our sympathy to his dear wife, Sis. Dee; and children, Bro. Derrell (Bay City, MI), Bro. Donn (Latty, OH), Bro. Allen, and Sis. Marcia Belsley (Bro. Larry), and 13 grandchildren. May God be a Comforter to this family in the days ahead.

May we be prayerful for Gyrkin Schwartz (Bro. Ernie and Sis. Robin) who is at Riley Hospital. We pray a special blessing on Gyrkin as he has faced many struggles in life. Kathleen Crum, daughter of Bro. Max and Sis. Eunice Steffen, underwent major surgery and we pray that all will be well with her.

Bro. Bob and Sis. Lela Meyer celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on October 20. We wish them God's blessings.

"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord".

Luke 2:11

As we reflect back on the miracle of births in our church, converts coming to the Lord, and ministers inspired to preach the Living Word, we realize that none of this would be possible if not for that special baby that was sent into this world on Christmas Day.

INDIANA, FRANCESVILLE Val Gutwein

"The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit."

Psalms 34:18

God is faithful and He proves this over and over to us. His Word never fails and He cannot lie. God says if we will humble ourselves, He will

lift us up. He has once again proved His faithfulness in the lives of three souls who have become our brother and sisters in the Lord. Bro. Lonnie Vogt (Bro. Ron and Sis. Diane), Sis. Cyndi Daniels, and Sis. Karen Eide shared with us their desire to depart from the world and to walk with the Lord. They were baptized on November 10. That same evening we had the privilege of sharing Communion together. It was a blessed time of renewing our hearts and minds toward God and toward each other. We especially thank Elder Bro. Marvin Leman (Bradford, IL) who so lovingly shared the entire weekend with us and was well spent in the Lord's service.

Bro. Stan Gutwein (Sis. Mary Gramm) announced his engagement to Sis. Andrea Zeller (Bro. Eric and Sis. Ginny) of Indianapolis. We trust the Lord will guide them and direct them as they make plans to walk this path of life together.

Our Sis. Louise Yaggie (the late Bro. Merle) went on to be with the Lord on November 12. We are thankful she can be free of the physical burdens of life, but we extend loving sympathy to her two daughters, Sis. Darla Yaggie and Clara Ulery. We are thankful for Bro. Tom Troxel (LaCrosse, IN) who lovingly came and shared a beautiful message with us during this time of sorrow. May God be near to all of the family who will sadly miss their loved one.

With the Christmas season upon us and the "extras" that come with this time of year, let's take time to ponder the great hand of love that was extended to us through the birth of the Son of God. What a beautiful time of year to fall before the Lord and surrender your life and your will if you have not yet received God's perfect gift. May God's blessings be upon each one during this special season.

INDIANA, INDIANAPOLIS

Lauretta Schafer

Melissa Baumgartner

Greetings of love! October 26 and 27 was the weekend of our annual outreach. Special thanks goes to all who put forth effort to make the weekend a blessing.

We rejoice with Sis. Andrea Zeller (Bro. Eric and Sis. Ginny) and Bro. Stan Gutwein (Francesville, IN) as their engagement was announced. We wish them much joy in their future together.

On November 9 and 10, the Princeville Choir came to inspire us in song and fellowship.

We thank all of our visiting ministers who came and shared the Word of life with us this month. They were Bros. Carl Wyss (Washington, IL), Gary Tonner (Bluffton North, IN), Erik Givens and James Plattner (Princeville, IL).

INDIANA, LACROSSE

Anna Marie Stoller

Sis. Kathy Heinold became the bride of Bro. Travis Knobloch (Lester, IA) on October 27. One could not help but shed an emotional tear as we bid Sis. Kathy farewell. The great joy in our hearts is that God goes with her and Bro. Travis as they begin a new home with Him as center. Visiting ministers were Bro. Ron Bollier, Bro. Roger Aberle, and Elder Bro. Bill Schlatter.

Great joy fills the hearts of our congregation as two souls have felt the need for repentance. Melinda Heinold (Bro. Glen and Sis. Sandy) and Neil Stoller (Bro. Steve and Sis. Anna Marie) are turning from the world of sin to God's marvelous way of forgiveness and peace. One privilege of parenthood is having a son or daughter say, "I need to repent!"

Can we thank our dear Lord enough for making possible this avenue of escape from eternal darkness?

Sis. Mary Troxel has our sympathy and prayers as she mourns the loss of her sister, Sis. Louise Yaggie. They were playmates as children and friends as adults, so a void fills Sis. Mary's heart.

Bro. Glen Gudeman departed for Phoenix, AZ to finish his education. His permanent return is anticipated in the spring, Lord willing, and this makes the parting less painful.

As Christmas approaches, may each of us grasp the hand of Jesus finding comfort, peace, and strength from His nearness.

INDIANA, LEO

Ethelyn Schlatter

As children of God, our thoughts of Christmas center on our Saviour Jesus' birth. With thankful hearts we praise our Father, who loved us so much, He gave us His only begotten Son.

I read that the stable room where Christ was born is traditionally believed to be part of the ancestral home of David, and before David, of Boaz and Ruth. Thus, according to this tradition, Boaz took Ruth to be his bride, and started the family that was bringing Christ into the world, in the very same room in which Christ himself was born.

The more we search the Scripture, the more we marvel at the plans and way of God.

God is so good; He provided us with many blessed teachings through our Elder Bros. Ed Schwartz (Bluffton, IN), Earl Ringger (Gridley, IL), Phil Stettner (Bluffton North, IN), Ben Maibach (Detroit, MI), Bros. Jim Ramseyer (Bay City, MI) and Randy Kellenberger (Kansas City, MO). We also welcomed their wives.

Elder Bro. Ben Maibach (Detroit,

MI) helped Bro. John Stoller serve us the "love feast in the upper room". Surely our thoughts were in heavenly places on Saturday evening, November 9.

On Wednesday evening, November 13, Bro. Mark Gerber (Bluffton, IN) presented the monthly topical Bible study on "Financially Content". He said there are three ways to use God's assets: 1) give it; 2) spend it; 3) save it. There are many Scriptures that remind us to be good stewards.

On October 24, about 30 of us went to Bluffton, IN. We participated in the food packaging that is done every month for our brethren in Eastern Europe.

We were again blessed November 16 and 17 by the Mortonnaires as they presented Heaven's message in song and praise. It was wonderful. We enjoyed the fellowship with all who came on the bus from Morton, IL.

We are so grateful for these times of refreshing, but we do need your prayers.

We rejoice with Bro. Kevin Stoller and Sis. Tonya Wieland (Princeville, IL) whose engagement of marriage was announced November 17. Their parents are Bro. John and Sis. Patsy Stoller and Bro. Bob and Sis. Nancy Wieland (Princeville, IL).

"Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:"

Ephesians 1:2-4

As I read this verse, it struck me, "blessed with spiritual blessings".

We have so many material blessings, but it is the spiritual blessings that will endure.

Wishing you all a blessed holiday season, because of Jesus.

INDIANA, MILFORD Renee Beer - Linda Beer

Jesus was born to die that man might live! What love God had for us as we lived in our sin and rebellion. All the gifts in the world combined could not compare with God's gift to us of His Son. The wise men searched for the new Saviour and after finding Jesus, went home a different way. We too, after finding Jesus and allowing Him to be Lord of our lives, also go a different way. We are changed and strive to allow Jesus to shine through us and bring glory to His name.

"...I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly."

John 10:10

Bro. Ray Haab (Sis. Paula) was seriously injured in a truck-train accident and we are very thankful his life was spared. He is now home after nearly a month in the hospital. Bro. Cap Beer (Sis. Mary Ann) is back in church after having surgery. Bro. John Lehman, Sr. (Sis. Mayedene) was hospitalized and now is in Mason's Health Center, Warsaw. Sis. Pat Mikel (Russ) has been undergoing tests and is to soon undergo surgery at I.U. Med Center. We all need each other in our journey to Heaven and pray these loved ones can be restored to their families and church.

We thank Bros. Ron and Tom Schambach (Elgin, IL), Dave Graff (Akron, OH) and Jon Zeller (Morton, IL) for sharing God's Word as they visited us.

We offer our sympathy to

Jeanette Vice whose husband, Bob, passed away suddenly. He is survived by a son, David, of Goshen. May God's comfort help her through this difficult time.

As we gather with family, send greetings, and give gifts, may our giving be motivated by our love for Jesus who is the reason for the season. What peace to know HE goes with us into the New Year.

A New Year's Promise

Another year I enter
Its history unknown;
Oh, how my feet would tremble
To tread its paths alone!
But I have heard a whisper;
I know I shall be blest;
"My presence shall go with thee
And I will give the rest."

—anonymous

Note of Thanks:

Bro. Ray Haab and his family want to thank friends and brethren across the land who showed such overwhelming Christian love with prayers, visits, phone calls, cards, and gifts at the time of his accident. May God richly bless you.

INDIANA, REMINGTON Patti Bahler

"And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins."

Matthew 1:21

We are thankful another soul has accepted this gift with a repentant heart. Paul Virkler (Bro. Stan and Sis. Beth) has turned his back to the world and we rejoice with him.

On November 3, we had the blessed privilege of hearing this year's Memorandum report. Elder Bros. Gene Marti (Kansas City, MO) and Andy Stoller (Smithville, OH) came to assist our Elder Bro. Alfred

Bahler. We are thankful for each brother who is willing to declare His holy name. Other visiting ministers this month were Bros. Jim Hoerr (Peoria, IL), Wayne Wiegand (Goodfield, IL), Garry Bucher (Valparaiso, IN) and Neil Widmer (Wolcott, IN).

Loren Wilson (Sis. Velma) and Nettie Wasner both spent time in the hospital this month. Bro. Eldon Getz was also a surgical patient. We pray each one will feel God's healing power for a complete recovery.

INDIANA, SOUTH BEND

Carolyn Frank - Gigi Schafer

We surely appreciated the recent visit of our Elder Bro. Jesse Beer (Milford, IN) and thank him for an inspiring service.

We appreciate the efforts of our Sunday School youth and teachers who presented a Thanksgiving program on the "fruits of the spirit" and how they can apply, on a day to day basis, throughout our lives.

And now we observe the season of winter upon us and the season of Christmas "just around the corner". May our hearts be prepared to honor and esteem our precious Lord and Saviour in this beautiful holiday season.

There are sounds in the sky when
the year grows old,
And the winds of the winter blow
When nights and the moon are
clear and cold,
And the stars shine on the snow.
Or wild is the blast and the bitter
sleet
That beats on the window pane;
But blest on the frosty hills the
feet
Of the Christmas time again.

—Anonymous

INDIANA, VALPARAISO

Cheryl Bucher - Ken Susdorf

Dear God, thanks for the gift of Jesus! He is our wonderful Counsel-

or, The mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6)

Our thoughts and prayers are with Bro. Lyle (Sis. Marilyn) Zeltwanger as he makes his recovery from surgery. Also, little Shannon Lamb (Randy and LuAnn Lamb) was recently hospitalized. We pray for God's healing touch on each one. We hope they will be back assembling with us soon.

Our visiting ministers this month were Bro. Nile Bucher (Bluffton North, IN) and our Elder Bro. Dale Eisenmann (Chicago, IL). God will richly reward them for their labors.

May all of us take time to reflect how blessed we are that God sent us His "perfect gift". Wishing each one of you a meaningful, blessed Christmas.

INDIANA, WOLCOTT

Jody Bahler - Sherice Bahler

The first weekend of November, we were privileged to have two visiting Elder brethren with us to assist Bro. Alfred with the reading of the Brotherhood Conference report. Elder Bros. Eugene Marti (Kansas City, MO) and Andy Stoller (Smithville, OH) graciously shared these exhortations with us. May each of us ever strive to do our part in upholding the doctrines and traditions of our church that are set forth and based upon the Word of God.

"The time flies on, and death draws nigh..." (Zion's Harp #188). We were saddened to hear of the unexpected death of our dear friend, Don Blume. We pray that God will be there in this time of sorrow to comfort his wife, Beverly; and children, Leroy Blume, Rhonda Hart and Linda Boehle. We also extend sympathy to his brother, Bro. Glenn Blume (Sis. Norma) of Sarasota, FL.

As the Christmas season ap-

proaches and another year draws to a close, let us continue to be thankful for the many blessings that God has bestowed upon us, and be willing to give our ALL unto His service.

IOWA, BURLINGTON

Edith Massner

Monica Eisenmann

We had the privilege of hearing the Conference tapes in October. Many thanks to our dear Elder brethren for all their efforts on our behalf. Also, a special thank you to Bro. Kenny Knapp (Taylor, MO) and Elder Bro. Ed Lanz (Oakville, IA) for sharing God's Word with us this past month. May God richly bless them.

Our sincere sympathy goes out to Sis. Margaret Applegarth in the passing of her mother. We pray that God will fill the void that has been left.

IOWA, ELGIN

Gloria Frieden

How great is our Heavenly Father's love for mankind. His gifts are always given with unsurpassed love. As we share gifts this Christmas season, may it also be with a loving heart, remembering that it is not the monetary value but the loving heart that gives the real blessing. While it is fun to receive gifts, may we also appreciate the blessing of being able to give, remembering our Lord's words, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

We are happy to report that George Schupbach (Mildred) is able to be back in his own home after spending the past six months in the hospital and nursing home.

Also, we are thrilled and thankful to have Bro. Kent and Sis. Betty Getz move here from Eureka, IL. Being a small congregation, we really appreciate the addition of this

new couple. May they also find a blessing in being here.

Bro. Scott Fehr (Sis. Leona) recently had the misfortune of injuring his hand at work. May God continue to grant healing and complete restoration.

Wishing you all a safe and blessed Christmas season as we again are reminded of the birth of Jesus, the One who paid the awful price for our redemption. What love!!

IOWA, GARDEN GROVE Laura Funk

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

Isaiah 9:6

Who Is This So Weak and Helpless?

Who is this so weak and helpless,
Child of lowly Hebrew maid,
Rudely in a stable sheltered,
Coldly in a manger laid?
'Tis the Lord of all creation,
Who this wondrous path hath trod;
He is God from everlasting,
And to everlasting God.

Who is this, a Man of Sorrows,
Walking sadly life's hard way,
Homeless, weary, sighing, weeping
Over sin and Satan's sway?
'Tis our God, our glorious Saviour,
Who above the starry sky
Now for us a place prepareth,
Where no tear can dim the eye.

Who is this? Behold Him shedding
Drops of blood upon the ground!
Who is this, despised rejected,
Mocked, insulted, beaten, bound?
'Tis our God, who gifts and graces
On His Church now poureth down;
Who shall smite in holy vengeance
All His foes beneath His throne.

Who is this that hangeth dying
While the rude world scoffs and
scorns,
Numbered with the malefactors,
Torn with nails, and crowned with
thorns?

'Tis the God who ever liveth
'Mid the shining ones on high,
In the glorious golden city,
Reigning everlastingly.

—*William Walsham How*

We wish you all a blessed and safe holiday season.

Visiting ministers this past month include Elder Bro. Ed Lanz (Oakville, IA), Bros. Floyd Schmidgall (Morris, MN) and Paul Messner (Winthrop, MN). Also visiting us was retired ministering Bro. Russell Wuthrich and wife, Sis. Karoline (Pulaski, IA). We appreciate the words of encouragement and admonition the Lord sends through His messengers.

IOWA, IOWA CITY Janette Schulz

Greetings to all! We were blessed with many visitors this month, including ministering Bros. Floyd Frieden (Elgin, IA), Wayne Lehman (South Bend, IN), Roy Ehnle (Bradford, IL) and John Steiner (Oakville, IA). We appreciate all who made the effort to worship with us.

We extend our congratulations and wishes for God's blessing to Sis. Wendy Eland (Bro. Brad and Sis. Joyce) and Bro. Benji Weyrick (Fred and Joyce, Oakville, IA) who announced their engagement this month. May their mutual desire to glorify God guide their plans for the wedding and their marriage—the One who created them and the institution of marriage, and the One who compared marriage to the relationship between Christ and the Church.

A Christian Marriage is Special

There's something very special in a marriage built on Christ—
Something only Christian couples know—

It's Love that's never proud,
but very patient, kind and good,
with roots that hold on firmly as they grow.

It's Faith, not just in Christ, but in the partner that you chose.

It's Hope that in the darkest times His light will still shine through so, in good or bad,
your hearts can still rejoice...

It's Joy in going hand in hand together,
and with Christ,
that reminds you He's a part of all you do.

It's Assurance that throughout your lives,
The Lord will never be any more than just a prayer away from you.

Our Sunday School is planning their Christmas Program for December 15. May we be careful that our own attitudes and priorities during this Holy celebration of Christ's birth be a good example to these attentive eyes and ears. How much more effective and impressive are their Sunday School lessons if they see these teachings consistently lived by those who profess them.

IOWA, LESTER Sue Warner - Cindy Leuthold

This past month we were privileged to have two visiting ministers assemble with us. Much gratitude is extended to Bro. Alpha Moser (Morris, MN) and Bro. Kent Mogler (Minneapolis, MN) for bringing forth God's Word to us.

On October 27, Bro. Travis Knoblock and Sis. Kathy Heinold exchanged wedding vows in La-Crosse, IN and have become husband and wife. Parents of the couple are Bro. Roger and Sis. Janet Knoblock and Bro. Gene and Sis. Evie Heinold. A reception for the

newlyweds was held here on November 9. We welcome Sis. Kathy to our congregation and pray for blessings as they begin married life.

Alvie, Lanna and Jacob Meyer are all excited because of the new baby at their house. Little Tarah Lynae was born on October 23 to her parents, Bro. Dean and Sis. Linda Meyer. Her grandparents are Bro. Pat and Sis. Twyla Meyer and Wayne and Jennie Van Wyhe. Great-grandmother is Sis. Emma Meyer.

Our prayers have been with those who have been ill this past month. Hospitalized were Sis. Elaine Kellenberger and her son, Bro. Ron Kellenberger. Our surgical patients have been Jeff Moser (Bro. Donn and Sis. Joyce), Char Leuthold (Bro. Doug) and Sis. Zelma Knoblock. We are thankful they are again in our midst and can worship with us.

Several in our congregation have experienced the loss of a dear loved one recently. We wish to remember Bro. Earl and Sis. Vera Knobloch with the death of her father, Bro. Edwin Staub. Sympathy is also extended to Sarah Feucht with the loss of her sister-in-law, Sis. Louise Schifferer, of Elgin, IL; and to Laurie Knobloch with the death of her grandmother.

Reminder: The Silver Lining collection is in January.

IOWA, OAKVILLE
Debbie Wagenbach
Melody Steiner

We're pleased to announce the engagement of Sis. Wendy Eland (Bro. Brad and Sis. Joyce, Iowa City) to Bro. Benji Weyrick (Fred and Joyce). We pray these dear ones will continue to let the Lord direct them as they make their plans to become one with Him.

Our sympathies and prayers are

with Sis. Hilda Gerst (the late Bro. Carl) and Sis. Verna Rocke in the passing of their dear sister, Sis. Loida Knapp (Goodfield, IL). May they feel the Lord's nearness as another of their precious family is going Home.

May the Lord richly bless the visiting ministers and their families who've been in our congregation this month. They were Bros. Bill Gerst (Alto, MI), Ron Schambach (Elgin, IL), Doug Grimm (Sabetha, KS), Bernie Messner (Morris, MN) and Jim Vierling (Eureka, IL). We thank them for allowing the Spirit to be used through them.

IOWA, PULASKI
Lisa Knecht

Keeping Christmas

Let the star shine in your window;
 Let the Christ come through your door,
 And the hopes and joys of
 Christmas
 Will be yours forevermore.

As it shone for seer and shepherd
 So the star still shines for you
 In its bright and ancient splendor,
 Keeping Christmas ever new.

To keep Christmas—here's the secret
 Which I gladly shall impart,
 Keep the starlight in your window
 And the Christ Child in your heart.
 —Minnie Klemme

May we all strive to keep the Christ Child within our hearts, not only at Christmas, but each day of our lives.

We appreciate God's Word brought to us by our visiting minister, Bro. Brad Funk (Sis. Laura, Garden Grove, IA).

Wishing you a blessed Christmas from the Pulaski congregation!

IOWA, WEST BEND

Eunice Fehr - Lela Banwart

We have been blessed by having several visiting ministers in our congregation this past month. Elder Bro. Gene Marti (Kansas City, MO) and Bro. Alphai Moser (Morris, MN) were here in October, and we want to extend our thanks to them for so willingly speaking God's Word to us.

On the first weekend of November, we spent an uplifting and encouraging time together as we listened to the testimonies and witnessed the baptisms of Sis. Rachel Schmidt (Bro. John and Sis. Paula) and Bro. Barry Fehr (Bro. Dan and Sis. Eunice). Elder Bro. Art Nohl (Morris, MN) came to assist Elder Bro. Wayne Fehr and Bro. Wayne Grimm in this most important work. Other ministers lending themselves the same weekend were Bros. Leland Plattner (Zapata, TX), Jim Knobloch (Winthrop, MN) and Beirne Messner (Morris, MN). It brings us back to the time when we sat in the front bench and spoke of that great love that we had for our Saviour, and we pause and wonder — do we still have that same closeness and obedience to our Lord? May Sis. Rachel, Bro. Barry and all of us who have surrendered our lives to God, feel that first love and do our best to walk closer to Him each day.

Joan Traub is slowly recovering from back surgery at home. We pray God's healing touch to help the recovery process. Other hospital patients have been Gina Bruellman (Bro. Dave and Sis. Yvonne), surgical; and Braden Knobloch (Bro. Cameron and Sis. Tammy). Both are recovering at home. May the Lord bless all the sick and help them as they recuperate, and may He also be with them when they are well.

We rejoice with Bro. Kevin and Sis. Lonnie Fehr who have become first-time parents of a baby boy, Taylor Scott. Congratulations and

best wishes. Happy grandparents are Bro. Melvin and Sis. Glenagene Fehr and Bro. Silas and Sis. Della Metzger. Sis. Nima Fehr is the great-grandmother. May the Lord richly bless little Taylor and his parents and all who help care for him.

We are happy and thankful that Denise Bruellman (Bro. Dave and Sis. Yvonne) has surrendered her life to the Lord and has found that wonderful, blessed peace that only Jesus Christ our Lord can impart. We look forward to hearing her testimony in the near future.

Christmas is always a time of joy as we look forward to observing the birth of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. May we seek to please Him as we plan and involve ourselves in activities at this season. Let us remember that it is "not the manger but the cross that sets the spirit free."

KANSAS, BERN
Holly Meyer
Lori Baumgartner

The beautiful Christmas season is upon us! Young and old alike, we never tire of hearing the blessed story of Christ's humble birth. But as the hymn writer has written...

Be not content this babe to know,
 Nor stay at Bethlehem,
 But go with Christ to Calvary's
 brow,
 Beyond Jerusalem.

'Tis there men learned to know
 the Christ,
 For there he bore men's sin.
 Then open wide the door of heart,
 And let the Saviour in.

Hymns of Zion #36

We rejoice with Dominic Meyer (Earl and Sis. Darlene) as he has opened his heart's door in repentance. His countenance alone gives evidence that he has "let the Saviour in".

The weekend of November 9 and 10 we heard the testimony and witnessed the baptism of Rodney Menold (Bro. James and Sis. Lou). We rejoice that he has been set free from the shackles of sin and we gladly welcome him into the brotherhood.

October 19 was a special day for Staci Hartter (Bro. Steve and Sis. Lois) and Jeff Bone (Robert and Judy, Mayetta) as they were united in marriage. Although their home is now in Lawrence, we hope that they feel welcome to come visit us at anytime.

We wish to congratulate Mandy Hartter (Bro. Steve and Sis. Lois) and Paul Simpson (Lynn and Carolyn, Pratt) as they have recently announced their engagement. Their wedding date is set for March 1. May they feel the Lord's guidance during this special time of planning.

The wedding engagement of Sis. Jeanelle Edelman (Bro. Wayne and Sis. Linda) and Bro. Brian Plattner (Bro. Don and Sis. Ada, Sabetha) was recently made known to us. May they feel the Lord's nearness as they make plans for a lifetime together.

We have appreciated having several visiting ministers and their families worship with us this past month. They were Bros. Dewayne Dill (Minneapolis, MN), Roger Aberle (Sabetha, KS), Jeff Bahr (Kiowa, KS), Richard Aberle (Altadena, CA), Don Braker and Elder Bro. Eugene Marti (both of Kansas City, MO). May the Lord bless each one for his willingness to labor on our behalf.

On November 13, little Abraham John was born to Tim and Chris Moore. He is welcomed home by his big sister, Abigail. Abraham's grandparents are Clayton and Miriam Strahm and John and Barbara Moore, all of Sabetha.

We wish to remember in prayer those in our congregation who have

been hospitalized due to illness or surgery this past month. They are Sis. Stella Moser (Bro. Rueben), Sis. Pearl Miller, Sis. Kaye Meyer (Bro. Steve), James Moser (Ann), and Sis. Nancy Rokey (Bro. Galen).

We are happy to welcome Ted and Marci Rottinghaus and their little daughter, Jacey, to our congregation. They have recently moved to our area from Topeka.

"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord."

Psalms 122:1

At this time, we are listening to the tapes of our Brotherhood Conference, "Battle and Victory". Oh, how refreshing it is to be able to pull ourselves away from the heat of life's battle, to be able to sit in the quiet sanctuary of our church, and to be exhorted and encouraged by our Elder body. Life truly is a battle and many times the enemy forces coming against us cause us to tremble with fear. It is then that we must cling to Christ, the Solid Rock. Only through Him can we obtain a victory.

KANSAS, KIOWA
Darcy Kisling - Janice Bahr

While by the sheep we watched at
 night,
 Glad tidings brought an angel
 bright.

There shall be born, so he did say,
 In Bethlehem a Child today.
 There shall the Child lie in a stall,
 This Child who shall redeem us all.
 This gift of God we'll cherish well,
 That ever joy our hearts shall fill.
 How great our joy! Great our joy!
 Joy, joy, joy...Joy, joy, joy!

Praise we the Lord in heav'n on
 high!

Praise we the Lord in heav'n on
 high!

—Here We Come a-Caroling #13

Surely this song describes the feeling that was in the hearts of the shepherds the night that Christ was born and in our hearts today. We can hardly comprehend the love that our Heavenly Father must have for us to send His only begotten Son from His glory on high to a lowly manger...and to suffer the death of the cross for our sins. Our joy is great when we think how great God's love is for us and that Jesus rose from the dead to become our Saviour on high! May the knowledge of this love help us to endure and to strive to become greater servants of our Lord.

We have certainly been encouraged and admonished as we listened to the tapes of the Brotherhood Conference. May we truly endeavor to be doers of the Word and not hearers only as we encourage and lift one another up.

We were certainly encouraged when visiting minister, Bro. Glen Funk (Wichita, KS), shared God's Word with us. It was also an inspiration to hear the visiting Wichita youth choir sing praises to God.

We want to remember our hospital patients this month who were Sis. Matilda Schupbach and Sis. Marie Schurter. May the Lord comfort and add unto them that which is needful as they recover.

We would like to thank everyone who helped with the services at the Friendship Manor this month. It is always a blessing to share with those in the home.

KANSAS, SABETHA
Mary Kay Wenger

Hospitalized were Bro. Willard Bahr (Sis. Eloise), Bro. Loren Strahm (Sis. Liseten) and Bro. Velmer Meyer (Sis. Vila).

Bro. Edwin Bahler (Remington, IN), Elder Bro. Eugene Marti (Kan-

sas City, MO) and Bro. Richard Aberle (Altadena, CA) shared the Word with us.

We rejoice with Kent Grimm (Bro. Rodney and Sis. Arlene), Kurt Grimm, (Bro. Doug and Sis. Jeryl), Brandon Plattner (Bro. Don and Sis. Ada) and Erik Hertzell (Bro. Gerry and Sis. Ellen) who were announced with peace. Their provings are scheduled for January.

We are listening to the Conference tapes with the Bern congregation. May we use the spiritual "tools" to be overcomers in the battle.

November 17 was the wedding day for Bro. Wayne Wenger (Bro. Harvey and Sis. Arleta) and Sis. Jean Bachtold (Bro. Lloyd and the late Sis. Viola) in Fairbury, IL. May God bless this union. A reception is planned for November 24 in Sabetha.

Bro. Richard and Sis. Joni Meyer were blessed with a new son,

Taylor Joel Meyer, on November 9. Cameron is happy to have a brother. Thankful grandparents are Bro. Eli and Sis. Lois Meyer and Elder Bro. Marvin and Sis. Jane Le-man (Bradford, IL).

We are pleased to announce the engagement of Bro. Brian

Plattner (Bro. Don and Sis. Ada) to Sis. Jeanelle Edelman (Bro. Wayne and Sis. Linda) of Bern, KS. We wish them God's blessings.

Note of Thanks:

Our sincere thanks to each one of you for the cards, food, flowers, memorials, phone calls and prayers. May God richly bless you all.

The family of Sis. Mary Isch

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Dayra Meyer

All to Jesus I surrender,
All to Him I freely give;

I will ever love and trust Him,
In His service daily live.
I surrender all,
I surrender all,
All to Thee, my blessed Saviour,
I surrender all.

On November 13, those of us assembled at Danforth Chapel for the final Bible Study of the semester felt the inspired Word of God. Bro. Ron Allenbach led the Bible Study. It was delightful to have Bro. Ron and his wife, Sis. Lois (Kiowa, KS), share their evening, thoughts and love. Bro. Ron focused the Bible Study on "Going for the gold of Heaven, beginning with building a firm foundation." God can help you build that foundation but first we must open the door and "surrender" our life. God, by your side, will help you begin to build a foundation that is firm, wonderful and everlasting. Bro. Ron expressed that the trophies of this world will be nothing but trash—the world will not remember you, but God will. So as we labor each day, build the firm foundation in your life with God. Reach the gold of Heaven—God's love.

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:"

Ephesians 2:8

The October Bible Study was led by Bro. DeWayne Dill (Minneapolis, MN). His wife, Sis. LaRae, and children shared the evening on Kansas State University campus. The focus of the Bible Study was "Knowing God". What do we do daily to build our relationship with God? Bro. DeWayne expressed the greatness of God in His entirety. "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father." (Matthew 10:29).

We have begun to listen to the

Conference tapes. It is a blessing to hear words assembled to address issues encompassing our lives. Here we find words that encourage, instruct and help us to build on the firm foundation of our life.

We rejoice as God has brought two souls together. Sis. Jeanelle Edelman (Bern, KS) and Bro. Brian Plattner (Sabetha, KS) announced their engagement on Sunday, November 10. Both are students at Kansas State University. Our thoughts and prayers are with them as they plan their future together.

We are thankful for all those that support our services here at Kansas State University. May God bless and guide you always.

KANSAS, WICHITA

Emma Miller

"O, come let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him." The words of this familiar hymn are an invitation to us to be mindful of our Saviour in all our plans for the holiday season.

Josh Huffman, son of Hans and Bea and great-grandson of Sis. Gussie Wullsleger, had the misfortune of falling and suffering multiple fractures in his arm. Praise the Lord, he seems to be healing and coping very well with his handicap. We are happy to have him taking part in Sunday School activities.

Bro. Jerry Carnahan underwent back surgery and is recuperating at home. We are grateful for the healing that is taking place. It will be good to see him in church again. Also, we are missing Sis. Gussie Wullsleger who is homebound. We pray that her affliction can be treated successfully.

On a happier note, we welcome Cecily and John Holliday back to Wichita. They formerly were a part of our congregation. Now that retirement has enabled them to move

back "home", we know they will be a blessing to the Bowers family and to us as a congregation.

Recently, our Sunday School students spent an enjoyable Saturday afternoon in Enid, OK where they were joined with Sunday School students from the Kiowa, KS congregation. They then returned to Kiowa for the night and worshipped there the following day. We heard enthusiastic reports of the outing the following Sunday. Thank you, teachers and parents, for your interest in our future church.

MICHIGAN, ALTO

Melanie Kaeb - Michelle Oesch

The harvest season is upon us—have we taken the time to count our blessings and thank the Lord for them one by one? Remember, this harvest is both of the fruits of the earth and of the fruits of the spirit.

Our November Teen Night was a potluck dinner and program which the teens put on for their "Over 50" grandparents and church family. The teens and the "Over 50's" had a wonderful time sharing music, poetry and stories.

The stirring of the waters has continued here at Alto. Sara Gerst (Bro. Wally and Donna) has made a beginning in the Lord. We now have four converts.

Our prayers go out for four loved ones in need of healing this month. Sis. Denise Oesch (Ken) has been in the hospital for surgery. Ronald Zaagman (Ed and Joyleen) spent two weeks in the hospital recovering from an infection related to his illness. We pray for him as he continues his chemotherapy treatments. Ronald was joined in the hospital by his aunt, Sis. Michelle Blough (Bro. Martin), when she was hurt by a steer while working on the farm. Sis. Loretta Steffen (Elder Bro. Aaron) is recovering from shoulder replace-

ment surgery.

We were blessed with the presence of Elder Bro. Ben and Sis. Lorene Maibach for Wednesday night service on November 6.

MICHIGAN, DETROIT

Lynette Moser - Holly Barton

Our choir was privileged to sing for this year's Thanksgiving celebration at Woodhaven. It was touching to see the families gathered to spend time with their loved ones. Perhaps we could all make an effort during this holiday season to reach out to someone who is waiting for a little recognition and kindness.

Waiting

I watch from my window day after day,
For someone may come to my door
and say,
"I was just passing by on my way
to the store,
I really meant to have called
before."

"Oh, do come in and sit awhile!"
"Yes," she answers with a friendly
smile.
"Perhaps a warm drink and a
little chat?
Won't you sit down? I'll take your
hat."

I set the tray with special care,
Then tidy my apron and smooth
my hair.
"What you've done to this house is
such a delight.
And the flowers in your garden
are a lovely sight!"

She sips her drink and smiles at
me,
As warm and friendly as she can
be.
We talk for awhile, then she has to
leave.
I feel the urge to tug at her sleeve.

"Perhaps you could stay a wee bit
more?"
But smiling, she makes her way to

the door.

"Thank you for coming, now do take care!"

Then I set the tray down by the empty chair.

I watch from my window and hear myself say,

"Perhaps that will really happen today!"

—*Theresa V. Meyer*

Some from our congregation have experienced the loss of family members. Jennifer (Todd) Moilanen's mother passed away, as did Sis. Audrey (Bro. Leonard) Hitz's brother-in-law, Bro. Elmer Steffen (Bluffton, IN). May God ease the sorrow felt by loved ones.

Warm wishes are extended to two couples who have announced their engagements. Kevin Haines (Leland and Katie) and Dorothy Marks (Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Marks, Hart, MI) are planning a January 3rd wedding. Bro. Jesse Bedolla and Sis. Bonnie Wieland (Bro. Rod and Sis. Evelyn, Bay City, MI) also look forward to being united in Christ in the new year. May the Lord bless these couples' love and commitment to Him and to each other.

A Son is Born

He rubbed his hands as he entered the room,
For the morning air held a chill.
A faint smile flicked on the time-worn face;
She knew he had something to tell.

Slowly he stretched out his hands to the fire,
The warmth seemed to loosen his tongue;
"Remember the young man who stopped by last night,
After the "NO ROOM" was hung?"

She nodded, remembering the earnest young face;
The eyes seemed to plead for some way.
"I told them to bed in the stable,"

he said;

"They took it—slept there in the hay."

"A son was born to the couple last night."

"A son!" and the old lady smiled,
Knowing the joy of the young woman's heart,
The joy that accompanies a child.

"I must fix the young woman a warm drink," she said.

"Yes, that would be good," said the man.

"A son," she repeated, enjoying the words,

Then she set to work on her plan.

"I wonder what they will name the wee babe;

They'll choose some name of the kin."

Then she placed the drink in an earthen jar

And journeyed forth from the inn.

The withered man and his aged wife

Shared the joy that a baby brings.

But, ah! They missed much, for they did not know

That the Babe was the King of Kings.

—*Janette Oke*

The world seems to miss much, doesn't it, about Christmas? People may know that a babe was born, that it's a nice time to go to church, and that peace and good will seem to abound, but so many miss—like the innkeeper and his wife—the significance of that birth. If they don't believe that Jesus was not only Mary's but also God's Son, then Christmas can mean nothing for them. But we who recognize Him can not only celebrate the birth of a Child, but also the death and resurrection of a Saviour. Oh, let's not miss Him this Christmas!

MINNESOTA, MINNEAPOLIS
Perry Virkler

On October 26, we were privileged to hear the reading of the Memorandum. We thank Elder Bro. Wayne Fehr (West Bend, IA) for assisting our Elder Bro. Leroy Messner (Winthrop, MN). May we strive more diligently to follow the admonitions that our beloved Elders have so prayerfully brought unto us. A special thanks for their inspiring messages on Sunday.

"And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Matthew 3:2

Many prayers were offered for Bro. Dave Stewart (Sis. Diane) as he underwent coronary bypass surgery. Also hospitalized was Sis. Esther Lienemann (Linus). May God grant them renewed health and strength.

We extend our heartfelt sympathy to Sis. Jane Wiegand (Bro. John) and Bro. Duane Rocke (Sis. Bonnie) in the passing of Sis. Jane's father and Bro. Duane's grandfather, Bro. Virgil Rocke (Sis. Pauline), Eureka, IL. May God give them comfort.

We were thankful to have Bro. John Grimm (Columbus, OH) minister to us on a Wednesday evening this past month. May God bless him for his labor of love.

Bro. Don and Sis. Bernadine Miller were blessed with another grandchild. A girl, Allison Lynn, was born to Matt and Amy Welter on November 7.

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

Isaiah 9:6

*IN CHRIST WHO WAS BORN
AT CHRISTMAS*

ALL MEN MAY LIVE AGAIN*Let Us Remember*

When our faith is running low,
 Christ is more than just a figure
 Wrapped in an ethereal glow
 For He came and dwelt among us
 And He knows our every need
 And He loves and understands us
 And forgives each sinful deed -
 He was crucified and buried
 And rose again in glory
 And His promise of salvation
 Makes the wondrous Christmas

Story

An abiding reassurance
 That the little Christ Child's birth
 Was the beautiful beginning
 Of God's Plan for PEACE on
 EARTH.

—*Author unknown*

May this Christmas season fill
 our lives with peace, joy and thank-
 ful hearts as we remember the birth
 of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus
 Christ. A blessed holiday season to
 all of you!

MINNESOTA, MORRIS

**Linda Schmidgall
 Nancy Wulf**

"And the Word was made flesh,
 and dwelt among us, (and we beheld
 his glory, the glory as of the only
 begotten of the Father,) full of grace
 and truth."

John 1:14

It is so special how this verse, in
 so few words, describes the whole
 meaning of Christmas. It is the be-
 ginning and the end of what Christ-
 mas really is. May this be utmost in
 our hearts and minds as we look
 forward to gathering together with
 loved ones, to give thanks for God's
 most precious gift to us, His Son.

We would like to thank minister-
 ing brothers who come with the in-
 tent to visit family, but are also
 willing to share the Word with us.

They are Elder Bro. Doug Schock
 (Pulaski, IA), Bros. Ken Lawson
 (Phoenix, AZ) and Kent Mogler
 (Minneapolis, MN).

We were happy to hear of the ar-
 rival of two little ones this month.
 Philip Lee Schaefer, born on Octo-
 ber 22, was welcomed by Bro. Rod-
 ney, Sis. Denise, Stephanie, Darren,
 and Mark. Grandparents are Bro.
 Anton and Sis. Verna Schaefer and
 Elder Bro. Dennis and Sis. Esther
 Warner (Lester, IA).

Melinda Rose Schmidgall, born
 on November 6, was welcomed by
 Bro. Paul, Sis. Shawn, Anna and
 Larissa. Her grandparents are Bro.
 Neil and Sis. Linda Schmidgall and
 Bro. Dave and Sis. Eileen Nohl.

Note of Thanks:

A sincere thank you to everyone
 for their cards, gifts, and birthday
 wishes, especially my children for all
 their kindnesses. It's great to be 80
 - "I love you all!"

Sis. Thelma Dogotch

**MINNESOTA, WINTHROP
 Becky Braulick - Jan Messner***I'M SPENDING CHRISTMAS
 WITH
 JESUS CHRIST THIS YEAR*

I see the countless Christmas trees
 Around the world below,
 With tiny lights, like heaven's
 stars
 Reflecting in the snow.

The sight is so spectacular
 Please wipe away that tear,
 For I'm spending Christmas
 with Jesus Christ this year.

I hear the many Christmas songs
 That people hold so dear.
 But the sound of music can't
 compare
 With the Christmas choir up here.

For I have no words to tell you
 The joy their voices bring.

For it is beyond description
 To hear the angels sing.

I know how much you miss me,
 I see the pain inside your heart.
 For I'm spending Christmas
 With Jesus Christ this year.

I can't tell you of the splendor
 Or the peace here in this place.
 Can you imagine Christmas
 With our Saviour, face to face?

I'll ask Him to light your spirit
 As I tell Him of your love.
 So then pray one for another
 As you lift your eyes above.

So please let your hearts be joyful
 And let your spirits sing,
 For I'm spending Christmas in
 heaven-
 And I'm walking with the King!

—*Author Unknown*

We feel sorrowful for those that
 have lost loved ones and we will be
 praying for those families who have
 experienced this sadness. But we
 will also rejoice in the fact that
 Christ's birth was the beginning of
 salvation for all and how thankful
 we can be that our loved ones are
 with our Lord and Saviour.

Our Snow Birds are heading
 south for the winter. We would like
 them to know how much they will
 be missed and wish them God's
 blessings while they're away.

Our surgical patients this month
 were Sis. Bernadine Messner (Bro.
 Ray) and Sis. Lois Messner (Bro.
 Marlyn). May God's healing hand be
 upon them.

**MISSOURI, KANSAS CITY
 Brent Kellenberger**

On October 22, a record (for Oc-
 tober) eight inches of snow fell in
 our area. Power lines went down
 and 125,000 homes were without
 electricity. The trees, leaves still in-
 tact, caught the wet heavy flakes
 and snapped like toothpicks under

their tremendous load. The sudden storm caught our area totally off guard. Ironically, the snow removal trucks were making a practice run that day. The weather forecast of "snow flurries" was nowhere close to being correct.

This incident really goes to show that man is still in subjection to the elements—especially the element of surprise. Our society seems to say the same thing that people said to Noah. "It has never snowed this early in Kansas City and it never will." Any one weatherman predicting anything different with no data to back his claim would have been laughed at.

Man has put too much trust in himself and his ability to predict the future. The so-called experts are wrong frequently, whether the subject is weather economics, or food production. Predictions and extrapolating statistics into the future have often failed, and when we read the Word it is no surprise. "...time and chance happeneth to them all." (Ecc. 9:11). It is God who is in control of all things. Science is in part what people use to hide from God. Perhaps scientists think that by gathering enough facts and

figures from the past they will be able to predict the future and therefore discredit God. Science will never be successful in that goal, however. Unforeseen pestilence, famine, and earthquakes will continue to strike. Time and chance, as determined by God, will continue until the end.

Our visiting ministers were Bros. Lloyd Kraft and Bill Emch (both of Lamont/Gridley, KS). We appreciated their willingness to preach the Word and hope they will return again.

We wish God's blessings on Bro. Joe Farney who is continuing to recover from surgery but has been able to assemble with us part time.

MISSOURI, LAMAR
Martha Kellenberger
Becky Marti

As we near the time of the year we celebrate our Saviour's birth, let us remember also:

'Tis not the babe, but Christ the man
Who walked in Galilee;
'Tis not the manger, but the cross
That sets the spirit free.

Hymns of Zion #36

We enjoyed all our visitors this past month. We especially thank Bros. Jim Knobloch (Winthrop, MN) and Tim Zimmerman (Lamont-Gridley, KS) for serving us in the ministry. Elder Bro. Kevin Ryan (Rockville, CT) was here November 9 to assist our Elder Bro. Lawrence Luthi in reading the Conference Memorandum. We appreciate their kindly warnings, admonitions and encouragements to help us in our battles with the evil one.

"Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you."

Hebrews 13:17

MISSOURI, ST. LOUIS
Peter Schrenk

We read Romans 12 one Sunday, and we were told that it contains the "prescription for life". If a physician gives us a prescription, we must take it to the pharmacist and take the medicine for it to be of use. If we do nothing and leave it in our pocket, it does us no good, and we will still have our problems. God's Word is the same: for us to benefit,

we must use it and apply it to our own lives. Just knowing the truth is not enough.

Many thanks to all the visiting ministers in the past two months who came to worship with us: Bros. Ted Witzig (Morton, IL), Arnie Gerst (Taylor, MO), Wayne Banwart (Champaign, IL) and Jim Rinkenberger (Bluffton, IN).

MISSOURI, TAYLOR
Rusty and Amy Adrian

Once again we have reason to rejoice as Julie Hoerr (Bro. Louis and Sis. Ruthie) has decided to turn her back on the world and begin a new walk in life with Jesus Christ. May Julie find the grace she needs to be an overcomer in the world we live.

How thankful we are that John and Julie Gerst was blessed with a son, Tyler John, on October 22 in Florissant, MO. Happy grandparents are Bro. Arnold and Sis. Marge Gerst, Ron Doyle and Darlene Doyle, all of Quincy, IL.

The weekend of October 26, the Bible Class had the opportunity to travel to Iowa City for an overnight stay. We thank our precious Lord for His traveling mercies and the special friendships that were made.

Those who met with accident or illness this past month were Austin Yackley (Bro. Joe and Sis. Jerilyn), Mark Wiegand (Bro. Marvin and Sis. Joann), and Bro. Jim Sutter (Sis. Kris). May God's healing hand be with each one at this time in their lives.

Special thanks are extended to Bro. Loren Schrenk (St. Louis, MO) for coming and sharing God's Word with us this past month. May the Lord Jesus Christ be the firm foundation in which our church always stands upon.

NEW YORK,

CROGHAN-NAUMBURG
Alice Virkler

Away in a manger, No crib for a bed,
 The little Lord Jesus Laid down
 His sweet head;
 The stars in the sky Looked down
 where He lay,
 The little Lord Jesus, Asleep on
 the hay.

The cattle are lowing, The Baby
 awakes,
 But little Lord Jesus, No crying
 He makes;
 I love Thee, Lord Jesus! Look
 down from the sky,
 And stay by my cradle, Till
 morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask
 Thee to stay
 Close by me forever, and love me,
 I pray;
 Bless all the dear children in Thy
 tender care,
 And take us to heaven, To live
 with Thee there.
 —*Martin Luther*

This beautiful Christmas hymn is one of the first ones little children learn to sing. The last verse asks the Lord Jesus to stay by our side and take us to Heaven to live with Him forever. We are happy that two loved ones have turned their hearts over to Jesus and answered the call to begin serving Him. Hope Graves (Bro. Floyd, Jr. and Sis. Linda) and Noreen Virkler are asking Jesus to guide them through their repentance so they can look forward to a home in Heaven after this life. May He be with them each day and gently lead them upon this important way which they have begun.

Fred and Barb Ebersol have been announced as having peace with God and are awaiting baptism. May God also continue to guide them in each step they take.

The Word of God was brought forth through Bro. Duane Reutter

(Rockville, CT) on the weekend of November 10. Our thanks go to him and his family and the other families from Rockville who shared the weekend with us.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Sis. Anna Mellnitz as she is unable to assemble with us at this time as she has a blood clot in her leg. May God be near to her during the healing process.

Our thoughts of sympathy were with Bro. Duane and Sis. Karen Farney and their family in this month as his great aunt, Ruth Peake, was called from this life. May God be a comfort to each one of them.

OHIO, AKRON

Diane Jarrett - Joyce Gasser

Bro. Wayne Klotzle is graduating from the Akron University in December with a Bachelor's Degree in Electrical Engineering. He also has a degree in Medical Technology. Our congratulations to Bro. Wayne and we hope the kind of position that he would desire will become available to him.

We are sorry that Sis. Helen Burr was hospitalized. She may soon be transferred to our Rittman nursing home.

Our congregation enjoyed "Family Night" when all were invited to an evening of doing something for World Relief. Almost 100, including some visitors, attended and could participate as there were various projects that could be done. There were health, school, and prenatal kits to be made, blocks to be cut, comforters to lay out and knot, bandages to be prepared, and other items to be worked on.

We were grateful to have Elder Bro. John Klotzle (Altadena, CA) and Bros. Glenn Riegenbach (Smithville, OH) and Gene Lehman (Wolcott, IN) for visiting ministers.

We appreciate the efforts these brothers and their wives made in visiting us.

OHIO, COLUMBUS

Nancy Banks

As I sat down to write this column, I felt empty and struggled with the task ahead. What can be written that hasn't already been read about this joyous time of the year? What can be said any differently about the birth of the beloved Christ child than what has already been spoken? But then a small light began to shine as an idea formed. Why should we strive to describe this season any differently than what has been voiced before? As long as there are receptive ears to hear that haven't heard before and willing hearts to open that haven't yielded before, we must never tire of proclaiming the greatest story of old. It doesn't need to be told any differently and it doesn't matter how many times we have written about it before; the message of Christ's birth in Bethlehem and His journey to the Cross of Calvary rings out loud and clear.

Be not content this Babe to know,
 Nor stay at Bethlehem,
 But go with Christ to Calvary's
 brow,
 Beyond Jerusalem.
 'Tis there men learn to know the
 Christ,
 For there He bore man's sin.
 Then open wide the door of heart.
 And let the Saviour in.

Hymns of Zion #36

We warmly welcome Marvin and Jennifer Manz into our church family. They have recently moved to the Cincinnati area and travel the distance to worship with us on Sundays. Our little church is so thankful for each and every new arrival that comes our way, no matter how tem-

porary or permanent their stay may be. We are also thankful for the visiting ministers who have traveled to share God's precious Word with us. This month, we were pleased to have Elder Bros. Eugene Pamer (Akron, OH) and Ed Aeschleman (Philadelphia, PA) and ministering Bros. Ben Manz (Junction, OH), Mark Masters (Mansfield, OH) and Mark Ramsier (Sardis, OH).

Our prayers for a speedy recovery have been answered for Sis. Theresa Hunyady (Bro. Andy) who is recovering from surgery.

We would like to thank all who have traveled to visit with us in Columbus in 1996. We have delighted in making many new acquaintances and rejoice in renewing past friendships. May the blessings of this holiday season be with you and your loved ones, from all of us at the Columbus church.

OHIO, JUNCTION

Sandra Manz

When we gathered together on November 2 to hear the Conference conclusions, we could feel a unity with the brethren across the nation and world, knowing that each member and convert would have an opportunity to hear the very same Memorandum. Along with our Elder Bro. Bill, Elder Bros. Henry Dotterer (Rittman, OH), Duane Farney (Croghan-Naumberg, NY) and Kevin Ryan (Rockville, CT) poured out their hearts in exhortation and with love on the various topics in this annual letter to the churches. May God grant each of us a humble heart to be submissive. On Friday and Saturday of the same week, our church was privileged to host a regional conference of Elders. They assured us that the Lord's presence was felt.

Bro. Roger Gasser (Sis. Sue) once again underwent a form of treat-

ment for his leukemia in a Chicago hospital. May we not soon forget those who almost daily struggle with physical ailments of the body. Those of us with good health are often reminded to be appreciative and thankful.

Johnathon Rose (Bro. John and Trish) and Connie Meyers (Ellen Meyers and Jeff Larkin) were united in marriage on October 26. May God's blessings be over their marriage.

As we anticipate the Christmas season, do we look forward to it with joy or do we encounter a feeling of dread as we ponder all the planning and work and money usually associated with this season? Granted, holiday family and church gatherings don't just happen without some effort put forth, but surely Jesus would not want us to go to such lengths that we actually groan inside just thinking about His birthday. As we do make necessary preparations, may we concentrate on those aspects of Christmas with lasting value. I will close with a thought from a sermon some months ago. Have you ever spent time planning the perfect occasion only to have your plans altered by some unforeseen circumstance? Think about Mary and Joseph. Possibly they were busy arranging their engagement and wedding only to have their plans altered by God. Aren't we thankful that they were willing to submit? It changed the whole world.

OHIO, LATTY

Kathy Sinn

Joyce Klopfenstein

James and Sis. Jane Linder welcomed Corbin James into their family on November 5. Thankful for a little brother are Riley, Abbey, and Haley. Grandparents are Elder Bro. Ray and Sis. Ann Sinn, and James

and Pat Linder.

Our prayers have been with those who were in the hospital: Sis. Carol Stoller (Bro. Ray), Bro. Henry Kipfer (Sis. Arvilla), Bro. Ben Schlatter (Sis. Helen) who is recuperating at Harbor Side Health Care, and Lamar Stoller (Shirley), son of Bro. Wayne and Sis. Dorothy Stoller. Recuperating from injuries are Sis. Kay Miller (Bro. Roger), Jordan Miller (Bro. Roger and Sis. Kay), and Sis. Irma Stoller.

May God comfort the families of Sis. Cherry Klopfenstein (Bro. Jerry), whose grandfather, Bro. Virgil Rocke (Eureka, IL), passed away; and of Bro. Don Steffen (Sis. Karen) whose father, Bro. Elmer Steffen (Bluffton, IN), passed away suddenly on November 4.

We have had the privilege of several visiting ministers: Elder Bro. Ed Lanz (Oakville, IA) and Bro. Curtis Kaufman (Tucson, AZ). On November 2, Elder Bro. Mark Bahr (Detroit, MI) assisted in reading the Memorandum to us. May God bless them for their labors of love.

Wedding bells have been ringing this past month for two dear couples. October 26, Michael Tierney and Tammy Whitman (Bro. Richard and Sis. Eileen) were joined together. November 9 was Jennifer Landshroener (Jack and Joy) and Chad Keysor's (Bro. George and Sis. Sharon) wedding day. We pray each of these couples will feel God's presence as they start their homes together.

OHIO, MANSFIELD

Cari Mann

"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

Matthew 18:20

Surely the presence of the Lord

was felt on October 27 as the members and friends in our congregation gathered for the annual Fall Outing. A blessed time was enjoyed by all.

On November 9, we were privileged to host the annual Eastern World Relief Meeting. We were blessed with members from several states as we were informed of the various activities of the World Relief Committee. May each one who makes an effort to help on these committees be richly blessed for their efforts.

"How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!"

Romans 10:14-15

How thankful we can be that there are ministering brethren who are willing to be "sent"! We pray for special blessings for the following brethren who have so willingly served us this month. Our visitors were Elder Bro. Doug Sabo (Sarasota, FL), Bros. Ken Schneider (Remington, IN) and Arnie Gerst (Taylor, MO). May they enjoy God's richest blessings.

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

Romans 5:1

We all rejoice with Ben and Betty Beer that through faith they could find peace with God our Father. May they feel our loving prayers as

they now await baptism.

One night at the dinner table, my nephew was talking about one of their ministers who is affectionately known as "Sonny." He said he thinks the minister should be called "Moony" because the moon is a reflection of the sun's light. He thought "Moony" would be appropriate because the minister was a human reflection of the Son's light. The thought came that as "Christians", we should all be "human reflections of the Son's light." During the upcoming Christmas season and all through the coming year(s), may each one of us strive just a little bit harder to truly be a reflection of Him. For without Him, there would be no reason for the season. May God bless each of you with a joyful holiday season and new year.

OHIO, RITTMAN
Carla Stoller
Michelle Dotterer

Our congregation is so thankful that two dear souls have decided to live their life for Jesus Christ. They are Eric Gasser (Jerry and Sis. Ellen) and Brad Widmer (Bro. Harold and Sis. Carol). May God's grace be abundant in their lives.

Brad and Chris Clark recently had a new baby, Brandon Joel, who was born October 11. Carrie is his excited older sister. Grandparents are Gerald and Ruth Clark and Charles (Bill) and Kathleen Shane.

The Shane's also had another grandchild, Casey Blaine, who was born November 10 to Ken and Mary Shane. Casey has an older brother, Jeffrey.

On November 2, Lane Michael was born to Doug and Dawn Knieriem. "Big" brother, Mitchell, and grandparents, Russel and Betty Knieriem (Hudson, FL) and Rex and Carol Young, are excited about his arrival.

Dan and Amy Fugate have a baby girl, Haylee Justine, who came into this world on October 9. Her grandparents are Rex and Carol Young and Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Fugate. Haylee's older brother, Nicholas, is pleased to have a companion.

On October 4, Karly Leona joined her siblings, Brandon, Trisha, and Jared, and her parents, Gary and Jackie Landis. Grandparents are Bro. Vernon and Sis. Elizabeth Landis and Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Newcomer.

We were blessed in the past weeks to be ministered unto by Bro. John Laukhauf (Latty, OH) and Bro. Wallace Ramsier (Mansfield, OH). May God bless all those who diligently preach His Holy Word.

Bro. George and Sis. Minnie Rigenbach recently celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary. May God continue to bless your lives together.

On November 17, the marriage announcement of Bro. Eric Steiner (Bro. Dave and Sis. Carole) and Sis. Tricia Indermuhle (Bro. Galen and Sis. Cheryl) was made known to our congregation. God bless you both as you plan your lives together.

Those hospitalized recently are: Sis. Ruth Beery, Sis. Helen Hartzler, Arlene Rupp, and Sis. Beverly Moore (Randy). May they feel God's healing hand.

Sis. Mid Christian (Bro. Ralph), Bro. Robert Gasser (Sis. Neva) and Twila Robinson's brother, Lloyd Gasser, passed away. They'll appreciate our prayers during this time of sorrow.

As the holidays approach, let us all try extra hard to focus on all our blessings and praise God for all the wonderful things He has done for us.

OHIO, SARDIS
Renee Miller

Visitors are always welcome and bring all of us in Sardis a special blessing. Bro. John Stoller (Leo, IN) made a quick trip to our area and was with us for a Wednesday night service. We thank him for brightening our week, and praise God for the message He brought forth through Bro. John over the pulpit.

Gift Wrapped in Swaddling Clothes

Gift wrapped in swaddling clothes
Upon the cattle's hay,
Outside the inn where people feed,
The Bread from heaven lay.

The thorn-crowned Man in royal robes
The populace refuse?
Acclaim instead a murderer,
And Rome's rule o'er the Jews.

Enshrouded dead in Joseph's tomb,
He lays the wraps aside,
Steps out to Kingship over all,
And claims His church as bride.

Clothed now in majesty
In heaven that Man I see
Who came and loved and died and rose
To give Himself for me.
—Donald M. Taylor

All of the gifts given and received this Christmas season cannot compare to the gift wrapped in swaddling clothes. Let's give the gift of the love of Christ to all and experience the true joy of the season.

OHIO, SMITHVILLE

Edith Miller - Julie Maibach

"Take my life and let it be, Consecrated, Lord, to Thee...". What a joy to know that there are still souls seeking the Lord! Eric Miller has turned from the world and begun to walk the higher path. May he build on the firm foundation.

Bro. Elmer Blough (Sis. Lorene) underwent surgery this month. Bro.

Don Stoller (Sis. Luzelda) recently suffered a stroke and is recovering at home. We thank God that both are recovering and doing well.

It is a blessing to have visiting ministers at times. This month, Elder Bro. John Klotzle (Altadena, CA) shared God's Word with us.

OHIO, TOLEDO

Rebecca Beard - Edie Fetter

The time flies on and death draws nigh;
Unite us, Lord, with thee on high!
Prepare us now to live with Thee
Forever in eternity!
Zion's Harp #188

As we see those of our congregation pass from time into eternity, we are thankful for the promise found in Revelation: "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." (Rev. 14:13). Sis. Lydia Fetter passed from this life November 6. She had lived in the Apostolic Christian Home in Rittman, OH for eleven years.

We have appreciated the services of several visiting ministers over the past month. We pray that the Word brought forth by Elder Bros. Ken Indermuhle (Sardis, OH), Bill Schlatter (Junction, OH) and Ben Maibach (Detroit, MI) might bring fruit.

As Christmas rapidly approaches, the world seems to take pleasure in seeing how full the season can be filled with materialistic endeavors. May we, instead of getting caught up in the rush of the season's expectations, spend quiet time reflecting on the wonder of the Word that "was made flesh, and dwelt among us." (John 1:14).

OREGON, PORTLAND **Mary Berg - Louisa Gallup**

To break Thy bread we now have gathered,
In covenant to drink Thy wine;
As brethren we unite together,
That unto death we might be Thine.
This promise we, with heart and will;
Give grace our promise to fulfill.

And ye, the Church's members, truly
Are folded in my heart's embrace!
In Christ ye are my brethren duly;
We share salvation through His grace.
We drink one cup; we break one bread;
One Saviour suffered in our stead.
—*Zion's Harp #25*

Recently, our congregation was able to partake of Holy Communion served to us by Elder Bro. Art Metz (Silverton, OR) and Elder Bro. Don Sauder (Roanoke, IL). Our thanks for their efforts in this important event.

We are glad to have Phil Moser (Bro. Ray and Sis. Barbara Moser) back with us again for the winter. He has been missed so much since his relocation to the Champaign, IL area last year.

Congratulations go out to Peter and Elizabeth Folia at the birth of their son, Benjamin Tiberiu, who arrived on November 13. May they look to God for direction in raising this precious little soul. Benjamin is welcomed home as well by his big sister, Elisheba, who is sure to watch over him with loving care.

Christmas will soon be here again. It seems to be many people's favorite time of year and of course that has a lot to do with the general atmosphere of love and goodwill that comes with it. And this, we know, comes from our Lord and Saviour whose birth we then cele-

brate. May we all be able to keep materialism in check and focus on the true meaning of Christmas!

Special thanks to the following ministers and their wives for coming our way and sharing the Word with us: Elder Bro. Art Metz (Sis. Betty) and Bro. Ed Knecht (Sis. Judie) from Silverton, OR and Elder Bro. Don Sauder (Sis. Wilma) from Roanoke, IL.

As always, we thank our visitors for coming to the Portland congregation to worship and fellowship with us.

OREGON, SILVERTON Peggy Schulz

We were blessed to partake of Holy Communion on November 2. Elder Bro. Don Sauder (Roanoke, IL) assisted our Elder Bro. Art Metz with this Holy feast. We are thankful for Bro. Don's willingness to come and pray the Lord will bless him for his efforts.

Our hospital patients this past month include Karla Dettwyler (Bro. Loren and Sis. Marlene) with knee surgery and Sis. Gloria Kuenzi (Bro. Lewis) with a broken hip. We wish them the Lord's healing mercies. Our thoughts and prayers are with Sis. Shirley Sinn (Bro. Otto and Sis. Marian) in her progressing illness. May she ever feel the Lord's nearness, as it is He who holds the key to all unknown.

As the Christmas season approaches, may our minds be focused upon its true meaning. As we rejoice in the birth of Christ, may we with thankful hearts also remember His gift upon the cross.

PENNSYLVANIA, PHILADELPHIA Franz Soni

Our song of praise to God ascend,
And there with angels' voices

blend.
The day of gladness now is here;
Sing hallelujah with good cheer,
Hallelujah!

Zion's Harp #7

We have so much to be thankful for. May we focus on the true meaning of why we celebrate the birth of our Saviour.

We rejoice that God has blessed Bro. Ben and Sis. Michelle Wiegand with a son. David James was born October 19. Welcoming home David James are sisters, Lauren and Emily. Grandparents are Elder Bro. David and Sis. Ethel Wiegand (Champaign, IL) and Bro. James and Sis. Juanita Walter (Fairbury, IL).

October 19 was the day Bro. Merle Rocke's (Sis. Beverly) father, Bro. Virgil, met his Heavenly Father. Bro. Virgil was 87 years old and is survived by his wife, Sis. Pauline (Eureka, IL); three sons, Bro. Curt Rocke (Eureka, IL), Bro. Nelson Rocke (Tremont, IL) and Bro. Merle Rocke; and a daughter, Sis. Jane Wiegand (Minneapolis, MN). May God comfort this dear family in their time of sorrow.

We thank the brethren who represented seven churches for worshipping with us when they were in Philadelphia for a nursing home conference.

We thank the following brothers for sharing God's Word with us this past month: Elder Bro. John Lehman (Bern, KS), Bro. Randy Gasser (Detroit, MI) and Bro. Walter Herrmann (Princeville, IL). May God richly reward these willing brothers for being such faithful servants.

We welcome all who are in the area to come worship with us. Services are Sunday at 10:30 a.m. and at 12:30 p.m. and Wednesday at 7:30 p.m. If more information is needed, please call Elder Bro. Edward

Aeschleman at (302) 478-7846.

TENNESSEE, NASHVILLE Gwen Leuthold

During the holiday season, gift giving has become a big part of the celebration of Christmas. Even back at the time that Jesus was born, gifts were presented to Him by the wise men of gold, frankincense and myrrh. We, as Christians, need to take time to reflect upon the greatest gift given to us by God and the true meaning of Christmas—Jesus.

As I was thinking of gifts and gift giving, my mind also thought about the gifts/talents God has given to each of us. May we thank him for these gifts and use them to His name's praise, glory and honor especially in the coming new year. Might we be as the angels this holiday season singing "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." (Luke 2:14)

We were privileged to welcome ministering Bros. Andy Moser (Valparaiso, IN) and Marvin Dotterer (Forrest, IL). Other visitors were from Chicago, IL; Athens, AL; and Forrest, IL. We appreciate each and every visitor and thank you for your efforts in worshipping with us. May God richly bless you.

Our hearts were once again deeply saddened at the sudden passing of Jon Hohulin (Bro. Stan and Sis. Jean). Our love, thoughts, and prayers are with you, Bro. Stan and Sis. Jean, Bro. Ross and Sis. Heather. May God help you through this trying time and comfort you. Although at times like this it's difficult to understand God's ways, may He take us by the hand and help us to trust Him and look to Him. Jon will be greatly missed by all of us, but we believe he is in Heaven waiting for us to join him on that yonder shore. The memories and friendship

he shared with us will be treasured by each life he touched.

Note of Thanks:

Once again, we are overwhelmed by the many acts of kindness and love shown to us at the death of our beloved son, Jon. We are encouraged by the many cards, calls, food, flowers, memorials, and prayers of both those we know and love and those we have never met. May God bless each of you.

*Stan and Jean Hohulin
Ross and Heather Hohulin*

Contact us if you are in the Nashville area. Lord willing, we are planning to hold services beginning in 1997 on January 5 (Leo, IN); January 19 (Peoria, IL); February 2 (Ft. Scott, KS); and February 16 (Taylor, MO). Services are usually held the first and third Sundays of each month beginning at 10:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. Please call Don and Faye Sauder (615) 373-8928; Sis. Gwen Leuthold (615) 352-3940; Bro. Don and Sis. Enid Miller (615) 384-8761; or Bro. Stan and Sis. Jean Hohulin (423) 376-9153 (Knoxville, TN area).

The past is history, the future is a mystery, and this moment is a gift. That is why this moment is called "the present".

TEXAS, CENTRAL AREA
Lois Gray

Our gratitude is extended to those who visited and ministered to us recently: Bro. Carroll Gerber and Sis. Louise (Bluffton North, IN), Elder Bro. Ron Messner and Sis. Pam (Washington, IL), Bro. Steve Martin and Sis. Vickie, along with their children (Eureka, IL), and Elder Bro. Charles Sauder and Sis. Miriam (Tremont, IL).

Jim and Carol Sundberg have been recovering from injuries sus-

tained in an auto accident and are again gathering with us. We are thankful that their injuries were not more serious.

Services are held the first Sunday of the month in Dallas, the last Sunday in Round Top at the home of Bro. Bill Zeltwanger. All Sundays in between services are held in Austin at the Omni Hotel at the intersection of I-35 and Hwy. 71. No services will be held December 22 or 29. We are a small congregation and many will be traveling to be with their families over the holidays.

We heartily welcome visitors and suggest you check in advance as our schedule is subject to change. Contact persons are: Bro. Bill Zeltwanger (409) 249-5102; Brian and Terri Kaisner (512) 338-4222; Dave and Shella Brummitt (512) 360-3379; and Sis. Dorothy Martin (210) 658-1968.

TEXAS, DALLAS
Dee Rapp

Did you know there are approximately 300 names for God in the Bible? It hardly seems possible, but they are there if you search diligently. About half are very obvious; the remainder must be searched with care. They can also be alphabetized. Following are some random names to pique your interest and get you started:

A - Abba Father (Romans 8:15)
C - Commander (Daniel 8:11)
H - Hiding Place (Psalm 32:7)
R - Rapha (I Chronicles 8:2)
T - The True God (Jeremiah 10:10)
W - Witness (Revelation 3:14)
X - What name will you find for this letter?!

Don't hesitate, begin today in Genesis, following through to Revelation. You will learn so much about God in this journey.

We want to thank the brothers who have faithfully served us this past month.

Dallas services are held on the first Sunday of each month at 10:30 and 12 noon at the Holiday Inn, DeSoto, TX.

Central Texas services will always be held the LAST Sunday of each month at the home of Bro. Bill Zeltwanger in Round Top. The remaining Sundays will be held at the Omni Hotel in Austin at the intersection of Highway 71 and 35W at 10:30 and 12 noon. Contacts are: Bro. Howard and Sis. Dee Rapp at (792) 867-4074 and Bro. Bill Zeltwanger at (409) 249-5102.

TEXAS, ZAPATA
Viola Perdelwitz

We are looking forward every Sunday to meet and greet our winter residents that are returning to spend the winter months with us. Among some that are here are our retired Elder Bro. Paul Fehr and his wife, Sis. Anna (Morris, MN), and our elected usher, Bro. Richard Bricker and his wife, Sis. Helen (Mansfield, OH). It is such a blessing to have more people in our assembly.

As we think about the many Christmas gifts we have received throughout the years, let us not forget the greatest gift of all.

Oft I read the blessed Bible,
How God sent His precious gift
How our Lord in love and mercy
Came the sinful load to lift.

Songs and Hymns of Zion #75



Silver Threads

Bearing Fruit...

I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

St. John 15:1-11

A man had built a prosperous business through zealous toil and honest dealings. As he advanced in age, he felt concerned about the future of his enterprise because he had no close relatives except three nephews. One day he summoned the young men and said, "I have a problem, and whoever comes up with the best solution will inherit all that I possess." Giving each of them an equal sum of money, he instructed them to buy something that would fill his large office. "Spend no more than I've given you," he directed, "and be sure you're back by sunset."

All day long his nephews sought to fulfil their mission. Finally, when the shadows lengthened, they obediently returned to make their report. Their uncle asked to see their purchases. The first dragged a huge bale of straw into the room. When it was untied it made a pile that nearly hid two of the walls. After it was cleared away, the second brought in two large bags of thistledown, which when released, filled three-fourths of the room. This was even better than the first.

The third nephew stood silent and forlorn. "And what have you to offer?" asked his aged relative. "Uncle, I spent half of my money to feed a hungry child and gave almost all the rest to the poor. With the little I had left, I bought these matches and a small candle." Then he lit the taper, and its light filled every corner of the room! The kindly old man realized that here was the noblest of them all. He blessed him for making the best use of his gift and gave him all his possessions.

See: Luke 12:42-48; I Tim. 6:16-19

Silver Threads

The Touch of the Master's Hand

'Twas battered and scarred, and the auctioneer thought it scarcely worth his while
To waste much time on the old violin, but he held it up with a smile:
"What am I bidden, good folks," he cried, "Who'll start the bidding for me?"
"A dollar, a dollar", then, "Two! Only two? Two dollars, and who'll make it three?"
"Three dollars, once: three dollars, twice: going for three."
But no, from the room, far back, a gray-haired man came forward and picked up the bow:
Then, wiping the dust from the old violin, and tightening the loose strings,
He played a melody pure and sweet as a caroling angel sings.

The music ceased, and the auctioneer, with a voice that was quiet and low,
Said, "What am I bid for the old violin?" And he held it up with the bow.
"A thousand dollars, and who'll make it two? Two thousand! And who'll make it three?"
"Three thousand, once, three thousand, twice. And going, and gone," said he.
The people cheered, but some of them cried, "We do not quite understand what changed its worth."
Swift came the reply: "The touch of a master's hand."

And many a man with life out of tune, and battered and scarred with sin,
Is auctioned cheap to the thoughtless crowd, much like the old violin.
A "mess of pottage", a glass of wine: a game - and he travels on.
He is "going" once, and "going" twice, he's "going" and almost "gone".
But the Master comes, and the foolish crowd never can quite understand the worth of a soul
And the change that's wrought by the touch of the Master's hand.

What Jesus Is

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <i>To the artist</i> , He is the one altogether lovely - Song of Solomon 5:15 | Sharon - Song of Solomon 2:1 | <i>To the preacher</i> , He is the Word of God - Revelation 19:13 |
| <i>To the architect</i> , He is the chief cornerstone - I Peter 2:6 | <i>To the geologist</i> , He is the rock of ages - I Corinthians 10:4 | <i>To the sculptor</i> , He is the living stone - I Peter 2:4 |
| <i>To the astronomer</i> , He is the sun of righteousness - Malachi 4:2 | <i>To the horticulturist</i> , He is the true vine - John 15:1 | <i>To the servant</i> , He is the good master - Matthew 23:8-10 |
| <i>To the baker</i> , He is the bread of life - John 6:35 | <i>To the judge</i> , He is the only righteous judge of man - II Timothy 4:8 | <i>To the statesman</i> , He is the desire of all nations - Haggai 2:7 |
| <i>To the banker</i> , He is the hidden treasure - Matthew 13:44 | <i>To the juror</i> , He is the faithful and true witness - Revelation 3:14 | <i>To the student</i> , He is the incarnate truth - I John 5:6 |
| <i>To the builder</i> , He is the sure foundation - Isaiah 28:16 | <i>To the jeweler</i> , He is the pearl of great price - Matthew 13:46 | <i>To the theologian</i> , He is the author and finisher of our faith - Hebrews 12:2 |
| <i>To the carpenter</i> , He is the door - John 10:7 | <i>To the lawyer</i> , He is counselor, lawgiver, and true advocate - Isaiah 9:6 | <i>To the toiler</i> , He is the giver of rest - Matthew 11:28 |
| <i>To the doctor</i> , He is the great physician - Jeremiah 8:22 | <i>To the newspaper man</i> , He is tidings of great joy - Luke 2:10 | <i>To the sinner</i> , He is the Lamb of God who takes the sin away - John 1:29 |
| <i>To the educator</i> , He is the great teacher - John 3:2 | <i>To the oculist</i> , He is the light of the eyes - Proverbs 29:13 | <i>To The Christian</i> , He Is The Son Of The Living God, The Saviour, The Redeemer, And The Loving Lord. |
| <i>To the engineer</i> , He is the new and living way - Hebrews 10:20 | <i>To the philanthropist</i> , He is the unspeakable gift - II Corinthians 9:15 | |
| <i>To the farmer</i> , He is the sower and Lord of harvest - Luke 10:2 | <i>To the philosopher</i> , He is the wisdom of God - I Corinthians 1:24 | |
| <i>To the florist</i> , He is the rose of | | |

Silver Threads

The Bridge

There was once a bridge which spanned a large river. During the day the bridge sat with its length running up and down the river paralleled with the banks, allowing ships to pass through freely. But at certain times each day, a train would come and the bridge would be turned sideways across the river, allowing a train across it. A switchman sat in a small shack on one side of the river where he operated the controls to turn the bridge and lock it into place when a train crossed. One evening as the switchman was waiting for the light of the day to come, he looked off into the distance through the dim twilight and caught sight of the train lights. He stepped to the controls and waited until the train was within a prescribed distance of the bridge. He turned the bridge into position, but, to his horror, found the locking control did not work. If the bridge was not secure in position, it would wobble back and forth at the ends when the train came on to it, causing the train to jump the track and go crashing into the river. This would be a passenger train with many people aboard. He left the bridge turned across the river, and hurried across to the other side of the river where there was a lever switch that he could hold to operate the lock manually. He would have to hold the switch back firmly as the train crossed. He could hear the rumble of the train now. He took hold of the lever and kept applying the pressure to keep the mechanism locked. Many lives depended on this man's strength. Then, coming across the bridge from the direction of his

control room, he heard a sound that made his blood run cold. "Daddy, where are you?" His four-year-old son was crossing the bridge to look for him. His first impulse was to cry out to the child, "Run! Run!" But the train was close; the tiny legs would never make it across the bridge in time. He almost left his lever to run and snatch up his son and carry him but he realized that he would not be able to get back to the lever in time. Either the people on the train or his little son must die. He took a moment to make his decision. The train sped safely about, on its way, and no one aboard was even aware of the tiny broken body, thrown mercilessly into the river by the onrushing train. Nor were they aware of the pitiful figure of the sobbing man, still clinging tightly to the locking lever long after the train had passed. They did not see him walk home more slowly than he had ever walked: to tell his wife how the child had brutally died.

Now if you comprehend the emotions which went this man's heart, you can begin to understand the feelings of our Father in Heaven when He allowed His Son to bridge the gap between us and eternal life. Can there be any wonder that He caused the earth to tremble and the skies to darken as His Son died? How does He feel when we speed along through life without any thought to what was done for us through Jesus Christ? When was the last time you thanked Him for the sacrifice of His Son?

Sermon continued from page 2

As we think and consider that within our lives, how it encourages, how it comforts, how it strengthens and how it uplifts us. To know that even though we groan, we can really have that relief so many times. We try in several different ways in our earthly life. We try to find comfort and those things that would pacify us and experience those different things that would perhaps help us to have a little bit more enjoyment in life.

The most important thing is to be clothed upon with Jesus Christ. He reminds us of that Spirit. He has given us the earnest of that Spirit as It would speak to us and help us to determine our direction in life, even though we groan. We know and we can understand within our hearts and our lives what is really the good direction.

The Apostle Paul truly had that same feeling in heart for the church—those dear believers who often caused a difficult situation, but always bringing them back to Jesus Christ and back to the place of hope. I believe that the thing we so desperately need in our life is that direction of hope and knowing that we have a home in heaven provided for us. If we can just cling to that, we can always look for that.

He says, "Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:" (2 Cor. 5:6). That is the way faith is. He says, "(For we walk by faith, not by sight:)" (2 Cor. 5:7). As children go out to different places at night, we would know they are away from parents. We know that many things can happen, they can do many things and they can kind of let their own free will kind of do what they want to do. But as they have been taught, instructed and encouraged, do they think of that? I believe so.

Just as you and I walk here on this earth, even though we can't be, as it says, absent from the Lord. We are here in this real world and what is it? We are walking by faith, not by sight.

That brings us to the part where it says, "We are confident." That part of being confident within our hearts and lives and knowing that we have truly made that conversion, truly knowing that we have peace in our heart with man and with God and we are ready to meet our Lord. How it is that we can have that peace within our hearts and in our lives!

We have that desire, as it says, "...willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." (2 Cor. 5:8). That is our desire and where we want to go and be one day. But here we have life. We have an opportunity to be that life and example that He wants us to be. He reminds us so well of our life and what we have to do. In different places in the Word, He reminds us how to walk, how to have that Christian character that we are to have from day to day.

"Wherefore we labour..." (2 Cor. 5:9). We labor and what that labor means (it is different for each one of us), we still have what it tells us in Philippians to have the same mind and same heart. We can labor together, fellowship together whether absent or present and that is a part of whether we are here or there or wherever it would be as we labor.

He says there in the last part of that verse that we may be accepted of Him. How it is that we can be accepted of Him that we know within our hearts and our lives. It tells us in Romans that He asks for a reasonable service, "...that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable...will of God." (Romans 12:2). What is accepted of Him? That is a

part for you and me as we pray and read God's Word and seek His direction. We let the Spirit speak to us so that we would know what is accepted of Him.

He reminds us that, "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." What that would be and the time would be, is only for Him to know, but He says, "...that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (2 Cor. 5:10). That is the part of our life that we can determine what direction we are going.

We think of the various things that could happen in our life. We drive down the highway. We see accidents happen and are reminded that we need to stop here, to observe this speed limit, and to observe this sign. We kind of know what to do and we know what will happen if we don't.

Perhaps the same way, "the terror of the Lord," we will know what happens if we don't. What do we do because of that? He reminds us as we tell others, "...we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences." (2 Cor. 5:11). The Apostle Paul poured out his heart, poured out his life, gave direction, prayed, encouraged the brethren to be faithful to trust the Lord, to follow His example and His teachings which He gave to them. It was for a purpose of serving God and to bring blessings to their lives.

Perhaps that part is given even to you and me to persuade men. How we persuade men, I don't know. We could really go out and just talk to someone and persuade them in a certain way, but we try by the example we have—our life, even it goes without speaking, many times, our conduct, where we are at, what we are doing, our smile, our confidence,

how we treat husband, wife and children, and how we talk to them.

It says, "Persuade men." It seems like there has to be some active effort. That is what moms and dads, seems like, always has a part in the family to give directions to the children. Here in the church, we think of the Sunday School teachers as many times they give of themselves to persuade those young hearts, to speak to them, to have those creative things that they can take and grasp it in their heart. They are glad to hear it, glad to do it, and glad to accept it. What is it? How do we persuade men? By the grace of God He would give in your life so that you can be that light and example.

"For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to answer them which glory in appearance, and not in heart. For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God: or whether we be sober, it is for your cause." (2 Cor. 5:12-13). What is the purpose of our life? What is the purpose of our church? Of our brother? We often think of the brotherhood and how so many times they give us encouragement and direction, and what is it all there for? It is for our good and our sake. He said it is for your cause.

I don't know how we would fare if we would just go out on the highway and there would not be any signs, speed limits or directions of any sort. I think we would realize that it would be a pretty chaotic situation. That is the way in our lives, we realize that everything we do we have somewhat a guideline.

There is a machine we use and it tells us how to use it. We know from experience how to use it safely. We know one-two-three how to operate it and how to shut it off. We know how to do different things with it,

but what? It is productive. What good would it be in all our efforts if we had all the different kind of machines about us and didn't have any instructions on how to use them. They would just set there and deteriorate, but because of the instructions and because of the guidelines we have, they are productive. They can do things that are beneficial for us and we can make our lives productive.

The Apostle Paul (as the Lord used him) said for your cause the Word of Jesus Christ could go out. Jesus Christ and Him crucified and others could know they are sinners, that they have sinned and come short of the glory of God. If there is a way to come from that and be born again, that is that useful instrument and that is the productive part, I believe, he said to persuade men.

"For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." (2 Cor. 5:14-15). For Jesus Christ. As He arose from that grave and was the first fruit of the resurrection, how wonderful it is on Easter morning that we can realize something wonderful has happened—that He arose from that grave!

But it was much more than that. It is much more for you and I that we can have that hope of one day knowing that we can see Him face to face. He has provided for us the way of salvation, that we can repent and be born again.

Even though we are burdened with sin in our hearts and our lives, we know there is an answer. We can repent. We can ask God for forgiveness. We can ask our brother for forgiveness and gain a peace and joy

within our heart. We can walk day by day. We can have that hope—the house eternal in the heavens, made without hands. We can have that hope in our hearts and in our lives.

As he goes on and speaks of that life in Jesus Christ, he reminds us that it is not after the flesh because if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. So many times we think of how He has transformed us. He tells us in Romans, "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed..." (Romans 12:2). We know how our lives have changed. It's just as simple as that—it changed and we have a new life! We have a new desire, a new ambition, and that is serving Jesus Christ.

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature:" A new creature, a new attitude, a new direction! "...old things are passed away;" We think of that so many times—our old life, our old sinful life, we buried it and did away with it. In Romans it tells us "rendered inoperative" and that is in a place we don't want to go back and bring it up again. "...all things are become new." (2 Cor. 5:17). That life in Jesus Christ, what a blessing!

That is a part in our lives that is so wonderful. Without problems? No. Without sorrows? No. Without difficulties, without times of anguish? No. But He reminds us of His help, of His Spirit, of His grace, that free gift, that mercy that He gives to us every morning. He said, "all things become new."

How is it within our lives? How about with you? How about with me? Do we experience that newness in Jesus Christ? We can honor God, as it says there in the fore reading, that He is our refuge and our strength.

"And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the

ministry of reconciliation;" (2 Cor. 5:18). That is the part in our lives that seems like we are working out to determine what is that good part in our life. We want to say, "Yes, this is the part that I want to save—it's the part that makes the difference." We take it, use it and realize that others can receive a blessing because of who we are and what we have within our hearts.

He reminds us that we are ambassadors for Christ. Ambassadors are someone who goes out in behalf of another. We have ambassadors to various nations from our nation. We know what that does to seek good relations from one another. That is a part of being a Christian and a believer in the Lord, having repented, being born again, seeing things with a new heart and new mind. Because of Jesus Christ, it is a new ambition that we have. If we can just think of that every day and consider who we are and that we are ambassadors for Christ here on behalf of another—on behalf of Jesus Christ.

The thing about it is we realize what we read in Romans, twelfth chapter, he tells us that it is our reasonable service. He wants us to "...present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." (Romans 12:1). So we go as ambas-

sadors as though God does beseech you by us. Did God speak to you? Did God encourage you? Did God give to you that feeling in heart and soul that He loves you? I hope so because that is what we need from day to day. That is what we need to experience in our hearts.

Then he tells us something else that ties this all together and gives to us what it is really all about. "We pray you in Christ's stead," (2 Cor. 5:20). He was praying and we find out that we pray both for ourselves and one another. That is what prayer is all about in Jesus' name, that we pray for one another to help and encourage one another. We realize that every one of us when we wake up in the morning, we may have different outlooks, different feelings, different groaning. We all have those different times within our lives.

But think of the praying brotherhood, praying brother, praying family, praying husband, praying wife, how it is that we can be reconciled to God. That is what He wants us to be. That bottom line in our life is Jesus Christ and is the One that counts. Jesus Christ is the One I am going to live for.

As we would honor Him, he said, "For he hath made him to be sin for us," (2 Cor. 5:21). We think of that cross and of Him as He was nailed

to the cross as it goes through our minds. So many times we see those hands nailed to the cross. We see that crown of thorns. We see that pierced side. We hear Him say, "Not My will, but Thy will be done." We know that He took on that sin. "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34). He took upon the sin of you and me that we can have that hope, as he said, "...that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. 5:21). The righteousness of God—do you feel that? Do you experience that? That is a blessing that we can have and an opportunity that we can live for Him each day with the righteousness of God in our heart and life! What a blessing! What a wonderful blessing because of Jesus Christ and His love for us.

May we just take that in the real world about us. Let us consider it. We have this earthly house here as we go from day to day, but let us think of the eternal part in heaven. Let us know and understand if we don't have that peace and joy within our heart, we can repent and be born again. We can ask for forgiveness and gain peace and joy that is truly a reflection of the righteousness of God. It would be a part of our lives that would be good and would be a blessing.

A Special Little Saying...

The Past is history

The Future is a mystery,

And this moment is a "gift".

That is why this moment is called the "Present".

Interdependance

... a perspective on the cover picture ...

authored by a Fairbury sister

This intriguing picture can be viewed as an illustration of our spiritual life. The tree is analogous to the child of God, the rock is the Church, and the ground is our foundation, Jesus Christ. As we continue to grow, we need to be "Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving." (Col. 2:7).

As the tree grew, the loose dirt around its roots eroded away until we are able to clearly see its reliance on the rock as a support and the firm soil in which it is rooted. In our lives, all the worldly lusts and sins need to be removed before we can reach our true foundation of Jesus Christ. After we have become established in the faith, we do not want debris to build up around our roots to inhibit their growth.

The soil under and around the rock is rich with all the nutrients necessary to sustain the tree throughout its life. Jesus and His Word provides all the spiritual nourishment we need to stand firm in our faith and eventually win the race. Our "soil" abounds with grace, love, mercy, and the many "minerals" which can develop into the fruit of the Spirit once they are absorbed into our lives.

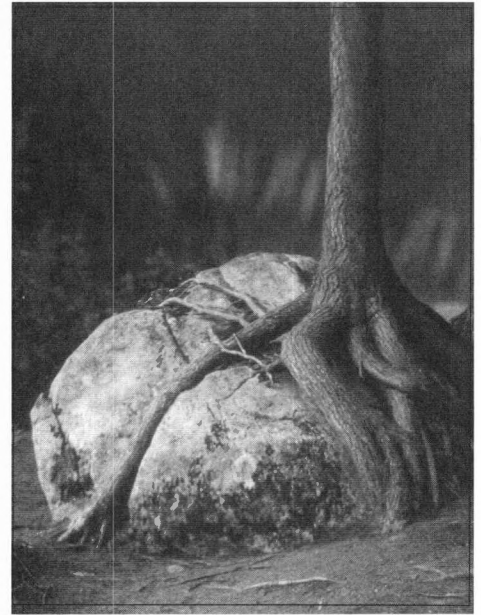
The tree's roots are its means of obtaining from the soil the nutrients which it needs to grow and stay strong. Our roots are the connection we have with Jesus and the supports we have to help us keep our faith: prayer, reading the Bible, fellowship with the brethren, faith, repentance and conversion, personal convictions, and the traditions and customs of our church.

If a tree's root system is deeply

implanted in the soil, they will provide a strong support structure to hold the tree fast during storms and droughts. The more firmly secured our roots are in the foundation of Jesus, the stronger our faith will be. We will stand courageously and boldly when the storms of life surround us and beat at us because we know that our Lord will hold us up. Even as the wild storms also provided needed moisture to a tree, the trials in our lives help us become stronger. For we should "...glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed;" (Romans 5:3-5).

Roots which are unhealthy should be cut away so they cannot corrupt the whole tree. In John 15, God, as the husbandman, purgeth "every branch that beareth fruit...that it may bring forth more fruit." If we remove the roots of bitterness, doubt, discontentment, and strife, our lives will grow more full and blessed. Our lives should be "...rooted and grounded in love...that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God" (Eph. 3:17,19).

As illustrated in the picture, the life of a believer, as the tree, is also resting on the support of the church. The rock is standing firm through time giving the assistance necessary for its members to continue growing straight and tall. However, as is also evident in the picture, if it were not for the roots surrounding the rock, it may shift or even roll away. If the roots were to decay or weaken, the rock would begin to loosen from its base on the foundation. With the rock loose and unstable, the tree would no longer



have this support to rest on and may also fall. This mutual dependence of the tree and the rock portrays the important role the child of God has in supporting all aspects of the church if it is to maintain its purpose as a haven for all those striving to seek our Lord and Saviour. Just as the believer needs the support of the brotherhood, the true church can only be sustained by the faith and love of its members.

The child of God whose roots are firmly established in Christ and His Word and is strengthened by our precious church can stand fast through life's trials and storms. Through faith in God and the love of the brethren, may we each continue on towards our home in Heaven where we shall see the tree of life and the "pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb" (Revelation 22:1).



Silver Threads

Who Will Let Him In?

The wind was brisk in town that day
As people gathered from every way.
They came from far, they came from near
To pay their taxes for the year.

Business was good in the market place
Many people bought goods by the case.
And quickly the day did venture by
As the shades of evening set the sky.

The many people that came from afar
Filled the hotels to wait for the mar.
Then they would journey homeward bound
After the night's rest they had just found.

As the day did grow older
And the night wind blew colder,
The hotel owner heard a knock at his door.
"What's this?" he thought "I can't keep any more!"

He opened the door to see who was there.
A man, and his wife which a donkey did bear.
"We've come a long way," the weary man said.
"All we'll need is your cheapest bed."

"Sorry, I can't help you." came the reply
"I'm full and I'm busy, so please pass on by."
The two turned around, back into the night
Again the cold air, into their faces did bite.

They came to another with rooms for rent
And asked the man there for a room to be lent
"For my wife here is heavy with child.
She needs to be where it's warm and mild."

The man laughed in their faces
"I can't help at all, I have no more places."
Again they turned and walked away
Rejected and cold, they knew not where to stay.

Snow flakes were falling when they heard a call
A figure approached them, lean and tall.
"Can I help you?" he said with a smile
The two were relieved with his kind style.

"A place to rest is all we need."
"Follow me, no need to plead.
I have a place to keep you warm,
At least it's a shelter from this storm."

"I own an Inn that now is full
But out behind is a stable for the bull.
Which you can use for the night,
To keep you from this winter plight."

They both laid down in the warm hay,
Soon in the manger their new baby lay.
As the bull outside snorted and trod,
They named it Jesus, the Son of God.

So if some night they come knocking to you,
Will you help, or not, what will you do?
This same Jesus is coming back to town.
Either let him in, or you're turning him down.

Written by a Brother in Faith

Silver Threads

The Story of the Christmas Guest

It happened one day at the year's white end...two neighbors called on an old-time friend...and they found his shop so meager and mean...made bright with a thousand boughs of green...and Conrad was sitting with face a-shine...when he suddenly stopped as he stitched a twine...and said, "Old friends, at dawn today...when the cock was crowing the night away...The Lord appeared in a dream to me...and said, 'I am coming your Guest to be'...so I've been busy with feet astir...strewing my shop with branches of fir...the table is spread and the kettle is shined...and over the rafters the holly twined...and now I will wait for my Lord to appear...and listen closely so I will hear...His step as He nears my humble place...and I open the door and look in His face."

So his friends went home and left Conrad alone...for this was the happiest day he had known...for, long since, his family had passed away...and Conrad had spent a sad Christmas Day...but he knew with the Lord as his Christmas Guest...this Christmas would be the dearest and best...and he listened with only joy in his heart...and with every sound he would rise with a start...and look for the Lord to be

standing there...in answer to his earnest prayer.

So he ran to the window after hearing a sound...but all that he saw on the snow-covered ground...was a shabby beggar whose shoes were torn...and all of his clothes were ragged and worn...So Conrad was touched and went to the door...and he said, "Your feet must be frozen and sore...and I have some shoes in my shop for you...and a coat that will keep you warmer, too"...So with grateful heart the man went away...but Conrad notice the time of day...he wondered what made the dear Lord so late...and how much longer he'd have to wait...when he heard a knock and ran to the door...but it was only a stranger once more...a bent, old woman with a shawl of black...a bundle of twigs piled on her back...she asked for only a place to rest...but her voice seemed to plead, "Don't send me away...let me rest for a while on Christmas Day"...So Conrad brewed her a steaming cup...and told her to sit at the table and sup...But after she left he was filled with dismay...for he saw that the hours were passing away...and the Lord had not come as He said He would...and Conrad felt sure he had misunderstood...when

out of the stillness he heard a cry..."Please help me and tell me where am I"...So again he opened his friendly door...and stood disappointed as twice before...it was only a child who had wandered away...and was lost from her family on Christmas Day...Again Conrad's heart was heavy and sad...but he knew he would make this little child glad...so he called her in and wiped her tears...and quieted all her childish fears...then he led her back to her home once more...but as he entered his own darkened door...he knew that the Lord was not coming today...for the hours of Christmas had passed away.

So he went to his room and knelt down to pray...and he said, "Dear Lord, why did You delay?...What kept You from coming to call on me?...For I wanted so much Your face to see"...when soft in the silence a voice he heard..."Lift up your head for I kept My word...Three times My shadow crossed your floor...Three times I came to your lonely door...for I was the beggar with bruised, cold feet...I was the woman you gave to eat...and I was the child on the homeless street."

By Helen Steiner Rice

My Garden of Verse

by Henry Beer

4th Edition available

The 1996 Edition of My Garden of Verse has recently been printed and may be purchased at several locations. This is the 4th printing for Bro. Henry Beer's lifelong collection of poems.

Many of these poems have been set to music and are sung in our churches. Books can be obtained by contacting Robert Indermuhle at 50400 Bares Run Rd., Sardis, OH 43946.

Retail orders are \$10 per book, post-paid. Wholesale orders, or orders of several copies are available at a discount.

Please call 614-483-1520 for details. It is hoped that this printing will also be an honor and praise to God.



The Church Conference Historically

The concept of church leaders coming together to “confer” about problems and opportunities finds root in the Scriptures. In Acts 15 the early church leaders met in Jerusalem to discuss the problems of that era. Their conclusions and proposed resolutions were subsequently delivered to the outlying congregations.

The first brother meeting of our faith was held in 1836 at Hauptwil, Switzerland. A portion of Bro. Samuel Froehlich’s invitation reads: “For some time a number of brethren have felt the need and expressed the wish for a gathering of the brethren from time to time. So I am notifying you in the name of the brethren that the first meeting of this kind has been set for Tuesday, March 22, 1836, at Hauptwil (Thurgau).”

In the early days of the Froehlich period, it was necessary for the brethren to deliberate in conference to draft answers to the state church. Because the church and state authorities were antagonistic toward the brethren, and various degrees of persecution persisted, the brethren often had to petition the state for a more suitable degree of religious toleration.

Shortly before 1847 it is believed that a special convocation of brothers was convened in Switzerland to address a letter from a Mennonite group in Lewis County, New York. They had requested that Bro. Sa-

muel Froehlich travel to America to adjudicate a religious dispute in their local congregation.

At this meeting the brethren ordained Bro. Benedict Weyeneth, 29, as an elder. He thence traveled to America and visited the Mennonites in upstate New York. His exhortation regarding (1) repentance and (2) baptism by immersion won a following; and our first American church was established in 1847.

The earliest known “brother meeting” in the United States occurred on August 20, 1866, at Leo, Indiana. Bro. Henry Geistlich, a visiting elder from Meilen, Switzerland, noted the occasion: “Brothers were assembled from far and near. We opened our assembly with singing and prayer. We talked about many important things concerning the welfare of the church. On the whole, this was a blessed day.”

A special meeting of elders was held at the outset of World War I to choose an official church name. This was done so young men of the church who were drafted into the military could list their denominational name on their entry forms. To gain a noncombatant status a church name had to be listed. The name “Apostolic Christian” was thus officially chosen.

The elder conference held on January 14 and 15, 1942 at Rittman, Ohio was an important one in that the elders issued their first written report based on the precedent found in Acts 15. This “memorandum” to the churches summarized the conclusions of the elders relative to

worldly threats faced by the membership.

On October 11, 1944, at Elgin, Illinois, lay brethren convened for the first time with the elders following the former’s earlier meetings.

Over the years, church conferences became both more frequent and efficient. The elders adopted a planned agenda in 1969 at Morris, Minnesota. As the personal occupations of the elders included more businessmen and administrators, their meetings became more organized and structured.

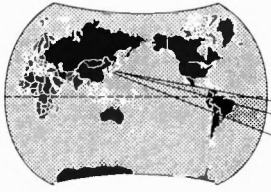
In 1970, the elders began holding mid-year meetings on an annual basis. These winter meetings were in addition to their meetings held each summer. The site of the first meeting was Elgin, Illinois.

The “general conference” at Bluffton, Indiana on August 23, 1974, was one of the largest in the church’s history. Over 1,500 persons were in attendance.

by Perry A. Klopfenstein

Next Issue:

Because the year 1997 commemorates our church’s 150th year in America, the January issue will begin a 12-part historical summary entitled Diligence and Devotion: 150 Years of Apostolic Christianity in America.



The Light Of Hope

From Across The Ocean



希望の光

“The Dayspring From On High”
Elder Bro. Willis Ehnle, Shioda, Japan

“The dayspring from on high hath visited us,” was spoken by Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, if I’m not mistaken. (Luke 1:78). Verse 77 speaks of the remission of sins and that is by the Lord Jesus Christ, not by John the Baptist.

The word “dayspring” is also written in Job 38:12 where God is speaking to Job and asking him if he is in control of the dayspring. In the end Job said, “I will lay my hand upon my mouth.” (Job 40:4).

In Luke “dayspring” refers to the Lord Jesus Christ but in Job it evidently is referring to something in nature which God controls but about which Job was powerless. In the Japanese Bible in Luke it is translated into the equivalent of “the light of day”, while in Job it is translated into the equivalent of “dawn”.

What does the word “dayspring” mean to you? To me the “day” part refers to light in contrast to “night”

or darkness. The “spring” part is a little more thought-provoking as it could refer to a season of the year, it could refer to water gushing out of the ground, or it could refer to a metal spring which suddenly pops up when released.

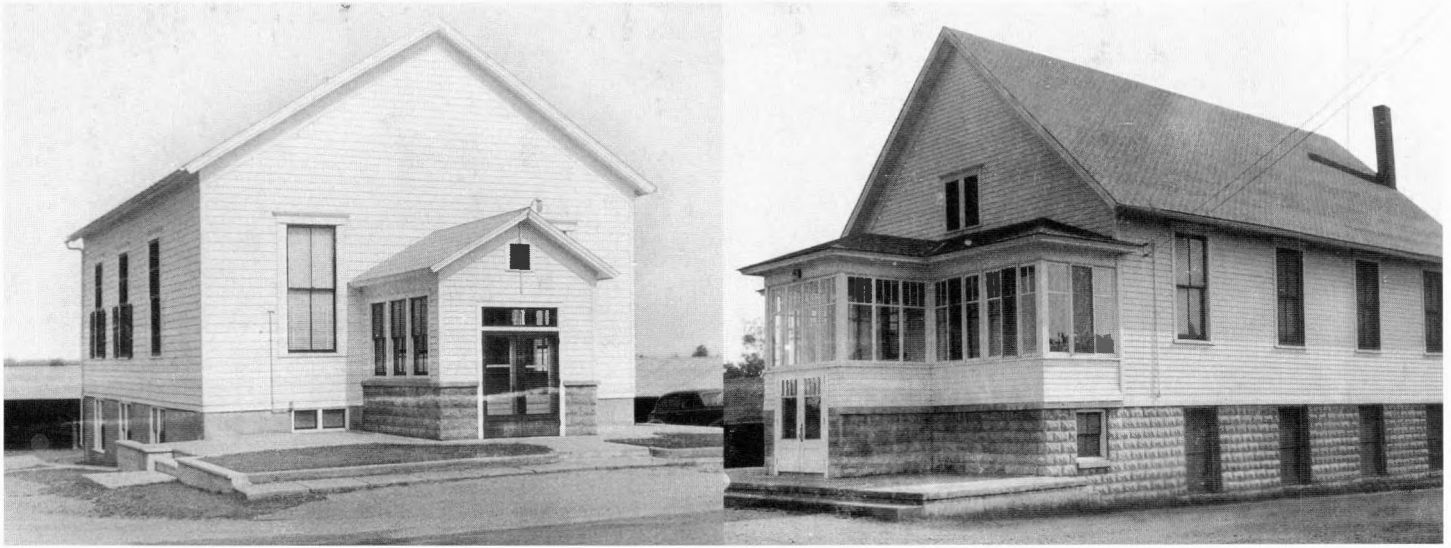
At Christmas we can say that the Creator God visited us through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Prior to that it was pretty dark, like on a moonless night. However, from our home here in Japan, the sun springs out from the surrounding mountains and bathes us in its glorious rays. In some languages “sun” is equivalent to “day”; in fact, in Japanese the same Chinese character is used for both words. Even the pronunciation is the same for both words and the meaning is determined by the context of the sentence.

The word “high” in the title of this article refers to Heaven so we understand that Christ has visited us from Heaven. This is in keeping with John 1:1, “In the beginning

was the Word,” since “Word” is another name for Christ. It’s a good name for Him, too, since God communicated with us through Christ and we communicate with one another by using words. Words are very powerful tools.

We can think of the birth of Christ as the sun springing up from behind the horizon, to change the night to day. Or we can think of the birth of Christ as water springing up from beneath the surface of the earth, offering healing and health to our thirsty souls, and enabling us to walk in the light of day. Or we can think of the birth of Christ as the season in our lives when that which lies dormant springs to life in all its beauty and splendor. Or we can think of the birth of Christ as a metal spring which expands suddenly and lifts us above the worldliness which surrounds us. Interpret it as you will, I like the phrase, “The dayspring from on high hath visited us.”

希望の光



Croghan - 1855 Naumburg - 1859

I was reminded by Elder Bro. Robert Beyer that the same mistake was made a second time concerning the identity of the first two Churches in the USA. That is why it was decided to run the pictures of the two Churches side by side as in reality they did so exist through the history of our faith. Croghan was first established and built in 1855, while the Naumburg Church was built in 1859 just four years later. There is a precious mantle of history that wraps itself around these two Churches.

The brethren that came to America at this time in history coincided with the terrible war period of Napoleon. These believers in Christ longed to be free of the pathetic conditions of killing and destruction which was prevalent at this time.

The immigrants, which came originally from the Alsace-Lorraine area of Germany, longed for the simple life and were granted farmland at a relatively low price. When the settlers arrived, they were met by a wilderness and Indians. The Indians, who were friendly, offered the immigrants housing in their tents until the houses of the settlers could be built. It was a hard time physically, but the brethren were able to worship in freedom. This freedom lasts even until this day and we pray that it never be taken for granted.

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