



The Silver Lining

The mountains melted from before the Lord

January 1998

“GOD LIGHTS OUR PATHWAY”

Sermon by Bro. John L. Steiner, Oakville, IA

Ezekiel 28 and Acts 4

We could go on and on as this is a continuous story that is contained in the Acts of the Apostles, loved ones. As we read the Word of God, as we did in this morning hour, we have the privilege of again being reminded of the power of God that is able to work among the children of men.

We see the success of the Word of God as it went forth. We read that there were upwards of five thousand who responded to the message of salvation. We would say, “What is happening today? Why is it not that we have that response in our time?”

But we only need to read further in the book of the Acts and see that Satan was not going to let this success continue unhindered. We can see how, then, there were disputations, struggles and there were many trials that the believers had to endure. They were then dispersed and even the apostles themselves had to go from place to place struggling against the enemies of the Word of God.

Loved ones, as we consider this work of salvation and the fact that we do have an enemy of our soul who is seeking to hinder the work even in our individual lives, let us take courage from the faith of the early apostles who by the power of God were able to endure the onslaughts of Satan.

This apostle Peter, as often as we consider his life and think upon his experiences, walking with Jesus, being with Him in the very beginning, called to be one of the early disciples, and how he was so determined to walk in the ways of the Lord. Yet he was not able, in the early days, to be successful because he was not yet converted. Yet he had that determi-

nation. God permitted him to go through struggles and trials to fit him for this work and for this labor, even in that time when he denied the Lord three times. How distressful that must have been for his soul, and how refining was the fire that prepared him for the work that was ahead.

So it is in our individual lives, dear ones, after we have been converted and regenerated by the power of the blood of Jesus Christ, the Lord permits us as individuals to go through refining fire. We are told in the Scriptures, even in the beginning, not only would we be baptized with water but also with fire.

When trials come into our lives, if we are willing and submissive and permit it to have its good work, He can bring us through to the extent that we might be able to meet the adversary and find victory, ever having the goal before us of heaven and life eternal.

We look forward to the time when we shall join there with the Lord Jesus Christ, and be among those who have been the victors after having gone through the strife.

Peter, in response to the elders and the rulers of the people, after they had healed the man who was impotent, they were being confronted by these powers of the time as to how they had the authority to do such things.

Loved ones, that power to heal that impotent man is perhaps not the very same type of thing that we see today among us.

But in the spiritual vineyard and the labor that the Lord sends forth, the call unto souls unto repentance and conversion, we see the healing

power that comes into the lives of souls who find themselves in need.

This is the message that is the self same message that comes. He said “Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.” (Acts 4:10). That is the same power that becomes evident among us when souls are called and drawn unto repentance.

This power unto conversion is yet working among us today and thanks be to God that we can yet proclaim this message to one and all and be reminded of the power that has been experienced in our lives in times past and to be reminded of the change that has occurred in our lives.

As we walk upon the way, as we day by day tread the path of life and as we have been upon the way for a number of years, we can sometimes become a little complacent and somewhat forgetful of that change that came about in our lives, that

Sermon continued on page 46

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

Light From The Word



Writings based
on God's Word

January 1998

The Possibility of Falling From Grace

A very deceptive and dangerous doctrine that is supported by many professing Christians is the concept that is referred to as eternal security or once saved always saved.

These terms refer to a spiritual guarantee that once we have "accepted the Lord Jesus Christ" as our personal Saviour, then we are secure for all of eternity, regardless of lifestyle. For a converted person, one whose life has been completely changed, there is, of course, a wonderful feeling of security as we think about eternity. That feeling of security in Jesus Christ will remain with us as long as we walk with the Lord and do His will. In that sense, we can find "eternal security" in our salvation.

However, it is very important that as children of God we recognize that we can walk away from our salvation. If we allow ourselves to go places or engage in activities that expose us to danger, we are tempting God and giving Satan an opportunity to cause spiritual shipwreck. These unwholesome activities can weaken our resistance and may cause us to fall.

Numerous passages of scripture state clearly that it is possible for a child of God to return to sin. "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;" (I Tim. 4:1). "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee" (I Tim. 4:16).

Paul was instructing Timothy to be watchful of the false doctrine he would encounter that could deceive him and cause him to be careless. Several words in these passages are especially important - "depart" and "continue". Clearly we cannot depart from something we never had, nor can we "continue" something we have not begun. Therefore, we are sure that Paul was speaking to Timothy about converted people.

In the last days, there will be believers who will be convinced to turn away from Christ and return to sin. There will also be those who grow impatient for Christ's return. They will be deceived and will try

to convince others that the promises God made about Christ's return to claim his bride, the Church, are false. "...there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (II Pet. 3:3-4). We must patiently continue to "hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (Rev. 3:11).

In the Book of Revelation, John wrote about those who at one time had placed the Lord first in their lives but had allowed themselves to grow careless and were very much in danger of losing their place in God's favor. "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and remove thy candlestick out of his place..." (Rev. 2:4-5).

We take great comfort in the promise that "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life..." (Rev. 3:5). This would certainly indicate that the faithful, the overcomers, will retain their place in the Book of Life. The importance of this is emphasized when John wrote "...and another book was opened, which is the book of life, and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books..." (Rev. 20:12).

Jesus explained to His disciples of the dangers and deceit that His followers would face before the end times. There will be false teachers and much sin in the world. "And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold" (Matt. 24:11-12). The only way for love to wax cold is for it to exist. Again, clearly Christ was speaking of those who once loved the Lord but allowed sin to intervene and their love for Christ grew cold.

Jesus Christ did not leave His disciples without hope. He promised them "But he that shall endure to the end, the same

shall be saved" (Matt. 24:13). This beautiful promise would not have been needed unless there was a danger of falling away.

Not only do we need to be careful that we are not deceived by others, we must be careful that self-confidence does not cause us to grow careless. "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (I Cor. 10:12). We must also remain dependent upon the Lord to keep us safe and in His love. "How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings" (Ps. 36:7).

In addition to the danger of putting trust in ourselves and losing our salvation, we must also not put our trust in riches. "...an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children:...following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness" (II Pet. 2:14-15).

Numerous other scripture passages could be cited that help us understand the false doctrine of once saved, always saved. Time and space do not permit a complete list but a few more are simply listed without comment. "And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62). "But now, after ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage" (Ga. 4:9). "But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, the dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire" (II Pet. 2:22).

In spite of the seriousness and frequency of the warning in the Holy Scriptures that those who have become followers of Christ would return to sin and lose their salvation, there is no need for a child of God to despair. To each of the seven churches that are addressed in Revelation, a promise of a secure eternity was made to those that overcome and remain faithful. That promise is still in effect for us today.



APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN

Mission Committee

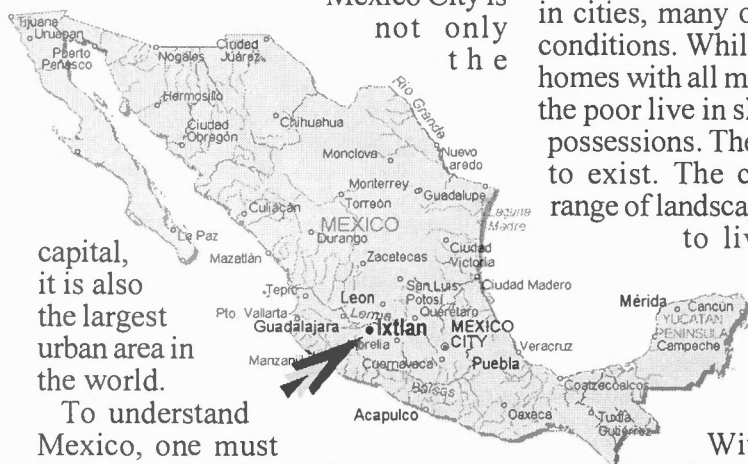
... The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest. Matthew 9:37-38

A New Church Develops South of the Border

Mexico, our southern neighbor

Mexico, the northernmost country of Latin America, lies adjacent to the United States, separated by the Rio Grande river along about two-thirds of its border. In the western hemisphere, only the United States and Brazil have larger populations.

Mexico City is not only the



capital, it is also the largest urban area in the world.

To understand Mexico, one must look at its long history. Native Indians had a sophisticated society in place many centuries ago. They built cities, developed a calendar, and had a written language. In 1512, the Aztec empire fell to the Spanish Conquistadors, remaining a colony of Spain for 300 years.

The Spaniards took away the wealth, leaving the Indians to degenerate into poverty with little hope of advancement. However, they did introduce many changes in farming, government, industry, and education.

During the Spanish colonial period, a mixed race of people developed with both Indian and Spanish ancestors. Known as mestizos, this group makes up the largest segment of the population today. Immigration has also brought in many other world cultures, including non-Spanish Europeans, Arabs, and Asians.

Present religious practices and living conditions

Over 90 percent of the Mexican people belong to the Roman Catholic church. This religion was introduced by the Spanish conquerors, but became mingled with tribal customs, traditions, and worship of nature. Superstitions also abound. Many poor people are deeply affected by these factors.

About two-thirds of the people live in cities, many of them in appalling conditions. While the rich enjoy their homes with all modern conveniences, the poor live in slums with few if any possessions. They struggle daily just to exist. The country has a wide range of landscapes, and people learn to live using the basic materials available.

The Town of Ixtlan

With a population of about 5400, Ixtlan lies about 75 miles south of Guadalajara. The roads are not up to our standards and it takes about two hours to travel that distance. It lies in a fertile valley whose soil produces corn, alfalfa, vegetables, etc. Dairy cows and goats roam the area which has few fences. Although electricity and other utilities are available, many cannot afford these services. Life is often hard for their large families.

Involvement of the Apostolic Christian Church (Nazarene)

Sometime about 100 years ago, a rift developed in the American Church, which resulted in a separation. The other church resulting from that division is named "Apostolic Christian Church (Nazarene)". Although

we who are active today had no part of this division, we must work with the existing situation.

The Mission Committee as well as the Elder Body feel that it is important to communicate to our brotherhood that we are trying to interact with the Nazarene church in a way which will be acceptable without causing confusion. Contact has been maintained between the two groups for many years. We all agree that it is not feasible to re-unite, but we want to keep an atmosphere where we can assist each other.

Services begin in Mexico

A number of years ago, members of the Apostolic Christian Church (Nazarene) began a mission in Mexico. They held services as often as they could, and there were some converts. Elders from their South American churches provided spiritual guidance. However, they experienced difficulties in maintaining and staffing this ministry. They did not wish to abandon the work, yet could hardly continue because of their own limitations.

Our brethren visit Mexico

Some years ago, Bro. Marshall Heinold and his wife, Sis. Jan, felt a calling to provide a boys' ranch for orphans in the impoverished areas of rural Mexico. Sis. Jan learned the Spanish language when they had Mexican exchange students living with them.

In 1989, along with Elder Bro. Wendell Gudeman and his wife plus five other brethren, they visited Mexico City and then Ixtlan. There they met representatives from the Nazarene Church and shared concerns with one another. At that time, they looked at a piece of property for a ranch, but felt the price was too high.

God's guidance continues

Through one of their exchange students, the Heinolds became aware of a possibility for a ranch in the state of Puebla. They made a thorough investigation of the feasibility of this project. However, the Mission Committee did not see an open way to pursue it.

A building is constructed

About the same time the Nazarene Church, with the assistance of some of our brethren, erected a small church building in Ixtlan in ten days. This is a very basic structure 30' x 26'. Services are held in a room about 30' x 14' with a kitchen at one end. The balance, 30' x 12' contains two bedrooms with a bathroom between them. It is very cramped at this time.

A spiritual beginning

After the building was up, the Nazarene Church still found themselves unable to maintain services. They made an appeal that we would consider sending someone there to assume responsibility for the entire project. The Heinolds visited the area and held services on four occasions each year in 1993 and 1994.

Late in 1994, approval was given by the Mission Committee as well as the Elder Body for them to move into the facility as permanent residents. While carrying on the ministry, they are also searching for a suitable location for a boys' ranch.

The Heinolds left home on January 16, 1995, with a small pickup truck full of essentials. They drove 2,195 miles in 6 days. By God's grace they arrived without incident or accident.

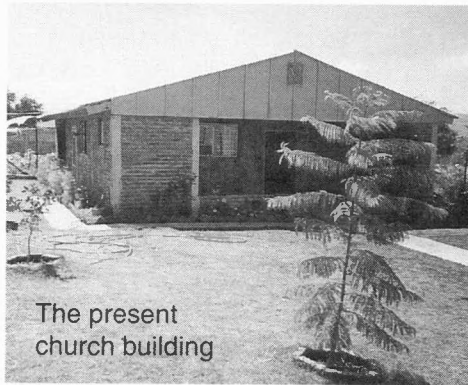
Regular services start

The first regular service was a Thursday evening service at 5:00 PM on January 27th. Since then, they have held services each Thursday evening as well as Sunday evenings. Service time is 5:00 PM.

The Lord blessed the work and in 1996 there were six converts. After much prayer and deliberation, the Mission Committee and the Elder

Body decided to ask the Nazarene elders to baptize these converts, and this was carried out. This decision was made because they already had two members in Ixtlan, and we needed additional time to consider our future spiritual involvement in Mexico.

We were trying to determine if the Lord was really directing us to make the commitment, as well as whether we were prepared and willing to accept the responsibility of establishing an Apostolic Christian Church in Mexico.



The current situation

In 1997, the gatherings grew, and the building became very crowded. Some Sunday School classes are being held outside. Also, there were five converts, two of which we have now baptized.

In November, 1997, Elders Roy Grimm and David Wiegand visited the Ixtlan area and evaluated the status of the entire situation. By mutual agreement of our elders and those of the Nazarene Church, the eight original believers and two recent converts were accepted into our church as members in full standing.

For many years, the leadership of both churches have agreed that in such situations each soul appears individually before the elders and the church, and is accepted as a member upon his or her testimony of faith. They must also be at peace with the members of each church. During this same visit, for the first time, a Holy Communion service was held.

A new facility

Approval was given by the Elder Body at the August 1997 Conference to build a modest church building next

to the existing one. The World Relief Committee also has given approval to sponsor a work team to assist with this construction.

What does the future hold?

As we stand on the threshold of another year, none of us knows what it holds. However, the Mission Committee as well as the Elder Body stand united in our support of the Ixtlan project. Everyone is aware of the great cultural and social differences. We have exercised great caution in arriving at this point, and intend to be very cautious as the future unfolds.

As the work in Ixtlan has grown, some of our brethren have expressed a desire to visit the area. Due to the lack of accommodations there, we request that before anyone goes, they contact Bro. David Wiegand of Champaign/Urbana, IL, who is Chairman of the Mission Committee.

It is also extremely important that any of our brothers or sisters who go to Mexico for work or a visit remember that they are recognized as representatives of the Apostolic Christian Church of America. The converts in Ixtlan have been very submissive and willing to embrace the doctrine and practices of our brotherhood. We are responsible that we do nothing that will confuse or discourage these babes in Christ. Our appearance, conversation, and actions should be in accordance with the Holy Word and accepted church practices.

We sincerely appreciate your support. If you wish to help financially with the new construction, contributions may be sent to:

Bro. Gene Marti
Apostolic Christian
Mission Committee
P.O.Box 23356
Overland Park, KS 66283

Mission Committee Members:

David Wiegand	Charles Hemmer
Phil Stettner	Wayne Anliker
Roy Grimm	Mark Bahr
Gene Pamer	Wayne Fehr
Gene Marti	

- 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**

<u>1997</u>	<u>MONTH</u>	<u>YEAR TO DATE</u>	<u>TOTAL — 14 YEARS</u>
December	6,671	48,155	412,198

* 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)

PLACEMENT OF POCKET TESTAMENTS

A very effective way of giving the pocket Testaments/Psalms/Proverbs (boxed), is to place the plastic box with label in hospitals, rest homes, motels, filling stations, stores, doctor, dentist, and eye doctor offices.

Be sure to ask permission to place the Testaments.

There are seven Testaments in each plastic box. This requires a regular check and re-fill of the boxes.

The plastic boxes and labels are available at the Leo Bible Distribution Center, 11520 Grabill Road, Grabill, IN 46741.

Old and New Testament Tapes - KJV Bible - Available
Pulpit Bibles - Red Letter - Self-Pronouncing - K.J.V.
- Available At Leo Bible Distribution Center -



APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN
World Relief

Haiti Coordinator Needed

We are seeking brothers or couples to serve as coordinators for our work teams. Volunteers would need to be in Haiti for several months during the winter season.

Please contact Bro. Roger Sauder
(954)584-0947

**WE INVITE YOU
ALL TO JOIN US!**

The 22nd Annual
Gateway Woods Auction and Sale

Saturday, August 15, 1998

Feel free to contact the Gateway
Woods office @ 219/627-2159

Counselor Needed

Gateway Woods, a residential care facility, is seeking a female counselor for an opening this spring. A Bachelors degree in Social Work or Counseling is required. A Masters degree in Social Work or Counseling is preferred. Responsibilities include individual and family counseling, case management and consultation with the treatment team.

For more information/application please contact:

Jeff Schumacher, MS
Senior Counselor
Gateway Woods
P.O. Box 151
Leo, IN 46765
(219)627-2159

Phil Stettner
Counseling Elder
(219)565-3499

**APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN
HOME FOR THE
HANDICAPPED**

"Be still, and know that I am God." (Psalm 46:10). As you read this, the holidays are over and we wonder if we used the time well. Most of us probably spent more time doing things than being still and knowing who God is. This verse is both an invitation and a commandment. We tend to skip the first part and go directly to the second. Of course, we know that He is God, but maybe there is more to it. Maybe we have to be still first before we can truly know that He is God and know who He is.

We become very busy at the Home and become very engrossed in our responsibilities and evaluating whether we are being effective and doing the right thing. When we stop and contemplate the work at the Home, we see that God is doing the right thing and we realize that it is not our work and we don't control the outcome. When we stop and observe God, we question less and understand more.

As we begin the new year, we

**APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN
CHURCH
MENTAL HEALTH HOTLINE**

1-800-747-9049

Calls are answered by an answering service and referred to the hotline. You will receive a return call shortly. All calls are strictly confidential.

Callers will receive a screening, suggestions for appropriate services and assistance with appropriate referrals.

The hotline will not provide diagnosis or treatment.

**WORK PROJECT DATES
MEXICO CONSTRUCTION
WORKTEAMS**

March 7-14

Contact Bro. Bruce Aschliman
(Bluffton)
(219)824-5160

March 14-21

Contact Bro. Wayne Lehman
(South Bend)
(219)773-4373

March 21-28

Contact Bro. Tom Schifferer (Elgin)
(847)695-7510

March 21-28

Contact Bro. Tom Schifferer (Elgin)
(847)695-7510

April 1-8

Medical Dental Team (Juarez)
Contact Bro. Dave Wegman
(Bloomington)
(309)452-8079

November 4-12

Medical Dental Team (Creel)
Contact Bro. Dave Wegman
(Bloomington)
(309)452-8079

need to spend less time contemplating self and our work and more time contemplating God, how He is working through us and how well we are letting Him use us. Let's be still, very still and know God in all

His glory and His love. Let's commit to getting out of His way and letting Him do a good work in us and through us.

Birthdays for February are: ACHH - Matt Pumphrey (17), John Kamm (18), Lee Anne McKay (19), Virginia Reece (27), Guy Masinelli (28).

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

Jeff Schumacher

Recently I was talking to a man who had spent some time in the hospital because of heart problems. He told me that as he lay in the hospital bed, he remembered the passage in Romans 8:28-29 that reads: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren." He said that these verses were comforting to him because he knew that God had His hand in this trial.

As he lay there, he prayed to the Lord asking what lesson He was trying to teach him. He told me that he felt the Holy Spirit prompting him with questions. He said the first question was, "If this was a serious heart problem, how long would you survive without your heart?" He told me that he realized how fortunate he was that it was not a serious problem, and that he could not survive very long without his heart pumping life-giving blood throughout his body. He said the next question from the Holy Spirit was even a little more strange: "Could you leave home without your heart?" The man replied, "no".

This man said that the Holy Spirit then started asking questions

in a different way: "As a Christian, how important is your spiritual heart?" Well, the answer seemed so clear to this man that it rolled right off of his tongue, "Vital, you can't live without it either." "If it is so vital," the Holy Spirit asked, "do you take care of it by exercising it and eating a healthy diet?" This man had to admit at this point that he was a little huffy because he read the Bible most every day. The reply was short and to the point, "Do you really study it?" He had to admit that this part of his life had diminished to the point that he just read and didn't really apply himself to studying.

My friend said that by this time he was very convicted. He knew that Lord was aware of his lack of Bible study and his lack of exercising his "spiritual" heart by not standing up for what he knew was right and not confessing "small" sins in his life that were well hidden to all (except God). He realized through the questions that there were days that he would "leave" his "heart" at home and try to get through the day without it.

My friend challenged me at that point, and I bring that challenge to all of us: Do we leave our "hearts" at home? Do we "forget" to use it when we are unjustly treated? He challenged me about reading and studying the Bible. He said that as he lay there in that hospital bed, he became aware of how similarly our physical heart was related to our spiritual heart and our spiritual walk.

Some other questions I have thought about since our conversation were: Do we demonstrate our "heart" when we are at work, or do we leave it at the door? Do our co-workers see that our "heart" is in "good health"? The Holy Spirit reminded this man that just as hu-

HAITI/JAMAICA WORK SCHEDULE - 1997-98

All volunteers should contact the project coordinator. Should you not be able to contact the coordinator, direct your inquiry to Bro. Harold Witzig, 308 N. Second Ave., Morton, IL, 61550. Phone 1-309-266-6263, Fax 1-309-266-8575.

COUNTRY	GROUP	DATE	AREA	COORDINATOR	PROJECT	CAP.	FULL
Haiti	MEBSH	Jan 09-17	TBA	Craig Emch	Grd. School	10	100%
Haiti	MEBSH	Jan 16-23	TBA	Glen Hackenjos	Grd. Shool	10	100%
Haiti	MEBSH	Jan 24-31	TBA	Earl Sauder	Water Aid	4	100%
Haiti	MEBSH	Feb 06-14	TBA	Jim Walter	Grd. School	10	100%
Haiti	MEBSH	Feb 14-21	TBA	Earl Sauder	Water Aid	4	100%
Haiti	S.E.E.D.	Feb 20-28	LeCayes	Bob Beebe	Ag. School	10	100%
Haiti	Palm Grove	Feb 20-28	TBA	Tim Butikofer	Grd. School	10	100%
Haiti	MEBSH	Mar 06-14	TBA	Phil Isabel	Grd. School	10	100%
Jamaica	CCCD	Mar 06-24	Kingston	Terry & Bev Miller	Deaf School	30	100%
Jamaica	CCCD	Apr 02-10	Kingston	Roanoke SS	Deaf School	40	100%
Jamaica	CCCD	Apr 08-14	Deaf Village	Gridley SS	Work Place	40	100%
Jamaica	CCCD	May 15-23	Deaf Village	Harold Witzig	Work Place	40	30%

CCCD=Caribbean Christian Center for the Deaf

MEBSH = Missions of Evangelical Baptists of South Haiti

Palm Grove = Mission of Haiti

S.E.E.D. = An Agricultural School & Extension Service

TBA = To Be Announced

(*) = Held for College Student Participation

COORDINATOR	PHONE	FAX
Earl Sauder	309-387-6357	309-387-6357
Harold Witzig	309-266-6263	309-266-8575
Greg Hermann	309-243-5610	309-693-4344
Craig Emch	330-939-4591	
Glen Hackenjos	818-442-4957	
Jim Walter	815-692-3158	815-692-2851
Bob Beebe	219-291-2158	219-299-8173
Tim Butikofer	319-426-5486	319-426-5586
Phil Isabel	219-261-3541	
Terry Miller	309-747-2212 or 941-485-4302	

mans cannot live without their physical heart, we as Christians cannot live without our "spiritual" heart. Without it we cannot function as a Christian. What is the condition of our "heart"?

We have had three new residents since our last writing. They are Angie F. in the Fiechters' house, Donnie L. and Christine S. in the Grafts', and Tyler G. in the Schrock home. We pray that the Lord will provide us with the strength and

understanding to help each of these young people.

APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN PRESCHOOL Athens, Alabama Molly Stickling

"I saw baby Jesus at my church yesterday," replied a child. Another child responded, "No, I saw baby Jesus at my church yesterday!" The children were referring to the nativ-

ity scenes displayed at their churches. Both children clearly thought they were special, because baby Jesus was at their church. How thankful we should be that it does not matter who we are or where we are, because Jesus can dwell in our hearts and go with us everywhere. "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever." (John 14:16)

December at the preschool was

an exciting time, where the story of Jesus' birth was our focus. The children practiced for their Christmas play that was held the night of December 19. Parents, friends, and family came to see the play where the Christmas story was acted out by the children. We were thankful for the opportunity to express the real meaning of Christmas.

December was also a short and busy month, for the preschool was closed on the 22nd for a two-week Christmas break. The children did spend time learning about the letter "M" and colors red and green during the first few weeks.

As we look back, we are so grateful for God's provision in many areas. As the new year lies ahead, we trust that God will continue to bless our school and each child and family that attends. We thank you and ask you for your continued love and prayers in this upcoming year.

ARIZONA, PHOENIX Ron and Ev Hoerr

Faith is needed every day
Faith to toil and faith to pray
Faith to smile, though sad within
Faith to conquer every sin.
Amen.

As we greet the beginning of a new year, let us keep the faith! The summer Elder Conference theme "Faith of Our Fathers" encouraged us to uphold the faith and traditions of our church and not let it become watered down!

Jeanne Schlatter Metzger now has the precious gift of peace with God and is waiting to give her testimony and be baptized.

Bro. Mike Baumann came from Mansfield, OH on November 19 to be our guest minister. We appreciate your message and thank you.

"Abide with me." On November

26, Russell and Sis. Virginia Con-trascere, and her mother, Frances Frank, moved to Mansfield, OH. Bro. Matt Roth has moved to Seattle, WA.

Mary Beth Sutton (Bro. Tim and Sis. Verene) returned from cancer treatment in a Tucson hospital. She is being cared for in Phoenix on an outpatient basis.

A happy bright occasion for the Sutton family is baby Megan, born on December 5. Beside her parents, Sam, Mary Beth, TJ and Katie are glad for God's great gift.

Elder Bro. Jon, Sis. Nancy and Tim Kokanovich flew to Ft. Lauderdale, FL for the World Relief meeting.

Sis. Kathy (Bro. Nate) Knochel broke her foot.

Our sympathy to Sis. Ruth Baer, Sis. Edith and Bro. Allan Freed on the deaths of family relatives.

On December 14, we were singing Christmas carols when our Sunday School children filed in to present their Christmas program.

Their dedication to Bible verses memorized and enthusiasm singing equals love for Jesus. Refreshments were served to the large crowd that attended, from Atlanta to the Yukon. Yes, there was room for Jesus! Our thanks to everyone who participated in this wonderful event.

Faith in God is the essential element for spiritual change.

God doesn't "pick and choose". He loves everyone. Do you?

ARIZONA, PRESCOTT Jane Hodges

Another year has gone by so quickly. As we review the past year, have we experienced a growth in our faith, love and service to our great God? There is a saying, "Only one life twill soon be past, only what's done for God will last." The Scrip-

ture says, "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." (I Cor. 10:31). May we all in this new year strive to serve God more faithfully and set an example of His love to others.

Our visiting ministers this last month included Elder Bros. Chuck Hemmer (Peoria, IL) and Jon Kokanovich (Phoenix, AZ) and Bros. Mike Baumann (Mansfield, OH) and Roy Koehl (Morris, MN). We wish to thank them for their service and the love shown to us.

ARIZONA, TUCSON

Lisa Knapp

Elder Bro. John Klotzle (Altadena, CA) was with us for Wednesday evening services recently. We certainly want to thank him for his visit and welcome him to come again anytime.

Bro. Joe Honegger has recently returned home to Indiana after spending six months with us in Tucson as part of our little church. We will miss Bro. Joe's presence as we grew very used to having him here with us. The little children will especially miss him I think because he certainly liked being around them. Thanks, Bro. Joe, for giving us the chance to get to know you. We pray God will direct your path as you finish your schooling and continue in your service to Him.

Carrie Kaufman (Bro. Curt and Sis. Caroline) and JoAnn Cox have returned home for the holidays after finishing their first semester in college. It's good to have them here with us again.

Another son, Luke Christian, was born to Tom and Heidi Todd. He was happily welcomed by his grandparents, Bro. Bob and Sis. Carole Haas, and of course, his big brother, Robert.

We sang Christmas carols this

month for Sis. Martha Blessman and the other residents of the nursing home where she lives. Sis. Martha has been having some medical tests done but we are happy to report that she was able to assemble with us one Sunday recently. This will not be a regular occurrence, so I'm sure it was special to Sis. Martha.

Just in time for the holidays, a winter storm has arrived in Tucson and is bringing snow to our mountain regions. Tucson is surrounded by mountains on all four sides. The snow level is expected to reach as low as 3,500 ft. Some of our members live close to or at that level. These are the areas that usually receive at least one light coating of snow during each winter season with only the rare occurrence of snow coming further "in town" and giving us all a treat. But with each winter storm such as this, every child hopes for that rare occasion!

CALIFORNIA, ALTADENA **Joshua Martinez**

"...whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy is he."

Proverbs 16:20

Greetings of love in this New Year! As we begin "the year of our Lord" 1998, may we give praise and thanks for our joys and blessings. May all our temporal cares become trivial in the light of His glory as we greet and worship our Saviour in this happy New Year. May we not hide the light that shines in our hearts from the world. May we tell our friends, neighbors and all whom we meet about the love of God and the joy that glows within us!

We wish to begin our year thanking our Lord and all those who made the end of 1997 a happy time. We thank Bro. Dwight Stoller (Latty,

OH) for visiting and sharing God's Word with us. May God bless him for labors on our behalf.

We are also thankful for our winter residents, Sis. Laura Opliger (Rittman, OH), Bro. Daryle and Sis. Edie Wieland (Bay City, MI) and Bro. Ruben and Sis. Chrystol Luthi (Morris, MN). Although we are blessed with beautiful mild winters here in Southern California, we are grateful for the added warmth and the love that they bring in their hearts. May our Heavenly Father bless our time together.

Our Sunday School expressed the meaning of the "Grace of Christmas" in song, poem and essay on December 14. We are thankful for each child's joyful expression of love for the Lord and for all the hard work they put into making the Christmas program successful. We also wish to thank the teachers for giving of themselves. May God bless each one for their labors in His name.

"Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."

John 16:24

Also on December 14, we heard with great joy the announcement of Bro. Joshua Martinez' engagement to Sis. Danielle Stickling (Bro. Dale and Sis. Diane) of Lester, IA. Bro. Joshua will miss his Altadena family dearly as he relocates to the Lester area. We are grateful and awed at the shining miracle He has created. May our Father direct them as they plan their future days together and may He bless this beautiful union of hearts.

On December 21, we shared the beautiful hymns of Christmas at several nursing homes in our area. It was a blessed time for the givers and receivers.

We are thankful for our visitors from near and far this month. We wish to extend a warm invitation to any and all who will travel through our area. May you have a happy month!

"To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen."

Romans 16:27

Note of Thanks:

We would like to express deep appreciation for the prayers, phone calls, cards, and visits while in the hospital, and since returning home. May God bless you for your kindness and thoughtfulness.

Steve, Ingrid and Matthew Bailey

CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO **Rose Huette**

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

Another year of progress,
Another year of praise,
Another year of proving
Thy presence all the days.

Another year of service,
Of witness for Thy love,
Another year of training,
For holier work above.

Hymns of Zion #150

The seasons are passing by us so swiftly now and we are left with a feeling of warmth in our hearts as we experience the blessings of Christmas. Our Sunday School children have enlightened us with the story of the gift of Hope, Peace, Joy and Salvation, which was the theme of the program. Everyone did so well in saying their verses and singing. We all enjoyed it. Later we heard a group from our church sing. It was so beautiful. We finished off with

desserts and fellowship. May all the children and their teachers be richly blessed for their love in teaching the children.

We were privileged to have Bro. Fred Witzig and our Elder Bro. John Klotzle (Altadena, CA) with us this month. May they feel God's love and blessings for the love shown us. We had visitors also and it was so nice seeing you. Thank you for coming!

Our ministering Bro. Peter Petrovic has recently returned after visiting Eastern Europe accompanying the European Board of the Mission and World Relief Committees. He really enjoyed it but is glad to be home again.

**ONTARIO, KITCHENER
CANADA
Laura Baxter**

"The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death."

Proverbs 14:27

To have the abundant life we need to fear the Lord. And to fear the Lord we need to receive His words and hide His commandments in our hearts. Then we shall understand the fear of the Lord and find knowledge of God. (Proverbs 2:1,5)

We again have had the blessings of visitors this past month. We thank Bros. Floyd Graves, Jr. (Croghan-Naumburg, NY) and Gary Maibach (Smithville, OH) for ministering God's Word to us.

We also want to welcome Zoltan and Maria Toth and their daughter, Eva, who recently moved to Kitchener from Saint John, New Brunswick. We are thankful to have them assembling with us.

We welcome all visitors who are in the area to come and worship with us. Please contact Bro. Wayne

Saddler (519) 662-6834 or Bro. Mike Ursu (519) 669-8515 for more information and directions.

**COLORADO, DENVER
Lynne Martin**

"Who shall also confirm you unto the end that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."

I Cor. 1:8

How can I ever be kept firm to the end of anything without blame?

Here is a new day...

a new year...

How will it look after it has passed through my hands?

If I handle it myself, it will surely be smudged.

Even if I live it for God, it will have a few spots

for I am only a human instrument.

Then what gives me the chance to say that anyday I live can be without reproach?

The eraser of God's forgiveness.

This makes the difference!

—Gordon and Gladis Dupree

On December 6-7, we were privileged to hear the Memorandum given by Elder Bros. Leo Moser (Lester, IA), Charles Sinn (Ft. Scott, KS) and Nate Steffen (Elgin, IL). Other visiting ministers this month were Bros. Duane Metzger (West Bend, IA) and Jim Vierling (Eureka, IL).

Many thanks to all the young children of our congregation for putting on a wonderful Christmas program on December 14. Much effort is put into practicing and rehearsing songs and verses! May everyone have a safe and blessed Christmas, as many from our congregation will travel many miles to be with family!

**CONNECTICUT, ROCKVILLE
Cherie Galat**

"...and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle..."

Acts 15:30

Recently, many of us gathered together to hear the reading of the Memorandum. We need to be reminded yet again of how we should live and carry on the "Faith of our Fathers". Assisting Elder Bro. Kevin Ryan were Elder Bros. Ed Aeschleman (Philadelphia, PA) and Bill Schlatter (Junction, OH).

Other ministering brethren who lovingly imparted unto us out of God's Holy Word were Elder Bro. Art Metz (Silverton, OR) and Bros. Earl Gerber (Forrest, IL) and Shawn Metzger (Philadelphia, PA).

Two families were blessed with bundles of joy. Bro. Matthew and Sis. Heidi Luginbuhl welcomed baby Zachary David on November 13. He joins his brother Joshua at home. Grandparents are Bro. Daryl and Sis. Normal Luginbuhl and Bro. Roger and Sis. Joan Moser.

On December 1, Aaron Ronald was born into this world to Bro. Rudy and Sis. Susan Virkler. His two sisters, Rachel and Sarah, and brother, Seth, have a new baby brother to love. Grandparents are Sis. Charlotte Virkler and Bro. Ron and Sis. Judy Stomberg. May both couples wisely look unto God for help to rear these dear children.

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

Romans 12:15

On December 7, Bro. Eldon Metz of Silverton, OR (Elder Bro. Art and Sis. Betty) and Sis. Alice Hoffman (Bro. Steve and Sis. Joan) were united in marriage. Joy is mixed with sadness as we will surely miss

Sis. Alice as she and Bro. Eldon establish a Christian home in Oregon. May God's blessings follow them throughout life.

As a new year dawns upon us, it offers opportunity to reflect upon the past year. May we continue to uphold the faith and press onward. I am reminded of the hymn, "Onward, Christian Soldiers" (Gospel Hymns) in which one of the verses states "Onward, then, ye faithful, Join our happy throng..." Let us go forward following in His footsteps and relying on His mercy and grace.

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
WASHINGTON
Henrietta Meyer**

As we begin the new year, may we draw closer to the Lord and seek to do His will.

Our ministers this past month were Bros. Brian Webb (Ft. Lauderdale, FL), Shawn Metzger (Philadelphia, PA) and Jeff Streitmatter (Sarasota, FL). We thank these brothers and their families for coming to serve us. Our other visitors this month were from Bluffton, IN; West Bend, IA; and Peoria and Goodfield, IL. We appreciate all our visitors and may the Lord bless them.

At the beginning of the year, perhaps you are looking for different employment. Please consider this area. Many high tech jobs are available. Contact anyone from this congregation for information. We would be happy to assist in any way we can. Let the Lord be your Guide.

Services are usually held the first, third and fourth Sundays of the month at the Tysons Corner Westpark (Best Western) Hotel, located about one mile west of the Beltway (I-495) on Route 7. Services are at 10:30 and 12:30. 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**

Another year is dawning,
Dear Master, let it be,
In working or in waiting,
Another year with Thee.
Another year of mercies,
Of faithfulness and grace.
Another year of gladness
In the shining of Thy face.
Hymns of Zion #150

We were privileged to host the National World Relief Meeting which brought many brethren from different congregations to worship with us. Most of the wives came with their husbands, and some of the families brought their children, too. We enjoyed having a full church Sunday and Sunday School with so many visitors. We had a number of ministering brethren: Elder Bros. Roy Grimm (Taylor, MO), Jon Kokanovich (Phoenix, AZ), Ed Schwartz (Bluffton, IN), Gene Marti (Kansas City, MO), Marvin Leman (Bradford, IL) and John Lehman (Bern, KS), and Bros. Doug Grimm (Sabatha, KS) and Arnold Gerst (Taylor, MO). Also visiting us were Elder Bros. Paul Butikofer (Elgin, IA) and Doug Schock (Pulaski, IA). May the Lord bless you for your labors of love on our behalf.

Our hearts were saddened to hear of the death of Otto Baer (Princeville, IL). His son, Terry Baer, lives here and we pray that the Lord will comfort Terry and the rest of the family during this time of loss.

**FLORIDA
NORTH FT. MYERS
Anjie Baum**

The Lord has granted us a new year! I can't help but reflect on the past year and rejoice for all He has done, and to look forward to 1998 knowing that He will be with me every moment of every day. Living for the Lord is the greatest joy we can know on earth, and I'm so thankful that He has revealed Himself to me.

Each new year I make my own resolutions of how I'll be more faithful and a better servant for God. I won't expound upon my failure to keep those resolutions. Nonetheless, I'm certain we all need to commit ourselves to living in His will, and perhaps the New Year is a time to pray in particular for His direction and to thank Him for each new day we are given to serve Him better.

"It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness. The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him."

Lamentations 3:22-24

Last month, I neglected to thank Elder Bro. Edward Aeschleman (Philadelphia, PA) for coming to North Ft. Myers and sharing the Scripture with us. Our sincere thanks, dear brother.

We would also like to extend our gratitude to Bro. Glenn Price (Sarasota, FL), and Elder Bros. Ed Schwartz (Bluffton, IN) and Dave Wiegand (Champaign, IL). We are so blessed to have ministers who submit themselves to the Holy Spirit in bringing forth God's message.

FLORIDA, SARASOTA Melissa Sabo - Rachel Sabo

The world crowns success
but God crowns faithfulness.

Sarasota hosted the regional Elder Conference this month, so we were blessed with many Elder brothers and a few visiting ministers. The Elder brothers were Bros. Ken Indermuhle (Sardis, OH), Bill Schlatter (Junction, OH), Duane Farney (Croghan, NY), Mark Bahr (Detroit, MI), Dale Eisenmann (Chicago, IL), Andrew Virkler (Bay City, MI), and ministering Bros. Marvin Steffen (North Ft. Myers, FL) and Mike Baumann (Mansfield, OH). May the Lord bless each one of these brothers for their efforts.

On October 26 and 27, we were privileged to hear two souls' testimonies and witness their baptisms. We welcome Bros. Mark Koehl and Bill Schnell into the fold. May the Lord be near them.

In the month of December, we always look forward to the Sunday School program. It is neat to see young children proclaiming Christ's birth. This year's program was centered around the star.

Our recent hospital patients were Sis. Ella Plattner and Lucy Buser. We pray that the Lord will continue to heal them.

GEORGIA, ATLANTA Peggy Camp

This past month we were privileged to have ministering Bros. Clark Stoller (Gridley, IL) and Curt Rassi (Tremont, IL) visit our congregation. We thank these brothers and all of the other visitors for their willingness to worship with us. May God richly bless each one of you.

After services on December 14, we enjoyed Christmas caroling at a

local nursing home, followed by a meal at the church. It was a blessed day for all.

Our church remodeling is continuing and we hope to finish the kitchen area this month. We certainly appreciate all who have given of their time to help with this project.

If you are traveling south this winter, try to spend a Sunday worshipping with us. The church is located at 6225 Campbellton-Fairburn Rd., Fairburn, GA. From Atlanta, take I-85 south to exit 13, go west four miles. The church will be on your left. Please contact Bro. Linn Stoller (770) 631-4554 or Bro. John Brewer (770) 502-8629 for further information.

ILLINOIS, BELVIDERE Carlene Jepson

During the Christmas season, we often find ourselves living in such a hectic pace. We shop, give and receive gifts, visit relatives, and on and on. We can overlook the real purpose and meaning of the birth of our Lord. Our son's Christmas piece stated: "If these are your reasons, Sit back and think, Listen to the story and in let it sink." We enjoyed listening to the children in our church minister to us during our Christmas program on December 14. It was a blessing to hear them tell us the Christmas story and sing from their hearts praises to God.

Our little flock is thankful for the ministers from Elgin, IL that come out regularly to support us. Bro. Tom Schambach (Elgin, IL) came out to minister the Word to us during the past month.

Our prayers were with Bro. Matt Hein and Bro. Brian Anliker who were hospital patients during the past month. Also to Bro. Brian and Sis. Peg Anliker after the passing of

Sis. Peg's grandfather, Bro. Harvey Banwart (Eureka, IL).

"But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

Philippians 4:19

ILLINOIS BLOOMINGTON-NORMAL Carol Sauder - Janice Horner

Bro. Ron and Sis. Donna Hodel had a double blessing as each of their daughters gave birth to daughters. Bob and Ronda Nichols had Kacey Lee on August 11; her sister is Kylie. Savannah Hope was born September 24 to Manny and Robin Carnejo; Hannah is her sister.

Joe Walter (Bro. Harvey and Sis. Margaret) and Suzanne Pufahl were united in marriage September 12 in Ottawa, IL.

Sis. Jill Bauer (Bro. Ray and Sis. Marcia) and Bro. Andy Lehman (Bro. Nathan and Sis. Yvonne, Denver, CO) were united in Holy Matrimony on October 5. Grandparents are Sis. Lucille Beyer (and the late Bro. Robert, Peoria, IL), Bro. Vernon and Sis. Arlene Schwab (Wolcott, IN), and Sis. Mary Bauer (and the late Bro. Urban, Cissna Park, IL).

We recently received word that Angela Schrof's mother has passed away in Germany. Our deepest sympathy to Angela and Vernon in their loss.

Bro. Clarence and Sis. Mildred Vogel have kept their marriage vows for 50 years, as of November 23, 1997. Congratulations!

Our church Christmas caroling was held Saturday, December 13, with the singers heralding Christ's birth to residents of a number of hospitals and nursing homes in the community. What a joyous and uplifting evening.

It is encouraging to have Elder Bro. Everett Hari once again sharing in preaching the Word, after a temporary absence for back surgery. We appreciate the diligent efforts of all of our ministering brothers.

Special note from Sis. Carol Sauder: Mom and I could certainly feel your prayers as we were embraced with sunshine and traveling mercies on our journey to Vancouver. The progress so far has been small but mighty, and definitely hopeful. Praise God for continuing lessons in faithfulness in small things.

**ILLINOIS, BRADFORD
Brad & Cheryl Kupferschmid**

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

Hymns of Zion #150

1998 stretches out before us. How thankful we should be to be granted another year to serve our Lord as we are blessed by Him. We could look at it in a different way though; 365 days of fighting the lusts of our flesh and struggling against trials and temptations so we can make it to Heaven. Both are accurate descriptions of the life of a child of God. The view of 1998 that we take depends a lot on our attitude. Do we "want" to serve the Lord or do we "have" to serve the Lord? Do those trials represent "obstacles" in our minds or are they "opportunities" to show the Lord our appreciation for giving His life upon the cross to save us from our sins? Let us be thankful, brethren!

We were thankful to hear the engagement announcement of Bro. Ben Endress and Sis. Katie Slutz. Parents are Bro. Larry and Sis.

Becky Endress and Bro. Richard and Sis. Marilyn Slutz. May God bless them and their families as they prepare for their wedding.

God has also directed the hearts of Bro. Nate Young and Sis. Stephanie Challacombe (Princeville, IL) as they were engaged this month. Sis. Katie Young (Cissna Park, IL) is Bro. Nate's mother. May God bless them now and much more when they are united as one.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Bro. Nate Stoller for his many years of service in the ministry. He has expressed his desire to retire this month. May God bless Him richly for his many years of labor for our benefit.

Our visiting minister this month was Bro. Bill Gudeman (Elgin, IL). We thank him for being with us and edifying us.

**ILLINOIS
CHAMPAIGN-URBANA
Samuel and Pamela Furrer**

Looking back over the past year, we see that we've had a year of relative stability in our congregation. Arrivals of new people and farewells to some who have been with us for a period of time are commonplace in a church in a university town, and ours is no different. We have had some families move on, but they have been back for visits already. We've added to our numbers with a couple of births and some individuals moving here to establish themselves in a new job. Health concerns seemed to be the most obvious adversity suffered by those in our flock, but reports have generally been optimistic. As always, our large group of students have been a real blessing. The concept of "new beginnings" has been prevalent with these folks as several have turned their lives to Christ and a few others

have become engaged or married. It is with thankfulness and appreciation that we receive all we have been blessed with in Champaign-Urbana, and we look forward to the new year and all that God has in store for us in 1998.

Just prior to Thanksgiving, our Sunday School teachers and students assembled food baskets and delivered them to individuals who might not otherwise be able to have a meal that typifies Thanksgiving in our culture. The children enjoy the time decorating the boxes to hold all the groceries, doing the shopping, and delivering the things to those who need it. A few weeks later, it was time for the annual Sunday School Christmas program. This year's theme was "Bethlehem: Through the Eyes of Children." The young age of our group of children presents its own challenges to the teachers planning the program, but each child gave a memorable performance for the church and all surely received a blessing from hearing the story of the Babe of Bethlehem told by our young students. The program was followed by caroling at area care centers and a chili supper at the church.

Again this year, the college students gave a gift of free childcare to any family wishing to drop off their children at church on a Saturday so parents could do Christmas shopping. This is always a great help to some families and a unique "study break" for the students. Special thanks to all those students who gave of their time and energy.

Our apology as correspondents is due Bro. Shannon Haerr. Several months ago, Shannon moved from Taylor, MO to take a job here as a claims adjuster for an insurance company. We were made aware of his relocation but failed to mention

his arrival. As always, we are very pleased to have him as an addition to our church. Moving on to take a job, we said farewell to Bro. Dana and Sis. Kim Plattner. Dana has completed his education and will be an engineer with the Indiana Department of Transportation. While we would have liked to have kept them in our little church, they will surely feel comfortable in their new church home in Leo, IN.

Our thanks to the visiting ministers who preached the gospel to us during this past month. They were Bros. Dennis Kaufmann (Bloomington-Normal, IL), Wayne Laub-scher (Cissna Park, IL), and Virgil Metzger (Chicago, IL).

ILLINOIS, CHICAGO

Jill Rager

The month of January is always a welcome time of the year for me in a spiritual sense. It is during this month that I am most likely to sit down and take some extra time for quiet reflection with the Lord. The weather is usually perfect for this activity, and my spirit is often hungry for it after a busy holiday time. It also gives me good opportunity to look ahead at the new year...a chance to start a clean, unspotted "blanket of time".

Christ's love and plan for our salvation is much the same. He encourages us to have quiet time with Him and to start again with a clean heart. Gretchen O'Shea (Bro. Tom and Sis. Jean) has allowed Christ to perform His cleansing work in her life. We rejoice with the angels in Heaven over Gretchen's decision and want to encourage her as she steps forward with a clean heart.

We want to thank Bro. Ron Schambach (Elgin, IL) for sharing God's Word with us this month. We also want to thank our dear Sunday

School students and teachers for the efforts they put forth in our Christmas program on December 13.

In closing, may I encourage you to take advantage of a quiet January moment and sit down with some hot cocoa and your Bible for an extra dose of God's Word.

ILLINOIS, CISSNA PARK

Joyce Bauer - Beth Steffen

"If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine..."

1 Timothy 4:6

We are thankful for the following ministers who brought to us the Gospel message: Bros. Marvin Schmidgall (Eureka, IL), Loren Schrenk (St. Louis, MO), Bob Beebe (South Bend, IN), Dennis Kaufmann and Kevin Knapp (Bloomington, IL), Jim Rinkenberger (Bluffton, IN) and Glen Braker (Princeville, IL). May God bless each of your labors in the ministry.

"Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord."

Proverbs 18:22

We pray God will abundantly bless the upcoming union of Bro. Nathan Young (Bradford, IL) to Sis. Stepanie Challacombe (Princeville, IL). Bro. Nathan is the son of our Sis. Kate Young and Harvey Young.

"Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life..."

Ecclesiastes 9:9

Observing 50th anniversaries recently are Bro. Earl and Sis. Mary Knapp, Bro. Ralph and Sis. Verna

Knapp, and Bro. Ray and Sis. Em Eisenmann. It is wonderful to see marriages that have gone this distance and are examples of what God desires for all our marriages—commitment, joy, and an unfailing love.

"Sing O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O, mountains: for the Lord hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted."

Isaiah 49:13

We are thankful to report Sis. Esther Steiner is back home and Sis. Lou Jacobs is convalescing at Heartland Health Care. Our prayers have been with Sis. Ellen Hofbauer, Sis. Sharon Eisenmann, and Dale Feller as they all spent time in the hospital. What a wonderful assurance to know God cares about our cares and afflictions. We pray each of you will experience God's faithfulness unto you.

December 7 was an evening of blessing when we gathered as a church to sing to those we love and care about. Our Sunday School children brought the wonderful message of Christmas to us on December 17. As the kids filed in, a memory of several Christmas's ago came to mind. I thought back to the time one of our children called for me to come because he had the manger all set up. There was baby Jesus in the manger with all the other figures, including the beasts, lined up in single file. With his eyes bright, he let me know they were all lined up to see Jesus. Wouldn't it be wonderful today if people were lined up to taste and see what Jesus could do for them? May we let our lights shine in the coming year and continue to pray for lost souls everywhere.

ILLINOIS, CONGERVILLE
Sandy Steiner
Missy Banwart

We rejoice with Tonya Scott (Sis. Janelle) as she is at peace with God and man. We look forward to hearing her testimony of faith. May we all be encouraged to pray more diligently for those who have not yet answered God's call.

Elder Bro. Wes Knapp (Goodfield, IL) and Bro. Clark Stoller (Gridley, IL) were our visiting ministers this month. May God bless them for laboring on our behalf.

Bro. Jesse Schrock, 103, died December 3. Our sympathy goes to his children, Bro. Roy (Sis. Polly), Bro. Don (Morton, IL), and Bro. Melvin (Elgin, IL), and to his sister, Sis. Mae Schrock. Bro. Jesse served as minister at Congerville from 1940-1974. Our sympathy and prayers are with Bro. Jerry and Sis. Arlene Banwart and family on the death of Bro. Jerry's father, Bro. Harvey Banwart (Eureka, IL). We also sympathize with Bro. Jerry and Sis. Linda Knobloch on the death of Bro. Jerry's father, Bro. Orvie Knobloch (Lester, IA). May each one be comforted and encouraged that if we all remain true and faithful, we will be reunited with our loved ones someday.

Our prayers have been with those who spent time in the hospital. Bro. Carl Schieber (Sis. Millie) had surgery, and Carmen Wettstein (Bro. Dennis and Sis. Emily) and Dylon Echols (great-grandchild of Bro. Dick and Sis. Katie Hasty) were seriously ill. We thank God for His faithfulness. All are home now and doing better.

Thankful for a healthy baby boy are Bro. Jay and Sis. Melinda Steffen and Nathan. Justin Dale was born December 14. Happy grandparents are Elder Bro. Ervin and Sis. Sandy Knecht (Eureka, IL) and

Bro. Duane and Sis. Lois Steffen.

ILLINOIS, ELGIN
Peggy Heiniger
Norma Schambach

Bro. Eric and Sis. Ericka Schambach were blessed with the gift of a baby girl. Kathleen Ann was born December 4. Her brother, Joseph, welcomes her along with grandparents, Bro. Bob and Sis. Jeanne.

December 14 was our annual Christmas caroling followed by a chili supper. Many attended to sing carols to our local nursing homes and shut-ins.

We look forward to the Sunday School Christmas program on December 21. The students and teachers always work diligently on their songs and pieces so that we might all benefit and receive a Christmas blessing.

As we look back on this past year, our congregation has gone through many joys and sorrows, hard work and rich rewards. God truly has been faithful in all things, and we beseech His grace and mercy in the coming year.

ILLINOIS, EUREKA
Dori Blunier

Our hearts were encouraged and our spirits uplifted as we heard the testimonies and witnessed the baptisms of Brenda Huber (Bro. Gary Huber and Karen Huber) and Justin Stoller (Bro. Jim and Sis. Janet) the weekend of December 7. May they continue to seek God's grace and direction all of their lives. We were also inspired by God's Word as it was taught to us by our visitors, Elder Bro. Bob Walder (Congerville, IL) and Bros. Steve Sauder (Tremont, IL), Bob Stoller (Lamar, MO), Dennis Kauffmann (Bloomington-Normal, IL), and Jon

Zeller (Morton, IL).

We extend our heartfelt sympathy to Bro. Scott and Sis. Elaine Frank at the death of Bro. Scott's mother, Sis. Lea Frank (LaCrosse, IN); and to Bro. Dan and Sis. Diane Fehr at the death of Sis. Diane's mother, Delores Whited, of Benson, IL.

We were also saddened by the death of Bro. Harvey Banwart on December 3. May God give comfort to his wife, Sis. Sylvia, his son, Bro. Jerry (Sis. Arlene, Congerville, IL), his brothers, Bro. Arthur (Lamar, MO), Bro. Raymond (Fort Scott, KS), and Lloyd (Springfield, MO), and his sisters, Sis. Pearl Banwart and Sis. Marie Banwart, of Sabetha, KS. Sis. Emma Hartter was called from this life on December 15. We also extend our sympathy to her family, her brother, Bro. Richard, and four sisters, Sis. Salome and Sis. Corine (Eureka, IL), Sis. Esther Tanner (Deer Creek, IL) and Sis. Freida Schaefer (Tremont, IL). We pray for each of these families that God will be their comfort as they now have a vacancy in their lives.

The engagement of Bro. Michael Huber (Lamar, MO) to Sis. Kristi Luthi (Lamar, MO) was announced on December 14. Bro. Michael, formerly of Eureka, is the son of Bro. Gary Huber and Karen Huber and Sis. Kristi is the daughter of Bro. Ray and Sis. Vi Luthi. We wish them the blessings and guidance of the Lord.

We appreciated the visit and ministry of Elder Bro. Charles Sinn (Fort Scott, KS) on November 30.

Our prayers are with Bro. Elmer Ginzel (Sis. Dorothy) who has spent some time in the hospital.

Notes of Thanks:

We wish to express our sincere thanks to everyone for your love,

prayers, cards, memorials, and your kind expressions of sympathy at the passing of our son and brother, Bro. Dale.

The Bro. Vernon Blunier family

We wish to express our sincere thanks for the prayers, love, sympathy, cards, flowers, memorials, and food given at the time of Bro. Harvey's death. May God bless each of you.

Sis. Sylvia Banwart, Bro. Jerry and Sis. Arlene Banwart and family

I wish to thank my friends, ministers, and family for the cards, prayers, visits, flowers and gifts of love while in the hospital and since returning home. God bless each of you.

Sis. Dorothy Hartter

The wrong coat was taken on Sunday, December 7 in Eureka church. The missing coat is a gray herring-bone tweed, size 8, and the coat that was left is a size 14. If you have any information about the coats, please contact Sis. Gloria Walder, 309-963-4820. Thank you.

ILLINOIS, FAIRBURY
Sally Fehr - Thelma Slagel

"And the Lord shall guide thee continually..."

Isaiah 58:11

Advance into this new year on your knees. Faith does not concern itself with the entire journey. One step is enough. That first step is all that is needed. Breathe a prayer for courage to fill your legs as well as your heart as you face the unknown, the unexpected. What matters that you know not your destination? Put your hand into the hand of God. He gives the calmness and serenity of

heart and soul. As He endures, you too can endure the climb over sharp rocks and crags. Climb with Him to the end of the year — yea, even to the end of life's trail. "The peak that is nearest the storm-cloud is nearer the stars of light." He gives the courage for which you pray to rise above the valley. Heed the Master's voice and press bravely on to the fulfillment of your task. You have a whole year to scale.

—*Streams in the Desert, book #2*

How thankful we are that Mark Bazzell has made this decision to "put his hand into the hand of God"! Also rejoicing are his wife, Tania, who turned to the Lord in repentance last month, and his parents, Bro. Don and Sis. Carol Bazzell. May they feel our prayerful support.

Joining the family of Bro. Ryan and Sis. Lori Hartman on November 23 was a precious little boy, Caleb Eli. Big brother, Philip, and grandparents, Bro. Gary and Sis. Jane Brown (Forrest, IL) and Bro. John and Sis. Rosemary Hartman welcome him.

"How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?"

Romans 10:14

We were blessed to have Bro. Paul Gasser (Akron, OH) visit us last month. We thank him for his willingness to "preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things." (Rom. 10:15).

My lifetime doth pass away;
Hourly to the grave I hasten,
And I know each fleeting day
My allotted span will lessen.
Think, man, death comes soon or
late.

Tarry not, it will not wait!

Zion's Harp #253

Ben Kaisner, 84, was called into eternity on November 30. We are comforted to know that he had expressed his need for a Saviour in the recent past. We extend deepest sympathy to his wife, Kathryn; daughter, Carol Vaughan, of Botkins, OH; grandchildren and other family members.

Sis. Sally Schieler underwent surgery and is now recuperating. May the great Physician grant healing and restoration.

Notes of Thanks:

Many thanks to all who have supported me during my accident and recuperation with prayers, cards, gifts, visits and other acts of kindness. I really appreciate your love and concern. May God bless you all.

Bro. Dan Steidinger

We wish to thank all those who remembered us with food, cards, gifts, flowers and prayers during the illness and passing of our loved one.

The Ben Kaisner family

Thought for the day: A great majority of the time when someone says something to you or about you that hurts you...it is rooted in a problem of their own. And, if you pray earnestly for a forgiving spirit, God can give you an insight into their struggles and develop in you a compassion that overrides and overcomes bitterness.

ILLINOIS, FORREST
Mary Bachtold - Jean Knapp

As we embark upon a New Year, it is common in the world to make New Year's resolutions, which seemingly do not last for any length of time. Many of us have in times past made a commitment to our-

selves to live better lives, which fails until we surrender fully unto the Lord in repentance and accept His grace.

We were thankful to hear the testimonies and witness the baptisms of four young souls who realized they needed the grace of God in order to receive the peace and contentment others desire. Sis. Kristen Koehl (Barry and Rosemary), Bro. Tim Mueller (Bro. Ron and Sis. Loida), and Bros. Joshua and Matthew Zimmerman (Bro. Mike and Sis. Jeanette) were received into the fold on December 14. We thank Elder Bros. Curt Frank (LaCrosse, IN) and Art Bahler (Fairbury, IL) for assisting our Elder Bro. Wayne in this work.

Other ministers feeding us with the Word this past month were Bros. Virgil Metzger (Chicago, IL) and Gary Anliker (Elgin, IL). We always appreciate those who are willing to visit and serve us.

November 29 was the wedding day chosen by Loren Honegger (Bro. Lloyd and Joyce) and Jennifer Johnson (Kirk and Jeanette, Bethalto, IL). As they begin this life together, may they look to the Lord for guidance in all things.

We are grateful Bro. Mike Zimmerman (Sis. Jeanette) is able to assemble with us again after undergoing major heart surgery. May he continue to feel the Lord's nearness as he regains his strength.

Funeral services for Sis. Leah Honegger, 86, were held November 23. We sympathize with her sons: Lyle (Katherine), Fairbury; Jerry (Nancy), Forrest; Gordon (Jean Ann), Morton; and Sam (Judy), Albuquerque, NM; and her sisters and brother, Aldine Nussbaum, Elda Mae Rieger, and Marion Rieger, all of Forrest.

We also sympathize with others

who have experienced the loss of loved ones. Vernon and Angela Schrof feel this loss in the death of her mother, Inge Petermann (Bremen, Germany). Bro. Kevin and Sis. Denise Coffey each laid a grandmother to rest this past month, Bessie Essington and Nellie Coffey, both of Fairbury. May the Lord comfort and provide for these loved ones.

Note of Thanks:

Thanks to everyone who helped with the cleaning and moving into Kristi's new apartment. Also, many thanks for the prayers, cards, gifts and visits since her surgery. May God bless each and every kind deed.

With Christian love and gratitude,

Sis. Kristi and Sis. Laura Knapp

ILLINOIS, GOODFIELD

Jan Beer

Our thanks to Bro. Don Manz (Junction, OH) for delivering the sermon to us on Thanksgiving Day. It is an honorable goal to make every day "thanksgiving day" in our hearts.

Saturday, November 29, was set aside as Clean Up Day for the Goodfield church and fellowship hall grounds. Our thanks to all who participated.

The Goodfield congregation and a host of family and friends witnessed the wedding vows of Sis. Marge Knapp (Taylor, MO) and Bro. Don Bauman on November 30. Visiting ministers were: Elder Bros. Roy Grimm (Taylor, MO) and Bob Walder (Congerville, IL), and Bros. Kenneth Knapp (Taylor, MO) and Bob Pflederer (Morton, IL). Our thanks to God for the establishment of another Godly household. We welcome Sis. Marge into our fellowship.

The Christmas story was pre-

sented to the Goodfield congregation by its Sunday School students on the evening of December 7. We hope they will never grow tired of reminding us of the most wonderful gift ever given to mankind. Our thanks to each student for the time and effort they invested in preparation and presentation.

Jon Christian Hohulin came into this world on December 8 to brighten the life of his dear parents, Bro. Ross and Sis. Heather. Grandparents in the Goodfield fellowship are Bro. George and Sis. Fern Knapp and great-grandmother is Sis. Marie Goetzinger. Bro. Stan and Sis. Jean Hohulin, formerly of Goodfield, are first-time grandparents.

On December 11, Kaitlyn Nicole Rocke joined the family of Bro. Jedd, Sis. Marsha and Tyler. Bro. Mark and Sis. Connie Rocke and Sis. Judy Knapp are Kaitlyn's grandparents in the Goodfield congregation. Bro. Howard and Sis. Phyllis Zobrist will have their first glimpse of their great-grandchild when they come home from Florida for the holidays.

Friday evening, December 12, was set aside for "all-church" caroling. The weather was perfect for caroling as the eight separate groups made their appointed rounds. Caroling is a special joy of the season in my opinion. Afterward, all the groups met at the fellowship hall for food and fellowship.

Several in our congregation are ill, have had surgery or are facing surgery and treatments. Our prayers continue for you.

"In the beginning God created..." (Genesis 1:1) "...and God saw that it was good." (Genesis 1:10)

At this time of beginning a new year, may God create in us all things

that He can pronounce as good.

ILLINOIS, GRIDLEY
Perry A. Klopfenstein

As the New Year begins, the usual focus is on resolutions, personal improvement and seeking higher levels of behavior. This is fine although a good deal of attention in all of this is centered on self.

Perhaps this year it would be just as well to add an additional focus—on the welfare of others. That is certainly what the Bible teaches us to do.

For as surely as we serve others—and seek their welfare—we lift ourselves up as well. If we can get the focus off of self-centeredness and beam it toward others, we will find happiness in 1998. There are many widows to visit in our church communities. Many of our loved ones sit day after day in nursing homes. Are we visiting them regularly?

“Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.”

Phil. 2:4

As 1998 begins, we as God's children have enormous opportunities before us—to serve others, to be a light and witness, to be holy, and to be charitable. Never in any Christian era have talents and resources been as plentiful as today. Let us thence prune our tendencies of the affections we may have for this present world that we may serve God more diligently.

“...For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required...”

Luke 12:48

Bro. Elmer Witzig was hospital-

ized just before Christmas for heart by-pass surgery. He is home now and doing well.

Sis. Lavielle Yoder, who has been seriously ill, is recovering and doing much better.

We are thankful for God's healing powers as He uses physicians, nurses and medicines, etc. to bring people back to health as He sees fit.

Bro. Curt Rassi (Tremont, IL) was a guest minister on Thanksgiving Day. Bro. Rick Plattner was our guest speaker on Wednesday evening, December 8, for our Topical Bible presentation. His topic was “Angels”.

ILLINOIS, MORTON
Phyllis Farney
Cheryl Wuthrich

Our Sunday School children and young adults brought us the Christmas story in song and verse on December 7. It was a very blessed evening.

Our all-church Christmas caroling was held on December 14. It was a blessing to sing for the elderly and shut-ins. May they feel our prayers throughout the year.

Bro. Dave, Sis. Krista, McKenzie and Lindsay Ploussard welcome into their hearts and home Elizabeth Kay. Elizabeth was born on December 2. The happy grandparents are Eugene and Mary Ploussard and Sis. Aldeine Witzig.

We heard the testimony and witnessed the baptism of Bro. Arch Knapp on Wednesday, December 10. We rejoice with the angels over our new brother.

Bro. Jed Taufer (Bro. Dana and Sis. Kris) and Sis. Vicki Link (Dave and Jane) were married on December 21. May our Heavenly Father continue to bless and guide them and be the head of their home.

May each one of you have a very

blessed new year in the Lord.

Note of Thanks:

We would like to thank everyone for the cards, gifts and good wishes sent to us for our 50th wedding anniversary which was December 14.

Kenneth and Mavis Kaiser

ILLINOIS, PEORIA
Peter and Mabel Weber

Our texts on November 16 were I Kings 19 and John 19. Taking a stand for God doesn't always mean we win, but it is the right way. Elijah was afraid of Jezebel (mighty men of God can be afraid) and ran to Beer-sheba, but God was his resort and showed him His faithfulness. He wanted to give up. On Mt. Carmel he thought he stood alone, instead of with God. “What doest thou here, Elijah?”. God is not interested in surface answers, even as the Pharisee enumerated all he had done. God communed with Elijah in that still small voice. If we receive no answer, be patient as God has to condition us and work hard to get us to listen. Jesus deserved no cross. He carried our sins, not just two beams. Do we say: these are the 90's and sin is no big deal? “King of the Jews” is not enough; our life must crown Jesus.

Thanksgiving reminded us that it is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord out of a thankful heart, not just go through the motions. We thank God for a new day, not trying to relive yesterday, but leave yesterday with Him and concentrate on today. We have been redeemed and want to give thanks forever and forever around His throne.

Christmas is important because of the good experiences we have, whether the birth of Jesus was late October (after harvest and before the cold weather) or combined with the ancient festival of light, late De-

ember. He was spared bloodthirsty Herod to grow up and become our Saviour, a fact foretold 465 different times hundreds of years before. What Adam did, we did. Now we don't have to remain of Adam's race but can become adopted into God's family. It was stated recently that the average person spends 16 hours shopping and 16 hours in worship. Were our thoughts and endeavors at the manger or the store? We bear consequences of wrong choices (John 6:66) and enjoy the promises of right decisions (John 6:37). The law had some 631 commandments; already Isaiah stated "bring no more vain oblations" (1:13). Today we bring a living sacrifice to the Lord. The law has been superseded by "love Him with all thy heart and thy neighbor as thyself" (Mark 12:33). The birth and mission of Jesus can only be understood in the experience of following Him.

Jesus is the reason our Sunday School and Young Group portrayed the Christmas story in prose and song on December 14. They represent our future church and we sincerely thank them, their parents, teachers, and, most of all, our Father in Heaven for giving us this Babe at Bethlehem.

Christmas and Easter bring increased attendance. After Paul and Barnabas had preached the Gospel to the Jews at Antioch in their synagogue, "the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath" (Acts 13:42). Do we have a desire to hear the Word again at the next available opportunity?

Our sincere thanks to Bro. Bob Pflederer (Morton, IL) for bringing us the topic "What is Christmas?" for our family night service.

When Bro. David Obergfel ministered on Sunday afternoon, Novem-

ber 16, only God knew that in less than 48 hours he would undergo serious heart surgery. We are thankful he is recuperating and was able to attend the Christmas program on December 14. Bro. David Meister and Sis. Mabel Hoerr are hospitalized and we wish them a speedy recovery.

Congratulations to Bro. Chris and Sis. Marsha Stickling for twin girls, Abigail and Allison, who join Julia, Joel, Nathan, Caleb and Jesse. Paul and Lynne Knobloch are thankful for Shelby Marie, born August 10. She is welcomed by Zachary and Chelsea. Grandparents are Bro. Jim and Sis. Helen Knobloch (Bradford, IL) and Bob and Sandy Clark of Wyoming.

Bro. Carl Feucht (79) went to be with the Lord on November 17. He ministered the Word at Lester, IA for 35 years and left a legacy of faithfulness and devotion. He was Sis. Martha Wagenbach's brother, and we extend our sincere condolences to her and her family.

Bro. Jesse Schrock reached the high age of 103. He passed away at the Skylines on December 2. He had preached the Word for 34 years in Congerville, moved to Peoria in 1975 and to the Skylines in 1987. We express our sympathy to his family but are thankful for his release from the ailments of age to be present with the Lord.

We should be getting over getting old, even older! When we age, we are doing something right. We are more aware of this process at the threshold of a New Year. The angel of the Lord said to Gideon in Judges 6:12 "The Lord is with thee." 911 is a prominent number we call for help today. Why not consider selecting (Jeremiah) 33 3 "call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou

knowest not"? May the Lord bless us in 1998.

Note of Thanks:

We wish to thank everyone for the outpouring of prayers and prayer groups for me during surgery and recovery. Thank you for all the cards, calls, gifts and thoughtful deeds. They were a great source of comfort and strength. Wishing all of you God's rich blessings.

Our love, Bro. David and Sis. Kathy Obergfel

ILLINOIS, PRINCEVILLE Sheryl Martin

"Bless the Lord, O, my soul. O Lord my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honor and majesty."

Psalms 104:1

As the new year begins, may each of us strive to become closer to God through more sincere and fervent prayers and in reading God's Word. It is so important for each of us to spend time with the Lord, to take time to be holy.

A precious little son, Marshall Kenneth, was born to Bro. Mike and Sis. Julie Martin on December 1. His brothers, Beau and Mitchell, welcome him home. Thankful grandparents are Bro. Walter and Sis. Janet Joos and Bro. Kenneth and Sis. Donna Gehrig. As these parents put their trust in Jesus, may they feel His guiding hand as they raise their children.

On December 7, we heard the engagement of Bro. Nathan Young (Bradford, IL) and Sis. Stephanie Challacombe. Bro. Nathan is the son of Sis. Kate Young (Cissna Park, IL) and Harvey Young and Sis. Stephanie is the daughter of Tom and Kathy Challacombe and John

and Carmen Butte.

The engagement of Bro. Michael Stratton (Taylor, MO) and Sis. Lori Martin was announced on December 14. Bro. Michael is the son of Bro. Mike and Sis. Cheryl Stratton (Taylor, MO) and Sis. Lori is the daughter of Bro. Dale and Sis. Teresa Martin. May God bless these two couples as they plan their future together.

Our friend, Otto Baer, passed away on December 4. We wish to express our sincere sympathy to his dear wife and family, Sis. Eleanor, Sis. Anna (Bro. Steve) Stoller (La-Crosse, IN), Sis. Delores, Sis. Linda (Bro. Roland) Joos, Bro. George, Ed (Connie) (Elverson, PA), Terry (Sunrise, FL), Bro. Larry (Sis. Vera), Sis. Cindy (Bro. Gary) Herr (Fairbury, IL), and Sis. Nita (Bro. Kevin) Grimm (Sabetha, KS), in the loss of their loved one.

In true repentance, die to sin,
In Jesus' name believing!
Baptized into His death with Him,
Full pardon be receiving!
Who dies with Christ will with Him
rise,
A new life's way before him lies,
The road of life with Jesus!
Zion's Harp #106

Robert Herrman (Bro. Howard and Sis. Maryann) has made a beginning in the Lord through repentance. May the grace of God be with Robert as he makes this change in his life and turns his life to Christ.

May Rachel Baer feel the healing hand of God.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

Romans 12:1

Notes of Thanks:

The family of Dale E. Blunier would like to extend our sincere thanks for the cards, prayers, and gifts during the loss of our loved one. We are grateful for all the support extended to us from our precious brothers, sisters, and friends of the faith. We truly appreciate everything because without your support and prayers we would not have made it through. Please continue to pray for all those who have lost loved ones. Thank you very much and may God bless each of you.

Through Christ our Lord,
The Dale Blunier Family

We wish to express our sincere thanks to everyone for your love, prayers, telephone calls, visits and cards during Ezra's illness and now for the many prayers, memorials, flowers, food and kind expressions of sympathy at the passing of our loved one.

Sis. Lucille Rumbold and family

ILLINOIS, ROANOKE Jana Gastman - Lisa Leman

When He cometh, when He cometh
To make up His jewels,
All the jewels, precious jewels,
His lov'd and His own.
He will gather, He will gather,
The gems for His kingdom;
All the pure ones, all the bright ones
His lov'd and His own.
Little children, Little children,
Who love their Redeemer,
Are the jewels, precious jewels,
His lov'd and His own.
Like the stars of the morning,
His bright crown adorning,
They shall shine in their beauty,
Bright gems for His crown.

Gospel Hymns #638

The Lord truly received another "jewel" when he reached down and carried our dear Amy Schwind "Home". We are so thankful her suffering could end, but our hearts are

saddened to say goodbye. Our deepest love and prayers continue for her dear family: her parents, Bro. Dave and Sis. Barb; her brothers, Andrew and Jonathon; her grandparents, Bro. Walt and Sis. Mary Schwind and Bro. Bruce and Sis. Pat Landes (Morton, IL); and her many aunts, uncles, and cousins. May the Lord fill the void in their hearts and continue to comfort them.

We welcomed two brothers and two sisters into the brotherhood last month: Sis. Gretchen Knepp (Bro. Curt and Sis. Denise), Bro. Marc Knepp (Bro. Rich and Sis. Janet), Sis. Mandy Luginbuhl (Bro. Rob and Sis. Gina) and Bro. Scott Yordy (Larry and Edie). We wish them God's precious grace as they live their lives for Him.

Bro. Rich and Sis. Julie Lindberg are thankful for God's blessings in the birth of a daughter, Hannah Joy. She is welcomed home by her seven siblings: Matthew, Mark, Jacob, Joshua, Caleb, Benjamin, and Lydia, along with grandparents, Bro. Jerry and Sis. Jane Schumacher and Ron and Janette Lindberg. May God bless their precious family.

Austin Robert blessed the hearts and home of Bro. Chad and Sis. Brenda Martin on December 17. Thankful grandparents are Bro. Bob and Sis. Chris Hartter and Bro. Harvey and Sis. Sharon Martin (Washington, IL). We wish them God's guidance and wisdom as they raise their family.

We are always thankful to have visitors come and share God's Word with us. May the Lord richly bless those brothers who ministered to us this past month: Bros. Ted Hirstein (Morton, IL), Steve Baner (Gridley, IL), Art Bauer (Princeville, IL), Don Braker (Kansas City, MO) and Glen Braker (Princeville, IL).

Our prayers continue for those in

our congregation who suffered physical ailments this past month: Bro. Bob Hohulin (Sis. Marie), Bro. Jack Sauder (Sis. Marlis), Bro. Matt Gastman (Sis. Jana), Bro. Ray Reckhemmer, Bro. Bob Luginbuhl (Sis. Jean), and Bro. Bill Hodel (Sis. Betty).

ILLINOIS, TREMONT
Barb Dill - Barb Kaeb

Now it is accomplished! I'm no longer mine;
Lord, I will forever and always be Thine,
For Thou has created and purchased me too,
Baptized with Thy Spirit, Thou makest me new.
Zion's Harp #209

On November 22 and 23, we had the blessed opportunity to witness the testimony and baptism of two dear souls, Sis. Berniece Joos and Bro. Rob Dennis. We welcome them into the "Family of God" and we want to thank Elder Bro. Ron Messner (Washington, IL) for coming and giving of himself that weekend.

We also want to thank our other visiting ministers that came to Tremont this past month. They were Bros. Jaye Rinckenberger (Goodfield, IL), John Rowell (Burlington, IA), John Steiner (Oakville, IA), Dennis Rassi (Fairbury, IL) and Craig Martin (Princeville, IL). May God bless them for their labors of love.

Sis. Lila Moser was recently hospitalized. We are thankful that she has been able to return home and pray that God will continue to grant His healing power to her.

Our sincere sympathy goes to the family of Sis. Barbara Getz. Surviving are her brother, Bro. Merle Getz; and sisters, Sis. Edna Getz, Bernice Plattner, Glenna Pfister,

Marian Lutz, Marjorie Koch and Gail Love. May God be their strength and comfort.

We also wish to express our sympathy to Bro. Chris and Sis. Wilmina Woerner on the death of her sister, Mary O'Donnell (Peoria, IL).

Note of Thanks:

I would like to thank everyone who remembered me with cards, prayers and words of encouragement during my recent surgery and recovery. May God richly bless you for your love and kindness.

In Christian Love,
Sis. Margaret Koch

ILLINOIS, WASHINGTON
Sue Ruppert
Denise Romersberger

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

Mark 10:14

Jesus loves children and shows that love over and over again in the gospels. As we watched the joy and excitement on the children's faces during the Christmas program, we understood why Jesus loves them so much. The Christmas program was well attended. Grandparents, parents, aunts, uncles, and friends all enjoyed the message. The children did a very fine job.

Children need attention and are bolstered by knowing they are loved. Children need to know that they are significant and are considered to be a blessing and a gift to their families. Perhaps that lends special significance to the fact that we who believe in Jesus are called God's sons and daughters, His dear children.

Because we are loved, God has given us His very best; His only begotten Son. We are not significant

because of what we may or may not accomplish, but because Christ gave His life for ours. It takes patience to be a parent or spend time with children. If you become impatient, think of how patient our Heavenly Father has been with us, patient and happy to adopt us as His own as He welcomes us with open arms of blessing.

May we continue to show the excitement we have over Jesus' birth just as the children did. We are so blessed to be His children and we need to share that excitement with the world. May we do just that in this New Year.

Ministers visiting with us were Bros. Duane Kilgus (Fairbury, IL), Walter Herrmann (Princeville, IL), Randy Kellenberger (Kansas City, MO), Mark Kiefer (Denver, CO) and our own Bro. Marshall Heinold (Ixtilan, Mexico). We are so thankful for each and every one of you. It is a joy to know we can travel from one area to another and know the Word of God will come forth in its truth and purity.

Hospitalized this month was Sis. Martha Simon. She is recovering at home and hopes to soon be able to join us at church once again. We thank God for the healing He has done. We look forward to her return. We appreciate all Martha does; working in the kitchen on Sunday, and many other things. Thank you, Martha, for all you do.

Church Christmas caroling was enjoyed by all who participated, as well as those who were sung to. A group also again went to minister to the inmates at Galesburg prison, and plans are made to also go to Canton prison this week. It is such a special time of year as we celebrate the Saviour's birth!

The Lord has called another young man into His family. Bro.

Grant Hangartner answered that call. He is the son of Bro. Mark and Sis. Karen Hangartner. His testimony and baptism was a blessing to all. We continue to pray for Grant, and welcome him into our church family.

INDIANA, BLUFFTON

Kim Maller

Trudy Eisenmann

As we begin the year 1998, how fortunate we are to announce several who will begin their year with Christ in their hearts. The converts we have are Joshua Imel (Bro. Dave and Sis. Sharon), Chris Steffen (Bro. Bill and Sis. Donna), Harry and Robin (Sutter) Anderson (Bro. Robert and Sis. Janice Sutter), Cameron Fry (Bro. Denis and Sis. Debbie), Kristopher Sipe (Bro. Kevin and Sis. Andrea), Todd Drayer (Bro. Herman and Sis. Julie) and Bethany Neuenschwander (Bro. Terry and Sis. Jean).

Beginning the new year in marriage will be Bro. Todd Brege to Sis. Carla Gerber (Bro. Leon and Sis. Pat) who were married on November 30. Engagements for 1998 so far are Bro. Klint Moser (Bro. Phil and Sis. Jean) to Sis. Amy Lantz (Bro. Dan Jr. and Sis. Charlene). It is our hope that 1998 will hold many blessings for both of these couples.

Greeting 1998 with youth are two girl babies, one born to Bro. Dean and Sis. Marlene Vanhorn, named Madison Kay, on December 13. Grandparents are Dorothy Vanhorn and Bro. Ralph and Sis. Lucinda Steffen. Another girl, Sophia Jane, born on December 11 to Bro. Doug and Sis. Tonia Isch. Her grandparents are Bro. Hubert and Sis. Judy Isch and Elder Bro. Ed and Sis. Jeni Schwartz.

Also celebrating with the joy a baptism can bring on November 23

were the families of Chad Lantz (Bro. Jim and Sis. Kathy), Todd Fiechter (Bro. Rick and Sis. Beth), Joel Drayer (Bro. Herman and Sis. Julie) and Abraham Habegger (Bro. Ted and Sis. Jane). The ministers visiting for the testimonies and the baptisms were Elder Bros. Jesse Beer (Milford, IN) and Phil Stettner (Bluffton North) and Bro. Bob Meyer Jr. (Bluffton North). We pray your families were blessed for sharing the holidays with us.

As the Spirit works in all of our lives, the Spirit has moved Bro. Eric Tonner and his son, Bro. Eric, to Haiti for an extended period of time where later they will be joined by mother, Sis. Rhonda, and daughter, Beth. We pray they feel a nearness to God as they do His work.

Sis. Lucinda Steffen has gone to her rest, and now joins her late husband, Bro. Obed, in the heavens. She passed away November 24. Our sympathy is extended to the many family and friends that has touched their lives.

In the past month Bro. Aaron Reinhard (Sis. Irene), Sis. Ilene Steffen (Bro. Lenard) and Bro. Bill Gerber (Sis. Carolyn) visited the hospital. We pray they have a speedy recovery. It is our hope that 1998 will bring health and happiness to all in the upcoming months.

INDIANA, BLUFFTON NORTH

Lori Steffen - Rhonda Maller

"Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting strength:"

Isaiah 26:4

How thankful we should be to know that God has all the strength we need and is with us in every situation!

We were blessed to have Elder

Bro. Jesse Beer and his wife, Sis. Shirley (Milford, IN), with us during December. As we read together in Nehemiah..."for the people had a mind to work", it caused me to think of all the good we can accomplish for the Lord when we work together. May our goals be in accordance with His will.

On December 7, we had the baptisms of four souls: Adam Merkle (Dr. and Mrs. George Merkle), Tony Reinhard (Bro. Ezra and the late Sis. Doris), Nathan Bertsch (Bro. Lonnie and Sis. Becky), and Alan Macklin (Carl and Betty) have buried their old lives and have become new creatures in Christ. There are four new names written down in glory on this day!

It is so exciting to hear of souls turning away from the world and asking Jesus to be the Lord of their lives. Brett Garrett, Sarah Troxel, and Ryan Corkwell have begun repenting. May we be prayerful for them.

We have three engagements to announce. Bro. Joe Sprunger (Bro. Kent and Sis. Shiela, Bluffton) and Sis. Tara Byerly (Sis. Sue Byerly) are planning to be married on May 17. Bro. Rob Cupp (Bro. Mick and Sis. Connie) is engaged to Sis. Bridget Scholl (Bro. Ron and Sis. Carol, Peoria, IL), who resides in Bloomington, IN. Bro. Klint Moser (Bro. Phil and Sis. Jean, Bluffton) has asked Sis. Amy Lantz (Bro. Junior and Sis. Charlene) to be his wife. May these couples continue to look to the Lord for direction as they build a life together.

Bro. Greg and Sis. Amy Kaehr are the parents of a new son, Morgan Joe, born on November 22. He is welcomed home by big brothers, Elishon and Gavin.

Sis. Aldulla Pulver (Bro. Les) has had surgery this month. May she

feel the prayers of the congregation during her recuperation.

What a privilege to listen to our Sunday School classes sing about the birth of the little Lord Jesus! As their voices blended in song, it seemed as though the angels were singing with them, proclaiming, "...they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." (Matthew 1:23). May this message make a difference in our lives as we enter a new year, 1998.

As we look back, let's thank Him
As we look forward, let's trust Him
As we look around us, let's serve Him
As we look up, let's expect Him.
—author unknown

INDIANA, FRANCESVILLE Lily Pelsy

"Teach me thy way, O Lord; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name."

Psalms 86:11

As we begin a new year, may we know God's nearness to the fullest degree. We thank Elder Bro. Dave Wiegand (Champaign, IL) for assisting Elder Bro. Wendell Gudeman to serve Communion. It was precious to feel the unity of the Spirit.

We rejoice with Melissa Wuethrich (Bro. Brad and Sis. Nancy) and Amanda Ward (Bro. Roger and Sis. Sandi) as they have found peace with God and man.

On December 6, Salome Noel was born to Bro. Bob and Sis. Joy Huber. Her sister, Chloe, and grandparents, Bro. Bill and Sis. Betty Huber and Bro. Ron and Sis. Dianne Vogt, are thankful.

Hospital patients this month were Bros. Andre Neihouser (Sis. Lois) and Lester Nuest. May they

know the goodness and healing power of the Lord.

We thank our home ministers for their faithful service as well as those visiting us this month: Bros. Ken Wuethrich (Indianapolis, IN), Dan Kilgus (Remington, IN) and Neil Widmer (Wolcott, IN).

Closing thought from a sermon: True thankfulness is feeling our indebtedness to God.

INDIANA, INDIANAPOLIS Lynn Dotterer

On November 22, Elder Bro. Layoyd Moore (Athens, AL) came to Indy to help our Elder Bro. Alfred Bahler in the reading of the annual Conference Memorandum.

We rejoice with Bro. Rob Cupp who announced his engagement to Sis. Bridget Scholl (Peoria, IL) on November 23. We wish them all God's blessings as they begin their new life together.

On December 14, we heard the Christmas story as told by our Sunday School children.

We thank ministering Bros. Jaye Rinkenberger and Jeff Grimm (Goodfield, IL) for sharing the Word with us this month.

INDIANA, LACROSSE Anna Marie Stoller

Visiting ministers the past month were Elder Bro. Bill Schlatter (Junction, OH), and Bros. Dan Stoller (Remington, IN) and Marshall Heinold (Mexico).

Sis. Mary Gudeman spent time in the hospital and is recovering in her home.

Bro. Aaron and Sis. Grace Heinold and family mourn the loss of Bro. Harvey Banwart (Eureka, IL). Bro. Harvey and Sis. Sylvia lived many years in the LaCrosse area.

A sudden loss came into the fam-

ily of Bro. Steve and Sis. Anna Marie Stoller when her Dad, Otto Baer, of Princeville, IL suffered a fatal massive heart attack.

During the year of 1997, our small congregation at LaCrosse has suffered many crosses. These difficult events in life draw us more close to our God and Father in Heaven, and He becomes very precious to our hearts. The presence of the Holy Spirit is appreciated moment by moment. "Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dismayed, for I am thy God and will still give thee aid; I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand, upheld by My righteous, omnipotent hand. When thru fiery trials thy pathway shall lie, My grace, all-sufficient, shall be thy supply; The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine. The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose, I will not, I will not, desert to his foes; that soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake, I'll never, no never, no never forsake." (Hymns of Zion #11). Wonderful words to be thankful for and encourage us on into 1998.

INDIANA, LAFAYETTE

We were blessed in November to have Bros. Dan Stoller (Remington, IN), John Reinhard (Bluffton, IN) and Ken Wuethrich (Indianapolis, IN) share the Word of truth with us. It is always a joy to gather around the Word. May God richly bless these brothers for their efforts.

Our group meets each midweek, except for the holidays, at the Fellowship Center in Lafayette. Our song service begins at 7:30 p.m. We alternate on Thursday evenings between Purdue Fellowship services and midweek church services. If you are in the area and would like to

worship with us, or would like a schedule, please contact Bro. Neal Widmer (765) 497-4709 for more information. We welcome you to our services.

**INDIANA, LEO
Ethelyn Schlatter**

A New Year's Prayer

Oh, Lord, open my eyes to see the truths Thou has for me. Help me by Thy grace to grow in understanding and love, as I meditate in Thy Holy Word each day. In this New Year may I draw close to Thee, and share my time and love with others. In Jesus name, Amen.

We bid farewell to Bro. Les and Sis. Patti Marti and their two sons, Levi and Lincoln, as they returned to Illinois. May they always feel the Lord's nearness and guiding Spirit.

Elder Bro. Earl Ringger (Gridley, IL) and Bro. James Ramseyer (Bay City, MI) shared God's Word with us on Thanksgiving Day. It was an inspiration and blessing to have them and their wives with us. Retired Elder Bro. Edwin Ringger and Sis. Geralene were also here.

On December 7, Bro. Ron Bollier (Indianapolis, IN) ministered to us. It was a blessing to have him and his family with us.

The following Sunday, Bro. Carl Wyss and Sis. Lydiann (Washington, IL) were with us. His message was very timely and we thank him for being willing to be used by God.

December 14 was our Christmas program in the late afternoon, followed by a supper. The theme was on the origin of Silent Night (by Joseph Mohr/Franz Gruber). Many parents and grandparents of the children from Gateway Woods attended the program and listened as their loved ones took part. May God

receive the glory and we pray the good seed found fertile soil.

A large group gathered at the Fellowship Center, divided into five groups, to go Christmas caroling on Friday night, December 12.

Our prayer for those who are afflicted in body, is that they feel the Lord's comfort and healing. Sis. Velma Bollier successfully came through surgery to correct her heart rhythm. Her need to gain more strength has not affected her spiritual outlook. Sis. Pearl Klopfenstein is confined at home and in the need of much care. Sis. Sylvia Steiner has been having periods of confusion and some of our sisters have been staying with her in the evening for an hour or two until she is settled for the night. Cameron Stieglitz (Bro. Lynn and Sis. Leonda) was hospitalized for a couple days with a virus following the chicken pox. His platelet count was very low, but with a transfusion has improved. Bro. Eugene Stoller is hospitalized at this time.

We appreciated Elder Bro. Phil Stettner (Bluffton North, IN) and Sis. Maureen's visit Wednesday evening as he reminded us "the just shall live by faith" (Heb. 2:4). He meditated on Matthew 11:28-30. Where else can we go for rest now and forever?

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy...Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf. For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it

first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?...Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator."

I Peter 4:12,13,16,17,19

**INDIANA, MILFORD
Linda Beer - Renee Beer**

As we look forward to the new year before us, we can reflect back over 1997 and see how richly the Lord has blessed us and again provided for us in numerous ways.

What will you do with this year
that's so new?
As we start a New Year untouched
and unmarred
Unblemished and flawless,
un scratched and unscarred
May we try to do better and
accomplish much more
And be kinder and wiser than in the
year gone before -
Let us wipe our slates clean and
start over again,
For God gives this privilege to all
sincere men
Who humbly admit they have failed
many ways
But are willing to try and improve
these "new days"
By asking God's help in all that they
do
And counting on Him to refresh and
renew
Their courage and faith when things
go wrong
And the way seems dark and the
road rough and long -
What will you do with this year
that's so new?
The choice is yours - God leaves that
to you!
—Helen Steiner Rice

"...choose you this day whom ye will serve...but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

Joshua 24:15

Believing that God will not let more come upon us than we are able

to bear, we think of those who have met with accident or had minor surgery. Our prayers and thoughts are with Tillie Kasbaum, Sis. Millie Beer, Sis. Kate Price, Bro. Howard Beer, and Bro. Dick Steffen.

We always look forward to the Christmas season each year and appreciate the events of the season. We were thankful for all who took part in our Christmas program and caroling. The message of God's gift was a blessing to all.

INDIANA, REMINGTON
Patti Bahler

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

Romans 12:15

This month, our church has many reasons to rejoice and also reason to weep. We rejoice with those who have become a child of the King and those who are planning to be joined as one in Christ. But we also weep with those who have had to say goodbye to a loved one.

On November 29 and 30, we were blessed to witness five testimonies and baptisms. Sis. Amanda Stoller (Bro. Dan and Sis. Deb), Sis. Andrea Bahler (Bro. Ed and Sis. Annette), Bros. Paul Virkler, Nathan Virkler and Joel Virkler (Bro. Stan and Sis. Beth) all expressed their desire to leave the world behind and live for Jesus Christ our Lord. We pray the Lord will lead each of their tender hearts in a plain path.

Elder Bros. Andy Virkler (Bay City, MI) and Curt Frank (LaCrosse, IN) came to assist Bro. Alfred Bahler with this work. Bros. John Laukhuf (Latty, OH) and Brian Huber (Francesville, IN) were also with us for the weekend. We sincerely thank each of these broth-

ers for preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We want to share the wonderful news of the engagement of Sis. Sara Stoller (Bro. Bill and Sis. Barb) of Latty, OH to Bro. Jason Getz (Bro. Eldon and Sis. Charlene). We extend a sincere warm welcome to Sis. Sara as she plans to move into our community and wish both of them God's nearness as they anticipate marriage. They are planning a March wedding.

In a month of rejoicing, we also wept with loved ones as they said goodbye to their mother and grandmother. Our prayers have been with Bro. Dan and Sis. Deb Stoller and their children in the death of her mother, Sis. Lea Frank (LaCrosse, IN). As we share in this sorrow, may the Lord provide comfort where we cannot.

INDIANA, SOUTH BEND
Marci Neuenschwander
Sue Beebe

Dear ones in the faith,

I feel that I must apologize for not having a Silver Lining submission in the September 1997 issue. I did type it out, but I didn't turn the paper face down when I faxed it in, and didn't realize this until just recently. So I will include the news from that month in an addendum to this month's news.

—*Sis. Marci Neuenschwander*

Our thanks go out to Bro. Gene Lehman (Wolcott, IN) and Elder Bro. Jesse Beer (Milford, IN) and their wives for giving of their time.

Congratulations go out to Clay Frank and Wendy Wilson who were married in Oil City, PA on August 16. We wish them God's richest blessings. Parents of the happy couple are Bro. Tom and Sis. Carolyn

Frank and Dale and Kathy Wilson of Franklin, PA. Congratulations also go out to Celise Frank and Kirk Beckham of Indianapolis on their engagement. Celise is the daughter of Bro. Tom and Sis. Carolyn Frank and Kirk is the son of Jim and Sheryl Beckham of Plymouth, IN.

I've always looked forward to the new year, because I see it as more opportunities to serve my Lord and get to know Him better. As time flies on and we each grow older, may we live to understand the joy and beauty of being one of His children. Christ's sacrifice alone should be all the motivation we need to look forward to the new year with anticipation and excitement. For in His death, we are given the opportunity to come to Him as we are, no matter the time of year. It is only that the passing of the old year gives us yet another chance to serve Him or to accept Him as our Sovereign Lord.

We extend our sympathies toward Bro. Tom and Sis. Carolyn Frank in the death of Bro. Tom's mother, Sis. Lea Frank (Bro. Ed), of LaCrosse, IN. She will be deeply missed by those of us who knew her.

On December 13 we went caroling, followed by dinner at Bro. Rich Gramm's. December 14 was our Christmas program. The Christmas story was beautifully shared by both the Sunday School and Young Group.

Craig Langhofer has been announced as having peace. His parents are Bro. Marty and Sis. Lavilla. We wish him God's grace as he continues to grow in his faith and comes to know his Saviour more.

We wish to welcome Chris Gramm to our South Bend congregation. Chris is the brother of Bro. Rich Gramm. Chris moved here from California, where he had lived for several years, and is now staying

with his brother, Rich.

We welcome anyone who would wish to visit us for either Sunday services or Wednesday night services. If you are planning to visit on Wednesday nights, we ask that you call either Bro. Bob Beebe or Bro. Wayne Lehman for the time and place of services. Between January 1 and March 31, our winter mid-week schedule is in effect.

INDIANA, VALPARAISO

Ken Susdorf - Cheryl Bucher

Greetings loved ones. As we begin a New Year once again, it may be a good time to sit down and see how well we did for the Lord in this past year. Chances are pretty good that we all have many areas that we could improve on. This would be a great time to examine ourselves and set some spiritual goals for ourselves. It's very easy to say "I'm going to do better for the Lord this year", but to not have any goals for ourselves is to wander aimlessly. Let's fight a well organized battle for the Lord.

Just a few weeks ago, we enjoyed having the Sunday School present their Christmas program for us. They are truly a blessing to us and we thank God for each one. Thanks to all the teachers who did a wonderful job of putting this together. The Sunday School also had a food drive and baskets were distributed by the Bible Class.

Also, we had our church Christmas dinner together in our fellowship room. What a wonderful family God has included us in and we are very thankful for His love toward us.

Our hearts and prayers are with Sis. Leona Bucher (Bro. Merle) at the passing of her brother.

Congratulations to Darel and Sis. Janet Walker on the birth of their

new little girl, Naomi Christine. Naomi has two sisters, Emily and Abby, who are very excited. May God richly bless your family.

May God grant you all a blessed New Year and may we all be gathering in the harvest.

INDIANA, WOLCOTT

Beckie Lehman - Jody Bahler

We have again been reminded of the miraculous, holy birth of our precious Saviour. Our Sunday School children brought forth the beautiful message of this sacred event on Wednesday evening, December 17. Let us never forget the true meaning of this Christmas season.

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

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

Another year of service,
Of witness for Thy love;
Another year of training
For holier work above.

Hymns of Zion #150

Now as we look forward to a new year, let us all strive for our Heavenly goal with new zeal and courage.

Sis. Reva Waibel (Bro. Leon) has returned home from a lengthy hospital stay. We are thankful that she can recuperate in the comfort of her own home. It is so good to see Sis. Reva with such a good attitude and a smile on her face.

IOWA, BURLINGTON

Edith Massner

Monica Eisenmann

We were privileged to have several visiting ministers in this past

month. Elder Bro. Ed Lanz (Oakville, IA) was with us on the Sunday of our Christmas program. Bros. Mark Kiefer (Denver, CO) and Jerry Wagenbach, Jr. (Oakville, IA) were also with us recently. We thank them for their willing service and ask that the Lord may bless them in this life and in the life to come.

Our prayers go out to our ministering Bro. John Rowell (Sis. Nelda) and Sis. Edith Massner (Bro. Lloyd) as they both have been experiencing health problems. Also, our prayers have been with many others in our small congregation that have had health concerns in the past year. May they all return to full health in the New Year, Lord willing.

Note of Thanks:

Thank you all for the lovely cards and gifts for my birthday. Thanks also to the brothers that came to sing. It was greatly appreciated! God bless you one and all.

Tillie Frank

IOWA, ELGIN

Gloria Frieden

As we close out another year with Christmas carols and begin the new with New Year's wishes, may God grant us the spirit of:

Love — "...if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." (I John 4:11)

Compassion — "...be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another..." (I Peter 3:8)

Humility — "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up." (James 4:10)

Thankfulness — "In every thing give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." (II Thess. 5:18)

Submission — "Submitting your-

selves one to another in the fear of God." (Ephesians 5:21)

Along with submission, may God also grant us the wisdom to know; faith to believe and trust; and the grace to obey His direction and perfect will in our lives.

Our thanks to Bro. Paul Messner (Winthrop, MN) for bringing his family for a weekend visit and for sharing God's Word with us. May God be his rich rewarder.

Our sympathy is extended to the Albert Hanson family in the death of Albert's mother, Alma, of Elgin. Alma raised a large family and I'm sure she leaves them with many happy memories.

Reminder: Silver Lining dues are scheduled for February for Elgin, IA. Thank you.

IOWA, GARDEN GROVE
Delores Reinhard

"The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower."

Psalm 18:2

On December 14, our congregation enjoyed an evening of caroling to the elderly and shut-ins followed by a lunch at Bro. Tom and Sis. Dawn Moser's house. On December 21, our Sunday School presented their Christmas program. It's always such a joy to watch the children make an effort to say their pieces and tell us about the birth of Jesus. Following the program was our monthly potluck.

Babies bring a new joy into the home when they arrive. On November 24, Jeremy and Rebecca Smith were blessed with a baby girl, Payton Taylor. Grandparents are

Eugene and Rachel Smith and Ronnie and Glenda Davis.

We were blessed this past month with visitors from Ames and Burlington, IA; Fort Scott, KS; Eureka and Roanoke, IL. Our visiting ministers were Bros. Don Miller (Minneapolis, MN) and Kenneth Knapp (Taylor, MO) and Elder Bro. Lawrence Luthi (Lamar, MO).

We are now stepping into another new year. Are we satisfied with what we have done for God and others in the past year of 1997? Let us all strive to work a little harder in serving and pleasing our Lord, and make 1998 a little better and more pleasing year. May God's blessings be with each one as they have so richly been in the past.

While on this narrow pathway
For grace we do depend
Upon the Lord and Saviour, Saviour,
Who'll lead us to the end.

Zion's Harp #134

IOWA, IOWA CITY
Sharon Gerst

We are thankful that God has blessed us again with visiting ministers to break the Bread of Life with us. They were Bros. Dale Wulf (Lester, IA) and Byron Stoller (Gridley, IL). May God richly bless these brothers for their efforts in our behalf.

God has granted our convert Amy Gerst (Bro. Joe and Sis. Connie) with His wonderful peace. We rejoice with her as she looks forward to her proving and baptism, Lord willing, on February 14-15.

On December 14, the Sunday School children told us of Christ's birth and why He came to this earth. May God reward these students and their Sunday School teachers for all their work!

When a new year begins, we have an opportunity to reflect on how

close we have walked with the Lord in the past year. May we look to God for direction and guidance throughout the new year!

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

Another year of service,
Of witness for Thy love;
Another year of training
For holier work above.

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

Hymns of Zion #150

IOWA, LESTER
Cindy Leuthold
Sue Warner

We have felt God's hand this month in our congregation. Our thoughts were turned heavenward as we laid to rest our dear retired ministering brother, Bro. Carl Feucht. We extend sincere sympathy to his wife, Sis. Emma; his sons, Darrell (Lori), and Bro. Dean; his grandchildren; and his brothers and sisters. Bro. Carl was known by young and old alike, and always took time to greet each one on Sunday.

We were also saddened by the death of Bro. Orvie Knobloch. Our prayers are with his wife, Sis. Laurretta; his children, David, Donald (Darlene), Eureka, IL; Bro. Jerry (Sis. Linda), Congerville, IL; Bro. Jimmy (Sis. Sandra), West Bend, IA; Harlan (Lisa), Maybank, TX; Bro. Virgil, Pulaski, IA; Lynette Knips (Mark); and Alvin; his grandchildren, and his brothers and sisters. We pray that our loved ones will feel God's nearness at this time of loss.

We also have cause for rejoicing in our midst as more souls have heeded the call to repentance. Our

prayers are with Jim and Betty Leuthold and Dana Metzger (Bro. Marvin and Sis. Joleen) as they seek to build on the firm foundation.

We also rejoiced with the opportunity to hear the testimonies and witness the baptisms of Sis. Karmen Popkes (John) and Bro. Jared Metzger (Bro. Art and Sis. Kristi). We pray that God will dwell mightily by the sides of the new lambs in the flock. We are thankful that Elder Bro. Art Nohl and his wife traveled to our congregation to help our Elders in this work.

We are thankful for the labors of the other ministers that visited Lester this month. They are Elder Bro. Doug Schock (Pulaski, IA), and Bros. Carl Wyss (Washington, IL), Virgil Metzger (Chicago, IL) and Doug Grimm (Sabetha, KS).

Believing it is God's will for their lives, two couples have announced their betrothals. Bro. Trent Knobloch (Bro. Roger and Sis. Janet) to Sis. Heather Metzger (Bro. Harvey and Sis. Mary); and Bro. Joshua Martinez (Altadena, CA) to Sis. Danielle Stickling (Bro. Dale and Sis. Diane). We wish them God's richest blessings in their lives together.

Todd and Sandy Martin were blessed with their first child, Sydney Dawn, on November 26. Happy grandparents are Ed and Judy Martin.

We have had several surgical patients and are thankful that all are home and recovering. They are Sarah Feucht, Bro. Larry Peterson (Sis. Emily), Glenn Meyer, Sis. Emma Knobloch, and Sis. Karoline Doorneweerd.

Notes of Thanks:

We would like to thank all of those who helped with food, cards, prayers and concerns during Carl's

illness and death. It is very much appreciated. God bless you all.

Sis. Emma Feucht and family

Our heartfelt thanks to each and every one for the many prayers, visits, gifts and cards through my accident and now since our residence in the Rock Rapids Health Center. May our dear Lord and Saviour richly bless you all.

Bro. Bud and Sis. Irene Knobloch

IOWA, OAKVILLE

**Melody Steiner
Debbie Wagenbach**

Bro. Mark Kiefer (Denver, CO) was home for the Thanksgiving holidays. We appreciated his efforts in bringing forth the Word. May God bless him and his family.

As we gathered to hear our Sunday School children recite their verses, we felt truly blessed to be reminded of the humble birth of our Lord and Saviour. It often seems throughout this busy season of the year we find ourselves wrapped up in the commercialism of the season and forget the true meaning of Christmas. As we look forward to the dawning of a new year, let us remember the precious words penned in Hymns of Zion #36, "Tis not the manger but the cross that sets the spirit free." Many can reflect on this past year with joyful memories and others have suffered heartache and loss. May God direct our hearts to "Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep." (Romans 12:15)

IOWA, PULASKI

Lisa Knecht

We are grateful for the ministering Bros. Gary Endress (Sis. Evelyn, Bradford, IL) and Darrel Stoller (Sis. Gloria, Bern, KS) who visited

our congregation this past month. May God bless them and continue to provide the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Our church was saddened to hear of the death of Bro. Virgil Knobloch's father, Bro. Orvie Knobloch (Lester, IA). Our prayers are with Bro. Virgil, his mother and family during this time of sorrow and in the days ahead. We are so thankful the Lord has a home awaiting for those who have lived their life in faith.

And when we do grow weary
He bringeth us to rest;
We in our graves do tarry,
And sleep there with the blest.

There freed from earthly burdens,
With no more pain or ache,
Till in the glorious morning
He calls: "Awake! Awake!"

There with the angels singing,
In heaven we shall roam,
With gratitude proclaiming:
We've reached the soul's bright
home.

Zion's Harp #139

As the New Year is upon us, may our faith and trust increase in the One who knows the path to Heaven, and simply asks us to follow.

He Knows

I know not what awaits me,
God kindly veils mine eyes,
And o'er each step of my onward
way
He makes new scenes to rise;
And every joy he sends me,
Comes a sweet and glad surprise.

One step I see before me,
'Tis all I need to see,
The light of heav'n more brightly
shines,
When earth's illusions flee;
And sweetly through the silence,
Came His loving "Follow me."

O blissful lack of wisdom,
'Tis blessed not to know;
He holds me with His own right

hand,
And will not let me go,
And lulls my troubled soul to rest
In Him who loves me so.

So on I go not knowing,
I would not if I might;
I'd rather walk in the dark with God
Than go alone in the light;
I'd rather walk by faith with Him
Than go alone by sight.

Gospel Hymns #181

IOWA, WEST BEND

Eunice Fehr - Lela Banwart

Several in our congregation have lost loved ones recently.

We extend our heartfelt sympathy to the family of Bro. Fred Wirtz, which includes his wife, Sis. Hulda; children, Mary Besch (Ted, Storm Lake), Esther Frieden (Les, West Bend), John Wirtz (Ella, Ft. Dodge), Eli Wirtz (Marilyn, Urbandale), Alvin Wirtz (Wendy, Gilbert, AZ), Lori Wirtz (Kearny, AZ), Luanne Collins (Chuck, Plano, TX), Irene Blair (Alan, Humboldt), Aaron Wirtz (Peg, Belmond), and Fred Jr. Wirtz (Patsy, West Bend); 26 grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren; brothers, Bro. Edwin Wirtz (Lucille, Mallard), Paul Wirtz (Beverly, Crystal Lake), and Bro. Verner Wirtz (Sis. Betty, West Bend); and sisters, Lydia Edwards (West Bend) and Adeline Spencer (Ellsworth, Hanlontown).

Frank Thomann passed away and our sympathy to his family as well, which includes brothers, Bert and Bob (West Bend), and Earle (Rochester, MN); and sisters, Edna Coleman (Falmouth, MA) and Lydia Gordon (Redding, CA).

Our sympathy to Louis Schafer on the death of his brother, August Schafer (West Bend).

Our deepest sympathy goes out to Bro. Jim and Sis. Sandy Knobloch on the passing of his father, Bro. Orvie Knobloch (Sis. Lauretta,

Lester, IA); also to Bro. Orvie's sister, Sis. Matilda Fehr (Bro. Elmer), and many nieces and nephews.

We extend our sympathy to Bro. Paul and Martha Demiter on the passing of Martha's brother, Paul McQuaid (Streetboro, OH).

Ervin and Nettie Banwart will miss their brother-in-law, Bro. Carl Feucht (Lester, IA), and our thoughts and sympathy go to them.

We pray that all who have felt the pain of losing loved ones will look to God for comfort and strength to see them through this time of sorrow. Perhaps the following poem can be a comfort and encouragement to us on this side of the Heavenly Gate.

Heaven's Gate

Sadly we stand outside the
Heavenly Gate
Left behind to work, to watch and
wait.
Loved ones pass through as life may
will,
Though out of sight, their spirits
with us still.

They watch us as we wipe away the
tears
Stand beside us as we progress
through the years.
From the other side they anxiously
await
The time we join them through the
Heavenly Gate.

Our hospital patients have been Sis. Ruth Dodd, Sis. Kris Banwart (Steve) and Bro. Art Banwart (Madeline). We are thankful that God has touched them with His healing hand and that they can all be home again.

God has blessed the home of Bro. Darren and Sis. Nora Fehr with another son, Travis Darren. Happy to have a little brother is Ashton. Grandparents are Bro. Jim and Sis. Barb Kuenzi (Silverton, OR) and Bro. Dennis and Sis. Judy Fehr.

On December 2, we had our annual business meeting. New posi-

tions have been filled by Bro. Wendell Schmidt (secretary-treasurer), Bro. Gary Schneider (church trustee), Bro. Harlan Metzger (usher), Bro. Melvin Fehr (Fellowship Center trustee), Bro. Chuck Mogler (Retirement Village board), Sis. Berniece Banwart (Silver Lining), Sis. Sue Schneider (World Relief committee). Sis. Beth Banwart, Sis. Lori Skoglund, and Sis. Carol Gress are all new on the committees in charge of the three cooking-serving groups. We want to thank all the dear brothers and sisters for their years of service in the various positions, and wish God's guidance and blessings to the brothers and sisters in their new duties.

The Opening Year

The year is gone, beyond recall,
With all its hopes and fears,
With all its bright and gladdening
smiles,
With all its mourners' tears.

Thy thankful people praise thee,
Lord,
For countless gifts received;
And pray for grace to KEEP THE
FAITH,
Which SAINTS OF OLD believed.

O Father, let thy watchful eye
Still look on us in love,
That we may praise thee, year by
year,
With angel-hosts above.

—selection from

"The Best Loved Religious Poems"

May we earnestly contend for the
FAITH OF OUR FATHERS in the
coming year.

JAPAN, SHIODA

Reiko Furuya

Last Sunday, the message at Shioda was on Mary's song from the first chapter of Luke, with emphasis on mercy. Mary exclaimed, "His mercy is on them that fear him from

generation to generation." It is by His mercy that we receive forgiveness of sin and receive salvation.

The word "mercy" is found again in verse 54, "He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy."

In verse 52 we read that God hath exalted them of low degree. In order to obtain this mercy, we must be humble or of low degree. In regard to God's servant, Israel, there is a spiritual Israel, as well as a nation of Israel. Spiritual Israel includes all true Christians.

If God remembers to be merciful to us forever, we must surely be merciful to each other and to everyone.

Willis Ehnle

This year, as usual, we will be going to the local hospital to sing Christmas carols and to pass out Christmas cards and a small gift to about 120 patients. We do this on the Sunday afternoon before Christmas.

Sis. Kiyoko Hirose has not been feeling well and we request prayer for her.

On December 24, Lois and I will be traveling to the States to spend the holidays with our children and grandchildren.

KANSAS, BERN
Lori Baumgartner
Holly Meyer

Love is of a friendly nature,
Does no selfish thought possess;
Love is not a sin partaker,
And is free from bitterness.
Love is truthful, not deceitful,
Does here every burden bear;
And, enduring is so fruitful
In all trials joy to share.

Zion's Harp #37

What a joyful moment as our congregation sang this song to our dear couple, Bro. Emil and Sis. Grace

Strahm, in honor of their 60th wedding anniversary. As this verse mentions, selfishness, bitterness, and deceitfulness, which can so easily creep into a marriage, have no place in a loving relationship. As we all struggle with these, to some degree on a daily basis, we are so thankful that we have an all-knowing God to turn to ("Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you." I Peter 5:7). God's blessings to Bro. Emil and Sis. Grace in the years ahead.

In the last issue, it was mentioned that our friend, Sara Popkess, was awaiting brain surgery. We are thankful to report that her tumor was removed successfully, but she now faces several weeks of radiation and possibly a year of chemotherapy. May we all strive to be more prayerful for her and her husband, Ed, their sons, Hogan and Hunter, and their extended families. The following verses were shared with her by a healthcare worker at the hospital:

"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour..."

Isaiah 43:2-3

We have been blessed with several visiting ministers this past month. Bros. Doyle Frauhiger (Bluffton North, IN) and Pat Zaugg (West Bend, IA) were both here on November 23. The next weekend, Bro. Roger Aberle (Sabetha, KS) ministered to us, and the following Sunday, Bro. Don Wagenbach (Washington, IL) was in Bern. We also assembled on Thanksgiving

Day and were grateful to have Bro. Dean Steffen (Belvidere, IL) and his family with us. May the Lord bless each one of these brothers and their families.

Bro. Matthew and Sis. Helen Edelman and their son, Marvin, welcomed Dianna Suzanne into their family on November 22. We rejoice with them and grandparents, Bro. Fred and Sis. Joanne Edelman and William and Helen Fehr (Fairbury, IL). Again, we need to be prayerful for the young parents with all their responsibilities to raise their children in a godly way.

On Sunday evening, December 7, many from our church enjoyed our annual Christmas caroling. It is always a special time to sing those carols of old and we pray that they were a blessing to everyone—young and old!

Several carloads from our congregation traveled to Newton, KS on Monday, December 15, to help with various World Relief projects. How thankful we are for these opportunities to help others and fellowship with brethren from across Kansas!

KANSAS, FORT SCOTT
Tammy Sinn

We appreciated having ministering Bro. Art Ingold (Rittman, OH) with us recently. May the Lord bless him for his service to us.

The engagement of Sis. Tammy Sinn (Elder Bro. Charles and Sis. Karen) and Bro. Nathan Bradle (Bro. Roger and Sis. Ila) of Eureka, IL was announced November 16. May God add His blessing as they plan for their life together.

November 22 was the wedding day of Chuck Sinn (Elder Bro. Charles and Sis. Karen) and Debra Mackey (Jerry and Freida). Sis. Rebecca Sinn (Elder Bro. Charles and Sis. Karen) and Bro. Phil Braker

(Bro. Bob and Sis. Janice Stoller) of Lamar, MO were united in Holy Matrimony on November 23. We wish both of these couples God's guidance and blessings as they walk together as one. We thank Elder Bro. Bob Walder (Congerville, IL) and Bro. Bob Stoller (Lamar, MO) for bringing forth the Word of Life to us that weekend.

Our sympathy is extended to the family of Caroline Banwart who departed this life on December 9. May each one feel God's nearness at this time of separation.

The Sunday School Christmas program was held on December 17. We always appreciate being reminded of the plan of salvation.

KANSAS, KIOWA

Janice Bahr - Darcy Kisling

Father, we thank Thee for this day.
Bless all we do and all we say.
May we each enjoy Thy blessings
great

As Jesus' birth we celebrate.

And may the love that we share here
Remain throughout the coming year.
Amen.

—Gertrude B. Byram

We have so many blessing to be thankful for, and the events of the past few weeks bring this home to us all the more clearly. We had a lovely sunshiny day for caroling for our loved ones, and a large group joined us for the occasion so the singing was very nice. The stars have been so big and bright lately, reminding us of that first star so long ago. The programs that rejoiced in the birth of Christ through song, and the reading again of the precious Scriptures of that night renewed our joy and faith, and most of all gave us humility that someone cared so much for our salvation, that He would send His only Son to this

sin sick world to give us the opportunity to choose whom we would serve. As we start the New Year, it is with a prayer for the grace to walk closer to our Lord, especially as we see the ever-changing world around us that tries to entice us with its "easily accessible pleasures" and thus leads us away from a closer relationship with our God.

We have started listening to the tapes of the Conference on Wednesday nights, and we again are truly thankful for the Elder brothers and the concern they have for our precious faith in trying to keep it holy and true until the coming again of our Lord for His Church.

We would like to express our deepest regard to the family of Sis. Florence Guthrie at the passing of her sister, Katherine Roecker, of Morton, IL. Also to the family of Sis. Laverne Roth, at the passing of her sister, Erma Woods, of Perryton, TX. Thirdly, to the family of Bro. George W. Greiner, who also was taken Home this past month. It is always difficult to lose a loved one, but especially during the holidays. May God be a comfort to each of you in your loss.

Have a blessed and happy New Year, and have it in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ!

KANSAS, LAMONT-GRIDLEY

Julie Bahr

I trust that Christmas was again a wonderful blessing to all our brethren. What a tremendous fulfillment it was again to be able to experience the joy of giving this Christmas season. Our children learn invaluable experiences when they can be taught first-hand how very blessed it is to give of oneself. The selfless way in which each one worked so hard to bring us a memorized verse and song to tell the story

of Christ's birth, the making of care boxes to give to families in need—those who are in the local community and those who live in far away countries, and also wrapping and giving a gift to handicapped children who rarely see a personal gift of any kind. Two of these children were inadvertently forgotten and didn't receive a wrapped gift. The Sunday School children standing nearby learned first-hand of selflessness by two of the brethren, who gave of their own personal items in order to prevent disappointment in the heart of a forgotten child. A child who wouldn't have had the understanding to know why he was not remembered. Praise God that He gives us opportunities daily to teach our children the blessed joys of giving. May we strive to seize these fleeting moments and not let them slip by.

A New Year dawns and with it we try to make new commitments to serve our positions more faithfully with the grace of God. Especially myself, sharing our news with all the brethren. It seems, as you all know, that the months slip by so quickly, and another article is due before I know it. Bear with me as "God isn't finished with me yet."

Glen Kraft (Faye) was recently diagnosed with a tumor requiring treatment. We pray fervently for him and his dear wife, Faye, that they may receive God's almighty power of healing—if it is in His will. Also hospitalized recently was Marvin (Jeana) Anliker for surgery, and Sis. Hannah Grimm for much needed relief of a serious medical condition. We are so thankful to see our loved ones in our midst as fellowship times seem lonely without them.

Our loving sympathy goes out to the dear families who have lost loved

ones. Sis. Leona Kraft passed away in the Sabetha home after having lived many of her years here in our area. Sis. Leona was oftentimes endeared as "aunt" or "grandmother" to many of us. Also to Bro. Rudy (Sis. Eileen) in the passing of his brother-in-law, Bro. George (Sis. Ann) Greiner, of Wichita. Our expression of sympathy also to Sis. Hannah Grimm in the loss of her dear sister, Caroline Banwart (Ft. Scott, KS). Sis. Hannah was recovering from her hospital stay and was unable to be present to offer a final farewell. The sadness sometimes seems a little unbearable, when opportunities are taken from us. We ask God for His much needed presence and grace during these difficult times for each one.

We rejoice with Bro. Cory Metzger and Sis. Jodi Reimschisel as they were united together in marriage on December 28. Bro. Cory is the son of Bro. Eldon and Sis. Dorene Metzger from here. Our loving congratulations are extended to this dear couple. May God bless their union.

KANSAS, SABETHA
Brenda Grimm
Mary Kay Wenger

Several inches of snow on the ground and fairly cool temperatures have provided ideal conditions for various groups in church to go Christmas caroling in our community this season.

Emma Rose was born to Bro. Darin and Sis. Karen Edelman on December 10. Rachel and Isaac are happy to have a little sister. Her grandparents are Sis. Marjorie Edelman (late Clemens) and Bro. Roger and Sis. Ilene Hartter.

First-time parents, Wayne and Carrie Grimm, welcomed Elsie Lee to their home on December 14. This

is the first grandchild for both Bro. Rodney and Sis. Arlene Grimm and Gary and Marilyn Edelman. We wish these couples God's nearness as they raise their children.

We want to thank Elder Bro. Mark Bahr (Detroit, MI) and Bro. Richard Aberle (Altadena, CA) for sharing God's Word with us this past month.

Our thoughts and prayers have been with Sis. Nita Grimm (Bro. Kevin) in the death of her father, Otto Baer (Princeville, IL); and with Sis. Dena Weiss (Bro. Calvin) on the passing away of her brother, Bro. Orvie Knobloch (Lester, IA). May God comfort each of these families in their loss.

Bro. Brian and Sis. Jeanelle Plattner have both recently graduated from Kansas State University and will continue to worship with us as Bro. Brian has found employment in Sabetha. Trent Strahm (Bro. Carl and Sis. Sharon) also graduated from Kansas State University this December and has chosen to go on to graduate school. We ask the Lord's guidance in each one of their lives.

We wish to remember those in our congregation who have undergone surgery or spent time in the hospital: Sis. Evelyn Wysong, Bro. Donald Strahm, and Bro. John Plattner.

As we reflect upon the past year and look forward to 1998, may we rejoice at the numerous blessings God has given us. Let us live each day in the fullness of God's mercy as we await His second coming.

Just prior to this mailing, I learned that Bro. Charles Terry was unexpectedly called Home on December 14. Prior to his passing away, he was hospitalized for a hip replacement and shortly thereafter developed pneumonia. Our sympa-

thy is extended to his wife, Sis. Esther, and daughters, Rita Meyer (Delwin) and Eleanor Miller (Peoria, IL).

KANSAS, WICHITA
Emma Miller

As I reflected over the past month, my first thought was, "I do not have anything to contribute." Then the Lord brought to my mind the efforts that are going into our Christmas program which is planned for the evening of December 21. Sis. Ruth Long offered to accept responsibility for directing our Sunday School students in this endeavor, thus relieving the teachers of this yearly assignment. What a precious gift of love and time! She wrote in the preface of the program, "As children we are taught of Christ's birth, we have sung songs of the blessed event, yet as we grow, Christ's birth becomes replaced with things to buy, make, give, and sell. We become so distracted without the worshipping and honoring of Christ's birth. We often follow the world's perception of the holiday season."

And then, I thought of some special reasons I have to give thanks for being a part of the Wichita congregation. As many of you know, Bro. Godfrey and I live a good thirty-five miles from the church. The last time it was our turn for the fellowship lunch, I goofed and forgot to take the towels home for laundering the week before. By the time I realized my mistake and did some calling for someone to check on the problem, I learned that someone else had taken care of the towels. Then the next Sunday morning when we arrived early with the food, we found the tables set. I still don't know who helped us. This is just one example of the thoughtfulness that can be

found among the Wichita Apostolic Christians.

The second example of thoughtfulness is one Bro. Godfrey and I are looking forward to this coming Wednesday night. Traditionally, our members and friends go to various residences and care homes to sing carols in lieu of Wednesday night services during the month of December. When we were asked if they would be welcome to come to our home, my first thought was, "It is so far, and such an imposition on your time." I was assured that was not the case. What wondrous love!

Then sadly, I must relate the passing of another of our beloved brothers in faith. Bro. George Greiner died the day after Thanksgiving. His memorial service was held the following Sunday at the church and his burial the following day at the Apostolic Christian cemetery at Gridley, KS. Bro. George was a steadfast brother and is survived by his caring wife, Sis. Ann; a son, Frank, and his wife, Anna, and their two daughters, Jennifer and Lora. Our hearts go out to Jennifer and Lora as they also experienced the death of their Grandmother Warren less than a month before.

KENTUCKY, LEXINGTON

Doug and Rebecca Germann

Our visitors this past month included Elder Bros. Jesse Beer (Sis. Shirley, Milford, IN) and Wayne Anliker (Sis. Judy, Forrest, IL) who brought several couples and young people with them. A special thank you to all who have visited our congregation this past year as we truly appreciate the fellowship. We want to extend an invitation to any who might be traveling through the area to stop and share a Wednesday evening or weekend with us here in Lexington. If anyone would like in-

formation on things to see and do in the State of Kentucky, please write us and we'll send information about the many beautiful state and national parks that are in our area.

Once again, we rejoice that God has called another soul to repentance and discipleship. We wish God's blessings upon our friend, Kyle Germann, who has made it known he wishes to take up the cross and follow his Saviour. He is the son of Bro. Doug and Sis. Rebecca Germann. We pray that Kyle and all our converts across the land will understand the true cost of Discipleship and that when Christ calls a person to repentance, He bids him come and die; die to the old nature and rise to a newness in Christ. Upon hearing of Kyle's wish to repent, I asked him if he understood what God would supply him in the days and years ahead to be an overcomer. The answer was grace. But then what is Grace? In our day and time, the world has given a new definition of Grace. Cheap grace is the grace we bestow upon ourselves, the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, communion without confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship. But, costly grace is the gospel which must be sought out again and again, the gift which must be asked for, the door at which a man must knock. It is costly because it costs a man his life, and it is grace because it gives a man the only true life! So, as we embark upon another year, may we count the cost of being His disciples and follow faithfully wherever He would lead.

Thought for the New Year: Our children are the living messages we send to a time that we will not see.

MICHIGAN, ALTO

Melanie Kaeb

Michelle Oesch

The evening of December 14, our Sunday School children told us the story of Jesus' birth with their songs and verses they had been practicing. In their innocence, we can see why God sent His Son to earth as a baby. Children are naturally full of excitement and hope and in their own way they are gentle reminders of the gift of hope that God gave us all when He sent His Son to be born in a manger.

Brian and Ceri Grawburg's home was recently blessed with their little baby, Noah. Also welcoming him home was big brother, Camrin, and his grandma, Sis. Jane Grawburg.

In the hospital this past month was Eric Blough (Gordon and Trisha) with a broken leg and Nick Blough (Bro. Jim and Sis. Julie) from a fall from a ladder. We are thankful for the Lord's healing mercies and that they both were spared more serious injuries. We will probably never know the times our children are spared because of our prayers for them. "...pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (James 5:16)

When There Are No Answers
Life will bring us questions without answers.

To live is to encounter silent seasons of the soul,
When every prayer will seem to go unanswered

As we face events beyond our understanding or control.
Yet in the quiet darkness, Christ is working.

His silence in the shadows doesn't mean He doesn't care
A part of faith is trusting without reason,

Believing, when He can't be seen or heard, that He's still there.
So when answers fail to come, don't

be discouraged.
 Keep leaning on God's steadfast
 love and trusting in His will,
 For knowing "why" won't really
 make a difference—
 But growing close and knowing
 Jesus "will".

As we step into a new year, may
 our hearts know the peace that pas-
 seth understanding that comes from
 knowing a loving and compassion-
 ate Saviour.

MICHIGAN, BAY CITY
Rhonda Knochel
Peggy Jackson

A new year has begun and with it
 brings new plans, hopes and
 dreams. Many of us make New Year
 resolutions. To most, a New Year's
 resolution means that over this new
 year we are resolving to work on
 different areas of our lives. There is
 nothing wrong with seeing a need to
 work on our weaknesses; however, I
 think that sometimes WE resolve
 and therefore we try to work on
 those weaknesses alone. I love the
 statement "Go with God" because it
 implies the Lord Jesus walking by
 our side through life waiting and
 willing to extend strength and grace
 when we need it. Often we resolve
 to change and forget to draw on that
 strength and grace and thus, once
 again, fall flat on our faces. God is so
 loving when He says "Be ye there-
 fore perfect, even as your Father
 which is in heaven is perfect." (Mat-
 thew 5:48). Why is this so loving?
 Because He then provides the tools
 for us to do that. So this year, "re-
 solve" to not leave God out. Don't
 try to change with your own
 strength, because you don't have
 much. Rather, reach out to the One
 who holds the world in His hands,
 and who once had the sins of the
 world on His shoulders. That's
 strength!

We had several spend time under
 medical care this month. They are:
 Sis. Janet Kober, Sis. Lois Wieland
 (Bro. Gerald) and Sandy Knochel.
 We pray that all of them will experi-
 ence God's loving comfort and heal-
 ing power.

Elder Bro. Bill Schlatter (Junc-
 tion, OH) labored with our Elder
 Bro. Andy in presenting to us this
 year's Memorandum. We extend
 sincerest thanks to Bro. Bill for the
 loving effort put forth on our behalf
 and pray God's blessings will be on
 him and his family.

Once again, as we start this new
 year, "Go with God!"

MICHIGAN, DETROIT
Manuela Denes
Kristi Meyer

As I'm writing for the month of
 January, it is hard for me to believe
 that another year is ending. Time
 really seems to slip by so much
 faster as I get older and I now realize
 that I have to utilize that time in
 more productive ways. A new year is
 always begun with the best inten-
 tions or resolutions. How many of us
 promise to change certain habits for
 the better?

More importantly, how many of
 us can say that we have stuck with
 those changes? If there is something
 that needs a change, let us work at
 those habits which will give us spiri-
 tual growth—spending a few extra
 minutes in prayer, read a few more
 verses in your morning or evening
 devotions, and so many other
 things. I recently found a verse that
 struck me as appropriate for the
 New Year, 1998:

There are two ways of spreading
 light: to be the candle or the mirror
 that reflects it.

—*Edith Wharton*

"A new heart also will I give you,
 and a new spirit will I put within
 you..."

Ezekiel 36:26

We close the old year out with
 many events in our Detroit fellow-
 ship. There was much rejoicing
 when Steve and Julie Dawson were
 announced as having found peace.
 Our prayers are with them as they
 seek to purify their lives and hearts
 by burying their old selves in bap-
 tism. May we all work to gain that
 "pure heart".

I want, dear Lord, a heart that is
 true and clean
 A sunlit heart, with not a cloud
 between
 A heart like Thine, a heart divine
 A heart as white as snow
 On me, dear Lord, a heart like this
 bestow.

We'd like to welcome Denise and
 Paxton Williams and their children,
 Amanda and Colby, from Columbus.

Prayers are with Sis. Maria
 Sabados as she has been in the hos-
 pital. We were all happy to hear that
 she is recuperating at home with her
 family.

Our condolences go out to Sis.
 Barb Johnson (Bro. Chris) in the
 loss of her uncle, Otto Baer
 (Princeville, IL).

Thanks goes to our visiting min-
 ister, Bro. Greg Stieglitz (Sis. Lisa,
 Indianapolis, IN) for sharing the
 Word with us this month.

Best wishes go out to Sis. Holly
 Barton as she has received her Mas-
 ter's degree in Psychology. May the
 Lord bless her as she continues in
 her teaching position.

No one knows what the next year
 will bring,
 But one thing is sure He will be
 with us and
 He is enough for every difficulty
 that may

Arise.

—*Amy Carmichael*

MINNESOTA, MINNEAPOLIS
Perry Virkler

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”

I Corinthians 16:58

We did not have any visiting ministers this past month, but want to express our thanks and appreciation to our home ministers who faithfully carry out their duties Sunday after Sunday. May God be their rich rewarder.

A large group of single brothers and sisters from Morris and Winthrop, MN came to worship with us one Sunday. We all enjoyed their visit and fellowship.

Our thoughts and prayers are with our loved ones who have been in the hospital this past month. Our Elder Bro. Leroy Messner (Winthrop, MN) suffered a heart attack and had a coronary angioplasty procedure. Bro. Joe Bednarski was hospitalized with pneumonia, and Sis. Esther Lienemann had knee surgery and is recuperating in a nursing home. May they feel our prayers and God's healing power.

We enjoyed a most blessed day on Sunday, December 14, when our Sunday School children so enthusiastically presented the annual Christmas program. It was a joy to listen to the recitations, scripture readings and beautiful songs telling of our dear Saviour's birth. A special thank you to the children, teachers and parents for all their efforts.

As another year draws to a close, let us ask God for His guidance and grace so that we may face each new

challenge in the New Year.

A New Beginning

Each day is a bright new beginning,
With time for a fresh new start.
I receive it as a gift from God,
And set old limitations apart.

I do not accept the boundaries
and pressures from the past.
I free myself of all prejudice,
And hold to values that last.

I bring to this day expectations of
good
And willingness to partake
In activities that will lead my life
On the paths that I should take.

God, guide me to make right
decisions,
And teach me to use my time
To accomplish the greatest good
And to strengthen this life of mine.

Today, as I take the first step,
I will hasten to begin it, — for
“This is the day which the Lord
hath made,”

I'll “Rejoice and be glad, in it.”

—*Micky Mayer Mathewson*

Note of Thanks:

We would like to express our thanks and appreciation for all the cards, gifts, flowers and especially the prayers Joe received while in the hospital and since returning home. May God bless you all.

Bro. Joe and Sis. Ethel Bednarski

MINNESOTA, MORRIS

Nancy Wulf
Linda Schmidgall

As another year is dawning, may we be thankful for all the blessings God has provided in this past year, and in the New Year may we strive to live according to His way and will.

We appreciate Elder Bro. Dennis Warner (Lester, IA) and Bro. Doug Grimm (Sabetha, KS) for sharing God's Word with us on Thanksgiving Day. May God bless them for being willing servants.

Our hospital patients were Sis. Ruth Jones (Bro. Shane) and Brent Wulf (Bro. Dave and Sis. Nancy). Brent had a 3-wheeler accident and suffered head injuries. We are thankful none are permanent.

God has blessed Bro. Kevin and Sis. Julie Koehl with a precious baby boy on December 18. Nathan Allen is their firstborn and the happy grandparents are Bro. Harvey and Sis. Wilda Koehl and Bro. Beirne and Sis. Joyce Messner. May God bless them as they bring their son up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

The Christmas story was again told to us at our program on Sunday, December 14. What a joy it is to hear the young voices honor the birth of our Saviour through verse and song.

MINNESOTA, WINTHROP

Becky Braulick

Jan Messner

Greetings!

Russ and Kari Terwey of Brooklyn Center, MN welcomed home their first child, Jack Russell, on November 18. Grandparents are Duane and Mona Messner of Gaylord and Dave and Ann Terwey of St. Joseph, MN. We pray that they will look to God to guide them in raising their child in His way.

We would like to extend a special thank you to our visiting ministers this past month: Elder Bro. Tom Hoffman (Sis. Kathy, Roanoke, IL) and Bros. Erik Givens (Sis. Deb) and Jim Plattner (Sis. Marlene), both of Princeville, IL. It is always a blessing when ministers from afar are willing to travel and share the Word of our Lord with us.

Bro. Tim Schmidt was voted in as Trustee. We pray the Lord will guide him in his new duties.

It is a joyous occasion when we can come together and sing Christ-

mas carols during this holiday season. We enjoyed an afternoon traveling to our elderly homes in the area singing the story of Christ's birth.

We had our annual Sunday School Christmas program this past week and were blessed from the children's singing and their recitation of the story of Jesus. We would like to thank the students and their teachers for all their efforts in making this a blessed night. We also enjoyed a nice evening of fellowship after the program.

Another year of mercies,
Of faithfulness and grace.
Another year of Gladness
In the shining of Thy face.
Another year of service,
Of witness for Thy love;
Another year of training
For holier work above.

Hymns of Zion #150

May we look to our Saviour for His guidance in the coming year and have the courage to do His will.

Our hospital patients this month were Sis. Florence Messner, Elder Bro. LeRoy Messner (Sis. JoAnn) and Sis. Geri Messner (Bro. Marvin). We pray for their recovery and that God will place His healing hand on them.

Notes of Thanks:

I wish to thank all the loved ones for their prayers, cards, calls, food and visits while I was in the hospital and after returning home. Also, a very special thank you to Sis. Hazel for staying with me and for all her help. It is deeply appreciated.

In His love,

Sis. Geri and Bro. Marvin Messner

I would like to thank all the dear ones who offered prayers on my behalf as I was suddenly sent to the

hospital with a heart attack. It is so comforting to know that during a trial such as this, there are so many people who were concerned and who took the time to think of me.

Elder Bro. LeRoy Messner

MISSOURI, KANSAS CITY
Brent Kellenberger

On Thanksgiving, Elder Bro. Mark Bahr and his family (Detroit, MI), along with many other visitors, worshipped with us. We are thankful that Bro. Mark was willing to preach upon the Word of God and bring us a message very fitting for the season. Other visiting ministers include Bros. Mike Rieker (Sis. Carol, Peoria, IL) and Bill Emch (Sis. Susan, Lamont-Gridley, KS). We appreciate each of these parents for visiting our church and their children that assemble with us.

As we face a new year, let us pray for renewed faith and strength. Trial and temptation are surely ahead. It is comforting to know that no matter what happens in our lives, God is in control. My last day of school I saw a magazine picture of a stockbroker getting shock therapy on the job. That night I read Job 1 where Job goes from being the richest man in the East to having almost nothing. This made the stockbroker's predicament look desirable. When Satan tempts us to feel sorry for ourselves, let's think about Job. "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1:21). If our mutual fund drops 90 percent, or our crop is decimated by hail, will we slump to the ground in shock, or work joyfully on? Where is our treasure?

Last weekend we were privileged to watch and listen as our Sunday

School children brought forth the Christmas story. The entire day was a blessing as we went to a nursing home to carol and finished at the church with a delicious chili supper.

Over the Christmas season, the majority of our congregation will be traveling. May God bless and keep each one of us in His care as we journey.

MISSOURI, LAMAR
Carolyn Banwart
Martha Kellenberger

Many of us were able to travel to Ft. Scott, KS for the wedding of Bro. Phil Braker (Bro. Bob and Sis. Janice Stoller) and Sis. Rebecca Sinn (Elder Bro. Charles and Sis. Karen). We welcome Sis. Rebecca to Lamar and wish them God's richest blessing in their life together. We also want to thank Bro. Tim Zimmerman (Sis. Barb) from the Lamont-Gridley congregation for helping minister in Lamar on that day. Their family made a welcome addition.

Sis. Anna Marti and Bro. Ray Luthi (Sis. Vi) were both surgical patients this past month. We hope they will be blessed with speedy recoveries.

We rejoice with Sis. Kristi Luthi and Bro. Michael Huber as their engagement was made known to us. Their parents are Bro. Ray and Sis. Vi Luthi, Bro. Gary Huber (Eureka, IL) and Karen Huber (Morton, IL). Our prayers are with them as they make plans to become husband and wife.

MISSOURI, ST. LOUIS
Betsy Schrenk

We were blessed to have many visitors this past month, including the following ministers: Elder Bro. Roy Grimm (Taylor, MO) and Bros.

Nathan Stoller (Bradford, IL), Ken Eisenmann (Cissna Park, IL) and Rex Frieden (Lamar, MO). Last month I accidentally omitted mentioning that Bro. Kent Heimer (Taylor, MO) visited St. Louis also.

I recently saw a sign that read, "The Wise kneel not only at the manger, but also at the cross." How quickly the beautiful Christmas season passes, when we gladly celebrate the birth of our Saviour—so soon the Easter season will be here, if God wills that time should go on, when we face the terrible reality of Calvary.

MISSOURI, TAYLOR Tina Sutter

The Christmas program in Taylor this year was a special blessing. All the children and teachers put forth such an effort to tell the incredible history of the birth of Jesus. The youngest children started off by singing:

"Three wise men, traveling afar, see
a star
They found the Saviour in
Bethlehem
They bowed on their knees and they
worshipped Him
Never before has there ever been
A child like Him."
—author unknown

On December 14, Bro. Michael Stratton and Sis. Lori Martin have announced their desire to share life together through God's direction. Bro. Dale and Sis. Teresa Martin (Princeville, IL) and Bro. Mike and Sis. Cheryl Stratton are the parents of this special couple.

Bro. Don Bauman and Sis. Marjorie Knapp were married on November 30 in Goodfield, IL. May the Lord bless their life together.

Sis. Marjorie Gerst (Bro. Arnold) is feeling sorrow in the loss of her

father, Kenny Arrowsmith. May they reach out and find comfort in the Holy Spirit in this time of need.

Bro. Keith Pflum (Sis. Tami) was hospitalized this month and was quite ill. We are so thankful that his physical health is being restored. Sarah Haerr (Bro. Norman and Sis. Sally Haerr) was hospitalized this month. We covet your prayers on Sarah's behalf.

We are sad to accept that Bro. Curtis and Sis. Sue Heimer have moved from our congregation to Bloomington, IL. We will miss them and their four sons. Our lives were truly enriched through the time they spent here at Taylor.

Correction needs to be made with last month's writing: Rachele (or Shelly) Hoerr is the daughter of Bro. Louis and Sis. Ruth Hoerr. Thank you for your understanding in my error.

NEW YORK CROGHAN-NAUMBURG Anna Mellnitz

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

John 3:16

The church went singing Christmas carols at Hallmark Nursing Home on December 5 and December 12, and we went to sing Christmas carols at Lowville Nursing Home on December 21. The children will have their Christmas program; it is wonderful to hear the children tell us the beautiful story of Jesus, His birth and the songs of Christmas carols. The dear teachers and each child does their very best. We gather to have refreshments and later in the evening the children and

teachers go to the homes of the shut-ins and the Lowville Nursing Home and hospital to sing Christmas carols to the residents and patients and then they gather to have refreshments and warm up. It is a very blessed time for everyone. That's what Christmas is all about—the birth of our Lord and Saviour.

Bro. Larry Purvines had ambulatory operation on his eye in November. He is doing fine.

Sis. Charlotte Virkler has a new grandson. His name is Aaron Ronald Virkler and his parents are Bro. Rudy and Sis. Susan Virkler (Rockville, CT). Nat and Sheila Virkler have a new granddaughter who was born on December 3. Her name is Colleen Elizabeth Virkler and her parents are Michael and Barbara Virkler.

On December 17, the sisters of the church put together Christmas baskets for the elderly and sick.

"Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Immanuel."

Isaiah 7:16

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

Matthew 1:21

OHIO, AKRON Joyce Gasser Diane Jarrett

Greetings from Akron. November 29 was the wedding date of Geraldine Hunyadi to Roger Betz of Mansfield. May God bless them in their new life together. We will miss Gerri as the couple establishes their home in Mansfield.

January 8 was the 90th birthday

of Sis. Margaret Gruenig.

It was a blessed evening as we heard the Sunday School students sing of Jesus' birth. We want to thank all who had a part in our annual Christmas program; may God bless the efforts of each one.

Beyond the sunset,
O glad reunion,
With our dear loved ones
who've gone before;
In that fair homeland
we'll know no parting,
Beyond the sunset
forevermore.

Hymns of Zion #172

On December 11, our dear Sis. Juliet Graf was called to her eternal rest. Our sympathy is extended to her stepchildren, Sis. Marge (Bro. Ken) Laukhuf of Latty, Bro. Bob (Sis. Alma), Donald, Bro. Leon (Sis. Janet), and Bro. Carl (Sis. Cathy) and their families.

In 1997, the Akron congregation had growth by two new members and six births. In addition, there was one marriage and three funerals.

OHIO, COLUMBUS

Nancy Banks

An early Christmas present came to the home of Bro. Bryan and Sis. Kara Stoller in the form of a precious little boy, Derek Adam. Grandparents, Bro. Carlos and Sis. Jane Meiss and Bro. Dale and Sis. Sandra Stoller (both of Fairbury, IL), welcome their new little grandson. Our love and prayers go with Bro. Bryan, Sis. Kara and little Derek as they temporarily relocate near Canton, OH for Bro. Bryan to complete an internship in ophthalmology. We eagerly await their return.

We have been showered with the blessings of many visitors this month. Elder Bros. Gene Pamer

(Akron, OH) and Wayne Anliker (Forrest, IL) and Bros. Mark Masters (Mansfield, OH), Dale Stoller (Fairbury, IL) and Allen Stoller (Bluffton, IN) traveled to be with us and we are thankful for their labors.

OHIO, JUNCTION

Sandra Manz

Following their testimonies, Inez Rose (Lee) and Laurel Schlatter (Bro. Ray and Sis. Corrine) were "baptized into His name most holy" on November 23. We welcome these two sisters and appreciate their sincere love for the Lord.

The angels are rejoicing with us as Rex Boroff (Rex and Pauline) has forsaken the world and its empty pleasures and feels the need for repentance and conversion. May he find lasting peace.

At what stage in life does the new year find you? To those who have never taken that first step, won't you come and taste and see? To those in repentance, may you continue to strive toward the goal of baptism. To those who have been on the heavenly way for a short time or long, may you find grace each day to stay true. To those who have fallen, won't you plead for the Father's mercy to find your way back?

OHIO, LATTY

Kathy Sinn

We extend sympathy to Bro. Bill and Sis. Barb Stoller and their family during the passing of Sis. Barb's mother, Sis. Lea Frank (LaCrosse, IN). "In sorrow and pain thy trust do retain in Jesus the merciful Saviour." (Zion's Harp #46)

Bro. Marvin Stieglitz (Leo, IN) visited us during the past month. As the brothers stand to preach the truth, our fervent prayers will plead for the necessary grace for these

brothers. "Should I restrain the Spirit's course for fear of man so feeble? Though Satan's hosts are raging here, Should I not be more faithful? Awed by a mortal's frown, shall I conceal the Word of God Most High?" (Zion's Harp #113)

Bro. Justus and Sis. Ruby Stoller commemorated their 50th wedding anniversary. As the Lord has given grace and strength in the past, with humble living, He will continue to guide, direct, and bless them in the future. "Thus united and in concord Let us walk the path of life; Hand in hand, O may love bind us For each other's welfare strive." (Zion's Harp #237)

Bro. Bill McClure underwent surgery during the past month. We are so thankful that he is able to continue to gather in the house of the Lord with us.

On Thanksgiving day, Bro. Earl Beery (Rittman, OH) gathered with us and exhorted the friends to give thought to their soul's salvation. We are fully able to praise our Saviour when we have humbled ourselves before God permitting Him to convert our lives. Are we thankful enough that our souls have been saved?

On December 7, our congregation gathered in the fellowship hall as usual for our first Sunday of the month singing. Because of the approaching Christmas season, we rejoiced by singing songs about the birth of the Lord.

As a soul passes from life unto death, we always feel loss. This is the case of Bro. Ken and Sis. Marge Laukhuf in the passing of her mother. May each one of the family members strive to contend for the goal of Heaven where we will meet again.

As families gather for the Christmas holiday, we are blessed by the presence of visiting ministers. Bro.

Doug Harmon (Toledo, OH) was with us during the month. We enjoyed his visit and look forward to another visit.

On December 14, the wedding engagement of Sis. Sara Stoller (Bro. Bill and Sis. Barb) and Bro. Jason Getz (Bro. Eldon and Sis. Charlene) from Remington, IN was made known. We wish them all God's richest blessings as wedding plans are made.

When the holidays end and another year "gets under way", we must resolve to align our lives with the Word for another year. By daily picking up our cross and heading straight for the goal, we will serve our Lord and reach the goal of Heaven.

OHIO, MANSFIELD Cari Mann

"I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge;"

I Cor. 1:4-5

How often we should be thanking God in behalf of our ministering brethren! We were blessed to have Elder Bro. Aaron and Sis. Loretta Steffen (Alto, MI) "home" this month. Although they serve the Alto, MI church, we hope they always feel as though they are coming home when they come to visit. Our prayerful thanks go out to them for their willingness to serve us.

We wish to extend a warm and loving welcome to Sis. Virginia and Russell Contrascere who have recently moved here from the Phoenix, AZ congregation. May the blessings to us and to them be increased as we get to know them.

"For brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another."

Galatians 5:13

How thankful we can be that there are those brethren who are willing to serve their fellow brothers and sisters of Christ. On December 7, we held our annual business meeting. Bros. Dave Eyerly and Pete Webel will be replacing Bros. Don Boliantz and Dan Sauder as trustee. Sis. Joyce Boliantz has finished her three-year term on the kitchen committee and Sis. Linda Webel will begin hers. Sis. Becky Moser has worked willingly on the World Relief Sewing Committee and now Sis. Marcy Pfeiffer will have a turn. Bro. Lonny Moser was elected as head song leader, replacing Bro. Dan Sauder. Bro. Marvin Beer was elected to complete Bro. Dan Domka's term as Sunday School superintendent. Our thanks goes out to the brethren who have served and our prayers go with those who were elected to office. May God bless each and every one, especially those who prayerfully fill the pews each time we gather.

Unflappable. That's what he called me. How could I possibly accept such a high compliment knowing that it was not true? Even to the extent that I have gotten up from my desk and walked away because the comments I could overhear him saying were so irritating. No, I freely admit that I am not unflappable, but what a goal to strive for—to always remain on an even keel—accepting the flow of things as God's perfect plan and knowing that if we are patient, He will bring all things to good in His own time. As the New Year begins, may we each strive to be unflappable by making a more

fervent effort to pray for and do good to those who seem to perturb us. Praying for a blessed New Year for all of you.

OHIO, RITTMAN Michelle Dotterer Carla Stoller

We rejoice and are thankful that Jerry Winkler (Bro. Andy and Sis. Mary Jane) has turned to the Lord in repentance. With God's abundant grace and mercy, we trust that Jerry will find the peace which passes all understanding.

Travis and Jan Higgins welcomed a son, Garrett James, on December 2. Grandparents of Garrett are Gary and Peggy Higgins and Jim and Sis. Joyce Thompson.

May God bless Elder Bro. Bob Walder (Congerville, IL) for the ministering words that he shared with us.

Those who have been ill and in the hospital recently were Mabel Goodwin, Bro. Carl Ingold (Sis. Erma), Walt Baltic and Sis. Violet Baltic. We wish them God's nearness through their sickness and recovery. We also want to remember Sis. Vivian Ramsier (Bro. Harlan) as she is hospitalized in Arizona.

After many trials and long difficult days, Sis. Minnie Riggenbach is now safe in the arms of Jesus. We want to extend our sympathy to each of the family who so willingly lent of themselves during this time. Sis. Minnie's children are Bro. Ed (Sis. Anita), Sis. Marge Stoller (Bro. Everett), Sis. Jane Hartzler (Bro. Vince), Bro. Glenn (Sis. Louise, Smithville), Sis. Carol Steiner (Bro. Carl), Sis. Bonnie Hartzler (Bro. Merle), Sis. Betty Baltic (Bro. Dan) and Bro. George. Also surviving are a brother and two sisters, Bro. Joe Ramsier, Sis. Anna Blough and Sis. Esther Saurer.

OHIO, SARDIS

Joy Indermuhle

Silent night, holy night,
All is calm, all is bright,
Round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy infant so tender and mild,
Sleep in Heavenly peace,
Sleep in Heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night,
Shepherds quake at the sight,
Glories stream from heaven afar,
Heavenly hosts sing alleluia;
Christ, the Saviour is born!
Christ, the Saviour is born!
—Joseph Mohr

On December 14, we once again had the privilege of hearing our Sunday School children present the birth of Christ through song and poem. It always warms our hearts to hear their voices raised in praise to Him. May God bless each of them and may our prayer for each child be that they would not stop at the cradle, but continue to the cross.

OHIO, SMITHVILLE

Ruth Gasser - Edith Miller

Baptized into Thy name most holy,
O Father, Son and Holy Ghost,
I claim a place, though weak and lowly
Among Thy seed, Thy chosen host.
Immersed with Christ, I'm dead to sin;
Thy Spirit now shall live within.
Zion's Harp #41

On November 23, we welcomed three new sisters into the fold after hearing their testimonies the previous evening. Our new sisters are Kim Bauman (Bro. Vic and Sis. Brenda), Pam Maletich (Bro. Dave and Sis. Connie), and Patty Indermuhle (Bro. Scott). We rejoice with them and wish them much grace and joy as they continue on their

Christian walk.

“And let the peace of God rule in your hearts...”
Col. 3:15

We also rejoice with Crystal Ramsier (Bro. Dave and Sis. Dottie) and Seth and Carrie Miller (Bro. Larry and Sis. Edith) as they have found this precious peace and await baptism.

A new little girl has come to bless the home of Bro. Dwaine and Sis. Shelly Beery. Katrina Rose was born on December 8 and is also welcomed by Mariah, DeeDee, and Sharnise, as well as happy grandparents, Art and Eileen Beery and Bro. Glenn and Sis. Lou Riggenbach. May God's presence be felt in this home.

We thank the following brothers for visiting us and bringing forth the Word of God: Elder Bros. Eugene Pamer (Akron, OH) and Henry Dotterer (Rittman, OH), and Bros. Dave Graf (Akron, OH), Mark Ramsier (Sardis, OH), Jim Vierling (Eureka, IL), Warren Zahner (Rockville, CT), and Art Ingold (Rittman, OH). May God bless them for their efforts.

The Lord's protecting hand was certainly with Jon Bauman (Bro. Steve and Sis. Connie) as he was recently involved in an automobile accident. Although he did sustain some injuries and was hospitalized for a short time, it could have been much worse. We trust he will soon be fully recovered. Our prayers are with Sis. Laura Oppliger, as she has temporarily gone to California where she plans to have a knee replacement. Her daughter, who lives there, will then be able to care for her while she recuperates. We wish her well and look forward to seeing her again.

“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”

Revelation 21:4

Several loved ones in our congregation have had to say goodbye to their parents. Sis. Cheryl Beery (Bro. Gaylord) lost both her father and mother, Charles and Vera Ecker, within three days, as they were both in failing health. Also, Bro. Glenn Riggenbach (Sis. Lou) bid his mother, Sis. Minnie Riggenbach (Rittman, OH), farewell. We extend our love and sympathy to both of these families.

“Be strong and of good courage...fear not, nor be dismayed: for the Lord God, even my God, will be with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee...”

I Chronicles 28:20

May we hold on to this promise as we begin another year, knowing that God is the same yesterday, today and forever.

May grace be with us ever,
The grace of Christ, the Lord.
May He, as here we journey,
His grace to us afford.
Zion's Harp #134

OHIO, TOLEDO

Rebecca Beard - Edie Fetter

Dave and Sis. Connie Sancraint are thankful for the safe arrival of their grandson, Zachary Tyler. His parents are Kevin and Jennifer. May God give them wisdom in raising their son.

Bro. Paul Rywalski (Sis. Teresa) has been hospitalized. Our thoughts and prayers are that he might feel the presence of God each day.

We are glad to see Sis. Josephine Rehkla in church again after a recent illness. We can always be thankful for God's healing power.

OREGON, PORTLAND
Louisa Gallup - Mary Berg

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

Luke 22:19-20

We were privileged to be reminded of this most solemn occasion by our beloved Elder brothers. Elder Bro. Henry Dotterer (Rittman, OH) assisted Elder Bro. Art Metz with this work.

We pray for Bro. Ray Cooper as he has been ill with pneumonia. May God be with him.

We thank Bro. Ed Knecht (Silverton, OR) for ministering to us this past month. May God richly bless him and Sis. Judie for their regular support of our small congregation.

OREGON, SILVERTON
Rosa Lee Kuenzi

The holiday season is past and hopefully they were of the original, literal meaning for you and yours...Holy Days! Days where we remembered Christ's humble birth, His perfect exemplary life and His obedient sacrificial death on the Cross. Days where we tried to show His love through our everyday actions, activities and attitudes. Days where we took time to "brighten the corner" where we were. Days where we shared our abundant blessings with not only our loved ones, but

also His loved ones who needed something we could give...a helping hand, a smile or a prayer, a place in line in a busy store or on a busy street, or the cheer of receiving some encouraging words, sung in a song or written in a note. This writer can certainly see room for improvement and items to add to the traditional New Year's resolution list. May God give us grace to daily seek His will in 1998 and strength to do as He leads.

We surely heard the blessed story of old in beauty and clearness through the songs and pieces so faithfully learned and the scripture readings as presented by our Sunday School children and youths. We, as well as so many of you, have seen our children go through these precious years and now are seeing our grandchildren do the same, but the Sunday School programs remain a great joy and encouragement to us every year. By the large number of members, friends, grandparents, neighbors and school friends who attend, it is safe to say that the efforts of the Sunday School teachers and of the students themselves, are worthwhile and very much appreciated.

"America! America! God shed His grace on thee, And crown thy good with brotherhood from sea to shining sea." This line from "America, the Beautiful" (Gospel Hymns #472) comes to mind with the December 7 marriage of Bro. Eldon Metz (Silverton) and Sis. Alice Hoffman (Rockville, CT). Parents of the couple are our Elder Bro. Art and Sis. Betty Metz and Bro. Steve and Sis. Joan Hoffman (Rockville, CT). We welcome Sis. Alice to Oregon and pray that though the miles be many that separate the families, they will always be close in heart. The closer we are to the Lord, the closer we are to each other.

PENNSYLVANIA
PHILADELPHIA
Franz Soni

The Christmas program for our children was held on December 14. We all appreciated the blessed account of our Lord's birth and the story of truth as presented in word and song through the mouths of our Sunday School and Bible class children. We appreciate so much the efforts made by the teachers who so willingly and lovingly instruct our children in the things which are lasting and eternal and we also appreciate the efforts of the parents of these dear children who support the precious faith and teach by both word and example.

The entire church was then invited to participate in caroling a number of senior homes and selected other places. A blessing was received by all climaxed by refreshments and warm fellowship following the caroling program.

We all were thankful for the visit of Elder Bro. Kevin Ryan (Rockville, CT) for Wednesday evening services on December 17.

TENNESSEE, NASHVILLE
Gwen Leuthold

1998! The beginning of a brand new year! A time when we reflect on the past year and its events and anticipate the events of the coming new year. This is also the time when quite a few of us reflect upon ourselves and make New Year's resolutions on the things we would like to change. How is Jesus fitting into these New Year's resolutions? Is He even included at all? If we have not already made the choice to follow Him, this would be a wonderful resolution for the new year. If we have made the choice to follow Him, are we going to rededicate our lives

to Him and follow Him a little closer through prayer and Bible reading? Only we ourselves can answer these questions. During the Christmas services, I read the following verse and thought that this may be one we may want to consider as we make our New Year's resolutions for 1998: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." (Luke 2:14)

In December, we welcomed Elder Bro. Eugene Marti and his wife, Sis. Mary (Kansas City, MO), as well as other visitors. We take this opportunity to thank Bro. Eugene for laboring in our midst and also to thank all of our visitors who have stopped to visit and worship with us during 1997. We extend a hearty southern welcome to each and every one of you to come and worship with us in 1998. Churches that are scheduled for services include Akron, OH (Feb. 1); Tremont, IL (Feb. 15); Detroit, MI (March 1); Bradford, IL (March 15); Latty, OH (April 5); Remington, IN (April 19). Please contact one of the following numbers if you are in the Nashville area and/or 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) 851-8864; or Bro. Stan and Sis. Jean Hohulin (423) 376-9153 (Knoxville, TN area).

TEXAS, CENTRAL

Lois Gray

We are grateful to the visiting ministers and their wives who were

with us to share God's Word and love: Bros. Loren Knapp (Sis. Joan, Tucson, AZ), Glenn Dill (Sis. Marilyn, Tremont, IL), Marvin Schmidgall (Sis. Dorothy, Eureka, IL), and Ken Schneider (Sis. Loretta, Remington, IN).

"We do not great things, we do only small things with great love."

—Mother Theresa

Central Texas services are held all except the first Sunday of the month. The third Sunday, we will be meeting in the San Antonio area. The last Sunday we meet in Round Top at Bro. Bill Zeltwanger's home. The remainder of the month we meet in Austin at the Omni Hotel at I-35 and Hwy. 290.

Contacts are Bro. Bill Zeltwanger (409) 249-5102; Brian and Terri Kaisner (512) 338-4222; Bro. David and Sis. Shella Brummitt (512) 360-3379; and Sis. Dorothy Martin (210) 658-1968. Please call ahead to confirm our schedule. We heartily welcome visitors.

TEXAS, DALLAS

Eric Strassheim

The turn of the new year usually brings about new year's resolutions and plenty of good intentions for change. On that note, there will be a change in the schedule for Dallas church services. Services will now be held on the first and third Sunday of every month. If you are in the area, and would like to stop by, contacts are Bro. Howard and Sis. Dee Rapp (972) 867-4074 or Bro. Bill Zeltwanger (409) 249-5102. We look

forward to prayerful support for the new schedule.

We were thankful to have Bro. Glen Funk (Sis. Sally, Wichita, KS) with us this month to preach God's Word.

TEXAS, ZAPATA

Viola Perdelwitz

Melva Messner

One cannot help but ponder on what events will take place in our lives in the coming year, but if we take one day at a time, with thanksgiving and faith, God will supply our "daily bread". Looking back on the past year we can surely count our many blessings.

We were happy to have Bro. Marvin Schmidgall (Sis. Dorothy, Eureka, IL) minister to us on Wednesday evening. Even though we were few in number, we could feel God's blessings as Bro. Marvin brought forth the gospel message. We were reminded how the apostles rejoiced to suffer for Jesus' sake and we should not murmur or complain. We really are a very blessed people!

We were sorry to hear one of our oldest winter residents passed away in November. Sis. Delilah Schrenk of Alto, MI was 88 years old. Her husband, Bro. Elmer, passed away in 1994 at the age of 85. They were veterans in the church during the winter months. Bro. Elmer served as minister until he retired from the ministry. Sis. Delilah assembled with us for about 22 years. We will miss her smile and kind and loving attitude.



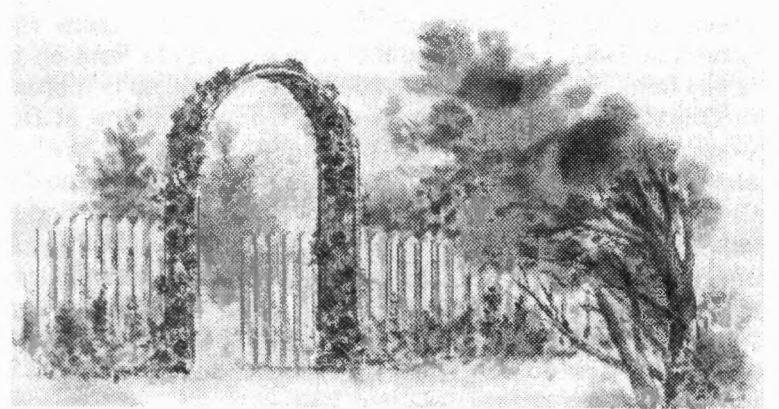
Silver Threads

Heavens Gate

Sadly we stand outside the Heavenly Gate
 Left behind to work to watch and wait.
 Loved ones pass through as life may will,
 Though out of sight their spirits with us still.

They watch as we wipe away the tears;
 Stand beside us as we progress through the years.
 From the other side they anxiously await
 The time we join them through the Heavenly Gate.

—F. Fairbanks



Persevere

Pilgrims, are you growing weary
 As you onward, upward climb?
 Persevere, you'll find 'twas worth it
 When you reach these realms sublime!

The Saviour yet pleads for you
 As you struggle there below;
 But you'll find a love far greater
 Than the brightest gem that glows.

No more pain, heartache, or trials
 In this land where now I dwell;
 Only joy and peace and gladness
 And you'll find "at Home 'tis well"!

written by a sister in faith

Silver Threads

Two Spirits

A couple thousand years ago,
Two figures walked along.
Each one sang a different song,
As they their lives did sow.

The church was one, from GOD above,
Inspired by the SON.
With thought for others, life begun,
He walked the path of love.

The world the other, sneaking by,
Was Satan in disguise.
He talked of foolishness and lies,
The hate of life is why.

Apostles, bold, kept church in line,
They set the boundaries firm,
By serving GOD in every term,
And in CHRIST'S love did dine.

The world, on hand, was not the same,
As it did thrive in sin.
With pleasures for men's hearts to win,
To steal from church its' aim.

And as these figures walked those days,
They stayed far apart.
For church kept GOD within her heart,
Ignoring world's arrays.

The men of old, who died for GOD,
Gave everything they had.
To keep the church from world's new fad,
And walk where JESUS trod.

The world, in flesh, thought church absurd,
That taught what JESUS said,
"To live in sin, you must be dead!"
The world despised GOD'S Word.

From death to torture of all kind,
The church did suffer long.
But Satan's hate made the church strong,
With fervent heart and mind.

The church did spread through all the land,
The world began to sink.
This caused the devil then to think,
"I'll try a different stand!"

"Instead of death to spotless church,
I'll give them wealth untold.
And with this wealth they'll leave the fold,
And life for self they'll search!"

So as the years continue by,
And Satan as a sheep,
Slowly puts the church to sleep,
To in small things deny.

"Who can be perfect in the LORD?"
"Impossible!" they say.
And slowly Satan to this day,
Attacks the fallen sword.

And people now from every tree,
Today do say they're saved.
But works of flesh, their life has paved
And Satan laughs with glee.

And as the world and church combine,
These many people say,
"You cannot judge me, in my way!"
They think they're living fine.

But in the midst there still are some,
That live the Bible's way.
Their will they give to GOD to slay,
And beg the lost to come.

So, Brethren, please do not take part,
For Satan is a liar.
But sacrifice your self desire,
Live for the great THOU ART.

—written by a brother in faith

Sermon continued from page 2

entrance in of the power of the Spirit that came into our lives at the time of our conversion. We need to be reminded of it, loved ones, that it is nothing that we could have done by ourselves.

Just as we were reminded there in the prophet Ezekiel when Ezekiel was told of God to say unto the prince of Tyrus, "Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a God, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas; yet thou art a man, and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God:" (Ezekiel 28:2).

They were reminded that they were just men and it was not their power that enabled them to be in their position of great honor. So it is in a different way, yet in our humble state of life, loved ones, we are walking this way and sometimes we tend to go on our own way and on our own power and abilities. We need to be reminded of who we are and that we are just men.

I am reminded of the Scriptures there in one of the letters where it tells us that Jesus when He became as man, He humbled himself. I always think of that whenever I read that Scripture, "When he became as man, he humbled himself." (See Philippians 2:8).

Where does that place you and me, dear ones? Where do we fit into the picture in light of that? Is it not that we need the Lord Jesus to daily lead us?

We need the in-dwelling of the Holy Spirit to guide us, that we of ourselves, this poor mortal vessel that we contain, has the same ability to sin and to walk in the worldly ways as we did before. We have the same capacities and faculties wherein we served Satan, but now it has been changed into a vessel to serve the Living God.

Yet we know that the apostle Paul himself said, "I have no confidence in the flesh." (See Philippians 3:3). We need to be reminded at all times of our frailty and our inability to please Him of ourselves. That is why it is so important that we understand and are reminded. I know we all know and are aware of it, but isn't it good to be reminded of our need for this power that does not come from within us?

We are living in a time when there are many theories, philosophies and ideas about the human family, who we are and what we can do with our lives. There is that false doctrine and theory, that we have the power within us that needs to be unleashed to do whatever we think we ought to be doing. Loved ones, it is obvious and important that we understand that for us to please God and to serve our Creator, we must have His in-dwelling power and guidance to lead us every day.

That is why it is so important why the apostle Peter could say here: "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole." (Acts 4:10). Can we say it this way? Even by Him, does this brother and this sister and each one of us have our being and we walk in His service and in the light of His gospel. We have been regenerated from a sinner into a saint and a servant of God.

We have been born again out of water and Spirit and it is only through Jesus Christ and Him crucified and the power of His grace that we are successful overcomers.

He said "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be

saved." (Acts 4:12). Now that is nothing new to any one of us. You have heard it from this pulpit many times. You have read this same Scripture in your own homes many times and you have heard it preached upon.

We bring to you nothing new, but as poor, frail human beings and forgetful people, we need to be reminded and rekindled in our love for the Lord Jesus for what He has done for you and for me.

This power is yet available today almost two thousand years since this miracle was done in this man.

This message of the gospel of salvation is yet available today and whosoever will may come. If there would be any among us this morning, beloved friends, pondering upon your future and thinking about what life has in store for you, or young people on the threshold of life, or if there are any among us this morning who is teetering between the choices of continuing in the life you are living or casting your lot with the Lord, we want to remind you that each one of us has an appointment with God some day soon or late.

We have seen it happen in our congregations. You have had it happen here and we have had it happen at home that young people can be snatched out of life in an instant of time. There is no continuing city offered to any one of us. So we want to encourage and remind you out of love and desire for you that you would have this living hope.

For the believer, that we might be reminded of our high calling and of the greatness of the love of God that has come into our lives.

The wonderful, unbounded privilege that you and I have, particularly in this time in which we live in this land of freedom where we have always had the opportunity to come

to the house of worship, never have we come to church on Sunday morning and the doors were barred. We have been able to sit among the brethren and we have had the blessing upon our beloved household of faith.

I want to remind all of our hearts, myself included first of all, that we have had immeasurable blessings come upon us as a household of faith and a body of believers from coast to coast. We have our struggles and concerns in the Apostolic Christian church for the stability of the faith and the maintenance of the way of truth, but we have been so abundantly blessed.

As I read about the five thousand who were brought to the knowledge of the truth at that time, I had to think of a conversation I recently had with a dear brother who met in another area recently. He was a refugee after World War II and was driven out of Yugoslavia with his family.

They were German people of the Nazarene faith and came to this country in his teenage years. We visited about the land of Yugoslavia and it is amazing as I think of it.

We are such a few in number,

relatively, and there was a period of time in the early part of the century when there were between forty and seventy thousand believers in the land of Yugoslavia. I am not sure, but well over one hundred churches, or more. He was aware that there was a church perhaps in almost every village. It's almost unimaginable in our country of America that there was that type of expansion of the Word of God in such a land.

Here in central Illinois you have it almost that way where there is a church in a lot of the towns, but it doesn't go very far. But in that little country, there was almost in every town at least a small gathering of believers.

As I thought about this number of five thousand, they became quite concerned. The leaders became quite concerned as to where this would lead. What happened in the land of Yugoslavia was that the believers there, of course, were those who would not take arms or who would not be of any value to the armed forces of the land. The leaders became concerned and an oppression began.

You know the story how so many had to either leave or experienced

great suffering, even death. In World War II there was a terrible amount of suffering that came upon those believers, and now the numbers are so small and so few, relatively.

We see how Satan cannot stand the success of the Word of God. He cannot abide this motivation that comes into the lives of believers who respond to the call of salvation. Does that explain to you and I, loved ones, why we have a struggle in our spiritual life?

Does that explain to you why, and you all know it already, why we are fighting this fight of faith and why we are encouraged to this spiritual warfare to be overcomers? We wonder why has it been our privilege to live under such relative freedom for all of these generations? So it is that we need to stop and to count our many blessings and to also encourage one another upon the way that we would not give up in the battle and in the struggle, but that we would be courageous.

There is so much more to consider here, but I see time has slipped away and I want to leave time for another brother.



Faith of our Fathers

Faith: *Now Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Hebrews 11:1*

Faith: Unquestioning belief that does not require proof or evidence. *Webster*

Faith: Unquestioning belief in God. *Webster*

Faith: (Amman, Chaldean) believe; to be firm, faithful. *Strong's Concordance*

We have no end to the resources that can be sought out to help us understand what we believe. There are convictions and there are opinions, which everyone has a portion meted out to them. We can be faithful in great things and we can be faithful in little things. One of the best lessons on being faithful in small things is in the scripture, *He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: Luke 16:10* Doesn't it seem to us that everything is getting so complicated? Sometimes we long for the simple faith of our fathers.

Our Fathers had a simple faith centered around the Word of God. That Word of God has been written down on everything from parchment leather to laser paper. Why, we might ask, has God inspired men to write down the Word of God and record it for future reference? *So then faith cometh by the hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. Romans 10:17* It is not possible to please God except we have faith, and it is not possible to obtain faith unless we have heard or read the potential of the matter. *But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. Hebrews 11:6* We can see by these few scriptures that God has a

great concern that we know what His will is and therefore has given us the written Word so we can discern the spirits from the true Spirit of God. Are we willing to be obedient to the Truth? Are we willing to live the truth? Do we want to compromise with the "modernist" who would even go so far as to say we should accept other versions of the Word of God (of which there are over 24 versions of the English language Bible today) so it would be more understandable in these modern days?

Faith cometh by hearing and how shall we hear except the Word be spoken. *...and how shall they hear without a preacher? Romans 10:14* Do we limit the definition of preacher to the formal meaning or can we see that anyone, parent, son, daughter, brother, sister or friend who speaks the Word is a preacher. In the fifteenth verse we read a very important qualification to the speaker of God's Word and that is, *And how shall they preach, except they be sent? Romans 10:15* A parent is sent to bring up their children, Lord willing they are blessed with children, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. It is our faith that we need to equip our children with the truth, so they can face the onslaughts of Satan. Sometimes it is the son or daughter who is sent to speak to parent, which it is surely sad when parents cannot lead children to the Father which art in Heaven. The important thing for us to remember is that we rely on our Heavenly Father to send us, through the movement of the Holy Ghost, verified through the Word of God.

When we consider speaking the Word, do we again limit our speech to words and syllables? What about

our everyday living style? Actions speak much louder than any words. There is an old saying that one must believe to be very detrimental to those who really live by it. It goes something like this, "Do as I say and not as I do." Can we believe that results can be obtained by simply telling someone to do something and at the same time be living a life style that is totally opposite. How can one teach his children or any others to be honest if that person in turn is cheating others out of money or time or life. Our faithfulness to God should be so strong that we would not even consider doing anything that would be a bad example to those who may be watching us.

Many of our forefathers led an agrarian life style and the only means of travel was by foot or horse and buggy, which allowed people to travel maybe up to 30 or 40 miles a day, if the going was good. Now we fly to Europe and Asia and all around the world in hours with meals being served as we fly. Today the record land speed in a vehicle is 300 times faster than a walking horse. Our forefathers were simple people because they were limited as to their knowledge of surrounding events. News increased dramatically after the printing press was invented and awareness level of the common people right along with it. Today we are rather non-chalant about satellites, airwaves communication, wire communication, fiber optics and electronic mail. We get food from the store instead of from the forest or barn lot. We spend \$300 for a suit of clothes that we wear two times a week. News is delivered in detail, live as it happens anywhere in the world with only seconds delay. Where does this all leave our faith compared to that of

our fathers? Could it be that we are shifting more and more to having more faith in ourselves and our abilities? Do we more and more want to assert our opinions onto others, partly because we are lacking dependence on God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. Do we think that we are mightily endowed with knowledge because of our education and higher learning? Don't we wonder how God views the inventions of man? Some have been to our good like pasteurization of milk and penicillin, while others have been to the overall detriment of all of us. Because of these inventions and high technology, we are left with a large number of people who lack the proper faith in God to be pleasing to Him.

Today we depend upon science in so many things. Science has identified the elements and thus gives the ability to fertilize properly. Science has proven that the world is round. Science tries to prove everything with fact and proof. This is completely opposite of faith, which is belief without proof. Therefore we have a tendency to depend more and more upon our fellow man instead of God. Wisdom and knowledge are again almost opposites. "Knowledge is learned and Wisdom is earned." God given wisdom is a precious commodity that is obtained through faithful living. There is no science or proof when it comes to God. It is by faith that we can come to Him and through that faith we can believe all things in Him.

There is a war that Satan is waging against faith. Satan is waging that war and we are caught in the middle if we allow ourselves to be persuaded by the world. Along with the new technology we see new religions, and new versions of the Holy Bible that are surfacing at a record pace. Satan is encouraging



each one of us to look more and more to a watered down life style and justify unholy actions by others. We cannot be sure how many religions there are upon the face of the Earth, however we do know that Satan tempts man to believe the broad way is going to be all right, since Jehovah is a forgiving God.

Satan is waging that war and we are caught in the middle if we allow ourselves to be persuaded by the world.

We have raised a lot of questions with concern to our faith and by no means is there a simple answer to inform us why there is so much question today of things that were not questioned years ago. One can be very appreciative for the infallible Word that is written down in the King James version of the Word of God. It has been this written Word that has kept the truth at our fingertips and brought salvation to so many people.

The issues of 100 AD were centered around the persecution of those who believed in Christ and in about 1500 AD the issue at the forefront was The State Church and the faith of our fathers, which involved

repentance by faith and conviction from God. These issues made strong convictions in the heart of the believer and there was unification of mind and spirit. In 1847 AD the Apostolic Christian Church was founded and many were converted at that time through the "preaching of the potential of the matter" or in other words when the Spirit of God moved the heart of man to conviction. When the true Word was spoken or prophesied by parents, children, brothers, sisters, friends, and the Church, loved ones developed faith in Christ our Saviour and in the Power of His Blood. Our brethren grew in faith and, as brethren have so aptly recorded, spread through Germany and Switzerland, then to America and on to Japan. Many hardships faced the early Church brethren, which in turn matured their faith in God. Blessing upon blessing was bestowed upon the Brethren as faith in God seemed to remain secure. Can we who are considered the forefathers of tomorrow hold fast to the faith that God's Son will want to be present when He comes to claim His Bride?

Is the sacrifice today worth the reward of Eternity? If God's children are wrong in having their faith in Jehovah, they will have still lived the better on earth because of their faithful lifestyle and will have lost nothing. However, if the children of God are right and there does prove to be a Heaven and Hell, the unbeliever will have lived a life of turmoil and self degradation while on earth and will have lost everything in eternity.

Will Christ find faith when He comes again. ...*Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the Earth?* Luke 18:8 Let us pray that He will find it in our hearts.



REMEMBERING

Our Spiritual Heritage

During the next several issues the "Remembering" column will carry excerpts from the diary of Elder Brother Henry Geistlich of Meilen, Switzerland who visited the new United States churches in 1866. Historically, this is known as the "Geistlich Diary", and gives a unique perspective concerning our early American congregations. Little is known about the life of Elder Geistlich other than his ordination in 1852, and his death in 1884. His ordination date informs us that he was a contemporary of Bro. Samuel Froehlich (who died in 1857) and was a part of the diligent zeal that existed among the brethren at that time. In reading his diary, it is evident that he was a deeply spiritual man.

On his arrival in America, there were 17 congregations in 6 states. The faith of our fathers had arrived here only 19 years earlier in 1847 (in upstate New York). The American venture (as viewed from Bro. Geistlich's European perspective) was still new, and he was eager to examine the quality of faith and practice that existed in this new, progressive nation. His stay in America was from May 27 to September 7.

It must be recognized that Bro. Geistlich labored with Bro. Samuel Froehlich. He had been under the strong zeal factor that existed during the early founding of the new church (in Switzerland) when brethren attempted to re-establish a church that followed the Word's instructions.

This first issue focuses on his trip across the Atlantic Ocean.

May 13 (Sunday): The weather is nice. We were required to stay in Southampton (England) overnight. We had a good bed which cost 16 francs. In the morning we read a chapter, also prayed. After breakfast, we boarded the ship. Fear and trembling overtook me as I entered the ship, seeing the immense mass of people. It was said there were 1175 passengers aboard, with music and dancing.

May 14 (Monday): We are on the sea.

The weather is rainy and the sea is quiet, although more windy towards evening. Last night I slept well despite a considerable shaking of the ship. In the Spirit I was home with my loved ones. I turned my heart toward God and His help. It is the easiest for me when I am thinking of my dear Saviour, as no matter where we may be—on land or on water, He is close and nearby to all who call upon Him. Today we caught sight of three other ships. We traveled 134 miles.

May 15 (Tuesday): The sea was quiet in the forenoon, but strong winds came in the afternoon. Today I did not feel very good, having had to vomit, and was dizzy. I had no appetite. Today we overtook 13 sailships, the wind being against them. In our spiritual thoughts we also have winds against us. For if the power of God was not with us, our Ship of Faith would not move or get to the end of our journey. Our ship made 229 miles today.

May 16 (Wednesday): Today I did not feel well, particularly in the afternoon. Later in the day, I did feel somewhat better. I was, however, very lonesome, often moaning but there is nothing to do but wait patiently. I thought of a beloved hymn:

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

Today we made 226 miles.

May 17 (Thursday): Often the ship will rise high on the waves and then suddenly dive down into the deep. It is terrifying to watch the storm...the waves coming as small mountains and there is much noise when the waves beat against the ship. In this we can see God's Almighty Power. We made 227 miles today.

May 19 (Saturday): Today I asked the Captain how many passengers were on board. He said the exact number was 1125, including 202 children. Our ship was rocking so bad that it threw our food and dishes from the tables to the floor.

Our ship made 226 miles today.

May 21 (Monday): Oh, if we could only long for that Fatherland as a man longs for land. I often think of Noah, saying in my heart, "Noah's ark long drifted on the surging flood, but with eyes uplifted, trusted he in God."

May 23 (Wednesday): The weather is nice and the sea is quiet, but foggy. Today is a pleasant day. Everyone seems happy. I also was glad and thankful to the Lord.

May 24 (Thursday): One passenger who became unruly was tied by the sailors, with hands and feet, high up on a ladder. Often my heart trembles as I see what some people do to others; how they are rough and ungodly, having no fear of God. They don't know the way of peace.

May 27 (Sunday): Today we reached the last day of our trip on the vast sea. About 5 o'clock this evening we could see land off to the left. There were hundreds of ships and vessels, coming and going. I have never seen anything like it before. I feel it's my duty to thank God with all my heart that He brought us so safe across the sea and shielded us from all dangers. I suppose it will be the same when we reach that eternal shore, with the help of the Lord.

May 28 (Monday): This morning at 6:30 a doctor came on board looking to see if there was any sickness on the ship. Afterward, the ship sailed into the New York harbor to its landing place. After this the customs inspector examined our belongings. Then, the first and second class passengers were allowed to disembark.

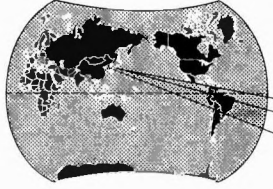
by: Perry A. Klopfenstein

Next Issue:

Elder Geistlich begins visiting the churches

The Light Of Hope

From Across The Ocean



希望の光

“Serenity in 1998”

Elder Bro. Willis Ehnle, Shioda, Japan

Serenity should be one of our goals in the new year. The word serenity is not found in the Bible but one of its synonyms, tranquillity, is. In Daniel 4:27 we read, “Wherefore, O King, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.” Daniel was speaking to King Nebuchadnezzar, urging him to repent so that serenity or tranquillity would return to him. He was not only urged to quit sinning, but he was also urged to perform righteousness, and, mercy to the poor.

A synonym of serene is the word “peaceable”. It is found in James 3:17, “But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.” Peaceable is a very nice word and it is something to which we should aspire.

As we face a new year, it is nice to think about serenity but it is not nice to think about turmoil, which is one of the antonyms of serenity. Turmoil sounds like everything is in chaos, and it is not a very desirable state of affairs. Yet, turmoil enters our lives at times, even though we may be faithful children of God. For one thing, children fight, argue, and are very noisy at times, which is part of their growing up. Those of us who are adults should get along with less turmoil and more serenity.

If we are the cause of our turmoil, we can repent, apologize, make restitution, confess, and put our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ for a constant cleansing and renewing. Titus 3:5, “Not by works of righteousness which we have done but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.” I have always treasured the word “renewing” in this verse. Receiving the Holy Spirit is not simply a once in a

lifetime experience. It should be constant, and this increases serenity in our hearts and in our homes.

In 1998 and for the rest of our lives, let’s keep in mind the importance of serenity. Anyone entering our homes should immediately feel that this is a very serene place where evil spirits cannot find an entrance and where the inhabitants speak lovingly, courteously, and respectfully to one another. We may not succeed 100%, but we can sure try. We must put the past behind us and go from there.

Serenity is very important in our homes, but is also very important in our church. Let’s strive for it as we enter the new year and in all the years to come. Serenity speaks of a calmness and peacefulness which is very precious and valuable. It is not possible without a forgiving spirit. God forgave us and we should forgive others, who were probably doing what they thought was right. Please be serene in 1998.

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NEW MARTINSVILLE -1875
(pictured 1944)

The New Martinsville Church probably found its origin during the moving of settlers down the Ohio River. Some brethren settled on the West side in Ohio and some on the East side in West Virginia. Due to hard economic times around the turn of the century, brethren moved to areas with more economic opportunity. The final termination of services in the little country church on a hill came in the late 1950's.

A dear sister wrote: "One of the saddest things in my life is that our Church has decreased in place of increasing like the Churches in other places. There is where my Mother carried me in her arms; there is where I went to Sunday School and Church all my life; there is where I found peace with my God and where my husband and I took our children every Sunday morning. To me it is the dearest spot on earth. It grieves me very much to know the door of that dear little old Church will soon be closed. I have had many happy days there. The Church used to be filled every Sunday. Those were the happy days and I will always love the little humble Church on the West Virginia hills."

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