



The Silver Lining

The Darkness is Past and the True Light Now Shineth

February 1997

“GOD’S WORD IS MOST IMPORTANT”

Sermon by Bro. Vernon Wettstein of Congerville, IL

Luke 21

As we think of this chapter that we have read together, it has so many teachings in it and so much good advice for us today. This generation that we live in, is a generation of the people who are gathered here today.

We realize the importance of a chapter that is in this Bible of how important it is and how it applies to our life. The advice that is in here is so important for our daily walk of life that we have here on this earth. We have to stop and think of the generations before that have read this chapter and allowed this chapter to govern their life so they could live by this chapter.

This morning as I was driving and coming this way, and in the last day or so when I was thinking of being here on this Lord’s day morning, my thoughts went back to the very first time I was in this area. About fifty years ago, I can remember being out at the north church.

It was a hot, summer day about like this. At noon hour, as a little boy, maybe four, six or eight years old (I’m not sure how old I was at the time), over noon hour we stood around the pump in the churchyard. If I remember correctly, we got drinks of water there out of that pump.

I remember Bro. Henry Kilgus being there and many other brothers that were gathered around that pump to have a drink of water at the noon hour. Some of those memories we have of our childhood, we deem so very precious. We now look to God, knowing that in that generation, the Word was so precious to those brothers and sisters.

They needed the Word. They could come together and lay down their earthly toils and cares on the

Lord’s Day and come to God’s House and gather in that little church and allow the Word of God to penetrate into their hearts. Those things are so precious!

We can think and recognize that at that time, as it tells us in the Scriptures, there was a devil on this earth at that time as there is today—a devil that would want to deceive even the very elect.

We can go back into the Old Testament and read where Lucifer was the angel that was cast out of Heaven because he was bragging how great he was.

He said he had power and he could do this and he could do that. There was only one mistake that Lucifer made, and that was the fact that he did not recognize that God is all-powerful. God was the One who cast him out of Heaven.

We know that Lucifer, the devil, goes up and down the road today, trying to deceive the very elect and trying to deceive the souls of men here on this earth. So that same devil is out there trying to get our vision off to this side or off to that side.

We want to keep our vision straight ahead. We know what we want to accomplish in this life—we want to overcome this world and we want to have hope of eternal life. When we depart out of this life, we want a home in Heaven awaiting us. There is something better and beyond the life that we have here.

May we realize that sometimes we need to stop and count the blessings that God has blessed us with here on this earth—all the blessings that He has given unto us. We thank Him for them...for our children...for our church and our brotherhood.

We are just thankful that He has

looked down upon us, upon this country, upon this land and has blessed it above and beyond that any of us deserve. He has blessed this land. May we always be thankful unto Him for what He has done for us.

In this chapter here that we have read together, Jesus stood there and saw those coming by and casting into the treasury those things. Here comes this poor widow and she cast in all that she had. He made this statement, “For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had.” (Luke 21:4).

We have to stop and marvel at those very statements that the Lord made that have been preserved for our benefit. We must recognize that it is important that those of their abundance were casting into the offering of God, but I think He made this comparison, knowing that here was this poor widow who cast in what she had also.

It probably would have been easy for her to justify, by saying, “I only have these two mites and I might

Sermon continued on page 46

The Silver Lining (Vol. 51, #2)

RR 2 Box 50 Roanoke, IL 61561

USPS 496780

Published Monthly By The Apostolic
Christian Church of America

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SEND CORRESPONDENCE TO:

The Silver Lining

RR2 Box 50, Roanoke, IL, 61561

309-923-7513 (phone) 309-923-7359 (fax)
Periodical postage paid at Roanoke, IL 61561, and
additional offices. The subscription rate is a donation.
Send zip number with address. Remember to send
changes of address. Send both old and new addresses
(with both zips). Postmaster send address changes to:

The Silver Lining

RR2 Box 50, Roanoke, IL 61561

*"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

February 1997

Education of Our Children II

The ramifications and feasibility of having our own church-based schools were studied, but the issues are very complex. Because the elder body does not feel clear direction from the Lord, we have no plans to establish church-based schools. The elder body supports the sincere efforts of parents who choose to home school or set up private schools based on the recommendations and guidelines as explained in this editorial and a separate article to follow. We believe that the decision on how our children are schooled is the responsibility of the parents (Deut. 4:9; Deut. 6:4-9; Prov. 22:6). Families who feel they can send their children to the public schools should not be made to feel guilty for doing so if they continue to properly instruct their children in spiritual matters. Families who feel led to home school or to send their children to appropriate private schools should also be able to do so without being made to feel guilty of wrongdoing. We sincerely trust that these choices will not become a source of contention within the brotherhood.

Public education has been available for many generations in our country and probably most of the current members of our church grew up under this system. The requirement to receive a certain level of education to function in our society is not in conflict with the standards of the Bible. Unfortunately, there have been many changes in the public educational system and in some areas the public school curriculum is no longer based upon biblical teachings. In the schools where biblical principles are ignored, much of the information is presented without proper distinction between right and wrong. The New Age influence of humanistic thinking, values clarification, and unproven theories such as evolution which appear in textbooks can affect our children's belief in the Bible.

There are also many changes in our society that are of concern to godly parents today. The impact of television on the moral values of our society creates an influence upon our children through their peers. The increasing number of children from broken homes, the vulgar language, the lack of ethics and other forms of un-

wholesome behavior create an atmosphere that may cause spiritual harm to our children. Disciplinary techniques have been limited by law and judicial rulings which result in a loss of control in some classrooms. The widespread breakdown of respect for authority across the land is having an affect upon the church as an increasing number of people seem to have less respect for God's authority and the authority of His servants.

What can be done under these circumstances? Since most of our children are attending public schools, we as parents should take advantage of the many opportunities to become better informed and properly involved in our children's education. It is essential that we both TEACH and LIVE the truth before our children. We must also be careful that we do not become influenced by radical commentators and authors. We need to investigate personally and make sure we have accurate information. We must not be confrontational in our interaction with the public schools. Rather than being overly critical, we could pursue one or more of the numerous opportunities for constructive involvement in our children's education by which we can be a positive influence without overreacting.

As our children are exposed to things in school that are not wholesome or true, we have the obligation and opportunity at that time to teach them the truth. There can be some very evil, and sometimes subtle, influences from the world that have impacted the school system, but so much of this depends upon the individual administration and/or teacher. There are many excellent and dedicated teachers in the public schools, including some very faithful brothers and sisters. Brothers and sisters who teach in the public schools appreciate your communication and prayer support.

Parents have a responsibility to make sure that their children receive good spiritual training that is not destroyed by their secular education. We need to know what our children are being taught in the classroom, and what kind of textbooks are being used. We also need to be alert to the influence on our children's attitudes and beliefs from their friends on the school bus and playground. There are appropriate areas in

which parents need to be involved in their children's public education.

These include the following:

- Mothers or fathers can become room parents. Parents' and Grandparents' Days are also opportunities for involvement. This can provide a better awareness of what they are being exposed to.

- Parents can serve as volunteer teacher aides in many different activities as long as they are careful not to attend activities that would reflect a poor light as Christians and as brothers and sisters in the church.

- Brothers and sisters could consider a teaching career as a wonderful opportunity to be a light and witness to their students.

- Schools are looking for help in decision-making. Cautious involvement on school boards, curriculum committees, and parent advisory councils provide that opportunity.

- It is essential that parents become aware of the curriculum and their children's textbooks. Ask questions about what your child is learning, and find out if there are programs or units being presented which conflict with biblical truth. Volunteer for textbook adoption committees.

- Initiate communication with school staff, including teachers, administrators, and other personnel. Privately express your legitimate concerns to teachers and school officials, and refrain from becoming part of a mass protest. When things are done well, give positive feedback to reinforce the good efforts in the public schools.

- Communicate often with our children and pray for the students and faculty.

Perhaps by taking advantage of these opportunities to have a positive impact on our schools, our children can safely attend public schools.

A separate article will discuss several alternatives to public education.



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

Mission Committee Activities Report

This month, we wish to continue to report on projects considered and approved by the Mission Committee. Readers following these pages are aware of our ongoing work in many places. In accordance with the scriptures, while we are supportive of many projects, we do give priority to the needs of our brethren, not only at home, but also abroad. Our kindness is not to be limited to believers, but is to be shown to them in a special way. We feel very grateful that God is moving the hearts of our brethren to assist those whose needs exceed our own.

Yugoslavian Relief Committee

For several years, we have been working with a group of brothers appointed by the Yugoslavian elders as a Relief Committee. With present day communications, both by voice and fax, we have much greater knowledge of their status than even a few years ago. Because of the nature of the work, projects are approved, and then financed by the Mission and World Relief Committees and then implemented through the European Board. Our policy remains that matters of a spiritual nature, such as Bibles, Hymn Books, and churches are financed by the Mission Committee. Humanitarian assistance usually comes from the World Relief Committee.

Conditions in Ukraine continue to worsen

Conditions in Ukraine cause us deep concern. The government is unstable, inflation is in three digits and the control of the Mafia is felt in nearly every city. Our brethren there are faced with these extra challenges

while working long hours just to provide for the daily needs of their families. In addition to this, the winter so far has been one of the coldest on record all across Europe.

As this article is being prepared for press, we have received word from Ukraine of a major disaster which struck one of their church families. On January 12, Bro. Kriza Pridii, 41, father of 14 children, was severely burned when a gas container exploded. His wife, age 36, and some children were forced to jump from a second story window, which resulted in injuries in addition to their burns. On January 14, Bro. Kriza died, and his 18 year old son was reported in critical condition with a severe head injury. His head was swollen to more than 3 times its normal size.

Because hospital facilities are so poor, and proper medicines are not available, brethren from Germany and Hungary responded by driving across the snow-covered Carpathian Mountains with blood plasma, drugs, and money to assist this unfortunate family. Their home is near the Mahalla church, one of the nine congregations with which we work.

It is very difficult to communicate with our brethren in Ukraine because of primitive telephone service. The system is such that a call must be sent manually from place to place using operators.

The Mission Committee believes that two or three brothers should travel to Ukraine in the Spring. They will meet with Elders and Deacons and evaluate the status of our work. This was approved by the European Board, and plans are being made for this trip, probably in late May and early June. Some German brethren also plan to accompany the group.

East European Harvest

The Committee discussed the activities of East European Harvest.

This organization is involved in Bible distribution in several countries. Approval was given for a contribution of \$1,000 to this cause. One of our brothers had called our attention to this organization and suggested that we consider a contribution. We appreciate suggestions from our brethren.

Novi Sad church building

The church building in Novi Sad was constructed in 1920, and has been well maintained. To accommodate their growing congregation, they are now building an addition to this structure. The Mission Committee approved \$20,000 for this.

Yugoslavian Bibles

Approval was given to contribute \$2,000 for the Yugoslavian Bible Fund. This fund is used to buy Bibles for brethren who do not have sufficient income to buy their own.

Printed sermon distribution

Approval was given to allocate \$3,000 to cover the expenses of printing and mailing sermons on a monthly basis. For many years, Bro. Homer and Sis. Virginia Blunier have given their time to this project, and it is greatly appreciated. Anyone who would like to be added to the list of recipients of printed sermons should contact: Homer & Virginia Blunier
101 W. North St.,
Forrest, IL 61741



Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

MATTHEW 25:13



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

Rural Gospel & Medical Missions of India

The Apostolic Christian Church has been involved with the Rural Gospel & Medical Missions of India (RGMMI) for nearly 30 years. Questions sometime arise as to when, how and why did our church become involved? In recent articles about RGMMI, its current operations have been reported. This article is intended to be historical and provide information regarding the above questions.

RGMMI was founded in India in 1938 by Mr. Bhagwat and Mrs. Antoinette Bhagwat. Mr. Bhagwat was born in 1901 of Hindu parents and reared in strict Orthodox Hindu faith. The family was quite wealthy. As a young man he was sent to study agriculture near Poona. While there he heard of the Gospel of Jesus Christ for the first time preached by missionaries. They gave him a Bible. However, tearing out some pages, he spurned these scriptures thinking they might pollute his Hindu faith. He became severely stricken by malaria. While lying weak in his bed, he heard a small still voice leading him to read the Bible. He opened to John 14:6 and read, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life." He sought out the missionaries to apologize and to seek further enlightenment, became convicted of his sins, repented and became converted and was baptized in a brook. This news reached his parents who were forced by Hindu priests to try to bring him home under force. As he ran away he was stoned, and bore the marks of this to his grave. The Priests demanded that his parents fast, feeling this would force their son to renounce his belief in Jesus Christ. He prayed for his parents but remained steadfast in his faith. This led to his parents' early demise.

In 1926, Mr. Bhagwat came penniless to the U.S. to attend agricultural school. During this time he felt

called to preach the Gospel in India but because of the Depression he could find no sponsors. He did receive some help from friends and returned to India in 1936. About a year later he returned to U.S. bringing a number of Indian artifacts as well as tea which he sold. During this time he married Antoinette Bandre from Streator, IL, whom he met through Christian contacts. In 1938 they returned together to India and established the Mission at Khardi. In the beginning Mr. Bhagwat was attacked by tribal people in the area. Later on, having been bitten by a cobra, the Lord spared his life. This so impressed the natives that they warmed to him and his evangelistic work could proceed.

The Bhagwats went to various parts of Maharashtra State establishing small congregations that still remain in a number of tribal villages. In addition to the compound at Khardi, they acquired property near the city of Nasik. They saw the great need to care for orphaned and fatherless children. They established orphan homes at both compounds. The great need for medical services among the poor tribal peoples led to the establishing medical dispensaries at each compound. During these times the Bhagwats had established no significant or regular sources of financial support. Nor would they embrace any specific denominational affiliation having established the RGMMI church solely on the Holy Bible. They avoided any entanglements with the World Council of Churches. Hence, their growth was somewhat limited as they insisted that only through a full and complete repentance and conversion experience and by living a sanctified life could a soul become reconciled with God and harbor the hope and promise of life eternal.

During the '40's and '50's RGMMI struggled and grew. The Bhagwats returned to U.S.A. for visits in 1946

and 1955 during which time they generated and strengthened contacts, mostly with individuals, who had been willing to support their work. In 1964 they once again came to the U.S. where they occupied a residence in Pasadena, CA that had been bequeathed to them. Although their intentions were to return to India, their health deteriorated and this fond longing was not to be realized. They were able to travel in the U.S. speaking to groups and showing pictures about their work in India. It was on such a tour that they first became acquainted with our Apostolic Christian Church.

While traveling through Amish country in Ohio in 1968, it appeared providential that they came upon our Apostolic Christian church in Rittman. Stopping to make inquiry, they were directed to one of our ministers who patiently listened to their questions. He found their interest genuine and sincere. He recalls, "We were visiting in the barn. Just from the expression seen in Mr. Bhagwat's eyes and on his forehead, I could tell he had a deep concern on his mind and from his questions that he had serious spiritual interests at heart. I wondered at first if he was 'real'. His serious intent relieved my doubts." They went to visit Elder Bro. Noah Bauman who invited them to attend services that evening. Mr. Bhagwat agreed to attend while his wife posed the question, "How do we know if they preach the truth or not?" After services, upon returning to their lodging where his wife was waiting, he reported, "I have met a people whose church and faith are just like ours, founded on the Holy Bible!" He had been deeply impressed to see sisters veiled, separate seating (as was their practice in India) and to see the holy kiss practiced which he knew was scriptural but had wondered how it could be done.

(Continued next month)

HOUSE PARENT NEEDED

We at Gateway Woods have enjoyed being fully staffed for some time now. Trent and Heidi Schrock have informed us that they will be leaving the Alternate Houseparent position and moving on to other work in the Spring of 1997. This will offer an opportunity for someone, directed of the Lord, to come to work in a full-time on going ministry with the rest of us at Gateway Woods. This position offers competitive wages and benefits and a close working relationship with brothers and sisters whose hearts and lives are dedicated to a mission with an eternal reward. If you feel the call to explore the possibilities, please call one of the brothers listed below.

John Stoller
Child Care Supervisor
PO Box 151
Leo, IN 46765
219-627-2159

David Bertsch
Counseling Elder
11520 Grabill Rd.
Grabill, IN 46741

GATEWAY WOODS Apostolic Christian Childrens Home

Annual Auction and Sale

Saturday, August 16, 1997

We invite you to join us. Feel free to contact the Gateway Woods office at 219-627-2159.



APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN HOME FOR THE HANDICAPPED

The winter months are a good time for reflection as decreased outdoor activity comes upon us. Let us consider a subject for thought for us on a quiet winter evening. "Was Jesus a respecter of persons?" Then contemplate another question, "Am I a respecter of persons?" Now, be very honest with yourself. Do you speak to only the same people in any sort of gathering? Do you first "size-up" a newcomer before deciding they are your type of person? The Bible tells us that Jesus loves each and every person in the whole, wide world. Jesus would speak to anyone. He was willing to love anyone.

What, you say, does this have to do with the Apostolic Christian Home for the Handicapped? Well, do you silently discriminate a developmentally disabled person? Do they not fit into your social group? Remember, all people need friends no matter what their level of intelligence or understanding. Consider the last time you were a true friend to someone outside your "group".

Also consider the wonderful opportunity of serving others who are less fortunate than yourself for a lifetime. Parents, do you suggest to your children as a worthy occupation a life of service or do you push for a status job with high pay? The Lord will reward so much differently than our materialistic society does. Please open your eyes for the eternal welfare of yourself and your children.

Outdoor activity for ACHH residents is currently at a stand still. Our residents at ACHH have spent many days at home as their day programs have been closed for Christmas vacation or just recently because snowstorms have made bus travel dangerous. The only outings have been for small groups to go out

to eat, short shopping excursions or to the movies. Activities inside the Home have been interesting though. Some evenings have been spent watching slide shows of past years here at the Home. Old and new residents see themselves and their friends as younger persons. They enjoy seeing Bob Knobloch and other past employees who were very important to them. Time is also spent watching films, playing games on a computer, games and puzzles. We also sing when we have our Friday evening song services.

March birthdays for all facilities are: ACHH - Judy Grimm (6), Margo Ebert (12), Susan Crose (15), Jeff Zimmerman (17), Tom Christensen (20), Edna Haynes (23), Jon Wilhelm (26), Nancy Meister (31). OAKWOOD ESTATE - Maretta Rokey (6), Sheila Steffen (9). HAZELWOOD - Mike Bodtke (4). WAGLER - Anna Eberhard (15).

GATEWAY WOODS APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN CHILDREN'S HOME Denise Klopfenstein

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." (Isaiah 1:18). As I gaze out my window on a cold, clear winter day, I admire the beauty of the pure white snow. However, I am reminded that if I walked outside and took a closer look at the snow I would find that much of it is marred by dirt left from footprints, animals, or tire tracks. It isn't all that it appears from afar! Do you ever do this with your life? We can stand back and with a passing glance pronounce our own lives as "pretty good" or "acceptable". We generally meet up to our own standards or at least are "better" than others around us. However, when we take a closer look and compare our lives with the truth

- NOTICE -**Repair and Distribution of Worn Bibles, Bible Story Books,
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**

1997	MONTH	YEAR TO DATE	TOTAL — 14 YEARS
Jan.	3,782	3,782	344,079

* 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)

of God's Word, we see that in reality we are marred with the "dirt" of sin. It is only through Jesus Christ that we can be truly pure, for only His blood has the power to completely wash away our sin. "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin." (I John 1:7).

As we come to Christ daily in humility, He will cleanse us and make us into vessels that can be used for His work. It is only when we acknowledge our own weakness that God can demonstrate His power through us. "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." (II Corinthians 4:7). "If a man, therefore, purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work." (II Timothy 2:21).

We wish Jessica T. well as she

returns to live with her family. This month we have also welcomed Melissa E. to the Schrock household and Adam B. to the Fiechter's.

We've been blessed this month with several college age volunteers who spent time here over their semester break. Thanks to Bros. Bryan Kellenberger, Steve and Andy Lehman, Brett Heiniger, John and Mike Rassi, and Sisters Megan Ringger, Jill Bauer, and Abby Kipper. We're also thankful for Bro. Vernon and Sis. Arlene Schwab for giving a week of their time. The enthusiasm and willingness of volunteers are an encouragement to all of us here.

Many of our residents struggle in the area of education and we provide tutoring after school each day to help in this area. We're thankful for the time that Jana Beck has spent as a tutor here and pray that God will bless her as she leaves to focus more fully on her role as a foster parent. We want to welcome Sis.

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 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

Amy Lantz (Bluffton, IN) and Sis. Rachel Fessenden (Leo) who will be taking over Jana's duties.

In January, our board members, administrative staff and local counseling elders participated in a one day planning retreat. The purpose of the retreat was to collectively seek God's wisdom and direction in developing a long range plan for expanding the programs and services of Gateway Woods in Indiana and Illinois. We're thankful for the wis-

dom of godly leaders and the promise of God's guidance when we seek Him. "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it." (Psalm 127:1).

**APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN
PRESCHOOL
Tricia Tucker**

Manners, manners, manners. For the month of January we have been teaching manners to the children. However, it seems to be that the students are doing a good job teaching the teachers also. Just the other day as the papers were being passed out and directions were being given, one of the students would not do his work. After a little scolding, the child meekly replied, "You forgot to say please." This time the child taught the lesson to be quick to hear and slow to speak. What a humbling experience when a three-year-old teaches a "grown up" God's ways.

We have also been studying the color purple, winter, and the letters N, O, P, and Q. We also had our annual pajama day. It was a nice treat for the students as well as the teachers to spend a day relaxing in our pajamas and eating popcorn.

Sis. Naomi Hall and Kay Barrett have been offering their time at the Preschool. We owe them a big thank you for all their help in the kitchen. If anyone is interested in volunteering, please contact the Preschool at (205) 233-0591. Spring break and summer vacation are good times to offer your services to the Lord. Please be prayerful and be willing to be used in His divine will.

**ALABAMA, ATHENS
Pam Moore**

January has been a time of reflection for me, looking back over the past year—the areas I have failed in that need work in the new year, as well as the rich blessings to be

thankful for. I didn't set specific goals to reach in 1997; I identified areas in my life where I want the Lord to guide me closer to Him and His will. The only way for this to be achieved is for me to draw closer to Him, and allow myself to be molded and formed by God's will.

One of our family's richest blessings has been one of our greatest trials. Sis. Doris Moore (Elder Bro. Lavoyd Moore) was diagnosed with a malignant type of rare cancer, prior to Thanksgiving. Following surgery and repeated testing, Sis. Doris was found to be free of cancer. Since then, she has undergone further testing at Vanderbilt's Cancer Research Center in Nashville, and no further cancer was found nor treatment needed. Bro. Lavoyd and Sis. Doris have expressed repeatedly how they have felt and appreciated all of the prayers offered for them, the cards and the phone calls, and it kept them going through the most difficult of times.

Sis. Ruby (Massey) Ross and Sis. Anais Perry have been hospitalized in the past month, and we ask that your prayers would be with them.

The blessing of a baby girl has been given to Buddy and Jessica Lynn. Meghan Alexandra was born on January 12. Her grandparents are Bro. Buddy and Sis. Clarann Lynn (Athens) and John and Diane Haynes (Madison).

Bro. Tim and Sis. Joan Reinhardt, with their girls, Sarah and Bethany, are temporarily in Haiti helping with the mission work there. Please pray for them to be guided and strengthened by God.

We want to thank Elder Bro. Dave Bertsch (Leo, IN) who braved a snowstorm in Alabama on January 11 and 12 to assist with church services while Elder Bro. Lavoyd was in Haiti. We are very thankful that the Lord kept Bro. Dave and his family safe.

**ARIZONA, PHOENIX
Ron and Ev Hoerr**

"...If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."

Luke 9:23

It is mid-January, 1997. The messages we heard again this month could have been preached fifty years ago, so very timely of a closeness special in our brotherhood.

We are grateful to visiting ministers, Bros. Mike Leman (Denver, CO), Wayne Banwart (Champaign, IL), Marvin Dotterer (Forrest, IL), Don Gudeman (LaCrosse, IN), and Gary Endress (Bradford, IL).

Lance David Kieser was born December 22 to Bro. Wes and Sis. Lena. Ty and Maria love their brother, as do grandparents, Bro. Verle and Sis. LaVonne Kieser (Bradford, IL) and Bro. Roy and Sis. Norma Hangartner (Eureka, IL).

Sis. Margaret Bradford passed away December 27 after a long illness. Bro. Bill Dotterer had her funeral service at church on December 31. Internment was in East Resthaven cemetery with Elder Bro. John Kokanovich presiding. Our sympathy to her family and sister, Sis. Clara Banwart, and family.

Congratulations to Bro. Wilmer and Sis. Sylvia Blunier (Roanoke, IL) on their 50th wedding anniversary. Many of their Phoenix friends offered best wishes at Bro. Ray and Sis. Wendy Blunier's home after a family dinner at a local restaurant on January 12. May God continue to bless you with many more years of Christian love and family visits to Phoenix.

Bro. Don Esterling (Sis. Josie) was hospitalized for a week. We pray for him and Bro. Joe Dotterer who is ill at home.

“Blest be the tie that binds...” Sis. Carmen Langhofer (Bro. Erik and Sis. Cindy) has moved to the Chicago area for education and employment.

Bro. David Dotterer moved to Lamar, MO for further education. His parents are Bro. Bill and Sis. Sharon. May the Lord be ever close as each settles into a new phase in life.

It never fails—the person who taunts you for being a child of God, comes for comfort when a loved one has passed away. Christian walk carefully, you might be the comforter.

Note of Thanks:

Our thanks to everyone for your kind deeds, flowers, food, and prayers at the time of Sis. Margaret’s passing. A special thanks for the family meals. May God bless you.

Sis. Margaret Bradford’s family
Sis. Clara Banwart and family

ARIZONA, PRESCOTT

Jane Hodges

“This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”

John 15:12-13

Isn’t this what the Lord Jesus did for us? He gave His life that we might live. This was just part of the message delivered to us by Bro. Gary Endress (Bradford, IL). This month as many in our country remember those they love with cards and gifts, may we remember the greatest love of all—the love of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We wish to thank Bros. Gary Endress (Bradford, IL) and Ken Lawson (Phoenix, AZ) for bringing us God’s message this last month.

May God richly bless them and their families for taking the time and traveling the distance to serve us. We pray that all who visit us enjoy and appreciate the fellowship as much as we do.

ARIZONA, TUCSON

Lisa Knapp

Our winter visitors have started arriving. It is good to have a few extra seats filled in the congregation. Welcome, everyone!

Bro. Marvin Dotterer (Forrest, IL) was with us recently for Wednesday evening services. We thank him for his work on the pulpit and ask God to add His blessing.

Our weather has been unusually cold these past few weeks. It’s a nice change of pace for us in Tucson. I hope the winter visitors can cope with it while we enjoy using our sweaters and jackets that sometimes seem like a waste of money! Today at noontime our temperature was 48 degrees, which for Tucson is a “bitter cold spell”.

We enjoyed our monthly fellowship supper the second Sunday of January with some visitors in attendance.

CALIFORNIA, ALTADENA

In December we were blessed by visiting minister, Bro. Frank Sauder (Roanoke, IL). He shared with us both on Christmas Eve and New Year’s Eve. It was refreshing, comforting and encouraging to be reminded again of our Saviour’s birth. It was hopeful to be encouraged at the prospects of another year, a year which the Lord entrusts to us to utilize as best we can. We were encouraged to utilize the spiritual gifts that are new as each day dawns and to ever seek in God’s Word the direction and instruction for their use.

In January we were blessed by a visit from Elder Bro. Chuck Hemmer (Peoria, IL) who shared with us the Word on Sunday morning and then in the afternoon labored with our Elder to present the Conference Memorandum. It was good to once again be reminded of the help God has ready to give to us to help us in the battle against Satan. With the power of His Word and Holy Spirit we are equipped to use the weapons if we have stayed close to the Lord. We can count upon our allies who include the precious brethren of the church, and as we draw ever closer together in unity find that our defenses against our spiritual enemy have grown stronger. Then, to be worthy to be sustained this way, we were encouraged to closely follow the many biblical teachings that instruct us to stay close to the Lord, to shun the world and all its temptations, to strengthen our ties to God through prayer and reading His Word. We are also reminded that doing these things in the fullness of deep and convicted submission and obedience will provide substance to our spiritual life and not be a mere shell of actions.

The year is still new enough for us to make corrections in our course and conversation that will enhance the worth and value of our service to God and to our fellow man. May we use each moment and every opportunity God gives us in this effort.

“Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.”

II Peter 1:10

CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

Rose Huette

Our congregation was blessed to have Elder Bros. Chuck Hemmer (Peoria, IL) and John Klotzle read

the Memorandum to the members recently. Bro. Chuck was visiting in the San Diego area with his wife, Sis. Mirian. We enjoyed their visit and hope they come back again.

Bro. Wayne Banwart (Champaign, IL) and family were also able to worship with us this past month. We thank Bro. Wayne for sharing God's Word.

Our prayers are with Bro. Rory Strahm as he has not been doing well. Sis. Frieda Minger continues to reside in a local nursing home. We pray that the Lord will continue to provide His grace and strength to both of them.

We are happy to have our "winter visitors", Bro. Aaron and Sis. Marguerite Baurer (Cissna Park, IL), back. They are very special to us and we enjoy their visit each time they come. May their stay be a healthy and blessed one. We would also like to take this opportunity to invite other families who would like to live in a warmer climate during the cold winters in the midwest and east to consider San Diego as their second home. We have plenty of room in church and in our hearts!

We congratulate Steven Bozzay (Bro. Tibor and Sis. Pearl) and Stacy Yahn (Richard and Sheila) as they were married December 21 in Pensacola, FL. Steven grew up in the Chicago church family. Stacy is from Crestview, FL. It was an old fashioned, warm "Victorian home" wedding, and a union of two wonderful families. Families and friends from both sides traveled many miles to be a part of this happy gathering. Steven and Stacy would like to thank all their loved ones for their special efforts to attend. As Sis. Pearl said, "We soaked up so much happiness it will last us a long time." The happy couple plan to make their home in San Diego. We welcome them and invite them to worship and fellowship with us.

Our area is again enjoying warmth and beautiful sunshine after much rain. The hills and fields are so green, and yet when you look north, you can see snow on the mountains. What a wonderful Creator God is!

**ONTARIO, KITCHENER
CANADA
Laura Baxter**

"Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you."

1 Peter 5:5-7

Our congregation recently traveled to Detroit to hear the reading of the Memorandum. We could clearly feel the Holy Spirit as we were encouraged to be submissive, humble and subject to each other. We thank our Lord for the many blessings we received and also our Elder Bros. Mark Bahr (Detroit, MI), Ben Maibach (Detroit, MI) and Aaron Steffen (Alto, MI) for their labors on our behalf. We also thank the Detroit congregation for their hospitality and love they always show us.

That same weekend we heard the Memorandum, we were also privileged to hear the testimonies of Bro. Mike and Sis. Barb Ursu. We are thankful that they are diligently seeking the Lord's will and welcome them into our brotherhood. We rejoice that God has placed them and their young children, Naomi, Jesse, and Jakob, in our Kitchener congregation.

We also thank our visiting minis-

ter, Elder Bro. Duane Farney (Croghan-Naumburg, NY), and his wife, Sis. Karen, for coming to serve us this past month. We appreciate the effort and time our visitors take to be with us.

We welcome all visitors. For more information and directions, please call Bro. Jim Baxter (519) 699-5081 or Bro. Tim Tomic (519) 634-9796.

**COLORADO, DENVER
Chuck and Naomi Wiegand**

Christian greetings across the many miles! Before I write this month's news, I need to apologize to you all for not writing last month's article. We didn't have much news, so instead of seeking the Holy Spirit for inspiration, I chose to write nothing. I regret doing this and don't plan to let it happen again. However, I do ask that you remember to pray for those who write in the Silver Lining because sometimes when we go to the well it appears to be dry.

Last month we enjoyed the Christmas Program put on by our Sunday School students. They worked hard to share with us the story of our precious Saviour.

We enjoyed hearing the testimony of Sarah Lasnier (Paul). We are thankful that she has chosen to follow in Christ's steps and welcome her as a sister in the Lord. We want to thank Elder Bro. Nate Steffen (Elgin, IL) for helping Bro. Tom with the baptism. We always enjoy him being with us.

We would also like to thank Bro. Jon Zeller (Morton, IL) for his part in sharing the good news of God's Word with us.

As 1996 comes to a close, we reflect upon the changes that occurred in our little congregation. We rejoiced as two babies were born into our congregation. There were two

marriages to bring a life of walking together instead of separately. No doubt angels rejoiced in Heaven with us here on earth as two souls were baptized and accepted into the fold as brother and sister in Christ. There was sadness as twelve people moved away from our little flock and joy as six people moved into our little church. We were blessed with 23 visiting ministers who were willing to bring the Word of God to us.

CONNECTICUT, ROCKVILLE
Cherie Galat

Our congregation gathered on Christmas morning and New Year's Day. As the world around us makes New Year's resolutions, we know that we do not have to wait a whole year to do so. Each day we have the opportunity to continue to rid our lives of unwholesome activities and replace them with edifying ones.

It was such a blessing to see our loved ones over the holiday season. May God bless those of our dear ministering brethren who imparted to us the Word of Life. Bro. Shawn Metzger (Philadelphia, PA), Bro. Carroll Gerber (Bluffton North, IN), and Bro. Brian Webb (Fort Lauderdale, FL).

Peter and Jill Welti were blessed with a son, Christian Walter, on December 30. He joins his sister, Taylor, at home. Grandparents are Donald and Marilyn Welti and Bro. Keith and Sis. Mary Kloter. We rejoice with them as they raise baby Christian.

Precious baby Emily Joy was born to Peter and Donna Person on January 14. Brothers, Erik and Aron, now have a sister. Grandparents are Lillian Person and Bro. Rudolph and Sis. Evelyn Luginbuhl.

In December, the Sunday School sang praises to God in our annual Christmas Program. As it was beautiful to our ears, we know that God

must be well pleased as they raised their voices in song. We thank each student and teacher for their efforts.

Our annual business meeting took place in January. As new positions are filled, let us continue to pray for and support those with new duties. Many thanks to all who have completed their terms and gave of themselves for the church.

Sis. Christine Virkler underwent surgery. May we remember to continue to pray for our loved ones for we know that prayer is a blessing to those in need of them.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
WASHINGTON
Henrietta Meyer

"What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."
Matthew 19:6

We rejoice with Sis. Doreen Gudeman (Philadelphia, PA) and Bro. Barry Steffen of our congregation as they became one on January 5. We will miss Bro. Barry as he does an internship in Wilmington, DE for a few months and they attend the Philadelphia church. We look forward to becoming better acquainted with Sis. Doreen when they move back to this area.

Our ministers this past month were Elder Bro. Phil Stettner (Bluffton North, IN) and Bro. Jerry Isch (Philadelphia, PA). Other visitors were from Peoria and Chicago, IL. We are thankful all from this area have returned after visiting loved ones over the holidays.

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.

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

"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee. Blessed art thou, O Lord: teach me thy statutes. With my lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth. I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches. I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways. I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word."
Psalms 119:11-16

The Lord provided us with three visiting ministers to bring forth His Word. They were Bros. Dennis Rassi (Sis. Diane, Fairbury, IL), Lenard Meyer (Sis. Charlotte, Chicago, IL), and Steve Baner (Sis. DonnaLou, Gridley, IL). We appreciate their willingness to be spent on our behalf.

Bro. Al Schneider (Sis. Gladys, Rockville, CT) who winters in Florida was in the hospital for a few days. We are thankful that he is doing much better.

Many of our winter residents have arrived and we enjoy having them assemble with us.

FLORIDA, NORTH FT. MYERS
Kay Eisenmann

Our visiting ministers were Bros.

Steve Gutwein (Francesville, IN), Marvin Stieglitz (Leo, IN), and Elder Bros. Dennis Warner (Lester, IA) and Don Sauder (Roanoke, IL). We thank these brothers and their wives for their words of encouragement. May they return again! May the Lord bless them and theirs!

Ben Blough is still home recovering from a broken leg (Sis. Marie). We trust they will soon be back with us. Bro. Roland and Sis. Viola Keller are back with us after their stays in the hospital. Bro. Ralph Yergler (Sis. Jeanette) is much the same and they come when they can; please keep them in your prayers!

Many of our winter family are back and we are so thankful to see the benches full.

Jesus wanted to teach mankind love, forgiveness and to be our brother's keeper; not to win or get even, which seems to be the trend of the world.

In our park "Windward Isle" we have a monthly newsletter. I felt the front page of January was special, so I thought I'd pass it on:

Food for Thought

When I was growing up, my grandmother had three traditions that assured that the new year would be great. First we always put a silver coin on the window sill on New Year's Eve to assure that the year would be prosperous. Secondly, we would always eat pork and sauerkraut on New Year's Day to assure health and happiness. Thirdly, she would always clean out the junk drawer (and every home has at least one) to assure that anything cluttering up the past was thrown away, so there would be room for blessings of the future.

I've been thinking about that item lately, and thought this is a very good thing to do with our spiritual "junk drawer"! When I open my drawer, the first thing I see is "old bills and receipts". They represent

old hurts and grudges. As I throw them out, I wonder why I hung on to them. They serve no good purpose. I don't even remember what all of them were for, and they kept me from having peace of mind.

The second thing I see are dead batteries. I thought they might have a little spark in them, but the power is gone. I need to recharge these batteries with "fellowship and prayer".

Next, there are some old sunglasses that have scratches and are broken. I need to replace them so that I can see things with new "insight and wisdom"!

Lastly, I find a lot of little things like pins, needles, broken gadgets, nuts and bolts that just litter up the drawer. They represent thoughts and opinions that have no real value but just mess up my "drawer".

It is hard work to clean out a junk drawer and it is far from pleasant. But after the job is done, it feels and looks good. Like Grandma, I tell myself I will not collect all that stuff again, but I am sure that next year the drawer will be just as messy. I hope that my junk drawer will not be crammed full of negative clutter. In fact, I pray that when I open it next year, it will be empty.

I don't know if the coin on the window sill or the pork and sauerkraut work, but I know that cleaning out that junk drawer gives me the hope of the new year. Did you clean out your "drawer"?

With Satan so hard at work to rule this world and make black white and to boggle the minds of men, we who have so very much, need to work that much harder to let our "light" shine and show the love of God in our hearts and minds. We have that peace of mind the world seems to be looking for, just as we did before we let God take control. Man likes to ever be in control, but we see the way the laws of

our land are going, by taking God out of government! No matter what the vote or outcome of the "assisted suicide" issue, we know who is really in control! May we ever keep praying for strength and grace to remember the promise of our God.

FLORIDA, SARASOTA Vera and Mary Martin

The winter season is again here, and although it brings a variety of mixed blessings and trials across our nation from bitter cold and snow in the north and the warm sunshine in the south, it is the season that turns our thoughts to the verse in St. Matthew 24:20 where it speaks in a spiritual terminology of winter, "But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter", that our hearts are not in the cold stormy season, but at peace and ready for our Lord's return.

We have many winter residents and visitors in our congregation and have been blessed with visiting ministers who have gifted us with many good teachings of God's Word. We thank Bros. Art Baurer (Princeville, IL), Randy Gasser (Detroit, MI), Earl Beery (Rittman, OH), Dennis Rassi (Fairbury, IL), Marvin Stieglitz (Leo, IN), Carroll Gerber (Bluffton North, IN), Fred Domka (Mansfield, OH) and Marvin Schmidgall (Eureka, IL) for allowing themselves to be used in the service of the Lord.

We are thankful to see Sis. Minnie Nuest in our midst again as she continues to convalesce. She wants to thank all who have remembered her with prayers and other deeds of kindness that have been given to her in the hospital and since her return home.

GEORGIA, ATLANTA Peggy Camp

We want to thank all of our visitors this past month, especially those in the ministry. May God bless Elder Bro. Kevin Ryan (Rockville, CT) and Bros. Lenard Meyer (Chicago, IL) and Dennis Rassi (Fairbury, IL) for sharing God's Word with us.

On December 22, our Sunday School children brought us back to the manger and the true meaning of Christmas with their songs and recitations. We thank them for the time and effort they put forth in presenting their program.

As always, we invite visitors to stop in and worship with us. The church is located south of the city. From Atlanta, take I-85 south to exit 13 (Rt. 138). Go west four miles. The church will be on your left. 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

We have had two new additions to our small congregation this past month! Bro. Ryan Hartter (Bern, KS) is continuing his education for one year at a college in Wisconsin and is attending Belvidere church while he is in the area. Our other addition is little Grant Tyler Anliker who was born January 8 to Bro. Brian and Sis. Peg Anliker. He was warmly welcomed by his brother and sisters, Derek, Jill and Krista, and his grandparents, Bro. Gary and Sis. Edie Anliker (Elgin, IL) and Bro. Jerry and Sis. Arlene Banwart (Congerville, IL). Belvidere church welcomes this precious baby and fine young brother and pray for God's blessing on each of their lives.

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your

sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow, though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

Isaiah 1:18

There has been a lot of snow this winter and as we look at the blanket of whiteness around us, this verse in Isaiah comes to mind. What a word picture of our hearts this verse gives us! Our ministers have taught and reasoned with us and the way of salvation has been made plain. We pray that God will bless His Word as it is faithfully preached each Sunday.

Bros. Jeff Grimm (Goodfield, IL), Dewayne Dill (Minneapolis, MN) and Gary Anliker (Elgin, IL) were the visiting ministers who came with their families last month. We really appreciated their ministry to us. We also want to thank the special group of young brothers and sisters from a number of churches for visiting us. There were other visitors who had family gatherings in the area and came to fellowship with us as well. All of you were a real blessing to our congregation!

There are friendships that we
cherish
In our daily walk of life
Friends with whom we meet and
labor

In our earthly toil and strife
Friends among the aged and
youthful,
Friends that live from us apart
Friends of higher rank and station
Find a place within my heart.

But I prize the friendship highest
Of the one whose heart is true,
Friends who live by truth and
goodness
And who live in Him anew,
Friends whose hearts are up in
heaven
Though their feet traverse this sod,
Find a place of highest merit
In our fellowship with God.

There's a tie of noble kinship

In a soul who loves the Lord,
There's a friendship warm and
lasting
If he heeds the Master's Word,
There is mutual understanding
And a sympathy so kind
In the tie of Christian friendship
As on earth we oft-times find.
Hymns of Zion #91

ILLINOIS

BLOOMINGTON-NORMAL Janice Horner - Carol Sauder

How thankful we are to have had visiting ministers the past month: Elder Bros. Joe Braker (Morton, IL) and Charles Sauder (Tremont, IL), and Bros. Rick Plattner (Peoria, IL), Ken Wuethrich (Indianapolis, IN), Doyle Frauhiger (Bluffton North, IN), and Jaye Rinkenberger (Goodfield, IL). We pray God will bless them and their families for their willingness to come and labor in our behalf.

December 22 was the date set aside for our Christmas program. Our Lord surely was pleased with the joyful praise He received as our children lifted up their voices to Him. It is always delightful and very touching to watch and listen as the Sunday School classes present their songs during the Christmas program.

December 29 was a blessed day as we witnessed the baptisms of David and Shella Brummitt from Smithville, TX. Bro. David is the son of the late Dave and Sis. Karen Brummitt. It is so encouraging to see the fruit of a mother's prayers. We wish them much grace in their new walk with the Lord.

On Sunday, January 5, Sis. Lisa Staker (Bro. Ted and Sis. Mary, Morton, IL) was united in Holy Matrimony to Bro. Pete Monagle (Gary and Sis. Kay, Washington, IL). They will be making their home in Bloomington. We certainly wish them God's richest blessings as they walk

down life's pathway together.

Bro. Clint Kaeb (Bro. Dave and Sis. Brenda) underwent emergency appendectomy surgery while vacationing in Colorado. We are thankful he is at home now and doing fine.

We wish to welcome Bro. Tom and Sis. Jay Martin to our Bloomington-Normal congregation. We look forward to getting acquainted with them.

Our Only Way

The dust of Dying Memories
May blur your eyes with tears,
Praise God, there is ONE who can
bring peace
And quiet all your fears.
He yearns to comfort and to guide
Your pathway everyday,
He is the Truth, He is the Light—
And still, our only Way.

—*Esther B. Hines*

Note of Thanks:

Thanks to all our dear Christian friends across the land for your many nice and caring Christmas cards and letters. Each one was appreciated and brightened an otherwise bleak December. Due to illness, we were unable to send any ourselves. Nevertheless, you are in our thoughts often, not just at Christmas, but many times throughout the year. God's blessings to each of you in the new year.

The Lynn Young Family

ILLINOIS, BRADFORD
Brad & Cheryl Kupferschmid

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

Isaiah 1:18

Another soul has answered God's call and has chosen a hope of life eternal instead of the destruction that comes from sin. Steve Endress

has started repenting this month. We rejoice with his parents, Bro. Larry and Sis. Becky Endress, and pray that the Lord will give him the grace to build a firm foundation of faith.

We are always thankful for visiting ministers and we want to thank Bro. Don Manz (Junction, OH) and Elder Bro. Wayne Fehr (West Bend, IA) for sharing God's Word with us this month. May God bless them for their labors.

"But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him."

I Corinthians 12:18

At our church business meeting, our congregation selected through the moving of the Holy Spirit, two new trustees and two new ushers. The new trustees are Bros. Bill Ringger (Sis. Karen) and Verle Kieser (Sis. Vonnie) replacing Bros. Jack Knobloch (Sis. Nancy) and David Klumpp (Sis. Barb). The new ushers are Bros. Fred Hausmann (Sis. Sue) and Richard Tanner (Sis. Marilyn). They replace Bros. Steve Ehnle (Sis. Karen) and Tim Kieser (Sis. Denise). We do not often realize the work that goes into keeping the House of God orderly and looking nice. We want to thank the brothers who have served in these offices and fulfilled their terms for their labors. We also pray that God will give those brothers taking over their positions the grace needed to do their duties in a way that the Lord will receive the greatest glory.

ILLINOIS, CHAMPAIGN
Samuel and Pamela Furrer

"And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another..."

I Thess. 3:12

As the month of February rolls around, attention turns to love of many kinds, but the focus is on romantic love with hearts and cupids. We all say we love many things: God, each other, favorite material possessions, our favorite food, and so on. When asked what he loves, our young son listed animals, trains, fire trucks, and his favorite people. Whether it is the love we have toward God and His Son or the love we have for others, we want that love to be thorough and constant. A story is told of a man who went to an auction and bought a cheap old earthenware vase for only a few pennies. He took his new possession home and filled it with a rich perfume—the attar of roses. For a long time, the vase held the perfume, and when it was empty it had been so permeated with the sweet perfume that the fragrance lingered in the material of the vase itself. One day the vase fell and was broken into many pieces, but every fragment still smelled of the attar of roses. That is how love should fill our lives.

"What greater thing is there for two human souls than to feel that they are joined for life—to strengthen each other in all sorrow, to minister to each other in all pain, to be one with each other in silent, unspeakable memories."

—*George Eliot*

Just prior to Christmas, we had two wedding engagements announced. Our Bro. Aaron Carnahan and Sis. Jill Hodel (Roanoke, IL) will be married in June. Aaron is employed as a car salesman in Champaign and Jill is a student at the U of I. Also engaged were student Bro. Eric Hodel (Washington, IL) and Sis. Gina Metz (Forrest, IL). We wish these couples many blessings in their new beginnings together.

May their love for each other and Jesus continue to grow daily.

During the past month, many from our congregation have been gone as a result of holiday travel and the semester break for the college students. We are not great in numbers to begin with, so we really do notice the void. However, everyone will soon be back and the second half of the school year will be under way for the students. As a former student, I know how the time does quickly fly by for our students and how much those long Christmas breaks mean as a time to be away from the student life and back with family as a time to prepare to hit the second semester. Many of our young people did some traveling during this time, and God has brought them back safely.

Sis. Ila June Hari had surgery in mid-January and spent several days in the hospital. We are glad to hear that the surgery went well and pray for God's healing hand on Ila June as her recovery process continues.

Ministering Bros. Wayne Laubscher (Cissna Park, IL) and Ben Wiegand (Philadelphia, PA) were here visiting family over the holidays and spent a bit of time ministering God's Word from our pulpit. We thank these brothers and their families for being with us in this past month.

ILLINOIS, CHICAGO

Kathy Schlatter

We have had a fair amount of cold weather recently. Some of you in more northern climates think we don't really know what that means—and maybe we don't. However, I have been musing about all the "parts of us" which need to be protected from the cold. There is the head, through which the vast majority of body heat is lost if it is not covered, the ears perhaps being the

most sensitive. There are the extremities, the fingers and toes, which seem to react most immediately. The remainder of the body is most often covered by one garment—except that to prevent the cold creeping in, we often need a scarf. Spiritually, cold is even more prevalent, I am afraid. We are warned in Revelations against lukewarmness, a cooling off of ardent faith—which it does not take much addition of cold to accomplish. We are also told that the greatest commandments are TO LOVE the Lord first with all of our being, and our neighbor as ourself. Creeping cold can consume charity. In Ephesians 6:11-17 we are told to put on the helmet of salvation (which covers head and ears), the breastplate of righteousness, the loins girt with truth, the shield of faith (all of which cover much of the body), and feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace (to help those easily numbed toes). That seems to leave fingers and the neck area to deliverance in other ways. Continuing in verse 18 seems to suggest them. "Praying always...in the Spirit..." would protect 'our neck' from the chill wind of evil or confusion, I believe. But, oh, those fingertips, sensitive to the slightest nuance from someone else, imagining what they thought about what they did to oneself, how delicate the fingers are and susceptible to the cold; however, how can we be judging our brethren if we remember to watch with "perseverance and supplication for all saints..." The Lord also included His Word for our protection against spiritual cold. Always we are exhorted to be more like Him, who loved all and gave His all.

It's so easy to welcome those who have joined us in this new year. Barry Winkler, Rittman, OH, is stationed with the Navy at Great Lakes. We look forward to his being

with us for worship and fellowship as often as possible. We are also thrilled to begin acquaintance with Sean Andrew, new son of Bro. Randy and Sis. Heather Knapp, on January 4. His brother, Ian, whispers to him; his grandparents, Bro. Ray and Sis. Jeanie Haerr (Bloomington, IL) and Bro. Bob and Sis. Jean Knapp (Eureka, IL) are grateful; we his church are prayerful as well. May we appreciate our newcomers and love and support them.

However, there is difficulty in farewells—though we are truly thankful for how the Lord has led in the lives of those who have left us recently. Sis. Paula Bahr, after much soulsearching, has accepted a position at General Mills, Minneapolis, MN, in their research and development division. She has already been welcomed into Minneapolis church and is enchanted with her job. We are sad that she has left, but we rejoice in the perfect work of the Lord. Bro. Luis, Sis. Cindy, and young daughter, Elizabeth, Gomez have relocated to the Morton-Washington, IL area. They will be attending Washington church, a homecoming for Bro. Luis. Their home is in Morton, coming home for Sis. Cindy. Bro. Luis will be associated with the Home for the Handicapped in their work to give their residents the most freedom possible. They will be lights wherever they go, we know, and we send them with sorrow at parting, but with our blessings, for they go with God. We love all four of them dearly, so we send our prayers and a bit of us with them, hoping they will return sometimes to be with us. In between times we will remember the joys of our times together.

Sis. Margaret Haas has been called Home, for Elgin Resthaven was only a temporary haven. We rejoice in her completed journey, yet we want to express our sympathy to

her daughter and son-in-law, Sis. Milli and Bro. Paul, her grandchildren, Jill, Bro. Jeff and Sis. Jackie, and her great-grandchildren, Marcus, Stephan, and Andrew, whom we love so dearly. May the Lord comfort them in the knowledge that He takes care of His own.

We also rejoice with Bro. Andrew Rassi (Bro. Greg and Sis. Carla) and Sis. Sandra Mott of Morton (Bro. Dennis and Sis. Beth) in the announcement of their engagement. May the Lord shower them with His love and grace as they build on the foundation of faith He has given them.

ILLINOIS, CISSNA PARK
Beth Steffen - Joyce Bauer

"All creation is an outstretched finger pointing toward God"
(Our Daily Bread).

As I look outside at the winter storm in progress, what a picture of God's power and handiwork. Such beauty in the snow and such power in the wind as it whips the snow into a frenzy, and the sun is shining through it all. What a picture of our lives. Some days are as calm and serene as the newly fallen snow while others are quite as boisterous and hectic as the snow storm. Through it all the "Son" keeps shining.

We have been blessed with several visiting ministers this month. Bro. Kevin Knapp (Bloomington, IL) shared the Word with us on Christmas day. Bro. Bob Beebe (South Bend, IN), Bro. Paul Gasser (Akron, OH), and Elder Bro. Dave Wiegand (Champaign, IL) also lent themselves on our behalf. We thank them for their willingness to serve us.

"The highest reward for a man's toil is not what he gets for it, but

rather what he becomes by it." At our annual business meeting, January 8, the following brothers and sisters were elected to serve in varying capacities: Bro. Bruce Frank and Bro. Les Kaeb were selected for Sunday School teachers; Bro. Curt Sauder for trustee; and Bro. Gerry Farney for fellowship hall committee. Bro. Roland Young will be our new usher and Bro. Dale Waldbeser will help with the microphones. New members of the dining room committee will be Sis. Myra and Sis. Laverne Farney. Bro. Elmer Kaeb will be helping with the Wing Material Aid Center and Bro. Lynn Knapp and Bro. Ed Alt will be working with Bible Distribution.

Our hearts go out to the family of our dear Bro. Richard Ehman, who died quite suddenly in the afternoon of January 8. He leaves behind his wife, Sis. Virginia Ehman, their children, Sis. Deb Tilbury (Minneapolis), Shelly Richard (Towanda), Kathy Hardison (Cissna Park) and Ron Ehman (Chicago); 7 grandchildren, 2 great-grandchildren, and one sister, Sis. Elsie Ehman.

We rejoice with Bro. David and Sis. Vicki Maul in the birth of their first child, a son, Austin Mitchell, born on January 15. Grandparents sharing this new grandchild are Bro. Fred and Sis. Joan Maul and Bro. Sid and Sis. Sandy Kaufmann. What a joy a new baby brings!

Those from our congregation who were hospitalized this past month include: Danny Rudin (Bro. Gerald and Sis. Joan) who had the misfortune of breaking his leg, Bro. Herman Bauer for surgery, and Sis. Louella Jacob for observation. We are thankful that they have all returned home and are on the mend.

ILLINOIS, CONGERVILLE
Linda Knobloch
Missy Banwart

The Sunday School Christmas program was December 18. Thanks to all students and teachers who participated, for all their efforts in bringing forth to the congregation the story of Jesus' humble birth.

There is joy in Heaven when a soul comes in repentance. We on earth are thankful, too, that Jonathan Virkler (Bro. Dennis and Sis. Gayle) has heeded the call. We pray God's grace and wisdom be upon him.

Sis. Mary Schieber (Bro. Mike) and Ruth Miller have required medical attention recently. Hilda Fehr is now at the Roanoke Apostolic Christian Home and we look forward to having her again assemble with us when she can return to her home.

We appreciate the efforts of all of our ministers as they stand to preach the Word. Visiting ministers have been Bros. Robert Stoller (Lamar, MO) and Tim Zimmerman (Lamont-Gridley, KS).

"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

James 1:27

ILLINOIS, ELGIN
Peggy Heiniger
Norma Schambach

Winter once again covers the earth with a blanket of pure whiteness. When we go out in the cold, we bundle up with extra clothes, hurry on our way, and look forward to coming back to a warm house. So it is in our spiritual life—because we live in a cold world, we need to bundle up with the armor of God, keep our eyes on the path so we don't slip, and push on toward our heavenly home.

The long journey is over for two

of our loved ones. Sis. Katherine Kachelmuss passed away on December 27 after spending a number of years at Resthaven. She leaves behind her family, Sis. Gertrude, Sis. Martha Greiner, and Bro. Clarence of Forrest, IL.

The Haas family gathered together once again as they laid to rest Bro. Herman Haas, a dear father and uncle, who died on January 4. He also spent his later years at Resthaven. May it be a comfort to the families to know they are safe in the arms of Jesus.

The family of Bro. Richard and Sis. Lyla Schock hosted an open house on January 4 to celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary. We pray for God's continued blessings on their life together.

Hospitalized this month were Lydia Osmond and Sis. Jeanette (Bro. Delbert) Schmidt. We are thankful for their recovery. We miss those who cannot assemble with us because of illness, and continue to pray for them.

We are always thankful for visitors. This month Elder Bros. Doug Schock (Pulaski, IA) and Ron Messner (Washington, IL) and Bros. Bob Pflederer (Morton, IL) and Dale Frank (Oakville, IA) shared the Word with us.

Sis. Louise Knecht, formerly of the Chicago congregation, has come to reside at Resthaven. We welcome her to Elgin.

We rejoice that Erica Schambach (Bro. Les and Sis. Alison) confesses peace with God and man. We look forward to her testimony and baptism.

ILLINOIS, EUREKA Dori Blunier

We wish God's blessings and direction to Bro. Milton Leman and Sis. Gerry Laukhauf who were united in marriage on Wednesday

evening, January 8, in Goodfield. We welcome Sis. Gerry to the Eureka congregation.

May God bless Bro. John and Sis. Gloria Cottrell who gave birth to their second son on January 10. Eli Earl is welcomed home by Samuel and grandparents, Bro. Earl and Sis. Elsie Zimmerman and Bill Cottrell and Sis. Judy Cottrell.

Bro. Mark and Sis. Lisa Schmidgall had a little baby girl, Ivy Joanna, on January 17. Ashley, Emily, Lilly, and Zachary are glad for a new little sister. Her grandparents are Bro. Marvin and Sis. Dorothy Schmidgall. Our prayers are with these two couples as they raise their children in the atmosphere of God's love.

Throughout the holidays we were thankful for our visiting ministers: Bros. Mike Rinkenberger (Congerville, IL), Loren Schrenk (St. Louis, MO), Elder Bro. Wes Knapp and Bro. Wayne Wiegand (Goodfield, IL). Let us appreciate the light of the Word as we listen to the sermons brought to us by the inspiration of God's Spirit. I recently traveled several hours by myself, and it was so refreshing to listen to some taped sermons. We need to remember to take advantage of this benefit offered to us by brethren who faithfully make these tapes.

Our prayers and thoughts are with Bro. Thurman Hinrichsen (Sis. Laydine) and Sis. Clara Lou Blunier (Bro. Lewis) who were recently hospitalized. May God continue to be with them and their families.

Note of Thanks:

May God bless everyone who remembered us on our 50th anniversary with cards, gifts, prayers, and thoughts of love.

Bro. Sam and Sis. Elizabeth Blunier

ILLINOIS, FAIRBURY Sally Fehr - Thelma Slagel

"Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

I John 4:7

We were blessed, as to have had Elder Bros. Ray Sinn (Latty, OH) and Wayne Anliker (Forrest, IL) to help our Elder Bro. Art Bahler for the reading of the Memorandum on January 11. We thank our Forrest brethren for attending this important meeting. We also thank our Elder brothers that labored for us and pray we can be faithful to the teachings which we heard.

We were richly blessed by other visiting ministers who shared the Word of Life with us this month. They were: Elder Bro. Roy Grimm (Taylor, MO), Bros. Todd Feller (LaCrosse, IN), Brian Waibel (Champaign, IL), Dewayne Dill (Minneapolis, MN), Elder Bro. Jay Luthi (Lamont-Gridley, KS), Bros. Jim Kaeb (Bern, KS), Ben Wiegand (Philadelphia, PA) and Duane Metzger (West Bend, IA). We thank each of them, their families and all the other visitors. May God bless each one.

The winter Elder Conference is in Bay City, MI. Let us pray for the Elder body as they strive to keep our precious faith.

Lynette Aberle (Robert and Iola) and Darin Bazzell (Bro. Donald and Sis. Carol) have announced their engagement. A May 17 wedding is planned and we wish them God's blessings.

A precious little girl, Layne Michelle Fehr, was born to Bro. Darren and Sis. Kendra on December 27. Drew is happy to have a playmate. Thankful grandparents are Betty and the late Warren Ifft (Forrest, IL) and Bro. Warren and Sis.

Shirley Fehr. Great-grandparents are Bro. Clarence and Sis. Doris Koehl (Forrest, IL), Gladys Ifft and Sis. Nettie Kyburz (Forrest, IL).

January 13 was our annual business meeting. May those who accepted new responsibilities feel God's guidance as they fulfill their duties. We thank the brethren who have faithfully served in the past.

We extend our sympathy to Sis. Linda and Bro. Alan Walter and family in the loss of her mother, Nancy Eaton, 57, on December 18. May God's love comfort you.

Sis. Johanna Wenger, 84, passed away December 30. She leaves to mourn five sisters. May they feel the love of God in this time of sorrow.

We extend heartfelt sympathy to Sis. Kendra and Bro. Darren Fehr and little children at the sudden death of her father, Warren Ifft, 54, on January 9. We pray that the family will feel comfort of the Lord in their time of sorrow.

In the year of 1996, our congregation reported 17 births (13 boys and 4 girls), 2 weddings, 11 baptisms, and 10 deaths.

A Winter Scene

It's such a lovely peaceful morn
the grounds all dressed in white,
the snow has covered everything
so beautifully and bright.
The Master painter came to call
with brush of color hue,
He chose to use the purest white
to make things fresh and new.
The branches all on every tree are
picture perfect too,
each one He touched so lovingly
and made them fresh as dew.
This rare and lovely winter scene
descended late at night,
and I woke this morn to see the
world all dressed in white.

—Katherine Smith Matheney

ILLINOIS, FORREST
Marlene Walter
Mary Bachtold

December 21 was a special day for J.T. Mueller (Bro. Ron and Sis. Loida) and Jolene Haas (John and Edna) as they were united in marriage. We wish them God's blessings and many years of happiness together.

Stacey and Tonda Mueller are the happy parents of a precious baby girl, Candis Amra. She is welcomed home by big sister, Amanda, and loving grandparents, Bro. Ron and Sis. Loida Mueller and Cindy Whitehouse, Sibley, IL.

We were thankful to have many visiting ministers with us this month. May God bless Bros. Art Mueller (Belvidere, IL), Ken Schneider (Remington, IN), Gary Anliker (Elgin, IL), Mike Rinckenberger (Congerville, IL) and Dennis Rassi (Fairbury, IL) for sharing God's Word with us.

On January 11, the Forrest and Fairbury congregations gathered together to hear the reading of the Memorandum. We appreciate the exhortations so lovingly given by Elder Bro. Ray Sinn (Latty, OH) along with our home Elder Bros. Art Bahler and Wayne Anliker.

Planning an April wedding are Clint Schaffer (Bro. John and Sis. Sally) and Amy Honegger (Gary and Mary Lee, Forrest). Also making wedding plans are Sis. Sarah Wenger (Bro. Ed and Sis. Renee) and Bro. Jeff Mueller (Bro. Ron and Sis. Loida). May these couples look to God for guidance as they plan to take this important step.

Several loved ones needed to spend time in the hospital this month. May Ben Stoller (Bro. Greg and Sis. Jill), Bro. Ben Traub, Sis. Laura Knapp and Minnie Rinckenberger feel God's nearness.

Feeling sorrow for the death of a loved one has touched many in our congregation. We sympathize with Bro. Clarence Kachelmuss in the loss of his sister, Sis. Katherine

Kachelmuss (Elgin, IL). We extend sympathy to Bro. John and Sis. Sally Schaffer and family in the death of his father, Chris Schaffer. Also feeling this loss are Chris's sisters, Sis. Kathryn Steidinger and Sis. Nathalia Wenger.

Our hearts go out to Sis. Betty Ifft and her family in the tragic death of her husband, Warren, who was killed in a truck accident. We pray that God will comfort and care for his daughters, Keith and Tamra Bachman, Bro. Reuben and Sis. Devra Stork, Ron and Kyra Carr (Roanoke, IL), Bro. Darren and Sis. Kendra Fehr (Fairbury, IL), and sons, Kevin (Roanoke, IL) and Quinn. May they continue to look to God to fill the emptiness this loss has left in their hearts.

We are thankful that Sis. Kathryn Honegger, 99, could be relieved of her earthly afflictions and be laid to rest. We extend sympathy to her many nieces and nephews.

Note of Thanks:

I certainly want to thank everyone for your prayers, cards, gifts, food, and snow removal since my illness. We can never fully appreciate our church, as well as my family, whose love and concern is truly felt. May God bless each and every kind deed.

With Christian love and gratitude,
Sis. Laura Knapp

ILLINOIS, GOODFIELD **Trish Gerber**

Our congregation was blessed with two weddings in the Lord this past month. Bro. Doug Ulrich was married to Sis. Trista Gerst on January 5. Their parents, Mr. and Mrs. Mike Lockhart, Eureka, and Bro. Steve and Sis. Bonnie Gerst, rejoiced with them as they shared the love of God and their love for one another.

On January 8, Bro. Milt Leman (Eureka, IL) and Sis. Gerry Laukhauf exchanged vows in the presence of God and their friends and family. We are happy to see these brothers and sisters follow the Lord's instruction in seeking out a mate.

Thanks to our visiting ministers, Bros. Jim Rinkenberger (Bluffton, IN) and Byron Stoller (Gridley, IL) and Elder Bro. Earl Ringger (Gridley, IL) for sharing God's Word with us.

We congratulate Bro. Brandon DesCarpentrie and Sis. Julie Wiegand on the announcement of their engagement. Bro. Russ and Sis. Jane DesCarpentrie and Bro. Ron and Sis. Barb Wiegand are thankful that their children answered God's call before taking the second most important step in their lives.

Notes of Thanks:

It has been 11 weeks since my accident and I am beginning to walk without a cane! Bill and I want to thank all of you for the cards, notes, gifts, visits and especially the prayers. We are sure that the reason that I healed so well and so quickly is because of the prayers said for us. God is very good! May He bless all of you for the love shown to us.

Bro. Bill and Sis. Terry Hart

We want to thank everyone who helped us celebrate our 50th wedding anniversary. We thank all who gave us cards, gifts and especially their prayers. We especially want to thank our children and grandchildren for their efforts and love and prayers. May God bless you all.

Bro. Wilbur and Sis. Mildred Heindl

In a congregation of 341 members, there is a lot of activity. Such has been the case during the last reporting period.

We are saddened to report the death of Sis. Mary Miller, 90, who died on December 30. She is survived by her sister, Sis. Aline Stortz, and several nieces and nephews.

Dear Sis. Mary always offered her faithful and smiling presence at church functions. She had cared for Sis. Aline the past while, even until the day she passed away of a stroke.

Truly, her life was one of service to others, in major and minor tasks. Her attitude was always one of cheer and friendliness.

On December 29, Bro. Mark Funk was married to Sis. Becky Winn (Morton, IL). His parents are Bro. Virgil and Sis. Shirley Funk (Congerville, IL). She is the daughter of Jack and Nancy Gould, East Peoria. We wish them God's special blessings in their quest for happiness and godliness.

January 5 was the wedding date of Bro. Doug Ulrich and Sis. Trista Gerst (Goodfield, IL). Her parents are Bro. Steve and Sis. Bonnie Gerst (Goodfield, IL). His parents are Mike and Mary Lockhart, Eureka. Our prayer is that the richness of that three-fold cord will forever bind them together in this life. We wish them much joy.

On December 25, the wedding engagement of Sis. Taunia Witzig to Bro. Richard "Buck" Henry was announced. She is the daughter of Bro. Roger and Sis. Elaine Witzig. His parents are Reginald and Edith Henry of Hudson.

Bro. Bob Gramm was in the hospital for additional testing. Also hospitalized were Bro. Ed Stoller (heart attack), Sis. Dixie Ringger (surgery) and Derek Moore (surgery). May God offer His healing balm, according to His will.

Our visiting ministers were Bros.

Curt Rassi on December 29 (Tremont, IL), Roger Aberle on January 5 (Sabetha, KS), Jim Vierling on January 12 (Eureka, IL), and Ted Hirstein on January 12 (Morton, IL). As we believe in and apply the same doctrine from church to church, the blessings of unity is ours to enjoy.

ILLINOIS, MORTON

Phyllis Farney

Cheryl Wuthrich

"Love of all gifts is the greatest, which the spirit dost bestow..." we love to sing from our Zion's Harps. How thankful we are for Christian love as we pass through the various experiences of life. How thankful we are for the enduring and unchanging love of God.

Anna Huthmann passed away very suddenly. Her funeral was December 23. May God comfort her brother, Bro. George Huthmann; her sister, Margaret Huthmann; and her five nieces.

Sis. Anna Tanner was called Home on January 4. She lived at the Apostolic Christian Home in Eureka. May our Lord comfort and bless her son, Bro. Lawrence; her two daughters, Lorraine Glasser and Ruth Hoerr; her grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Sis. Ruth Rapp passed away on January 5 at Apostolic Christian Restmor. May the Lord comfort and bless her sister, Louise Onken (Francesville, IN), and her many nieces and nephews.

December 29 found us rejoicing with Sis. Becky Winn (Jack and Nancy Gould) and Bro. Mark Funk of Gridley, IL (Bro. Virgil and Sis. Shirley, Congerville, IL) as they were married in Christ Jesus. May God bless them as they now walk life's pathway hand in hand and heart in heart.

Another Christ-centered home

ILLINOIS, GRIDLEY
Perry A. Klopfenstein

was established on January 5 as Sis. Lisa Staker of Bloomington, IL (Bro. Ted and Sis. Mary, Morton) and Bro. Pete Monagle of Bloomington, IL (Gary and Sis. Kay, Washington, IL) were joined in Holy Matrimony. We pray for continued blessings and guidance for this couple.

The Morton congregation wishes to thank the Princeville choir for bringing us rich blessings in song and fellowship as they were with us for our Hymn Sing on January 12.

We wish to thank our visiting ministers this month. They were: Elder Bros. Wendell Gudeman (Francesville, IN), Earl Ringger (Gridley, IL) and Bros. Clark Stoller (Gridley, IL), John Steiner (Oakville, IA), Vernon Wettstein (Congerville, IL), Erik Givens (Princeville, IL) and Fred Witzig (Altadena, CA). May God richly bless them for their labors of love.

Note of Thanks:

I would like to thank everyone for their prayers, cards and gifts of love while I was in the hospital and since returning home. May God bless all who were so kind.

Sis. Alice Knapp

ILLINOIS, PEORIA

Cara Nussbaum

New babies truly are a blessing from God. This month we have three little blessings to report. Jared Benjamin was born to Bro. Jeff and Sis. Marie Hoerr on December 11, 1996. He was welcomed home by Lauren, Jordan and Ethan. His grandparents are Bro. John and Sis. Dorothy Hoerr of Peoria and Bro. Richard and Sis. Marlene Seidel of Morton.

On November 19, 1996, a baby girl, Shannon Lee was born to Bro. Gary and Sis. Gina Kempf. Shannon will get lots of attention from Tyler, Ryan, Paige and Dane at home. Her

grandparents are Bro. John and Sis. Wilma Honegger of Peoria and Bro. Bill and Sis. Clara Kempf of Eureka.

December 3, 1996, was a special day for Bro. Dave and Sis. Stephanie Wieland as they welcomed their first child, Sydney Marie. Sydney's grandparents are Bro. Harvey and Sis. Janice Schieler of Fairbury and Norman and Evie Wieland of Visalia, CA.

We extend our appreciation to our recent visiting ministers, Bros. Ron Joos (Pulaski, IA), Doug Wagenbach (San Diego, CA) and Don Wagenbach (Washington, IL). May God bless you all.

We are thankful that our hospitalized patients are home now. May God continue to heal Bro. Walt Plattner, Sis. Lillian Koehl and Sis. Ruth Huthmann.

ILLINOIS, PRINCEVILLE

Joanna Herrmann

We are so thankful for the examples of faithful brethren. In Psalm 37:4 we read "Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart." We rejoice that after accepting the loss of their spouses, and showing fruit of delighting themselves in the Lord, Bro. Walter Joos and Sis. Janet Martin were joined as one in the Lord. They were married December 29. As they start this new chapter in their lives, may they feel God's nearness.

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:"

Romans 5:1

On the weekend of January 4 and 5, we heard the testimonies and witnessed the baptism of three new sisters in faith. Sharing evidence of their faith and conversion were Sis. Mary and Sis. Gwenn Ehnle (Bro. Kurt and Sis. Jane) and Sis. Naomi

Streitmatter (Bro. Steve and Sis. Mary Lynn). We want to thank Elder Bro. Robert Walder (Congerville, IL) for assisting Elder Bro. Joe Stoller.

We held our annual business meeting January 8. We want to thank those who have served us in the past and pray for those who will serve in the future. Bro. Alan Martin replaces Bro. Lawrence Wagenbach as church trustee, Bro. Mike Martin replaces Bro. Doug Herrmann as usher, Sis. Janet Streitmatter replaces Sis. Carol Baurer on funeral dinners, Sis. Kathy Stoller replaces Sis. Kay Siebenthal on baptism dinners, and Bro. Doug Stahl will serve as the Goodfield Distribution representative.

"Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord; and the fruit of the womb is his reward."

Psalms 127:3

Little Joshua Taylor was born January 7 to Bro. Phil and Sis. Linda Baurer. Joshua joins older siblings, David and Jonathon. Thankful grandparents are Bro. Gene and Sis. Kay Siebenthal and Bro. Ed and Sis. Carol Baurer.

On January 10, Derek Ezra was born to Bro. Greg and Sis. Heather Rumbold. Grandparents are Bro. John and Sis. Liz Wieland and Bro. Elwin and Sis. Loretta Rumbold of Bradford.

We were again blessed to have several visiting ministers this past month. We want to thank Elder Bro. Marvin Leman (Bradford, IL), and Bros. Ron Joos (Pulaski, IA), Wayne Lehman (South Bend, IN), Roy Ehnle (Bradford, IL), and Fred Witzig (Altadena, CA) for ministering to us.

We are thankful that our brethren who were ill are home and recovering. Those who were in the hospital this past month were Bro. John (Sis. Lillian) Elsasser and Bro.

Bob (Sis. Esther) Herrmann.

At our New Year's Eve service, we were given the following statistics: we have had 14 births, 10 funerals, 7 weddings, 18 baptisms, 10 converts, and 50 visiting ministers.

Note of Thanks:

I want to thank everyone for the generous gifts, cards, and for visiting and thinking of me since I have entered the Apostolic Christian Nursing Home in Peoria. God bless you.

Sincerely, Cordelia Musselman

ILLINOIS, ROANOKE

Jana Gastman - Lisa Leman

Christian love and greetings to one and all! January has brought cold snowy weather to central Illinois; however, our hearts are often warmed by the love and fellowship of our brethren. May God bless each soul who shares God's love with a smile or kind word of encouragement!

We rejoice with two couples who have announced their engagement. They are Sis. Jill Hodel (Bro. Ken and Sis. Kathy) to Bro. Aaron Carnahan (Champaign, IL). Also, Bro. David Whitten (Bro. Gene and Carol) to Sis. Lori Wade. May God lead, guide and direct these couples as they plan their new lives together.

We rejoice with three dear souls who are seeking the Lord in repentance: Lydia Bertschi (Bro. Rich and Sis. Bev), Emily Wiegand (Bro. John and Sis. Mary) and Cheryl Wacker (Jim). Let us remember these loved ones, along with all of our converts, in thought and prayer.

May the Holy Spirit comfort Sis. Velda Schlipf in the passing of her sister, Sis. Minnie Unsicker (Peoria, IL).

Our visiting ministers this month were: Bros. Art Baurer (Princeville,

IL), Steve Baner (Gridley, IL), and Dennis Kaufmann (Bloomington, IL) who conducted our January Bible Study. We thank you brothers for bringing God's Word to us.

Our prayers are with our loved ones who have been ill this month. Sis. Doris Bowald has spent time in the hospital; may God be with her during her time of recovery.

*In Memory of
Grandma (Marie) Blunier*

Dear Grandma Blunier has finally gone home,
Home to her Lord she loved so,
Home to that place of eternal joy,
Home where she longed 'ere to go.

Oh yes, we will miss her kind,
gentle ways,
She was blessed with a
countenance dear,
Always a kind word or a helping
hand,
'Twas her way as she trod life's
path here.

Sixteen children she lovingly
raised
Teaching of God and His love,
To think it was fifty-two years ago,
Her dear help-mate was called on
above.

But she met the struggles with
God at her side,
Knowing where her strength
cometh from.
She labored unselfishly
throughout the day,
Often past the setting of sun.

We Grandchildren have precious
memories too,
Which we will always hold so dear,
We loved going to her tidy, small
home
So warm and full of good cheer.

She always took such an interest
in us,
Had such kind words and advice.
Often we'd hear our friends say to
us,
"Your Grandma—oh she is so

nice!"

She loved keeping busy for others,
It's one of the things she did best;
Whether holding a child,
crocheting, snipping beans,
Her hands were seldom at rest.

Often I remember, stopping in at
her home,
Finding her there in her chair,
Lovingly reading from God's
precious Word,
How I loved spending time with
her there.

She spent her last years there at
"the Home",
Living to a hundred and two,
Often the children and grandkids
assembled
To fellowship there in her room.

Knowing her day would surely
soon come,
Yet two daughters then went on
before,
God still had a reason to keep her
here,
To teach us a few things more.

But now dear Grandma we bid
you farewell,
We thank you for sharing God's
love,
Someday may we all reunited be
In the splendor of Heaven above.

*submitted by a granddaughter
of Marie Blunier*

ILLINOIS, TREMONT
Barbara Dill - Barbara Kaeb

*Never Borrow Sorrow
From Tomorrow*

Deal only with the present,
Never step into tomorrow,
For God asks us just to trust Him
And to never borrow sorrow —
For the future is not ours to know
And it may never be,
So let us live and give our best
And give it lavishly —
For to meet tomorrow's troubles
Before they are even ours
Is to anticipate the Saviour

And to doubt His all-wise
powers —
So let us be content to solve
Our problems one by one,
Asking nothing of tomorrow
Except "THY WILL BE DONE."
—Helen Steiner Rice

Our visiting ministers this past month have been Bros. Dewayne Dill (Sis. LaRae, Minneapolis, MN), and Frederick Knapp (Sis. Marjorie, Congerville, IL), and Elder Bros. Joe Braker (Sis. Shirley, Morton, IL) and Everett Hari (Sis. Beverly, Bloomington, IL). We thank them for their willingness to come and labor in our behalf.

The death angel has again visited our congregation as Sis. Charlotte Steiner (Bro. Dan) was called Home. May God comfort all those who are sorrowing is our prayer.

January 3 was a special evening for JoAnne Prather (Bro. Warren and Sis. Carolyn) and Jeffrey Cleasby (Richard and Donna) as they were united in marriage. May God richly bless them as they walk life's pathway together, is our prayer.

Hospital patient this month has been Sis. Janice Sauder (Bro. Howard). We pray she will soon be able to assemble with us again.

We rejoice with Todd and Stacey Prather on the arrival of Benjamin Steven born December 29. Matthew and Jesse are excited to have a new brother. Grandparents are Bro. Warren and Sis. Carolyn Prather and Richard and Sue Muselman.

Bro. Kevin and Sis. Jody Dill are thankful for the safe arrival of twin girls, Cassidy Elizabeth and Kennedy Jo, born January 6. Brother, Cole, and grandparents, Bro. Kenneth and Sis. Sandy Dill and Bro. Dale and Sis. Jane Kaufmann, welcome the girls home.

"John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of re-

pentance for the remission of sins."
Mark 1:4

How thankful we are to have souls that have answered the call and could give us a testimony of their faith, be baptized and are now our new brothers in faith. We welcome Bros. Matt Sauder (Bro. Dale and Sis. JoAnn), Troy Stuber (Bro. Todd and Sis. Beth), and Greg Post (Bro. Gary and Sis. Kathy) into our church family.

Note of Thanks:

We would like to thank everyone for the gifts of prayers, cards, visits and love during Sis. Charlotte Steiner's illness and for the kindness shown to us upon her passing.

Bro. Dan Steiner and family

ILLINOIS, WASHINGTON
Sue Ruppert
Denise Romersberger

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

Matthew 6:33

Here is a practical illustration to reinforce the idea that God's will, what He wants us to do, should take precedence. When we put things in the right perspective and get our priorities straight, there will be time enough for all the activities that ordinarily mark our daily lives.

Take a jar and fill it three-quarters full of raw rice. Then fill a second jar with ping pong balls. The rice represents all of our time. The ping pong balls represent those things our Lord would have us to do. Try pouring the balls into the jar of rice. Not many will fit; there isn't room. Now reverse the process. Put all the balls into the jar and pour in the rice. Isn't it amazing that when

we get our priorities straight, the Lord's business first, we have room for all the things we deem important?

When we confuse priorities, God's will so often comes up short. But when we put His will and His desires first, there's room for all those things that ordinarily compromise our lives. We need to ask the Holy Spirit to help keep our priorities straight and put first things first.

We rejoice with Jeff and Tressa Schumacher in the arrival of their first child, Mallory Rae. Grandparents are Bro. Lloyd and Sis. Betty Schumacher from Washington, and Jerry and Janet Coots from Morton. We are so thankful that Tressa was able to go the full term. God bless their family with health and love.

We welcome Caleb Robert. He is the son of Bro. Jeff and Sis. Brenda Thames. He was welcomed home by his other brothers and sisters. We thank God that all went well. Grandparents are Robert and Dolores Kiefer and Phil Thames and Kay Thames. We wish you God's blessings.

Guest ministers were Bros. Doug Wagenbach (San Diego, CA) and Randy Kellenberger (Kansas City, MO). It is refreshing to be able to travel from church to church knowing the Word of God will be preached. Thank you, Brothers, for your efforts.

Bro. Chris Ledford was hospitalized and is now home and recovering. We pray for God's healing hand.

We welcome Bro. Luis and Sis. Cindy Gomez and family to our Washington church. They were attending in Chicago. We look forward to spending time with them and getting to know them.

We rejoice with Bro. Eric Hodel and Sis. Gina Metz as their engagement was announced. Bro. Eric is the son of Kent and Janet Hodel and

Sis. Gina is the daughter of Bro. Gene and Sis. Carol Metz (Forrest, IL). Their wedding date is set for June 29, 1997. We are so glad the Lord has worked in their hearts and we pray He will continue to lead them day by day.

INDIANA, BLUFFTON
Brenda Bertsch - Kim Maller

"Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"

1 John 5:5

On the weekend of January 11 and 12 we were blessed to hear the testimonies and witness the baptisms of five souls. They were Matt and Julie Lehman (Bro. Rick and Sis. Cathy Stucky), Klint and Quinn Fiechter (Bro. Jim and Sis. Jenny), and Elizabeth Aschliman (Bro. Derryl and Sis. Peg).

Bro. Mike and Sis. Deb Snider welcomed Seth Michael on December 19. His big brothers are Vince and John.

On December 26, Sarah Marie joined Bro. Gary and Sis. Stacey Fiechter. Welcoming her home are Luke, Matthew, Nathanael, Daniel and Elizabeth. Her grandparents are Herman and Sis. Phyllis Fiechter.

Leah Joy was born on January 13 to Jim and Sis. Pam Agler, James and Zachery. Grandparents are Bro. Alan and Sis. Sheryl Ringger.

Ben Reinhard (Bro. John and Sis. Pam) has recently accepted God's call to salvation. We wish him much grace as he begins his walk with the Lord.

We want to thank Bro. Hartzell Kaisner (Detroit, MI) and Elder Bro. Phil Stettner for sharing the Word with us this month.

Bro. Barry Steffen (Bro. Ramon and Sis. Lorena) and Sis. Doreen

Gudeman were united as one this month. We wish them God's richest blessings in life.

We were saddened to hear of the death of Sis. Virgil Isch on December 25. We extend our sympathy to her husband, Bro. Harold; and children, Sis. Janet Furrer (Bro. Vernon, Wolcott), Sis. Jean Moser (Bro. Phil), Sis. Judy Kipfer (Bro. Ken), Bro. Les (Sis. Ann) and Laura Compton (Brad, Spencerville).

We would like to extend a loving welcome to Bro. Brad and Sis. Dahlys Troxel and children, Brandon, Douglas and Stacy. They have recently moved here from the Ft. Lauderdale area.

Sis. Helen Stoller and Sis. Sandy Ringger (Bro. Kendall) have been in the hospital this month. We pray that they will feel the Lord's nearness.

Bro. Kris Reinhard will be going to Haiti for several weeks to help with the work projects there. We pray God will protect him and all who go to work on these wonderful projects.

INDIANA, BLUFFTON NORTH
Kay Steffen - Lori Steffen

"O Lord, thou art my God: I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name;...For thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm..."

Isaiah 25:1,4

Through the storms of life, God will always be there for us if we will just rely on Him. As I look outside, another snow storm is approaching us. God's beauty and creation is so evident in the months of January and February as the beautiful white snow covers the earth.

Bro. Matt and Sis. Lisa Markley were blessed with a daughter, Paige

Nicole, on December 29. She joins a brother, Dylan, at home. Grandparents are Bro. Gary and Sis. Nancy Schladenhauffen.

Our prayers go out to Sis. Mary Ann Kaehr (Bro. Vernon) who has had a lengthy stay in the hospital. We pray that her health can be restored as she continues to recuperate at home. "...for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." (Hebrews 13:5)

Church services are held at Ball State University, Muncie, IN every other Wednesday night at 7:30. If anyone would have the opportunity to spend a Wednesday evening at Ball State, our young people would surely appreciate the support and fellowship. Currently, there are eight to ten friends, members and/or converts attending this mid-week service. The university is approximately an hour's drive southwest of Bluffton.

INDIANA, FRANCESVILLE
Val Gutwein

"Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."

Luke 1:78-79

We are thankful to share that five of our recent converts have a testimony within their hearts that God Almighty has spoken peace to them. Now the joy has come and they are rejoicing in the Lord Jesus as they await baptism. They are as follows: Alyssa, Shawna, and Brooke Gutwein (Bro. Jeff and Sis. Wendy), Cheree Fritz (Bro. Mike and Sis. Monica), and Carmen Cook (Sis. Debbie). May the peace that they have found continue to dwell within their hearts, and may the love of the

church and their families strengthen them as they walk the road of earthly joys and trials.

January 5 was the wedding day for our Sis. Doreen Gudeman (Bro. Willis and Sis. Margaret) and Bro. Barry Steffen (Bro. Ramon and Sis. Lorena, Bluffton North, IN). We trust that God will richly bless their lives as they become "heirs together of the grace of life".

Brandon Wuethrich and Rosa Mojica (Kewanee, IL) recently announced their engagement and are planning a June 21 wedding. Their parents are Bro. Rick and Sis. Judy and Hosea and Kathy Mojica of Kewanee IL. Also, Pat Wuethrich and Dustiny Giesler have made known their plans to marry and are planning a fall wedding. Their parents are Bro. Brad and Sis. Nancy and Mr. and Mrs. Chip Warner. May God's blessings rest upon these dear couples as they make plans to walk as one.

January 10 was the wedding day of Stacey Eide (Sis. Karen) and Jameison Cronin. They were married at our Fellowship Center in Lafayette, IN. We trust that God will send many blessings their way as they start a new life together.

We were sad to hear of the passing of Sis. Ruth Rapp of Morton, IL. We extend our sympathy to her sister, Sis. Louise Onken (Rex), and all her nieces and nephews here in Francesville. May God be near those who will miss their loved one.

We were sorry to hear that our Sis. Catherine Neihouser (late Bro. Pierre) and Bro. Leon Wuethrich (Sis. Mabel) were recently hospitalized. We pray that God's healing touch would strengthen them each new day He gives. We are thankful to report that our Sis. Mabel Wuethrich (Bro. Leon) is now residing at Parkview Haven. We know she will find the "love of God" and the "love of the brethren" as she

settles into her new home.

In closing, we would like to once again thank those ministers who came and gave of themselves so lovingly over the past month. One brother who shared the Word really challenged us in the area of Biblical Love. He reminded us that we only love Christ as much as we love those around us. If we struggle to love a brother, then our love for Jesus is not any stronger than our love for that brother. What a challenge and a wonderful message as we begin a New Year. Our special love and thanks goes to the following brothers and their families: Bros. Ken Wuethrich (Indianapolis, IN), James Emch (Phoenix, AZ), Dan Kilgus (Remington, IN), Neil Widmer (Wolcott, IN), Howard Plattner (Alto, MI), Paul Gasser (Akron, OH), and John Reinhard (Bluffton, IN).

INDIANA, INDIANAPOLIS

Lauretta Schafer

Melissa Baumgartner

Greetings of love in our Lord and Saviour.

We rejoice with Seth and Jaime Wuethrich and also Bob and Heather Schini as both couples were recently united in marriage. Our hearts and prayers go out to them that the Lord grants their union much joy and peace.

We extend much thanks and appreciation to our Elder Bro. Alfred Bahler (Wolcott, IN) and Bro. Mark Gerber (Bluffton, IN) for sharing the Word of Life with us.

INDIANA, LACROSSE

Anna Marie Stoller

Sis. Leah and Bro. Ed Frank grieve the loss of Sis. Leah's brother, Soloman Aeschleman, of Peoria, IL. Our love and sympathy is extended to this dear family.

Sis. Lucille Heiniger wishes to

convey her heartfelt appreciation to those who attended her 81st birthday reception.

Elder Bro. Bill Schlatter (Junction, OH) was our visiting minister this month. As St. John 19 was recently meditated upon, we were reminded of the great sacrifice for our salvation. Jesus and our Father endured such bitter agony for us. Surely we owe Him our deepest love and devotion!

Sis. Jackie Feller has begun teaching Sunday School as a replacement for Sis. Sandy Heinold. Our prayerful support is with Sis. Jackie in her new responsibility, and our sincere appreciation is extended to Sis. Sandy for her faithful service.

Krisztian Diriczi, from Budapest, Hungary, has returned to his homeland after a six month visit in our area. Bro. Ed and Sis. Carol Troxel and family will miss Krisztian as he made his home with them.

Bro. Ralph Levy has been ill for several weeks. Our prayer is that he will soon be restored and able to worship with us.

"Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow."

Psalm 51:7

Dale and Andrea Schneider have repented, found peace with God, and anticipate their baptism soon. Our hearts delight in their salvation, and that God has directed them to move to the LaCrosse area. Alyssa, Blake, and Jade accompany their parents in this move from the Remington congregation. Our wishes are that God's continued blessing and guidance go with this precious family.

INDIANA, LEO
Ethelyn Schlatter

We gathered Christmas Day

morning and New Year's Eve for our mid-week services. Following the Tuesday evening service, December 31, we spent family time at the Fellowship Center in singing and special numbers. Just before midnight, Bro. Lynn Stieglitz spoke on the past, Bro. John Stoller on the present, and Bro. Brace Wieland on the future. The thoughts expressed focused on our love and concern for one another. Bro. Marvin Stieglitz closed with prayer.

The Lord fed us spiritually through Bros. Greg Stieglitz (Indianapolis, IN) and Randy Gasser (Detroit, MI). Verses emphasized were Joshua 1:8 and Luke 2:49. We were encouraged to evaluate where our priorities are.

This morning I prayed the Lord would reveal what theme I should use and that He would give me some thoughts.

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth...darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness."

Genesis 1:1-4

This afternoon, Bro. Brace Wieland brought to our attention that this light was before the sun, moon and stars were created on the fourth day; this was the light of the Lord.

"That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." (*John 1:9*).

"While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light..." (*John 12:36*).

"This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." (*I John*

1:5).

"And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun: for the Lord God giveth them light:..." (*Rev. 22:5*).

From Genesis through Revelation then we have the light of the Lord. I was reading in the newspaper an article of the Islamic faith. The muslim follow many commandments of the Old Testament. Islam is one of the world's largest religions, with more than a billion followers worldwide. They follow the teachings of Mohammed and are instructed to live holy, humble, disciplined lives, and to be charitable and consider the poor. But they do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as the Son of God.

"Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father..." (*I John 2:23*). We can be so thankful for the true light, "...let us walk in the light of the Lord." (*Isaiah 2:5*).

INDIANA, MILFORD Renee Beer - Linda Beer

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."

Matthew 5:6

Do we hunger and thirst after God? Do we yearn to learn more of Him from His Word? It is remarkable that our spiritual and physical appetites work in opposite ways. If we physically eat too much, we want no more food; our appetite is satisfied. Our spiritual appetite is stimulated by the amount we take in. The more we take in spiritually, the hungrier we become for God. If we take in less and less spiritually, we lose our appetite for spiritual things. How do we get our spiritual appetite to grow? We may not want to be "force fed", but the more of God's

Word we take in, the greater spiritual appetite we will have. God has promised to fill us if we hunger and thirst after Him.

Jesus loved us so much when He came to earth and paid for our sins—100%. We are special in His eyes; if not, He would not have died for us. Jesus left one thing undone—our growth. Our spiritual growth in our relationship with Jesus is our responsibility alone. Oh, that we could realize, we can have as much of God as we want in our lives.

"And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart."

Jeremiah 29:13

We hope those who have been ill have felt the nearness of God's strength and courage. Everett Price (Sis. Leona), Bro. John Lehman, Jr. (Sis. Pam), Sis. Eleanor Beer (Bro. Howard) and Bro. John Lehman, Sr. (Sis. Mayedene) were surgical patients. Sis. Esther Getz and Sis. Leona Price (Everett) were moved to long term care facilities for the present time.

We thank Elder Bro. Ray Sinn (Latty, OH) and Bro. Wayne Leman (Roanoke, IL) who shared God's Word to us. May God bless them and fill them with wisdom.

Bro. Jon and Sis. Deb Haab were blessed with a son, Tyler Jonathon. Grandparents are Bro. Ray and Sis. Paula Haab and Bro. Wayne and Sis. Shirley Lehman (South Bend, IN).

We offer our sympathy to Bro. Elmer Hartter in the death of his son-in-law, Don Hoover (Virginia), on January 13 in an auto accident. May they feel God's arms carrying them. "My times are in thy hand..." (*Psalm 31:15*).

What will you do with Jesus? Neutral you cannot be. Someday your heart will be asking,

What will He do with me?

—author unknown

INDIANA, REMINGTON

Patti Bahler

Recently, I read an account of a nurse on a hospital pediatric ward who often let her young patients listen to their own hearts. It's a rather strange experience to hear the steady rhythms of that organ which started to function before you were born and will continue to beat until you die. One day as she carefully positioned the stethoscope for a 4-year old, she said to him, "Listen. What do you suppose that is?" He tightened his eyebrows in deep thought and with a bright smile asked, "Is that Jesus knocking?"

Let this little 4-year old be our teacher. Jesus Christ, the crucified Saviour and risen Lord of glory, is indeed knocking at the door of every human heart. He's knocking, waiting to come in. Won't you open your door?

On December 22, our church gathered together to hear our Sunday School children praise God for the gift of His Son. We were reminded the Bible used almost 200 names in reference to our Saviour. May the message of hope be planted in each child's heart that took part in the program. Later that evening, we all met at the fellowship hall for our annual Christmas caroling and had a blessed evening.

On Sunday, December 29, our deacon, Bro. Edwin Bahler spoke his last sermon over the pulpit and retired from the ministry. We, as a church, want to thank Bro. Edwin and Sis. Lois for their many years of service for the Lord and for the church. May the Lord continue to use their lives to minister to the needs of others. Our Elder Bro. Alfred Bahler was with us for the afternoon and the Remington and

Wolcott churches gathered together for a singing that evening at the fellowship hall to thank Bro. Edwin and Sis. Lois for their years of service.

On January 2, the Remington church had our annual business meeting. We want to thank the outgoing teachers and the brothers and sisters who held other offices for their dedication and service. We welcome our new Sunday School teachers, Sis. Annette Bahler, Sis. Beth Virkler, Bro. Joseph Beer and Bro. Alan Schambach. We appreciate everyone's willingness to be a part of the body, "fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." (Ephesians 4:16).

On January 1, Sis. Charlotte Steiner (Tremont, IL) gained her victory and went to be with her Lord. Sis. Charlotte lived in our area several years during and after her marriage to Bro. Erwin Bahler. Our prayers are with Bro. Dan Steiner (Tremont, IL) in the loss of his wife.

Sis. Arlene Kilgus is recovering from gallbladder surgery. We pray she will have a rapid and complete recovery.

Note of Thanks:

Thanks to everyone who remembered me with prayers, cards and flowers during my surgery and food since I've been home. God bless you all.

Sis. Arlene Kilgus

INDIANA, SOUTH BEND

Marci Neuenschwander

Sue Beebe

February - a month when we think of frilly valentines and of expressing our love to those near and dear to us.

How would you define love? The world defines it as a strong, complex emotion or feeling causing one to appreciate or delight in the presence of another.

But the love we read of in the Bible goes beyond man's definition and is called "charity". A definition of charity is "a readiness to overlook faults; tolerance; spiritual benevolence, Christian love".

We are told that "charity" is the greatest gift given to man by our Creator. "And now abideth faith, hope, and charity, but the greatest of these is charity." (I Cor. 13:13)

I John 4:12 says that "if we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected (or brought to full development) in us." Because "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." (I John 4:16)

"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death." (I John 3:14)

We appreciate and thank ministering Bro. Walt Rager and his family (Toledo, OH) for their recent visit and many good teachings.

We rejoice with Bro. Wayne and Sis. Shirley Lehman upon the birth of their little grandson, Tyler Jonathon, born January 11 to Bro. Jon and Sis. Debbie Haab of Milford.

We welcome one and all to come and fellowship with us. If you plan to visit on a Wednesday evening in February or March, please call one of our ministers for the specific location, as we meet in nursing homes and in homes of brethren these months.

INDIANA, VALPARAISO
Cheryl Bucher - Ken Susdorf

If we have everything, but do not have Christ... we have nothing.

If we have nothing, but have Christ... we have everything.

When I think of this saying, I realize how true it is. Everything in my life hinges on the fact that I know Christ as my Saviour. Because of that one fact, every circumstance and how I look at it, is changed. I thank God, that He is my Heavenly Father and that Jesus Christ died for my sins.

Our hospital patients this month were Sis. Irene Nuest and Ryan Gaddis (Don and Dawn). Our thoughts and prayers are with each one and their families during these stressful times.

Elder Bro. Dale and Sis. Judy Eisenmann (Chicago, IL) visited us this month. The fellowship is always appreciated and also the sharing of the Gospel with us, too.

INDIANA, WOLCOTT

Sherice Bahler - Jody Bahler

We were blessed to listen to Bro. Dan Kilgus (Remington, IN) give a Bible topic on Charity on November 20. It gave us each food for thought, and definitely challenged our hearts to be a more willing giver of the things God has blessed us with.

We miss the cheerful smile of Sis. Viola Kyburz, as she recently moved to the retirement village at Francesville, and assembles with them there. We certainly welcome her to come back and visit us anytime.

"He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away all tears from off all faces..."

Isaiah 25:8

We extend heartfelt sympathy to Bro. Vernon and Sis. Jan Furrer on the passing of Sis. Jan's mother, Sis. Virgie Isch (Bluffton, IN). We pray that God will comfort their hearts, and bless them with peace, knowing

that she is safe in the arms of Jesus.

Bro. Ken Schneider (Remington, IN) ministered the Word unto us on a Sunday afternoon. Thanks to Bro. Ken for his willingness to assist our Wolcott brethren.

On January 12, we were privileged to hear the touching testimony of our dear Sis. Kara Bahler (Steve and Sis. Elaine), and then witness her baptism following the testimony. We gladly welcome Sis. Kara into our church family circle, and pray God's blessings on her all the days of her life. Elder Bro. Wendell Gudeman (Francesville, IN) assisted Elder Bro. Alfred. May God bless him for spending the day with us.

We held our annual meeting on January 14. May each one voted into the various positions feel God's direction as they pursue their duties.

IOWA, BURLINGTON

Edith Massner

Monica Eisenmann

Thank you to Bros. Mark Kiefer (Denver, CO) and Bill Gerst (Alto, MI) and Elder Bro. Ed Lanz (Oakville, IA) for lending themselves in God's service this past month.

Bro. Gary and Sis. Karen Schulz and family welcomed home Zachary John, who was born on December 26, 1996. Grandparents are Bro. Myron and Sis. Dorothy Schulz and Elder Bro. Ed and Sis. Joan Lanz, all of Oakville.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Bro. Bill Obermann and Sis. Marty Buehler as they have both recently been in the hospital.

IOWA, ELGIN

Gloria Frieden

What a close knit body of believers we are. Though we may meet as strangers, this common bond immediately draws us together. Last

month, Sis. Melisa Butikofer (Bro. Lon and Sis. Sandy), my daughter, Becky, and myself had the privilege to be a part of the work team that went to Jamaica to work on a school being built at CCCD (Caribbean Christian Center for the Deaf). Out of the group of 56, I seen five familiar faces at our first gathering, but a week later there were no strangers. We worked, worshipped and shared together and will always have these precious memories. We went to Jamaica to give of our time, labor and love, but over and over again we were the receivers. It was truly a memorable experience and I have asked Sis. Melisa to share a little of our experience with you.

"For there's a roof up above me, I've a good place to sleep, there's food on my table, and shoes on my feet. You gave me your love, Lord, and a fine family. Thank you, Lord, for your blessings on me!"

I stood there in awe as the woman sang this with all her heart and soul. It wasn't her voice that touched me; it was what was behind her. She stood on the front porch to the infirmary—the most gruesome and heartwrenching place I'd ever been in all my 19 years, and she sang of blessings and with joy. All around her was what I perceived to be sadness, and pain, and yet she was thanking God that she had a roof above her. It's been over a year that I committed my life to the Lord, but I have to wonder if I have ever been so thankful as that woman with so much less than I. Over and over again I was reminded of Heaven during our eight days in Jamaica. The deaf children at CCCD in Montego Bay "sang" of the Lord with their hands, and although we couldn't understand every sign, it was obvious by their faces that they knew one day they would be in a place where the blind can see and the deaf can hear. I wondered before

I left for Jamaica if I would really be able to make a difference by going on a work team, and I know now that was foolish. These children are learning about God and growing to love and communicate their love, and knowing there are others that need this so much, it makes the work seem so very worth it! We also visited a place of safety for girls and young women. "My" little girl (Kashona) led me around her new "home" and showed me all that she had—it all fit in a little locker that wouldn't even hold my shoes! It was touching to love and be loved by this quiet little girl who spoke so confidently of Heaven. Even within our work team I was often reminded of Heaven as I'd just sit and listen sometimes to the beautiful singing, and think that someday we'll be singing a new even more beautiful song with the angels. It's hard to imagine! The unity and love within our work team was also touching. I left Chicago with four friends and returned with 55. It's amazing the love God can create between His people in so little time! Another touching experience was seeing the World Relief trucks come in. The supplies are needed and the toys and clothes are very much appreciated! The children got very excited as they saw bikes, beds, and beans being unloaded. I wonder if God could possibly have allowed me to touch as many lives as touched mine in the past eight days. The Lord provided many blessings and taught me a lot about myself—what I have, and how thankful I should be by showing me an example in the children—what little they have and how thankful they are! May we all remember to thank God for His blessings on us and continue to support World Relief. I've seen what a difference it is making!

Reminder: It is time again for the

collection of the Silver Lining dues for Elgin, Iowa. The rate is \$10.00.

IOWA, GARDEN GROVE **Laura Funk**

Greetings to all from Garden Grove.

It is snowing today. It is beautiful to look outside and see everything covered with pure white. Is your soul white as snow?

We have been blessed with visiting ministers this past month. We want to thank Bros. John Steiner (Oakville, IA) and Byron Stoller (Gridley, IL) for lending themselves in the work of the Lord.

The engagement of Sis. Marlene Reinhard to Bro. Tim Sinn (Latty, OH) was announced. Sis. Marlene is the daughter of Bro. Dan and Sis. Delores Reinhard of Garden Grove. We wish them God's guidance as they prepare to walk life's pathway together with the Lord.

IOWA, IOWA CITY **Janette Schulz**

Greetings to all! We again extend our heartfelt thanks to all who traveled to visit our small congregation in the last month. Among our visitors were ministering Bro. Jim, Sis. Marlene, and Kyle Plattner (Princeville, IL) and the Princeville Single Group. We certainly appreciated Bro. Jim's willingness to assist our Bro. Joe Gerst in delivering God's message of hope to each of our hearts. May each of us be just as willing to follow those directives necessary for our salvation. We hope it is obvious that each of us benefit from the fellowship of those from near or far who assemble with us.

We extend our hand of fellowship to Bro. Darin Massner (Burlington, IA) who will be in our area periodically throughout the next year for an internship. We trust God will protect him as he travels many miles

to assemble with us or his home congregation and hope he feels welcome whenever he is with us.

While we have had enough cold and snow to delight those who enjoy winter and aggravate those who don't, we certainly think about and pray for our brethren and friends across the land who have faced severe hardship because of the weather. For those of us who have become "urbanized", even severe weather is usually no more than a nuisance if we are not required to travel. The effort required to shovel our driveway is nothing compared to those in rural areas, especially those who must care for livestock. May God grant each of you the means, the energy, and the faith to sustain you daily until the promised spring arrives. If any of us find ourselves in a spiritual "winter", may God do the same for us.

IOWA, LESTER

Sue Warner - Cindy Leuthold

Despite the bitterly cold and snowy surroundings that we find in our landscape this winter, our hearts are warmed to know that God's grace has been granted to those who seek Him. We rejoice that Carmen Popkes (John), Monte Gerber (Bro. Bill and Sis. Erma) and Dudley Knobloch (Bro. Melvin and Sis. Wilma) have heeded God's tender call to repentance. May they build a firm and lasting foundation in Him.

We appreciated our visitors this past month, including ministering Elder Bro. Lawrence Luthi (Lamar, MO), and Bros. Kent Mogler (Minneapolis, MN), Roger Aberle (Sabetha, KS), Virgil Metzger (Chicago, IL), Mike Rinkenberger (Congerville, IL), and Jim Knobloch (Winthrop, MN). Thanks to these brothers and their families for being with us.

Our heartfelt sympathy goes out to Sis. Elaine Kellenberger and her families with the tragic death of her granddaughter, Nichole Messner, of Minneapolis, MN. Nichole is the daughter of Bro. Doug and Sis. Suzie Messner who are former Lester residents. May God's Almighty power and strength help them at this sad time.

Three new babies have been born since we last reported to you. Congratulations to Bro. Myron and Sis. Beth Knobloch on the arrival of Amy Sue on December 23. She is joined by Laura, Brett and Clark. Her grandparents are Bro. Ezra and Sis. Marie Knobloch and Bro. Howard and Sis. Lollie Mogler.

On December 28, Morgan Berta was born to her parents, Brad and Sis. Linda Klostergaard. Her happy siblings are Angela, Karmen, Alison, and Bryce. Grandparents are Bro. Art and Sis. Elgeva Knobloch and Corky and Roberta Klostergaard.

Damon Ethan is the name chosen for the newborn son of Bro. Vernon and Sis. Chalea Knobloch who was born on January 4. He is a welcome addition for his sister, Chalsea, and brothers, Garth and Blain. Damon's grandparents are Bro. Art and Sis. Elgeva Knobloch and Gary and Jan Teunissen.

Recent surgery patients have been Sis. Marie Feucht (Bro. Alfred), Leah Doorneweerd, Bro. Wilbert Knobloch (Sis. Helen) and Bro. Fred Metzger (Sis. Etsy). All have returned from the hospital to their homes but endure long hours of recovery. Other known hospital patients in for medical reasons were: Bro. Orvie Knobloch (Sis. Lauretta), Bro. Ronald Kellenberger, Grant Metzger (Bro. Jerome and Sis. Jana) and Kendra Mogler (Bro. Dwight and Sis. Donna). They also are once again at home.

In the past year, the Lester con-

gregation experienced 16 births, 0 deaths, 12 baptisms, and 5 souls are awaiting baptism.

IOWA, OAKVILLE
Debbie Wagenbach
Melody Steiner

Our visiting minister this month was Bro. Bill Gerst (Alto, MI). We thank him for his service in the Lord and allowing himself to be used on our behalf.

Many thoughts and prayers are with Sis. Hilda Gerst (the late Bro. Carl) and Sis. Verna Rocke (Bro. Orttie) and their families with the passing of their sister, Sis. Charlotte Steiner (Bro. Dan, Tremont, IL). We also extend our sympathy to her late brother's family (Bro. Orel Steiner). They can be comforted, after an extended illness and much pain, she seemed to just slip away into the arms of her Saviour. Though there is a loss, may they look to that great reunion someday.

We recently had our annual business meeting. We are thankful to those who have completed their terms and so willingly were able to take care of the physical needs of our church. Elected to fill the new terms were: church trustee, Bro. Keith Lanz; cemetery committee, Bro. Todd Massner; fellowship center trustee, Bro. Dan Anliker; Sisters' Committee, Sis. Patty Stoller; World Relief sewing committee, Sis. Mary Lou Grimm. Our prayers are with each of them as they now strive to do their duties in the will of the Lord.

IOWA, PULASKI
Lisa Knecht

May Memories Comfort You
The tide recedes but leaves behind
bright seashells on the sand,
The sun goes down, but gentle
warmth

still lingers on the land,
The music stops, and yet it echoes
on
in sweet refrains...
For every joy that passes,
something beautiful remains.

May our Lord comfort the hearts of Sis. Patrice Metzger (Bro. Ben and children, Jeff and Heidi) at the passing of her father, Robert Doherty.

"For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard."

Psalms 22:24

We want to thank our neighboring ministering Bro. Brad Funk (Sis. Laura, Garden Grove, IA) for serving us again, as well as Bros. Gerry Hertzler (Sis. Ellen, Sabetha, KS) and John Rowell (Sis. Nelda, Burlington, IA). May they continue to receive their strength from the Lord.

Sis. Karoline Wuthrich had the misfortune of breaking her leg. She is recovering well at this time, for which we are grateful.

IOWA, WEST BEND
Eunice Fehr - Lela Banwart

What a blessed weekend we could enjoy together as we welcomed two sisters into our congregation. Sis. Denise Bruellman (Bro. Dave and Sis. Yvonne) and Sis. Karen Zaugg (Bro. Pat and Sis. Julie) gave their testimonies on Saturday evening and were baptized on Sunday. Elder Bro. Gene Marti (Kansas City, MO) came to assist our Elder Bro. Wayne Fehr and Bro. Wayne Grimm on this special occasion. Bro. Gary Brown (Forrest, IL) also ministered to us that Sunday. We pray God will bless them for their service. It is so encouraging to see young souls give

their lives to the Lord, and it is our sincere prayer that many more can take advantage of this wonderful gift of salvation.

Bro. Dale Moore (Elgin, IA) was also a visiting minister this past month. We want to thank him for lending himself to feed us with God's Holy Word.

Our hospital patients have been Bro. Walter Banwart (Sis. Esther) and Sis. Ida Schmidt. We are thankful that God has touched them with His healing hand and they are in their respective homes again.

We extend our love and sympathy to Bro. Cloyce and Sis. Carol Gress and family on the death of Sis. Carol's stepmother, Sis. Charlotte Steiner (Bro. Dan), of Tremont, IL. May God comfort them in their loss and grant them strength and courage in the days ahead.

Our love and sympathy to the family of 17-year old Nicole Messner (Bro. Doug and Sis. Suzette) of Minneapolis, MN who lost her life in a tragic car accident. We include in our prayers her aunt and uncle, Bro. Bruce and Sis. Audrey Messner, great grandmother, Sis. Lena Grimm, and many great aunts and great uncles and cousins of our congregation. How thankful we are to know that God's Comforting Spirit can reach far beyond our feeble efforts to offer consolation, and that He is able to heal the broken hearts.

Miriam Frieden is very happy to have a new grandson, Thomas Roy, born to first-time parents, Terry and Nora Frieden of Alexandria, VA. Maternal grandparents are Mr. and Mrs. Richard Mullen of Paterson, NJ. Congratulations and best wishes. We pray God's blessings on the new family member, his happy parents, and extended family as they care for this precious gift from God.

JAPAN, TOKYO **Andrew and Jana Klaus**

New Year's is a time when most Japanese travel back to their home towns to be with their families and relatives. We thank God for His blessings in all of our travels. Our Elder Bro. Akito Inoue also traveled to Europe during the middle of January and was able to return safely.

Bro. Takaaki Miyagawa and I, Bro. Andrew Klaus, spent a week traveling to China during the holidays. The Lord blessed us in every way. This month I would like to share a little about the Christian church in China and our travels.

We do not have an Apostolic Christian church in China, but neither are there other American or European denomination churches. The communist government started in the 1960's with the cultural revolution to outlaw all forms of religious activity in China. As a result, Bibles were confiscated, churches were burned, the many of those who stuck true to their faith in God were imprisoned, beaten, killed, or sent off to labor camps.

For many years, China did not have relations with the outside world. The government thought the church would die away. However, in 1979 when it was opened to the western world, those that visited found that believers were not all gone. But they were a severely persecuted group that mostly met in homes with little fellowship and few Bibles. Thus started a work to supply this underground church with Bibles.

During the 80's and 90's, the underground church has grown tremendously in number. The government has created a void in many persons' lives and interest in God is very strong. Many have become members of the church, but at present there is still an acute lack of

basic Christian teaching for all of the new converts. Bibles are so scarce in some regions, there can be hundreds of people per available Bible.

The government has countered this movement by ordering all churches to register with the government and become part of the "3-self church" which stands for self-administration, self-financing, and self-evangelization—three big lies through which the state has tried to gain control over all churches. These churches are officially recognized by the state, but have all kinds of controls slapped on them. Bibles are made in China and sold to 3-self members, but all members' names and what they have purchased are registered. Communist officials regularly attend services and keep watch. Ministers are not allowed to speak anything construed as anti-revolutionary.

At any rate, Sis. Jana and I spent a memorable Christmas Eve packing Bibles to take into China for the underground church. When I told a supplier here in Tokyo that Bro. Takaaki and I were planning to fly into Shanghai, we almost could not get Bibles to take because in that area this winter, they are having a big campaign (read persecution) against the churches and it would be too dangerous.

However, the power of prayer prevailed and the Lord blessed our entry by shutting down all x-ray machines on our arrival in Shanghai. We walked through the customs checkpoint without a word from anyone. The next morning we were able to meet an old lady from the underground church and give her some of our Bibles. The rest were carried by others to other parts of China. The lady told us a little about her life: she has been a believer for many, many years, and has undergone many persecutions. As late as

last year, officials came and searched her house and confiscated everything related to Christianity. Not that she did anything wrong, but was only suspected of underground activities. When we said good-bye to her, she smiled and waved as she rode off in a little rickshaw, clutching tight her bag of Bibles. It is a sight I shall not easily forget.

From Shanghai we went to Nanjing. The Saturday we were there we found out they were having a young peoples' gathering at a 3-self church that night so we decided to go and see what it was like. The small church was packed with 500 people, mostly in their 20's, 30's and 40's. (The state does not permit evangelizing to anyone under 18 years of age, so virtually no children go to 3-self churches and Sunday schools are not allowed.)

We could hardly understand a word of what was spoken or sung, but what we saw was hundreds of zealous hearts. Afterwards we talked with a few people, and then about 10:00 p.m. I asked if I could play their piano. After playing one hymn, everyone who was left gathered around and all started giving out songs that they wanted to sing. Everyone sang enthusiastically, and before the song was done, someone else had another one picked. This continued until about 11:30 when the minister, fearing what would happen, finally managed to put an end to it. I had not been to such a singing since my college days in the young group. Before we left, someone asked us if we believe in God. We said yes, and how about you? With beaming faces, they all nodded their heads.

This is a picture of the 3-self church that is very regulated. The members of the underground church are no doubt even more earnest in their faith than those who

attend the 3-self church.

From there, we went to Yangzhou, where we could visit Sis. Stephanie Moser (Leo, IN) who is teaching English at Yangzhou University for one year, although her reason for being there is to be a witness for our Lord to the Chinese. She was in very good spirits, and her little apartment was the homiest place we saw in all of China, although as with most foreigners like her living in China, it is bugged; so it was not the ideal place for Christian fellowship. We had to be careful what we said to her and to her students, as the communist officials are everywhere, and are always peering into everyone's lives. Sis. Stephanie cannot share openly in her classrooms nor personally without fear of getting herself and her students in trouble. When students come and ask her questions, then she shares with them, but has to warn them not to speak too openly to others.

Such is life in a country with severe persecution. However, I am struck by the zealousness of Chinese Christians and yearn to see that worldwide. Like the early church, persecution and the blood of martyrs seem to be bearing much fruit.

May we remember Christians in far off lands that do not have the freedom and the riches that we do. May we be liberal with the talents that God has given to us.

KANSAS, BERN
Holly Meyer
Lori Baumgartner

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

John 13:35

A minister went to visit a lonely sister-in-faith who had been recently widowed. In the course of

their conversation, this sister began to reminisce about her husband and his many attributes. She told the account of her and her husband visiting a neighboring congregation. While there, someone had shared some disturbing news with her concerning a close acquaintance of theirs. On the trip home, this sister began to unload the disturbing news to her husband. Upon hearing it, he quickly replied, "Oh, I wish you would not have told me that. I really love that brother." This dear sister went on to say that from that time forward, if she would chance to hear unkind gossip about someone, she would never pass it on to her husband because it hurt him so. This account is a beautiful reminder that idle talk will cause harm and may stifle the love we have for our brother. As we fellowship with one another, may we always strive to "let brotherly love continue" (Hebrews 13:1). May our prayer be:

"Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer."

Psalm 19:14

Ministering Bros. Lee Plattner (Zapata, TX), Roger Aberle (Sabetha, KS), and Don Braker (Kansas City, MO) recently visited our Bern congregation. We appreciate their willingness to bring forth God's Word.

Our annual Christmas program was held December 22. Our hearts were touched by the innocent voices of our young children and the blending of harmony in our older classes. Realizing that this is our future church, may we each strive to do our part in being an example. We never want to be a stumbling block for our precious youth.

On December 29, our congregation was able to witness the mar-

riage of Bro. Terry Menold (Bro. James and Sis. Lou) and Sis. Dayra Meyer (Bro. James and Sis. Jeanne). We share in their joy and pray that God will direct them in establishing their Christian home.

There is joy in the hearts of Bro. Eldon and Sis. Waneta Plattner as they have been blessed with a new granddaughter, Isabelle Marie. Isabelle was born December 12 to Richard and Angela Robuck (Wichita, KS).

We rejoice with Bro. Tim and Sis. Margaret Edelman as they were blessed with a son, Alex Lee, on December 18. He is welcomed home by Kyle, Brittany and Sarah. His grandparents are Mary Ann Koch and Sis. Marjorie Edelman (Sabetha).

We wish to express our sympathy to Bro. Emil and Sis. Grace Strahm on the recent death of Bro. Emil's sister, Lillian Wittenbach. Lillian was a resident at our Apostolic Christian nursing home in Sabetha.

Hospitalized at the time of this writing is Harlan Wittmer. Bro. Dale Strahm (Sis. Shelby) and Mary Ann Koch have both experienced brief hospital stays during the past month. We are thankful for the Lord's healing touch.

Our annual business meeting was held January 9. For those brothers and sisters who have been chosen for various duties in our congregation, we offer our support and encouragement. For those whose terms have ended, we express our thanks for your past willing service.

Two faces are missing from our single group. Bro. Ryan Hartter (Bro. Neil and Sis. Evelyn) has recently moved from our area to Sheboygan Falls, WI to attend a one-year program at Lake Shore Dairy School. Sis. Wendy Edelman (Eugene and Judy) has accepted a position of employment near Lamar, MO. May they feel the Lord's

nearness as they both adjust to new surroundings, new employment, and new church facilities.

KANSAS, KIOWA

Darcy Kisling - Janice Bahr

The love of God is greater far
Than tongue or pen can ever tell;
It goes beyond the highest star,
And reaches to the lowest hell.
The guilty pair, bowed down with
care,
God gave His Son to win;
His erring child He reconciled,
And pardoned from his sin.

—*Hymns of Zion #289*

It has been said that one of the many pleasures of old age is to become ever more sharply aware of the many mercies and blessings God showers upon us. This seems so true to a believer when we reflect upon all the Lord has done for us. This fact also helps us appreciate all the trials we have had along the strait and narrow path when we realize that this is part of God's great love for us to prepare us for eternity.

Our youth and many that are young at heart gathered on December 31 for church and afterwards to bring in the new year together. The fellowship in our small group is always a blessing!

"That is, that I may be comforted with you by the mutual faith both of you and me."

Romans 1:12

May we always be encouraged by the gift of our faith and the faith of our brethren.

Note: Subscription to the Silver Lining is due in February.

KANSAS, LAMONT-GRIDLEY

Julie Bahr

When you were small I'd cover
you with blankets
and gently stroke your hair.
Now that you are tall and out of
reach,
I fold my hands and cover you
with prayer.

It's such a concern to let go and watch our children make choices that will affect them for the rest of their lives. Events happen in each of our lives that are so out of our control. We then have to step back and ask the Lord to teach us to trust Him in all things.

"Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."

1 Thess. 5:16-18

It's hard to believe all circumstances have a purpose with God. "Dear Lord, help us in our unbelief! We ask Thee to lead them, guide them, convict them and protect them."

We were saddened for Sis. Bertha Beyer in the loss of her sister-in-law, Eva (Floyd) Beyer, Wichita. Eva had been committed to a care home in Wichita for many years. "When the cares of this life get too heavy to bear, Dear Lord, we just commit them to Thee." We ask for God's comfort upon each one of Eva's dear family.

The engagement of Dora Edelman (Bro. Albert and Sis. Jeanie) was announced to Tony Hines (Ron and Judy) of Emporia. Dora and Tony plan a May 7 wedding. We join together in sharing their happiness and pray for God's direction as they plan their lives together!

Our prayers have been for God's healing touch upon those who had surgery this past month. Bro. Bill Emch (Sis. Susan) required surgical repair of some facial fractures, Bro. Albert Edelman (Sis. Jeanie) re-

quired eye surgery, and Kent Kraft (Bro. Doug and Sis. Judy) required surgery repair of a serious ankle fracture. We also want to remember our dear Sis. Dorthy Young who is nearing completion of her radiation therapy treatments for a recently discovered malignancy. May she feel the warmth, the power and the presence of our Almighty God. When a spouse has been taken and children are raised and gone, it seems that a physical burden is much more difficult to bear. We ask for God's nearness, especially for Sis. Dorothy. To celebrate her 85th birthday, a card shower was held for our dear friend, Martha Hughes. Martha's health has not permitted her to attend church for quite a long time. We miss Martha assembling with us and pray that she can feel God's presence and love.

Our annual election was held on January 19. Our deepest thanks and appreciation to those who served faithfully in the various capacities of God's work. We ask for God's wisdom to be upon those who will be filling these positions.

Our hearts are warmed and we are always thankful for our visiting ministers. Bros. Shawn Metzger (Philadelphia, PA) and Don Gude-man (LaCrosse, IN) visited with us this past month. Thank you for helping us to "Build our Faith".

KANSAS, SABETHA
Mary Kay Wenger

O, the fount of truth and grace
Found in loving,
If within the bonds of peace,
We are living!
Without love we cannot live;
This is truthful,
Love should make life fruitful.
Zion's Harp #70

Sis. Marjorie Edelman is thrilled with another grandson. Alex Lee

Edelman was born December 18 to Bro. Tim and Sis. Margaret Edelman of Bern. Also welcoming him home are his brother and sisters, Kyle, Brittany and Sarah.

Without love the burden great
On our shoulder
Would our weak and feeble state
Crush and smoulder;
But in love it groweth light,
And we offer
Still to toil and suffer.
Zion's Harp #70

Bro. Nathan Grimm (Sis. Lois) was in the hospital. Our prayers are for God to provide his every need. We were thankful to see Bro. Willard and Sis. Eloise Bahr back in our midst.

Those who unto Christ the Lord
Do surrender
All their mind and thought and
word
In love tender
Shall, by faith and love impelled,
Boldly journey
On the narrow pathway.
Zion's Harp #70

Christmas brought extra joy in the home of Bro. Roger and Sis. Ilene Hartter when their daughter, Kristin, began to repent.

We rejoice as another soul takes advantage of God's gift of salvation.

Thus with grace our soul and mind
Is inspired;
In our labor joy we find
As desired,
Meeting kindred minded souls
Is reviving,
Humbling and enliv'ning.
Zion's Harp #70

We pray for God's blessings on the engagement of Bro. Tom Strahm (Bro. Carl and Sis. Sharon) and Sis. Carrie Zeltwanger (Bro. Dale and Sis. Rachel Zeltwanger, Morris, MN). Their engagement was announced in Morris where

Bro. Tom has been employed.

It was very uplifting to listen to four young men give their testimonies and witness their baptisms on January 11-12. We were also thankful for the presence of Elder Bros. Doug Schock (Pulaski, IA), Arthur Nohl (Morris, MN), John Lehman (Bern, KS), and Eugene Marti (Kansas City, MO). Our new brothers in faith include Bros. Brandon Plattner (Bro. Don and Sis. Ada), Kent Grimm (Bro. Rodney and Sis. Arlene), Kurt Grimm (Bro. Doug and Sis. Jeryl) and Erik Hertzell (Bro. Gerry and Sis. Ellen). May God guide and protect them in whatever comes their way.

KANSAS, WICHITA
Emma Miller

Monday, January 13, Eva Beyer passed into eternity. Eva, who has been incapacitated for the past twenty years, was faithfully cared for by her husband, Floyd, until it became necessary for her to go to a care facility. In the years preceding her illness, Eva and Floyd attended church regularly. She is survived by her husband, Floyd; a son, Dr. F. Everett Beyer of Phoenix, AZ; a daughter, Barbara Dilli, of Wichita; and four grandchildren.

Many in our congregation are suffering from infirmities of the flesh. In times like these, it is important to place our confidence in the promises contained in the Holy Bible. One that is especially meaningful to me is Isaiah 41:10, "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."

We welcome Sis. Wanda Grimm of Sabetha to Wichita for a three month period of time. Wanda, who is majoring in occupational therapy at the University of Kansas, is doing

an internship at Rainbows United Preschool here in Wichita. We are so happy to have her worship with us.

KENTUCKY, LEXINGTON

Doug and Rebecca Germann

A special thanks to our visiting minister and his family, Bro. Art Ingold and Sis. Bonnie from Rittman, OH who served us this past month. We appreciate the fellowship when brethren stop to spend time with us.

Also this past month, the Sunday School enjoyed an afternoon of time together. What a blessing it was to hear the young voices join together and sing "Blest Be the Tie" as we were about to leave. We trust that they truly understand the tie that binds our hearts together and that they will become faithful brothers and sisters in our faith.

We were talking one weekend with some visitors about holiness and what it means in our brotherhood. The Bible speaks about holiness in several places, and in particular in Hebrews 12:14, "Follow peace with all men and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." What a challenge for all of us to take as we walk this narrow pathway. The poem below seems to sum up our challenge.

What Happened to Holiness?

What happened to holiness, tell me, oh where,
Are the people of God, who seek Him in prayer?
Who daily delight in obeying His Word,
Submitting to each in the fear of the Lord.

What happened to holiness, to those set apart,
And serving their Maker with all of their heart?
In quietness seeking their places to fill,
Who not only say, but are doing

His will.

What happened to holiness, true godly fear,
Where all of God's Word is esteemed very dear?
Repentance is thorough with self crucified,
Committed to Jesus they walk side by side.

What happened to holiness?
Perilous times,
When men fail to knock, seek and to find,
But loving instead to follow the trend,
Embracing ideas so pleasing to men.

Thank God for the few who in holiness dwell,
They've a witness to give and a story to tell,
Their speech and their actions, their life and their dress,
Show lives lived for God in true holiness.

MICHIGAN, ALTO

Melanie Kaeb Michelle Oesch

One by one they came, far as the eye could see
Each life somehow touched by your generosity,
Little things that you had done, sacrifices made
Unnoticed on the earth, in heaven now proclaimed.
I know up in heaven you're not supposed to cry,
But I am almost sure there were tears in your eyes
As Jesus took your hand and you stood before the Lord,
He said, "My child, look around you, for great is your reward."

Thank you for giving to the Lord, I am a life that was changed.
Thank you for giving to the Lord, I am so glad you gave.

—Ray Boltz

Do we ever think when we share

the Bible with someone next to us in church, or a smile when we greet them, that it may be the last thing we'll share with them on this earth?

On a snowy December 26, we bid our last earthly farewell to our sister-in-faith, Brenda Patten. Our love and prayers are with her family that their hearts may find comfort in the days ahead. Surviving is her son, Jared; her mother, Sis. Virginia Schutte; sisters, Marilyn Schutte, Sis. Louise Desotell, and Sis. Sue Daniels (Bro. Wes); and her brothers, Steve (Sis. Sandy), Rudy, and Darell Schutte (Peggy). We all feel the loss of Sis. Brenda and it is in our human nature to ask God why He chose to take her life so suddenly, leaving grieving hearts behind. But we also know that He is a compassionate God who feels the pain of those who are hurting, and is ever near to give comfort. "Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever." (Psalm 73:23, 26)

We rejoice that the Lord has moved another heart in our midst to serve Him. Andrea Steiner (Brent) has begun her repentance and we pray she may know the Lord's grace.

Carl and Brenda Blough have been blessed with their little bundle of joy, Maria Elizabeth. She joins at home big sisters, Paula and Michaela. Grandparents are Bro. Noah and Sis. Marguerite Blough and Paul and Sheila Dykstra.

We wish the Lord's blessings to Jenny Oesch (Bro. Fred and Sis. Donna) and Allen Grile (Bob and Virginia) at their engagement announcement. They are planning a June wedding. May they always keep the three cord bind with the Lord in their lives.

Also announcing their engagement are Laura Blough (Bro. Jim

and Sis. Julie) and Luke Rumbold (Bro. Ron and Sis. Jackie, Princeville, IL). They plan on being married in February and moving to Illinois. We pray the Lord will be with them as they make their plans and they will look to Him for guidance as they begin their life together.

We are thankful to have Sis. Heidi Kaeb back home from Washington, D.C. She spent a few months out there working in an agricultural office and though she enjoyed her time there, she is glad to be back home safe and sound.

I apologize for not getting the news in for the last issue of Silver Lining, so I will fill you in on our December events. We enjoyed an evening of caroling on December 14 and had snacks afterward at Bro. Jim and Sis. Julie's shed. The next evening was our Christmas program and we all heard the wonderful story of our Saviour's birth as the children said their pieces and sang the Christmas songs they had practiced. Whatever the time of year, Christmas and the message of our Lord's birth can live in our hearts and lives.

In the hospital recently was Tom Oesch (Bro. Tom and Sis. Michelle) for surgery on his broken ankle. We pray his recovery time will go well and for the Lord's healing grace. Ronald Zaagman continues to be hospitalized for chemotherapy and we ask for your continued prayers that he may find healing.

MICHIGAN, BAY CITY
Marlene Mosher
Rhonda Knochel

*'Twas the Night
 Before Jesus Came*

'Twas the night before Jesus came
 and all through the house,
 Not a creature was praying, not
 one in the house.

Their Bibles were lain on the shelf
 without care,
 In hopes that Jesus would not
 come there.

The children were dressing to
 crawl into bed,
 Not once ever kneeling or bowing
 a head.
 And Mom in her rocker with baby
 on her lap,
 Was watching the late show while
 I took a nap.

When out of the East there arose
 such a clatter;
 I sprang to my feet to see what
 was the matter.

Away to the window I flew like a
 flash,
 Tore open the shutters and threw
 up the sash!

When what to my wondering eyes
 should appear
 But angels proclaiming that Jesus
 was here.
 With a light like the sun sending
 forth a bright ray,
 I knew in a moment this must be
 THE DAY!

The light of His face made me
 cover my head
 It was Jesus! returning just like
 He had said.
 And though I possessed worldly
 wisdom and wealth,
 I cried when I saw Him in spite of
 myself.

In the Book of Life which He held
 in His hand,
 Was written the name of every
 saved man.
 He spoke not a word as He
 searched for my name;
 When He said "It's not here," my
 head hung in shame.

The people whose names had been
 written with love
 He gathered to take to His Father
 above.
 With those who were ready, He
 rose without a sound,
 While all the rest were left
 standing around.

I fell to my knees, but it was too
 late;
 I had waited too long and thus
 sealed my fate.
 I stood and I cried as they rose out
 of sight;
 Oh, if only I had been ready
 tonight.

In the words of this poem the
 meaning is clear;
 The coming of Jesus is drawing
 near.
 There's only one life and when
 comes the last call,
 We'll find that the Bible was true
 after all!

MICHIGAN, DETROIT
Lynette Moser - Holly Barton

Satisfied with Thee, Lord Jesus, I
 am blest;
 Peace which passeth
 understanding, on Thy breast:
 No more doubting, no more
 trembling,
 Oh, what rest! Oh, what rest!
 —C.A. Wellesley

Our new brother in Christ, Russel Rambeau (Ginny), has testified of this wonderful peace and satisfaction with the Saviour. We enjoyed a blessed day on January 5 with his testimony and baptism, and we are glad that his family was able to be with us as well. May God bless them all.

We rejoice with Greg Schlatter (Sis. Sharon, Bay City, MI) who has also found peace in his soul. He looks forward to baptism in the near future.

Many have been ill this month, including Sis. Perseda Wieland (Bro. Floyd), Sis. Audrey Hitz (Bro. Leonard) and Sis. Ann Tachar. Sis. Ann also recently lost her son, and we wish her to know she is in our prayers.

Bro. Howard Plattner (Alto, MI) so willingly ministered to our Woodhaven residents this month. We're

so thankful to all who help in our endeavors there!

We are certainly prayerful for our Elders as they gather this month for the mid-year Conference. The Lord is willing and ready to impart direction as long as we are submissive and sincerely seeking His will.

"The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way."

Psalm 25:9

The meek are those who have a distinct preference for doing as He pleases. Such can rely on being guided and taught by Him.

—G. Hall

My heart resigned, submissive,
meek,

My great Redeemer's throne,
Where only Christ is heard to
speak,

Where Jesus reigns alone.

—Charles Wesley

MINNESOTA, MINNEAPOLIS Perry Virkler

We extend a warm welcome to Jeremy Schmidgall (Bro. Keith and Sis. Lois, Morris, MN) and Sis. Paula Bahr (Bro. Rudolph and Sis. Eileen, Lamont-Gridley, KS) who are both employed in our area. We hope they will feel at home in our congregation.

At the close of 1996, we had fifty-one members (increase of three), twenty-nine Sunday School children, one baptism, no deaths, three births and two marriages. We are thankful for the increase.

Our sympathy is extended to Brenda Massner (Keith) in the passing of her father, Arnold Hohn Sr. (Mora, MN). Sis. Deb Tilbury (Bro. Jim) also has our sympathy in the passing of her father, Bro. Richard Ehman (Cissna Park, IL). May God comfort both of them and their fami-

lies in their loss.

"The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

Job 1:21

Our congregation was deeply saddened Thursday evening, January 9, as we learned of the untimely death of Nichole Elaine Messner in a car/school bus accident. She was the daughter of Bro. Doug and Sis. Suzette Messner. Nichole was a very friendly, kind, thoughtful and loving young lady. She touched many of our lives in the seventeen years she was with us. Along with her parents, she is missed dearly by sisters, Alissa and Chelsey; grandparents, Sis. Elaine Kellenberger (Lester, IA), Bro. Harold and Sis. Gerry Messner (Winthrop, MN); great-grandmother, Sis. Lena Grimm (West Bend, IA); many aunts, uncles, cousins, school friends, our congregation, Sunday School students and teachers. May God comfort and heal all the broken hearts.

We were thankful to have Bro. Wayne Grimm (West Bend, IA) and Bro. Ken Lawson (Phoenix, AZ) with us the weekend that Nichole Messner passed away. May God richly bless these ministering brothers for their labors of love.

"And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."

I Corinthians 13:13

The Greatest of These

This world is filled with sorrows
that captivate us all.

At any given moment,
anyone can fall.

By faith we break our daily bread
with hope that God will bless.

We say our prayers and go to bed
in seasons of distress.

We can endure most anything

if only there is love,
For love restores our faith and
hope
that God still reigns above.
Love gives us strength when we
are weak,
and courage when afraid.
Love celebrates our victories
and sacrifices made.
Hope and faith go hand-in-hand
like fingers in a glove,
But greater still is God's great gift
of His unfailing love.
—Clay Harrison

MINNESOTA, MORRIS Linda Schmidgall Nancy Wulf

Winter's chilling grip is hugging Minnesota, and even though the great snows make for many hardships, the beauty of the snow-sculptured landscape is awesome. So as of now, the view is still a thrill to behold. But come March, and the snow is still here, we'll be getting a real yearning for green and growing things, and then we are reminded of God's command...

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

Eccles. 3:1

...and so we wait for God's perfect timing in all things, and learn the virtue of patience.

We are thankful for ministering brothers who come to be with their families for Christmas and New Year's, and are willing to share the Word with us. Those and their families who were with us are: Elder Bro. Lawrence Luthi (Lamar, MO), Bros. Doug Grimm (Sabetha, KS), Kent Mogler (Minneapolis, MN), Rex Frieden (Lamar, MO), Dale Wulf (Lester, IA), and Jon Schmidgall (Oakville, IA).

We do have to admit that our best news ever is when we can tell of souls who are seeking the Lord in

repentance. Trevor and Jody Schmidgall have together made that first step. Their rejoicing parents are Bro. Mike and Sis. Diane Schmidgall and Bro. Dave and Sis. Eileen Nohl.

The second most important step is that of marriage, and we are thankful for God's direction when He brings two souls together. Looking forward to that union on February 2 are Bro. Tom Strahm (Bro. Carl and Sis. Sharon, Sabetha, KS) and Sis. Carrie Zeltwanger (Bro. Dale and Sis. Rachel).

Also announcing their engagement are Shari Schmidgall (Bro. Jeral and Sis. Linda) and Steve Werk (Roger and Betty) who look forward to that special day on April 19. May God richly bless them as they make their plans to that end.

For some, that wedding was a long time ago, and yet may seem to have only been yesterday. Bro. Noah and Sis. Shirley Nohl celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on December 26, 1996. May God continue to bless this precious marriage that you share.

Little ones bring great joy to the heart, and hearts that are rejoicing are Bro. Jeff, Sis. Jill and Andrew Steiner who welcomed Leah Marie on January 7. Grandparents are Bro. Harv and Sis. Wilda Koehl and Bro. Richard and Sis. Ann Steiner (Tremont, IL).

More eager little arms that welcomed Trent Clifford on January 15 were Heidi, Matthew and Eric, and parents, Bro. Stan and Sis. Pam Wulf. Grandparents are Bro. Bill and Sis. Leona Wulf (Lester, IA) and Clifford and Sis. Barb Edelman (Sabetha, KS).

Suffering from accident, but grateful for all he's been spared is Bro. Dennis Wulf (Sis. Judy). God has truly been merciful.

Our hearts go out to Bro. Kenney and Sis. Sally Feuchtenberger and

sons, in the loss of Sis. Sally's mother, Helen Blankers. The pain goes deep, but God's promises are everlasting, and we pray He will carry you through.

Our statistics for the year 1996 give us reason to believe that God has truly been with us. We had 9 births, 3 funerals, 2 weddings, 8 converts, and 16 baptisms.

Notes of Thanks:

I want to thank everyone for remembering me with so many cards, gifts and birthday greetings. A special thanks to all family and friends for making my 80th birthday a day to remember. God bless all of you.

Sis. Marie Feuchtenberger

A loving thank you to our dear children and grandchildren, to all our relatives and friends, and for the many nice cards, flowers, gifts and hugs. This will always be a cherished memory on our 50th golden wedding anniversary, December 26, 1996.

Bro. Noah and Sis. Shirley Nohl

Thank you to those who remembered us with cards, gifts of love, and prayers after Shane's hospitalization. May God bless you.

Bro. Shane and Sis. Ruth Jones and girls

MINNESOTA, WINTHROP Becky Braulick - Jan Messner Greetings!

This past month it's been so rainy, cold, windy and snowy here and because of the weather, we were unable to hold church services a couple of Sundays. In spite of this wintry weather, our hearts continued to be warmed by Christ's love.

Three new babies have arrived from above:

Bro. Paul and Sis. Jan Messner are rejoicing over their new baby

boy, Leighton Paul, born December 24. Leighton was welcomed home by his brother, Landon, and brings much happiness to his grandparents, Bro. Don and Sis. Viola Messner (Peoria, IL) and Richard Daigger (Columbia Heights, MN).

Sidney and Dolcie Schmidt welcomed home their baby boy, Mason Gregory, born on December 26. The happy grandparents are Gene Schmidt (late Sis. Ella Mae), and Greg and Bev Woods of Gibbon.

On January 15, Cory and Nikki Schmidt and big sister, Bryce, were happy to bring home their new bundle, Kala Rachel. Thankful grandparents are Bro. Dick and Sis. Mary Lou Schmidt and Donna and Mike Mattison of Winthrop.

Wishing these families many blessings with their new little ones and may they look to the Lord in the raising up of their children.

We would like to send a special thank you to Elder Bro. Ron Messner (Sis. Pam) from Washington, IL for spending Christmas Eve with us and bringing forth the wonderful story of Christ's birth and reminding us just how thankful we should be that God gave this precious gift to the world.

"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

II Corinthians 1:3-4

We wish to extend our deepest sympathy and prayers to the family of Nichole Messner: Bro. Doug, Sis. Sue, Alissa and Chelsey of Minneapolis, MN. And also special prayers to Nichole's grandparents here in our congregation, Bro. Harold and Sis. Gerry Messner. May the Lord

continue to heal their hearts and ease the pain of their loss.

Our hospital patient for this month was Sis. Delores Messerli (Bro. Cornelius). Even though there are many miles between us these winter months (as they spend winters in Zapata, TX), our prayers and concerns have been with Sis. Delores and we pray God's continued healing hand be upon her.

MISSOURI, KANSAS CITY
Brent Kellenberger

"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

John 14:6

We rejoice with three dear souls who have started a new life in Jesus Christ. They are Mark Miller, Julia Pyle, and Dawn Anliker. May God grant them grace to follow the way and the truth.

We were blessed to have four visiting ministers with us this month: Elder Bros. Jay Luthi (Lamont-Gridley, KS) and Lawrence Luthi (Lamar, MO) and Bros. Shawn Metzger (Philadelphia, PA) and Charles Marti (Lamar, MO). We thank these brothers and their families for coming and bringing forth the Word.

MISSOURI, LAMAR
Carolyn Banwart
Martha Kellenberger

We deeply appreciate the brothers who visit and minister to us. This past month, we enjoyed the visits of Bros. Wayne Banwart (Sis. Charlen, Champaign, IL) and Bill Dotterer (Sis. Sharon, Phoenix, AZ). May God bless them for their service.

It's always a blessing to add to our small congregation and we extend a

warm welcome to Bro. David Dotterer, formerly from Phoenix. He plans to further his education in our area.

Again, we have those who have suffered from ill health. Our thoughts and prayers have been with Bros. Charles Marti (Sis. Alice), Bro. Jerry Braker (Sis. Carol), and Sis. Vera Frieden (Bro. Rex).

When thru the deep waters I call thee to go,
The rivers of sorrow shall not overflow;
For I will be with thee, thy troubles to bless,
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

Hymns of Zion #11

After a lingering illness, our Bro. Dean Marti was called from this life on January 20. We extend our heartfelt sympathy to his wife, Sis. Arlene; sons, Wayne and Kenneth; and daughters, Lu Fanning and Connie Lehman, all of our area; and his twelve grandchildren. Additional survivors include three sisters, Sis. Eunice Martin, Sis. Polly Schrock, and Rosemary Degnan, all of IL; and three brothers, Bro. Charles, Don and Roland, all of Lamar.

MISSOURI, ST. LOUIS
Peter Schrenk

"Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me."

Psalms 51:10-11

These beautiful words describe what is essential in the Christian life. It is comforting to know that we don't have to "get it right" before we go to God; He will convert us and give us a clean heart and a good

attitude. As we can see in David's life, it is a good attitude and contrite spirit that God wants from us more than anything else. With a clean heart, we may not have the power to be sinless, but we have the power to sin less.

As always, we thank all the visitors who came to worship with us this past month. We would especially like to thank Bros. Kenny Knapp (Taylor, MO) and John Steiner (Oakville, IA) and Elder Bros. Marvin Leman (Bradford, IL) and Roy Grimm (Taylor, MO) for serving us from the pulpit.

MISSOURI, TAYLOR
Tina Sutter

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not unto thine own understanding."

Proverbs 3:5

Oh, how we are reminded daily! He is our strength and infinite wisdom.

We are thankful that Bro. Jared Sutter (son of Sis. Marcia Sutter) and Bro. Brad Gehring (Sis. Judy and the late Bro. Uriel Gehring) were welcomed with a warm loving embrace into God's family after their testimonies and baptisms on January 18 and 19. What a truly blessed evening it was as we witnessed the miraculous work of Almighty God. We were blessed to have several visiting ministers who included Elder Bro. Nathan Steffen (Elgin, IL) and Bro. Ron Heiniger (Bloomington, IL).

We want to remember Sis. Nerys Lightner in our prayers as she underwent surgery on January 17. We also want to lift Jenny Gerst (Bro. Arnold and Sis. Marjorie Gerst) up in prayer as she is struggling through illness in the Chicago area.

Ann Wiegand and her son, Ben,

met with accident due to the icy roads. We thank the Lord they were spared serious injury and want to remember them in prayer.

Travis Daniel Haerr arrived safely in the arms of Sis. Peg and Bro. Shon Haerr on January 6. His brothers are Tyler, Dallas and Parker. May the Lord be their Guide in rearing His little ones. Grandparents are Bro. Norman and Sis. Sally Haerr and Bro. Al and Sis. Ginny Hunziker.

We want to thank Bro. Rusty and Sis. Amy Adrian for their willingness to write the Taylor correspondence in the Silver Lining the past three years. "If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour." (John 12:26)

Note of Thanks:

The family of Sis. Rose M. Hoerr would like to humbly thank each of you who expressed your love and sympathy during the illness and death of our dear precious mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. May God give us comfort in her loss in the days to come, and may He richly bless each of you.

The families of Bro. Robert, Louis and Donald Hoerr, Barbara Plank, Irene Riney, Sis. Rosemary Massner and Sis. Cindy DeSigne.

**NEW YORK
CROGHAN-NAUMBURG
Alice Virkler**

Our Sunday School children presented a short program after church services on December 22 to tell us what they have learned and to sing about the birth of the Saviour. In the evening they went Christmas caroling for shut-ins and at the Lewis County Extended Care Facility which is the home of Sis. Mabel Ebersol and Sis. Corinne Virkler.

On the weekend of December 28 and 29, we gathered to hear the testimonies and witness the baptisms of our new brother and sister in faith, Fred and Barb Ebersol. We are thankful that Fred's mother, Sis. Mabel, has been granted sufficient health so she could assemble with us on Sunday afternoon to witness the baptisms. It has been many years since she has been able to be with us regularly. We want to thank Elder Bros. Eugene Pamer (Akron, OH) and Andy Stoller (Smithville, OH) and his wife for being with us and helping our Elder Bro. Duane for the weekend. It was a blessed way to spend the last weekend of 1996.

On December 31, we enjoyed a covered dish meal together and then gathered for a church service to close out 1996. In 1996 we reported 2 births, 4 deaths and we had 2 baptisms.

Tracie Farney and Daniel Getman have announced their engagement and are making plans for a July 19 wedding. May they look to God for guidance as they take this important step in their lives. Their parents are Elder Bro. Duane and Sis. Karen Farney and George and Theresa Getman.

Norbert and Joanne Farney lost their dairy barn to fire on December 22. They were able to get the cattle out of the barn and were fortunate to be able to house them in a neighbor's barn only a few miles from their home for the winter.

Bro. Floyd and Sis. Loretta Graves and Sis. Amelia Belle Virkler have been able to be in our assembly again after a few weeks of illness. Also, Gertie Herzig (Bro. Ted) has been able to be with us again after many months of being in her home. May God continue to strengthen each of them.

OHIO, AKRON

Diane Jarrett - Joyce Gasser

Bro. Paul Gangle is having his 90th birthday on February 21. He is a resident of our Apostolic Christian Home. May God continue to bless him.

We were happy to have visiting ministers, Bros. Earl Beery and Ron Steiner (Rittman, OH), and Doug Harmon (Toledo, OH).

Our hospital patients have been Bro. Joe Grossenbacher, who has recovered and is assembling with us; and Sis. Olga Trostle, and we pray for her speedy recovery.

We wish to thank each of those who had done well in their terms to fill positions, and are now rotating off. The Sunday School Superintendent position, which Bro. Steve Pamer has filled, will be occupied by Bro. Don Steidl; other Sunday School teachers fulfilling their terms are Bro. Todd Graf and Sis. Joanne Schar, and the new terms will be occupied by Bro. Glenn Greenbank and Sis. Esther Zsoldos. Bro. Mike Palitto is to complete the term vacated by Bro. Mike Walder, who as previously reported, moved into a new home near Smithville and is attending church there.

Sis. Alma Graf has done well in serving on the kitchen committee, and now that her term is finished, Sis. Lynell Palitto is coming on that committee. Bro. Tibor Zsoldos has finished his term as a trustee and Bro. Randy Miller will now assume trustee duties. Bro. Wayne Klotzle has fulfilled his term as an usher, and now Bro. Dan Reljin will take the position.

Our sympathy goes to Harold and Sis. Esther Fritz as their grandson, Brian Stingley, was killed in a vehicle accident. Brian, in driving, came upon a patch of ice. His parents are Dwain and Diane Stingley, to whom also our sympathy is extended.

OHIO, COLUMBUS**Nancy Banks**

The icy chill of winter winds are upon us. As our age increases, the thrill of winter blizzards and sub-zero temperatures decreases! The topic of conversation is the same in all of our visits with elderly brothers and sisters in faith and family members; the winter days and nights are long for those who cannot brave the snowdrifts and blasts of cold air. This winter, let's reach out to those who are confined to their homes because of cold weather and help with shopping, doctor appointments or just visits to help pass the time.

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

John 13:35

We were pleased to have ministering Bro. Ben and Sis. Michelle Wiegand and family (Philadelphia, PA) with us this month and are thankful for his willingness to share God's Word with us.

OHIO, JUNCTION**Sandra Manz**

"Now it is accomplished! I'm no longer mine." (Zion's Harp #209). We've had two baptisms this past month. Traveling all the way from Silverton, OR to be with us for the testimony and baptism of Rose Dietrich (Bro. Gus and Sis. Dorothy) was Elder Bro. Art Metz. Ministering Bros. Earl Gerber (Forrest, IL) and Larry Wenninger (Latty, OH) also took part in the weekend as we joyfully welcomed Sis. Rose to the fold on December 29. Then on January 19, Neil Stoller (Bro. Craig and Sis. Ruth, Latty, OH) became a soldier in the army of the Lord. Elder Bro. Ray Sinn and Bro. John Laukhuf (Latty, OH) were our visiting ministers. May our new brother and sister

find abundant grace to remain true and faithful. Our special thanks to the ministers, visitors, and all those who contributed to these blessed weekends.

Election results from our annual business meeting held January 8 were as follows: Bro. Gus Dietrich (Sis. Dorothy) replaces Bro. John Rose (Patricia) as trustee; Sis. Karen Manz (Bro. Lester) replaces Sis. Connie Manz (Bro. Don) on the kitchen committee; Bro. Warren Schlatter replaces Bro. Roger Manz (Lisa) as usher; Sis. Madeline Manz replaces Sis. Karen Manz on the World Relief sewing committee. We offer our support to these loved ones as they serve in their various capacities.

The world promotes expressions of love on Valentine's Day, which is nothing to be criticized. Aren't we, as children of God, thankful for the continual expressions of unconditional love found in the pages of the Bible? May His love warm your heart.

OHIO, LATTY**Joyce Klopfenstein****Kathy Sinn**

We enjoyed gathering on Wednesday evening, December 18, to listen to our Sunday School children singing and recite the blessed story of The Babe of Bethlehem. May these songs and verses sink deep into their hearts. As they reach the age of accountability, may these lessons serve as a guide in their lives to answer the call of Christ who walked to Calvary's brow.

We extend sympathy to the family of Bro. Henry Kipfer (Sis. Arvilla) at the time of his death. May Sis. Arvilla and his entire family circle feel God's comforting hand as they continue on striving to reach the heavenly shore.

Sis. Iva Stoller (Bro. Darl) spent

time in the hospital during the past month. May God grant her improved health in the coming days. Sis. Laura Dunham (Bro. Charles) also has been hospitalized during the past month. We pray for her health to improve. May the Lord give strength and courage to these brethren as their bodies mend.

We have commemorated several wedding anniversaries this month. Bro. Loren and Sis. Esther Stoller have served the Lord together for 50 years. Bro. Wayne and Sis. Dorothy Stoller have also kept their vows of faithfulness to each other for 50 years. Bro. Phil and Sis. Gloria Grant have been united as one for 25 years. May the Lord continue to bless and provide for these couples in the years to come.

On December 22, Bro. Mark Sinn (Elder Bro. Ray and Sis. Ann) and Sis. Diane Sinn (Silverton, OR, Bro. Otto and Sis. Marian) were announced to be married. May God richly bless this couple as they plan for their wedding and married life together. We sure look forward to having Sis. Diane in Latty.

On January 12, the wedding engagement of Bro. Tim Sinn (Bro. Walt and Sis. Renee) to Sis. Marlene Reinhard (Bro. Dan and Sis. Delores, Garden Grove, IA) was announced. We wish them God's richest blessings in the future. May He guide and direct them in the future as He has in the past.

As the Christmas season comes to a close and winter weather sets in, we say farewell to several couples who travel south for the winter months. May the Lord watch between us and bless each one during this time apart.

Prayers of comfort are extended to Sis. Marilyn Kipfer (Bro. Ephraim) and her family circle during their time of loss. As she lays her mother, Bonnie Peters, to rest, may God grant peace to her mind and

soul.

On January 1, we gathered to begin the new year with the Lord. Following this service, we held our annual business meeting, during which Elder Bro. Ray related to the church that throughout the year of 1996, we experienced 11 births, 5 deaths, 8 weddings, 4 converts, and 3 baptisms. We continue to pray for the families that these numbers involve. With the prayers, support and unity from the brethren, Lord willing, many more souls can be added to the fold, our homes can be strengthened, and peace can ever abide.

The results of the voting for open church offices were announced on January 5. The following brethren will be filling each position: Sunday School, Bro. Gary Sinn (Sis. Paulette); Sunday School, Sis. Wendy Williamson (Bro. Jason); Church Trustee, Bro. Bob Stoller; Fellowship Hall Trustee, Bro. Bob Sinn (Sis. Sheila); World Relief Sewing, Sis. Becky Schlatter (Bro. Tim); Kitchen Committee, Sis. Wanita Laukhuf (Bro. Dwain); and Fellowship Hall Scheduling, Bro. Jason Williamson (Sis. Wendy). May the Lord bless each person who will give of their time and talent during the coming year and those who have completed their term. Thanks for your time and effort that was a benefit to each one of us.

Bro. Eli and Sis. Janel Schlatter have welcomed home a new baby boy, Kory Jay. Big sister, Kristen, will now have a playmate! Grandparents are Bro. Joe and Sis. Elsie Schlatter and Aldean Price and the late Bob Price. May God grant wisdom in the raising of baby Kory.

Note of Thanks:

The family of Bro. Henry Kipfer wishes to thank everyone for the prayers, cards, gifts, love, and sympathy extended during the illness

and death of our dear husband and brother. May God bless you.

*Sis. Arvilla Kipfer
Brothers and Sisters*

**OHIO, MANSFIELD
Cari Mann**

"All the brethren greet you. Greet ye one another with an holy kiss."

I Cor. 16:20

Almost every Sunday now, we have the privilege of greeting Sis. Ella Harmon who has moved here from Phoenix, AZ to be closer to her family. We are blessed to have her with us and pray that she feels at home here.

January 4 brought much rejoicing to the household of Bro. Chuck and Sis. Tammy Beer, for in the early hours of the morning, their second son, Wade Charles, was born. Big brother, Wesley, and big sister, Johanna, are looking forward to the time when their brother can play with them. Thankful grandparents are Bro. Ken and Sis. Jane Hartzler (Smithville, OH) and Bro. Joel and Sis. Sue Beer. May this new baby bring as much joy to their lives as his older siblings have.

One afternoon as I sat in the crowded waiting room of the doctor's office, a lady and her small daughter came in. The little girl immediately waved to the man in the chair across from her, bringing a smile to his face. The mother was only stopping in for a minute, but by the time she was ready to leave, her precious blessing had walked around the room and said "Hi" to each one seated there. As she brought a smile to each face of those who were not feeling well, the thought came that she was a little piece of heaven right here on earth for she had brightened the world of

several people that day, even if only for an instant. Do we as "Christians" brighten the world of those around us? Do we encourage each person we meet with a bright heart-warming smile? Do we try to lift someone's spirit who may be feeling a little low? As we consider these questions, may each one of us strive to brighten the life of at least one other person today.

**OHIO, RITTMAN
Carla Stoller
Michelle Dotterer**

Our congregation is rejoicing because another soul has turned unto the Lord in repentance. We certainly wish Barry Winkler (Bro. Andy and Sis. Mary Jane) much grace and strength to walk this new and better way of life.

On Christmas Day, Anna Marie was born to Greg and Sis. Peggy Tieche. Her sisters, Kelly, Sarah, Rachel, Ruth, Abigail, Rebecca and Mary, welcomed her home. Anna's grandparents are Miriam Tieche and Bro. Andrew and Sis. Lillian Maibach.

In the past weeks we've been privileged with visiting ministers. May God bless Bros. Randy Gasser (Detroit, MI) and Glenn Riggensbach (Smithville, OH) and Elder Bro. Ken Indermuhle (Sardis, OH) for their labors.

Bro. Ernest and Sis. Pauline Hartzler recently celebrated their 61st wedding anniversary. A card shower was organized for their special day.

On January 5, there was an appreciation singing at the Fellowship Hall for Bro. Bob and Sis. Inez Ramsier for administrating the Apostolic Christian Home for 20 years. We are so thankful for their dedication and hard work over the years.

Those hospitalized recently are Bro. Willard Steiner, Sis. Martha

Koehler, Sis. Luann Musser (Bro. Mike), Sis. Brenda Zollinger (Bro. Rudy) and Haylee Fugate (Dan and Amy). We certainly wish them all a speedy recovery.

Our prayers are with the family of Bro. Homer Hartzler who passed away recently. May God give comfort to his sister, Sis. Bertha Gasser, and to his brother, Bro. Vernon Hartzler, and to all those acquainted with him.

The brothers and sisters voted in this year for positions are: trustee - Rob Stoller; kitchen help - Karen Riggerbach; Nursing Home Auxiliary - Shirley Rufener; usher - Doug Ingold; fellowship hall director - Dan Rufener; song leader - Ron Gasser. A special thanks to those who labored in the past year. May the Lord bless those in the coming year as well.

OHIO, SARDIS Joy Indermuhle

"O list to the story that never grows old, Its tidings of joy repeat." (Hymns of Christmas #31). We had the privilege, once again, to hear the children and young adults bring forth the Christmas story through songs and poems. Their efforts were appreciated by every one.

Though the flu and cold weather have kept some at home, we are glad all seem to be getting better and are able to assemble with us once again.

"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

I John 1:7

We are thankful for those who came to be among us in the past month. It always brings joy to our hearts and uplifts us to have visiting brethren in our midst. May God

bless each one who made the effort to come our way.

OHIO, SMITHVILLE

Edith Miller - Julie Maibach

We are always thankful to have visiting ministers. This month, Bros. Mark Ramsier (Sardis, OH), Ron Palitto (Akron, OH), Marvin Dotterer (Forrest, IL), Larry Weninger (Latty, OH), and John Stoller (Leo, IN) shared God's Word with us. May God bless them in their ministry.

Completely yielding our all to God's perfect will is probably one of the most difficult things a Christian must do, and yet also one of the most important things.

Here I bring within my trembling hands,
This will of mine, a thing that seemeth small,
Yet Thou alone, O Lord, canst understand
How when I yield Thee this, I yield mine all.
—Unknown

Our thoughts and our prayers are with Bro. Scott Stoller (Sis. Charlene). Bro. Scott is in the hospital with serious injuries from a farm accident. Our prayer and plea to our Heavenly Father is that Bro. Scott will feel God's healing mercies and that he will have strength, faith and courage for each day.

OHIO, TOLEDO Rebecca Beard Edie Fetter

"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."
Galatians 6:2

There are many ways we can bear each other's burdens, and we are thankful that opportunities are given to us. Service to God's chil-

dren always brings a blessing, both to those who give and to those who receive. Bro. Mark Masters (Mansfield, OH) and his family were recent visitors to our congregation. We appreciated his willing service as we shared the instruction of the Word together.

OREGON, PORTLAND

Mary Berg - Louisa Gallup

We rejoice with Ken and Camie Knecht at the birth of their first child. Jessica Marie was born on January 7. We wish Ken and Camie God's blessings and His guidance as they raise their little girl. Grandparents are Bro. Ed and Sis. Judie Knecht (Silverton, OR) and Randy and Linda Plummer from Clackamas, OR.

We thank our visitors who made the effort to worship with us this past month; especially ministering brethren, Elder Bro. Art Metz (Sis. Betty) and Bro. Ed Knecht (Sis. Judie), both of Silverton, who shared the Word with us.

Note of Thanks:

We wish to express our gratitude to all for the cards, prayers, kind words and sympathy after the passing away of our mother, Mignon Gallup. It helped us through a sad time.

Bro. Mark and Sis. Louisa Gallup

OREGON, SILVERTON Peggy Schulz

On December 22, we rejoiced with Sis. Diane Sinn and Bro. Mark Sinn as their betrothal was made known to us. Their parents are Bro. Otto and Sis. Marian Sinn and Elder Bro. Ray and Sis. Ann Sinn of Latty, OH. We wish them the Lord's blessings and guidance as they make plans for a June wedding.

Little Jessica Marie was wel-

came into the lives of Kenny and Camie Knecht on January 7. As first-time parents, there will be lots of new experiences and decisions, but we pray the Lord will give them much wisdom in raising this precious little soul. Her happy grandparents are Bro. Ed and Sis. Judie Knecht and Randy and Linda Plummer.

We are thankful to have Bro. Carl Schmid back with us after becoming ill while visiting family and friends in Illinois. We're glad his stay in the hospital was a short one. May the Lord continue to strengthen him.

Once again our hearts rejoiced on January 12, as it was announced that Jason and Colette Snook, through a true repentance and conversion, have found peace with God. We look forward to hearing their testimonies. May the Lord continue to provide His grace and strength as they continue in their service to the Lord. We rejoice also with their parents, Vance and Sis. Liz Snook and Elder Bro. Wayne and Sis. Kathy Fehr (West Bend, IA).

Note of Thanks:

Beloved Brethren, Family and Friends,

Thank you for your prayers and letters of love and concern for my illness. They mean so much to me. The Lord's plan is perfect for each of us. Let us continue to trust and rejoice in Him.

*With Love in Christ,
Sis. Shirley Sinn*

**PENNSYLVANIA,
PHILADELPHIA
Franz Soni**

"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;"

Titus 2:13

We pray for Sis. Kathy Clough (John) who recently has been ill. May God work His healing powers upon her.

Tyler Lanz (Bro. John and Sis. Kay) has turned his heart to the Lord. May God guide him as he begins his new walk of life.

A group of brethren and friends visited area nursing homes during Christmas and sang Christmas carols for the residents.

We held our annual business meeting on Sunday, January 12. We are fortunate in having so many who give of themselves to keep the church operating.

Bro. Barry Steffen (Washington, D.C.) and Sis. Doreen Gudeman (Philadelphia) were joined in Holy Matrimony in Francesville, IN on Sunday, January 5. We pray that they may enjoy many years of happiness together in the Lord. "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

**TENNESSEE, NASHVILLE
Gwen Leuthold**

February is the month that thoughts turn toward expressions of love one toward another in celebration of Valentine's Day. Expressions of love and thoughtfulness on this day usually center around gifts, flowers, candy, dinner, etc.

In thinking of expressions of love, my thoughts turned to God's love and how He expresses His love to us. First came thoughts of God sending His only Son to live and eventually die for the sins of the whole world, thus creating the way and plan of salvation.

"In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and

sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

I John 4:9-10

God also sends His love to us by providing and surrounding us with loving family members and friends. God places these special people in our lives for many reasons among which are to love us and help us during trying times. Our church family is also another blessing and way God sends His love to us. We feel love flow from one to another every time we assemble together in His house of worship! Church family members can also give us help and encouragement as we journey toward Heaven.

"Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God."

I John 4:7

Through the creation of nature, God also portrays His love to us. When we view God's beautiful creation, we can truly catch a glimpse of His Almighty power.

God also expresses His love to us (if we are His children) by giving us the Holy Spirit to guide and help us. He has also given us the Holy Bible as a roadmap for our lives. Through His Word, He will talk to us and lovingly remind us that He cares for us and is just a prayer away. He even allows trials to come into our lives so that we may be strengthened. When we fail, we can go to our Father and ask for forgiveness.

In conclusion, God shows His love to us in innumerable ways and is continually expressing His love to us even when at times we do not deserve it. We truly serve a great God!

Ministering brothers this past month have been Bros. Marvin Stieglitz (Leo, IN) and Mike Rieker

(Peoria, IL). Other visitors were from Goodfield, IL; Lexington, KY; and St. Louis, MO. We thank all of you for worshipping with us. May you all feel God's love and blessings every day as all of us continue our walk toward Heaven.

We welcome you to visit us in Nashville. Upcoming services are planned for March 2 (Washington, IL); March 16 (Francesville, IN); April 6 (Bluffton North, IN); and April 20 (Ft. Scott, KS). Please contact one of the phone numbers following if you do plan to worship with us: Bro. 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).

TEXAS, CENTRAL AREA

Lois Gray

We rejoice with our new Bro. David and Sis. Shella Brummitt. They gave their testimonies and were baptized December 28 and 29 at Bloomington, IL. Bro. David is the son of the late Sis. Karen Brummitt and the late Dave Brummitt. His grandparents are Bro. Alpha and Sis. Lillian Witzig (Eureka, IL, formerly of Gridley, IL). Sis. Shella's father is Mucio Alcocer of San Angelo, TX.

Our thanks to Elder Bro. Ken Sauder and Sis. Sue (Mansfield, OH) who visited and ministered to us December 29. Services were held at the home of Everett and Sis. Dorothy Martin, Universal City, TX.

Due to the holidays, road conditions and other factors, our schedule was altered considerably this past month. Visitors are urged to please check in advance regarding possible schedule changes.

Our schedule is planned as fol-

lows: Dallas holds services the first Sunday of the month. Central TX services are held the last Sunday at the home of Bro. Bill Zeltwanger in Round Top. The Sundays in between services are held in Austin at the Omni Hotel at I35 and Hwy 71 at 10:30 a.m. and 12:00 noon. Contact persons are Bill Zeltwanger (409) 249-5102 and Terri and Brian Kaisner (512) 338-4222.

Visitors are welcome and much appreciated.

TEXAS, DALLAS

Dee Rapp

As the calendar turns to February, valentines and angels come to mind.

In studying Scriptures, there are many references to angels and they leave us with questions like, "Where do angels fit into God's big picture?" Psalm 8:5 says, "For thou hast made him (man) a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour." So angels are created beings who fall somewhere between God and man.

Other questions you might ask are, "What do angels look like?" or "What do angels do?" What they look like is not clearly defined. What they do is mentioned in various places. Many times we speak of our guardian angel and perhaps are tempted to thank him for his protection. In reality it is God we should thank for His wonderful blessings in our lives, not the angel God sent to do His will. Angels told men, "Do not worship me - worship God!"

We can certainly thank God for the ministry of angels in our lives but they should never be the focus of our attention or devotion. That place of honor should be reserved for the Lord alone.

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 12:00 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 12:00 noon. Contacts are: Bro. Howard and Sis. Dee Rapp at (792) 867-4074 or Bro. Bill Zeltwanger at (409) 249-5102.

TEXAS, ZAPATA

Viola Perdelwitz

Melva Messner

"The Christian's armor will rust except it be burnished with the oil of prayer." How wonderful that we have the avenue of prayer! Regardless who we are, whether the elite or the beggar, God hears our prayers.

We were blessed with visiting ministers this month. Bro. Dean Messner, his wife, Sis. Wanda, and family (Winthrop, MN) and Elder Bro. Ken Sauder and wife, Sis. Sue (Mansfield, OH), brought God's Word to us.

Sis. Delores Messerli (Bro. Cornelius) was a hospital patient. We are pleased to have her assemble with us again.

Sunday, we heard how important parts of the body are needed for the makeup of the physical body. Likewise, how important the members are that make up the spiritual body!

We also heard that charity is God's love in action. Are we partaking?



Silver Threads

A Special Child

I heard today of a couple in one of our churches who have been blessed with a special needs child. My heart went out to them as we have also been blessed with a child challenged in the same way. How alone we have felt at times in our experience, as often friends and family can't fully understand the unique needs, feelings, and ramifications of parenting a special needs child. Indeed, we didn't prior to our daughter's birth.

I pray these parents feel love, support, and acceptance in their circle. I know their brethren want to support them, yet perhaps feel somewhat helpless from inexperience. In hopes of helping the family of Christ more effectively serve the special needs families within it, I thought I'd share some insights from our experience and experiences other parents of handicapped children have shared with me. I know I don't have all the answers or wisdom on this topic - only God does - yet perhaps this will be a start.

1) God does not make mistakes. We are all designed with a plan and purpose. The special needs child is therefore worthy of a warm enthusiastic welcome to this life. As our daughter's grandma said upon visiting her at the hospital, "She deserves rejoicing at her birth." It warmed this mother's heart!

2) While acknowledging the joy of a blessing from God, reality is, there are a lot of unknowns and challenges ahead. Denying it helps none. Do not attempt to squelch the grieving process the family is experiencing. It is the loss of expectations. The parents expected a healthy child, and now in the midst of the loss, are adjusting to the child who did arrive.

3) Don't expect to find words that will make everything right. Often people choose not to approach the family after the special needs of the child are made known due to loss for words. We, the family, don't need eloquence or wisdom - just a hug or sim-

ple words of caring.

4) Don't forget them on your knees. Pray. Keep praying with the passing of time. Ask the family how you can pray for them. Time changes needs.

5) Ask the family how you can help and to ask for help if need arises. There will be appointments with specialists, perhaps financial needs, a need for a sympathetic ear, etc.

6) Ask about how things are going with the child and in general. But please, don't ask if you only want to hear "good news". Parents find it hurtful if you abruptly end the conversation when the going is tough.

7) Pray that God will give you a love and acceptance for the special needs child. Often there are behavioral issues with these children that require loving guidance and patience. Sometimes less than lovely or inappropriate behavior takes a long time and much effort to redirect or curtail. Pray for wisdom and sensitivity in responding as rejection in even the subtlest ways hurts child and parents.

8) Talk to your children about the child's special needs. Explain to them it is an opportunity to help the weak as we are instructed to do by God. Encourage them to include the child in play and conversation.

9) Be practical in your help - babysit siblings during appointments, cook a meal, offer respite care. Babysitters are hard to find and special needs parents really need time off together. Be creative and once again, ask!

10) Be aware of partiality. These children often have few friends, seldom get invited for play dates, parties, or other outings. even if the special needs child isn't fully aware of this fact (often they are), the parents are aware and they feel it.

11) Rejoice over the special needs child's accomplishments. They often put forth volumes of effort in comparison to other children to accomplish the same tasks. Encourage

success. Don't do for the child what they are capable of doing for themselves.

12) Weary not in well doing. I was warned by a sister in faith, who is also mother to a handicapped child, to prepare for an eventual decline in support. Life goes on, people get busy, and forget. The newness wears off and I've wondered if the fact it's a lifetime of needs discourages others. Alas, challenges continue and sometimes they get harder with the passing of time. The parents may seem to be coping better yet there are still hurdles to jump, losses to experience, the unknown to deal with and tears to be shed.

Appreciate the child for the unique gifts God has given them and praise God for them. Our daughter, for example, has the obvious gifts of appreciation (she's usually the first with a thank you), unconditional love for others, and perseverance (yes, it serves her well). Another child may have the gift of the need to be served, thereby blessing others with opportunity to give of themselves. You may find it helpful to acknowledge their gifts as they are often well aware of their challenges.

Remember siblings. Often with the attention a special needs child requires, siblings may feel slighted.

I hope these ideas will help you reach out to the special needs families among us. We are called to be servants of all. At times, our Christian walk calls us to do things outside of our comfort zone or tasks that are not convenient. I encourage you to be willing to be a blessing to the handicapped. God will ultimately reward you in return.

submitted by a Sister in Faith



Sermon continued from page 2

need them next week for food or something." She could have kept them in her pocket or her purse, but she was willing to share also what she had.

It is really important. It tells us in the Scriptures that the poor are with us always. It is important that we remember that they are with us, but what is this generation going to do with the poor? We need to share our wealth with them and be kind to them and love them also.

So, it is really important that the Word of God includes these two verses in the Scripture. It is really important in my heart that they have been preserved for our benefit in this day.

"And as some spake of the temple, how it as adorned with goodly stones and gifts," (Luke 21:5). Just like a new building that looks so pretty and so clean, the temple was that way also. Jesus reminded them that some day there would not be left one stone upon another. I think that is how our life is also. As we spend our time here upon this earth in a building, a home or whatever earthly possession we have, someday they will be as nothing. They will be of no value to us.

As we have the opportunity to build them, we give God the credit and recognize that without Him we can do nothing and with Him we have the hope of everything—and life eternal!

"And they asked him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be? and what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass? And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived:" (Luke 21:7-8). That is really important in our day, that we take heed that we are not deceived.

If we want to see how we are doing, we need to go to the Word of God. If we want to see how our spiritual life is here upon this earth, we need to go to the Word of God. We do not compare with our neighbors or friends or someone in a different country.

We need to go to the Word of God to see how we are doing so we are not deceived. The Word of God is so

plain and so true and so easy for us to comprehend if we are in the right spirit. We want to be in the right spirit so we can comprehend that.

It is kind of like the parable of the fig tree here. When we look in the spring of the year, we can see the first buds coming out or we see the first blooms on the apple tree. Then we think of the nice apples that we got off that tree last year and hope that in the fall, there will be apples on the tree again this year so that we can partake of them. He compares it with a fig tree here and all the trees that when they shoot forth those buds, we know that summer is at hand.

"So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand." (Luke 21:31). I think sometimes we have to recognize the kingdom of God as we walk here upon earth and think about our own life. We wonder how the kingdom of God is.

We just have to look around. We need to stop and pause a minute and look around at all the blessings and all the miracles that happen in our midst. We have to recognize that God did that...that was God's hand that did that!

It was not a man or something that we did on our own, but it was God that did that. He can preserve a person when we think there is no hope left in a soul. He can take that soul and turn that soul around and that soul can be born again, anew, out of water and spirit!

We can see a terrible tragedy in the world and even in our own church as we can see the healing and the opportunity that that person has to mend and become as he was. We just have to look to God and recognize those things that He has given unto us. They are from Him and by Him, and without Him, there is nothing.

It said here, "So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall

not pass away." (Luke 21:31-33).

The Word that was preached there in the little country church north of town, that Word is still here today. It is still the same Word that the brothers use as they stand here on this pulpit in this church. It is a rock. It holds us. It tells us that it is the same yesterday, today and always will be the same. It is what guides us, leads us and directs us every day that we live here.

"And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares." (Luke 21:34). That verse is so important for us today, regardless if we are young, old, middle aged or wherever we fit, even if we are just a child in a mother's arms this morning.

That verse is so important to us so we would not be overtaken by the cares of this life. We should not be overtaken to the extent that we would not recognize the signs of the times. We should not allow the world to overtake us unaware that we slip or fall or come short of the glory of God.

"For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." (Luke 21:36-37).

We might be able to stand before Him when we depart out of this life. We realize that the only thing that is important in our life, the only thing that is important to you and to me is that on the great and notable day when we stand before our great God, that we be worthy to enter into that eternal Home.

So it is in our life, that we would take our life and compare it to this Word, so this Word might direct us. It tells us in the Word here, and it is so precious, "But there shall not an hair of your head perish." (Luke 21:18)

If we are true and faithful unto Him, if we have followed the Word of God, if we have done that which

is required of us in the Scriptures to repent of our sins and allow the Lord to convert us, then we will have a clean heart and an indwelling of the Holy Spirit. If we can maintain that Spirit within our heart every day that we live here upon this earth, if we can maintain that Spirit so it would be fed and cared for and nourished within our heart, if we go forth through our life maintaining that condition, the Lord will bless us and care for us and watch over us. Not a hair of our head will perish.

It says here, "In your patience, possess ye your souls." (Luke 21:19). Patience is such a precious gift. I wish I had more patience. Some of us are impatient and we really have to work on being patient.

I have to reflect back on some of the older brothers and older sisters that are with us and those who have gone on to their reward, and think how it seemed like they were really patient. It seemed like they really had the patience that I need. I am sure through the years of serving a great God that they have increased in patience. So, I just hope that I, too, can increase in patience.

It says, "In your patience, possess ye your souls." (Luke 21:19). Humbly, submitting ourselves to the Lord God, realizing that if we do not get it all done today, God will give us another day that we can maybe finish the job that we are trying to accomplish. If He does not give us another day, it makes no difference. But only if He gives us another day, then we can go ahead and finish that particular project.

It says here that "Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven." (Luke 21:10-11).

We can see that there are wars

and rumors of wars throughout our country and our world that we live in today. We can see that there are places with famines, pestilence, disease and fearful sights. We can see those happening before us.

"But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake." (Luke 21:12). We know there are trials and tribulations. We know that there are those who are persecuted because they are Christians in the world that we live in today.

We know that God is with us and God will take care of us. We have that faith, we have that belief, and we are on that solid rock that we love Him and have dedicated our life to serve Him.

"Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer: For I will give you a mouth of wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist." (Luke 21:14-15). It seems that sometimes we are questioned about this or questioned about that, then God gives us the Word. We just have to think of our great God and just put our trust in Him. He will care for us.

When young people go to college away from home, they are faced with different situations than they have had in their life before. Many of them tell us how the Lord helped them, how the Lord gave them strength and gave them wisdom.

"And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken." (Luke

21:25-26). We haven't seen that yet, have we?

We have not seen that to the extent when the powers of heaven will be shaken. But it tells us in the prophecy that that will happen. We know the outcome. That is what is really important. We can dwell upon those things that are going to happen, but we know the outcome already.

It tells us the outcome is going to be that God is going to be the winner! God is going to prevail! The devil is going to be taken and be chained and thrown into the bottomless pit. He is going to be there for a thousand years.

Whose side do we want to be on? We want to be on God's side. We want to be with Him! We want to be in the heavens above where there will be no more sun, but the Son of God will bring forth the light. The streets will be paved with gold. A place beyond words to describe.

Only the overcomers will be there. May each one of us apply the Word of God to our heart, that we can be an overcomer and be able to enter into that eternal Home. May there be no question in our life, but that we have dedicated our life to serving our great God. We should thank Him every day for life and breath that He would afford us to be one of His children. To be a child of God, there is no higher standing, nothing better, nothing greater, nothing even close than to be a child of God.

May each one of us allow the Spirit of God to work in our hearts every day that we have life and breath, so that when we are laid in the coffin in the bosom of the earth, there would be no question that we have overcome the world. May the Lord grant each one of us grace sufficient to be able to enter in.



Faith of our Fathers

Martyrdom of the Twelve Apostles (cont.)

Our hearts feel so heavy when we witness the faith that has been the lot of our fore fathers. To understand the future, we must first know the past. The Bible teaches that there is no new thing under the sun and it is easy to see why the past repeats itself and the inhabitants of earth keep making the same mistakes over and over.

Only after the quiet last 400 years BC did an occurrence happen which would shape the spiritual and physical laws of the world. The birth of Christ, the King of Kings, Hosanna, our Lord and Saviour, would go on to be one event that would never again be repeated. It is with humility and thanksgiving that we reflect upon the precious gift God gave to mankind, which was a sacrifice to end the Old Testament shedding of blood. Our Lord taught for just 3 years before He gave up His life on earth as a human, however He left us the greatest of doctrines the world had ever known. He also shed His blood as the perfect sacrifice so mankind would have a hope of Salvation through God's grace.

Many were the believers who followed Christ at the beginning of the 3 years of preaching, but faint heartedness caused many to back off as the going got tough. The Church of that time threatened those, who espoused a belief in the new found faith, with excommunication and expulsion.

After the Crucifixion, Christ spoke, "wait for the promise of the Father, which, ye have heard of Me." Only an hundred and twenty gathered in the upper hall and

waited for that promise. What promise did they wait for? They waited for another precious gift of God, which was the Holy Ghost. God's Spirit came in the form of a tongue of fire to begin the dispensation of Grace. The Holy Ghost, (*All modern versions of the Bible have changed the precious words of "The Holy Ghost" to "The Holy Spirit"*) which is God in the form of a Spirit, that has left the body of God, by God's willingness, to dwell in the sin free and cleansed body of man. It is the still small voice of the Holy Ghost that speaks to man's heart when spiritual danger approaches and also when we need comfort. The Lord spoke these words in Acts just before He went up to Heaven. "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." *Acts 1:8*

Many converts quickly came to the faith taught by Christ and preached by the Apostles. We are humbled as we look back on those years after our Lord's crucifixion and try to see in our heart how the true believer struggled against the Jews, Saul of Tarsus, the Roman government, the State Church, and other pagans who loved the way of the world more than they did the love of God. Because of this faith in God, many were convicted of their sinful ways and struck out with murderous hearts and hideous death sentences. It is of these trials we want all to understand so we would never forget how our faith grew inspite of or maybe because of the fiery trial of Martyrdom.

Let us now continue by the grace of God to place in all our hearts the martyrdom of the Apostles and our fathers.

Bartholomew

Bartholomew, a Galilean and a fisherman, was called by Jesus to serve his God as an Apostle. The Bible seems to be somewhat quiet of this Apostle, however if the history laid down by Polycarp, a disciple of the Apostle John, and others contemporary to that time is correct, and we believe it is, then we can see the humble greatness of this dear Apostle. He spread the gospel far and near, finally reaching the country of Armenia. There through his preaching and the grace of God, many including the King's brother, the King's wife, his two sons, and a daughter were converted to the faith. He moreover, as is stated by others, delivered from idolatry, twelve cities in that country, in which the devil was worshipped through the idol Ashtaroth. It was the priests of that idol that complained to the King and Bartholomew was apprehended to stand before an angry Astayages.

When Bartholomew stood before the king, the latter upbraided him, that he had perverted his country. He therefore threatened him with death, unless he would desist preaching Christ and sacrifice to the king's gods. Bartholomew replied that he did not pervert the king's family, but rather was only instrumental in their conversion. However, rather than denouncing his Saviour, Bartholomew stood firm in his faith. The pronouncement of death by severe torture was made upon Bartholomew. He was beaten with rods and finally hanged upside down on a cross and beheaded. This having been done unto him, he was reunited with Christ, his Lord.

Thomas

Thomas, surnamed Didymus, also was a native of Galilee and a fisherman. His love and ardent affection for Christ appears from the fact that he exhorted his brethren to go up to Jerusalem, that they might die with Christ.

Thomas was given the ministry to travel through the lands of Ethiopia, Parthia, and India. Concerning the end of Thomas we can read that he was first tortured with red hot metal plates and then cast into the flaming furnace. Those that stood by seen that the fire hurt him not and so with spears and javelins they pierced him through. Jerome, another historian of that time, states that they removed his body from out of the fire, and buried him in the same place where he gave up the Holy Ghost and went on to be with the Lord.

Matthew

Matthew, also called Levi, was a publican or a tax gatherer. He was despised by the Jews because they did not feel bound to pay taxes to any foreign prince or king. However when Christ in love called Matthew into the ministry, the latter quickly left all and followed Christ.

Matthew was sent out to teach among the heathen of Ethiopia. However before leaving to teach in Ethiopia, he by the grace of God wrote the Gospel according to Matthew in the Hebrew language and



Matthew, Beheaded at Naddavar

left it to them. His ministry in Ethiopia was fruitful and under King Aeglippus gained much for the Lord. However upon the death of Aeglippus, who was attached to the Christians, his successor Hytacus, an unbelieving heathen, caused Matthew to be apprehended. It is written that he was martyred by being nailed to the ground and beheaded in the capital city of Naddavar. That is where we believe he is buried, for Venantius Fortunatus wrote over a thousand years ago, "For the great city Naddavar shall restore to us at the last day the eminent apostle Matthew."

Simon Zelotes and his brother Judas Thaddeus

Simon and his brother Judas Thaddeus were both slain for the truth of Christ. Simon traveled through Egypt, Cyrene, Africa, Mauritania, throughout Lybia, and in the islands of Great Britain, where he preached the gospel of Christ. Finally after preaching in England, Simon went to Persia

where he met up with his brother Judas. Of Simon it is said that he was crucified in a very painful way by a certain governor of Syria.

As regards Simon's brother Judas, nothing is said of him in Evangelical history; only there is mention made of a question which he asked the Lord Jesus, saying how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? It was this Apostle that wrote the Epistle of Jude, which is a very comforting letter to the believers, in which he admonishes them to remain steadfast in the faith once received; and threatens the unbelievers with the severe judgment of God.

In accordance with the division of the world made by the Apostles for the preaching of the Gospel, he traveled throughout Mesopotamia, Syria, Arabia and as far as Edessa. Finally having gone to Persia, he reproved and opposed the pagan idolatry; on which account he was beaten to death by the idolatrous priests, who were losing their gain.

Simon Zelotes and his brother were killed towards the close of the persecution of Nero, or about 70 AD.

The faithful converts were planted as seeds across the known world in the first century and in a quiet way maintained the faith of our fathers so that in due time a reformation could take place.

Next month:

The Martyrdom of John the beloved Apostle.





REMEMBERING

Our Spiritual Heritage

Toward A Better Land

The spiritual renewal that was born in Europe in the 1830's was destined to find its way to America.

The young church established by Samuel Froehlich was only 15 or so years old when it began to gravitate westward across the Atlantic ocean. Initially, Bro. Froehlich was hesitant to encourage emigration to the United States. He thought the Lord's coming was imminent. He finally consented, however, when state church harassment persisted to a very frustrating extent.

A major benefit for the new American church was that it retained its first generation fervor and dedication. That is, the newly established church in Switzerland and adjacent areas was a little more than a decade old by 1847—and had been growing significantly due to the Spirit's power. The initial zeal was powerfully intact when brothers and sisters came to America.

In understanding how our forefathers and foremothers came to America, it must be realized they came here after Christianity had been well established. A two-century presence of various spiritual thought and practice had existed.

Denominational pursuits—previous to ours—were varied. A study of Colonial America confirms that a multitude of Christian organizations had expended enormous efforts to “spread” Christian influence. The American ideal of religious toleration had bred a mosaic of diversity that exists yet today.

In America, as in Europe, our people were minded to live the Christian life without compromise. Recognizing the Word as the final rule of faith and

life, they strove to protect the faith from being diluted. So fervent was their discovery of Christian truth and renewal that they did not wish to communicate with anything that was substandard or varied from what the Scriptures taught. The concept of separating truth from untruth was very much alive in their hearts (as it is today).

The setting for our faith coming to the United States was the result of a request to the brethren in Switzerland from a group of Mennonites in upstate New York (Lewis County). A schism had developed in their group that had apparently become unsolvable. This was 1847.



A man in the Mennonite group who had previously been a part of the Froehlich movement in Europe suggested they write to Samuel Froehlich and invite him to America to help them. This man, a Mr. Bence, was very likely as accountable as anyone for our church coming to America. He is referred to in a local history, *Strangers and Pilgrims* by Arlene Yousey (page 48).

On receiving the letter from the New York Mennonites, Bro. Froehlich called a brother meeting in Switzerland to discuss this request. He did not come to America himself (and never did subsequently), but instead the brethren dispatched a young tailor, Benedict Weyeneth of Langnau, age 29 and single, to America to address the Mennonite concerns. He was ordained as Elder especially for

this purpose.

There is documentation to confirm Bro. Weyeneth's visit. He went into the Mennonite church and spoke with confidence and boldness. An account is given in *A History of the Mennonites in Lewis County, New York* by Arletha Zehr Bender on page 11: “A little different teaching unfamiliar to the Amish Mennonite people was introduced. One change pertained to the New Birth experience. They also subscribed to the doctrine of baptism by immersion rather than pouring.” Author Yousey confirms Bro. Weyeneth's presence in Lewis County (page 48) where she writes that he preached, “Repent and be baptized every one of you.”

Thus, the truth of repentance and conversion, and becoming a new creature in Christ Jesus, was introduced. No doubt the message was spoken with fervor from the Holy Spirit. About half of the Mennonite group responded affirmatively to this message. They followed Bro. Weyeneth to establish our first church in America. Minister Rudolph Virkler was the first one to leave the Mennonite church. Bishop Joseph Farney followed two years later. From this, our church(s) in Lewis County, New York (Croghan and Naumberg) were formed.

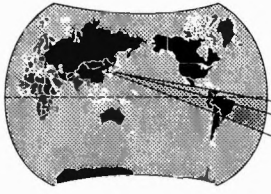
By: Perry A. Klopfenstein

Next issue:

Part III, Planting the Seeds

The Light Of Hope

From Across The Ocean



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“A Split Mountain”

Elder Bro. Willis Ehnle, Shioda, Japan

When the Lord Jesus Christ returns, the mount of Olives will split down the middle. This is an unusual event but we read, “And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.” (Zechariah 14:4)

I’m sorry to complicate things for you, but did you notice that the mountain will cleave or split toward the east and toward the west, but then the two halves will move toward the north and toward the south? This should show that God has His hand in it—it is very unnatural.

In I Thess. we read, “Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” No mention is made here of

Christ coming to the surface of the earth. It may be that He will come only as far as the clouds at this time and then come later with the saints to set up His reign on earth for a thousand years. Zechariah did write, “and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee.” (14:5)

At the beginning of this same verse we read, “And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains.” This gives me the feeling of a place of refuge in the valley, similar to the cities of refuge spoken of in Numbers 35:6, “There shall be six cities for refuge.”

You may be facing a mountain of problems but spiritually speaking, if God’s Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, sets His feet upon it, it will split down the middle and the two halves will move in opposite directions so it cannot close over you again. Furthermore, a valley of refuge will be formed where you can rest. If this mountain has prevented your repentance, you will be able to repent. The Holy Spirit will break the power

of Satan over you and cause you to see that repentance is a very wonderful thing and that we should all realize that we are nothing of ourselves. Best of all, in the valley of refuge, you will recognize Christ for who He is, the Son of the Living God. Through Him and the Holy Spirit whom He pours upon us, we can go right through the mountains of problems because they are split and the halves are moved in opposite directions.

If you are a true believer, your mountain may not prevent repentance, but it may prevent you from recognizing any purpose in life. If the Lord puts His feet upon that mountain, surely it will be removed because everyone around us needs a friend and needs the power of the Holy Spirit to live a modest, holy and wonderful life.

I do not know when Christ will come again. While waiting, I’m going to try to persuade Him to move some of these other mountains.

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Fort Sam Houston -Texas 1983

From the late 1940's throughout the Vietnam conflict, services were held in this small building on a regular basis. Brothers in the service of our Country would meet loved ones on Sunday and ministers from far and near would attend to help with the services.

It was a joy and release from being away from home, when families would pack up and drive to Fort Sam. Soldier boys would meet incoming brethren and family and share what meager means they had to extend a wonderful welcome.

There are a number of Fort Sam Reunions that meet annually even to this day. Many are the memories of the "Quad" and the evening singings. Truly this little Church is remembered as an Oasis in a Dry Desert.

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