

The Silver Lining

Stand ye upright, even in the presence of great weight and cares.

January 2000

“THE DIVINE ENERGY OF THE SPIRIT”

Sermon by Bro. Ben Wysong, Sabetha, KS

Isaiah 57 and John 3:1-21

Here comes a Pharisee and Jesus called Him a master of Israel, one who was a leader in the Jewish faith. He did not understand very much about the workings of the Spirit and about what God and Jesus Christ had tried to teach those people in the short time that He had begun His ministry, which was not too long into this chapter in this Book of John. This man's name was Nicodemus and it is a story that we know well, isn't it? It is a story from Sunday school and a story that perhaps our little ones know by heart by hearing it many times. Perhaps maybe your Bible opens to this particular chapter often.

Nonetheless, there is sufficient here for the guidance of God's Spirit to feed us this morning with a lesson. This man came to Jesus by night. I guess immediately we assume that because he came by night, he was afraid of being seen by his peers. Maybe that was the reason. Perhaps it was the reason. We are just left to speculate on that.

Nonetheless, he did come to Jesus by night, by day, whatever it is. Is that not the important thing, when we realize that all that is in our life is not right? Very little in our life is not right? Nothing in our life is right? Is that what we need to do?

We need to come to Jesus Christ whether it is by night or by day. If we are afraid to have our peers see us, if we don't want anybody else to know it, we still need to come to Jesus Christ. For He and Him alone was able to save us and to give us that perfect peace.

He recognized here and called him Rabbi. He said, "...we know that thou art a teacher come from God." (John 3:2). We know, he said, that thou art a teacher that is come from God. I believe, in my mind, this man was sincere. I don't think

he was jesting with Jesus. I don't think he was trying to catch Him in any way.

He said, "...no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." (John 3:2). I believe Nicodemus' heart was right. He just didn't know what to do. He was just ignorant, as we say.

Jesus, evidently, reading his thoughts said, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3). Nothing was said about this, was it, in these first verses...anything about being born again? He knew what Nicodemus was thinking. He knew he had questions in his heart and in his life, and he knew that Jesus, as he said, was a man of God.

"Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" (John 3:4). Obviously, he could not. He is not talking about a natural birth, is he?

"Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John 3:5). Could it be any plainer than that this morning to us, dear ones? Dear friends, could it be any plainer than unless we are born again of water and of Spirit that we cannot see the kingdom of God? These are the words of our Lord and Saviour, and they are recorded and kept here for a very, very particular reason.

He said, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." (John 3:6). We know that. When a natural birth occurs, we have a baby. We have a new born being and they are flesh.

When the miracle of repentance and conversion takes place in a life

and we see that soul arise from that watery grave, we have a new creature in Christ. We have a newborn babe in Jesus Christ. What greater miracle is there? It is indeed a miracle when there is a newborn babe come forth with all of the organs, all their fingers, toes and everything, and all the intricate parts of the human body. Certainly that is a

Sermon continued on page 45

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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 2000

Sowing Discord I

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6:7). Every day we sow seed. Every day we plant a future harvest. Some of the seed we sow is good seed and will yield a bountiful harvest. Unless we are careful, some of the seed we sow will cause us to face unpleasant consequences in the future. The scriptures instruct us clearly that..."they that plough iniquity and sow wickedness, reap the same" (John 4:8). Also, "For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind:" (Hos. 8:7) but "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him" (Ps. 126:6).

There is much evil seed that is sown in the world. Sometimes statements are made with the intent to hurt others. Sometimes statements are made thoughtlessly, with no intent to hurt, but the comments may cause pain in spite of our intent. Sometimes comments are made by individuals who are trying to advance their own cause, perhaps to get a better job, or to make a better business transaction, and in the process someone else gets hurt. Whatever the reason, as children of God, we need to be careful that we are not guilty of this kind of behavior.

The scriptures contain many beautiful teachings that help us to understand the difference between the evil seed and the good seed. As children of God we should want to heed the advice that is so abundantly provided in the scriptures to insure that we are sowing good seed.

Solomon instructed us that "These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, A heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren" (Prov. 6:16-19).

Unfortunately, we have come to expect a great deal of sowing of discord in our society. Many times political cam-

paigns seem to have the sowing of discord as the primary theme. We hear of deceit and discord being used to further one's ambition so often in the world that it seems to be an acceptable practice and a normal way to achieve one's goals. Perhaps in a sin-sick world this should not be too surprising. As the "...lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (I John 2:16) dominate the thinking of an unconverted person, "...iniquity shall abound..." (Mt. 24:12).

But what about discord within the family, the community, and the household of faith? Have we reached the point where a lack of harmony in a diverse society seems normal? Have we fallen into the trap of believing that discord within the family is inevitable? Have we come to the conclusion that each of us has our own convictions and therefore peace and unity within the brotherhood is not possible? Surely Satan will gain an advantage over us if we allow thoughts that lead to this kind of behavior to become a part of our lives.

Although there will be differences of opinion within families, especially as children begin to develop a spirit of independence, serious disagreements leading to discord and significant disruption of the family are neither inevitable nor acceptable. Certainly some children have a much stronger will and are more rebellious than others. Although there are some children who cause considerable disruption to unity within the family, their unacceptable behavior needs to be controlled by setting reasonable boundaries to prevent them from destroying the unity of the family.

As children of God or as friends of the truth, we need to frequently examine our lives in the light of God's Word to enable us to identify and correct such behavior. It may be necessary to seek help within the church to control and solve this problem. If our own lives are in proper order, we will have a better chance to help our children if they face this problem.

Also, within the community there will be some differences in opinion and some

differences in priorities, but we need to work to be peacemakers. Peace with our neighbors is so important that Jesus said the second greatest commandment was to "...love thy neighbor as thyself" (Mk. 12:31). To emphasize the importance of this commandment, he taught us that our neighbor was anyone on whom we could show mercy (Lk. 10:28-37). Being a light to our neighbor is an opportunity to spread the gospel message of salvation.

Finally, peace within the household of faith is so important that unity among the brethren is stressed over and over. Jesus said there were other sheep that he needed to bring that "...there be one fold, and one shepherd" (Jn. 10:16). To accomplish this He was willing to lay down His life for our sakes.

The Apostles taught of the need for peace and unity among the brethren. "For we being many are one bread and one body:" (I Cor. 10:17). "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you: but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (I Cor. 1:10). "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another;..." (I Peter 3:8). Many other references encouraging peace and unity could be quoted and it would be time well spent if we searched to find these pearls of wisdom.

How is discord sown? What behaviors do we need to avoid to be certain that we are not guilty of sowing discord? What behaviors do we need to encourage so that the sowing of discord can be eliminated?

Although it is not possible to examine all possible causes nor to list all cures in a relatively short article, it is possible to "...stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance:" (II Peter 3:1) that we can use the Word of God to keep ourselves from sowing discord.

The next editorial will focus on some of the scriptural warnings about the causes of discord.



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

Brethren in Ukraine Struggle to Survive

The European Board is using this page to inform our brethren of the struggles our brethren in East European countries are experiencing. Since communism fell about 10 years ago, governments in these countries are trying to establish a democratic system of free enterprise. This is becoming more difficult as the people try to make the transition by building upon an unstable base.

Difficulties at the border

As a team of five US and two German brethren entered Ukraine in October of this year, the first of many challenges came at the border. Although everyone had paid for and acquired visas in advance, this border crossing took longer than any in recent memory. A brother from Arad, Romania drove a van with Romanian registry, which did not draw attention from police as did the German vans previously used.

Language difficulties

The region where our brethren live in Ukraine is called Bukovina, and has a long history of being shuffled from one country to another. The Romanian language is widely used in this area, and the driver was naturally skilled in this language. One would think that he could communicate well with border officials, but this was not the case. The entry forms were printed in Ukrainian, and officials claimed they could not translate them into Romanian. One of the brothers walked through the border complex at least twelve times going from one office to another without success. Finally another traveler was kind enough to assist us, which greatly simplified the process. After about five frustrating hours, formalities

were complete and we drove across the border to where our Ukrainian brethren had been waiting the entire time.

Supper and bed

Weary brethren greeted each other with emotion. It was good to meet again and feel the love that flows from heart to heart. Love is a language that needs no translation.

Darkness had fallen by the time the travelers set out to the familiar home of one of the local Elders. There is a large room that had been used for services before a church building was erected with our help. This room was used for meals, sleeping, and meetings. One can be comfortable there, although plumbing is especially primitive by our standards.

American brethren often ask about food in Eastern Europe. This has always been lovingly prepared and tasty. Chicken soup, fried chicken, sausage, stuffed peppers or cabbage, melons, potatoes cooked various ways, tomatoes, homemade bread, pickles, etc. are often served.

All eight travelers slept in this house on Friday and Saturday nights. Most had beds, but one slept on the floor (by choice) for three nights. He seemed to like it!

To the market

It has been our practice that when going into this part of the world, we try to visit stores and markets to learn what is available and what things cost. In the December issue, we related the costs in numbers of hours worked to buy various items. The large open market was stocked with nearly any kind of consumer product one could wish. Things looked good, but the cost for the local citizens is very high. It is for this reason that our policy in recent years has been to send money instead of goods. If a person

has dollars, goods are able to be purchased. In local currency, as compared to local wages, things are extremely expensive.

Meetings with the brethren

After lunch on Saturday our brethren met with the three local Elders. After a time about twelve local Deacons joined the discussion. Most of the visiting brothers were well acquainted with the Ukrainians. The discussions were very frank and open, with specific matters being addressed. The Romanian, German, and English languages were used. The spirit of God was certainly present.

The subject of employment, income, and pensions was explored at some length. We learned that 100% of all brethren have no permanent jobs. Pensions have not been paid for months. Most have some form of subsistence farming. We continue to finance this self-help type of effort.

The distribution of funds previously sent was examined and approved after considerable discussion. The travelers had carried a previously approved sum of \$25,000 in cash with them across the border with no problems. When asked how much additional money they needed for this winter, they told us \$60,000. By God's grace and with the support of our US brethren, this amount has since been transferred to them through established channels. Self-help programs have also been in place, and more were approved.

(Continued in the next issue.)

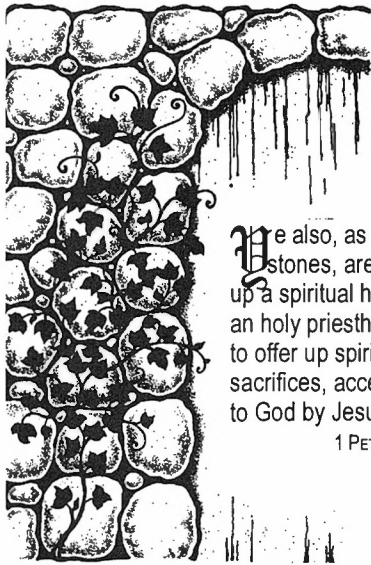
For further information:
Several of the brethren kept diaries.
Copies of those reports are available.
For information call or write:

Gene Lehman
16112 West Street
Remington, IN 47977
219/261-3313 Phone



APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN
World Relief

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



We also, as lively
stones, are built
up a spiritual house,
an holy priesthood,
to offer up spiritual
sacrifices, acceptable
to God by Jesus Christ.
1 PETER 2:5

Work Team in Juarez, Mexico

Our great God continues to open the way for construction teams to enter the impoverished areas around Juarez, Mexico. Many people in this locale near to the US border live in conditions of poverty that are almost beyond our belief. In the past few years brethren have found a way that work teams from our churches can travel to this area and build small houses for those who otherwise would have practically nothing. Following is a report of the experiences made by a World Relief approved work team that went to Juarez for this purpose earlier this year. It is typical of the experiences made by those who participate.

Sunday was the first day

Sunday, August 15, was the first day the work team spent in Mexico. On this day they prepared themselves both physically and spiritually for the best use of their time in Juarez. Elder Bro. Wayne Banwart from Champaign, IL was the leader of this team, and took charge of the worship activities on Sunday.

The work week begins

Monday, August 16, started by having breakfast at the hotel and then spiritual preparation by reading Philippians 4. During the 40 minute drive to the work site they saw poverty everywhere. Upon arrival at the construction site, they noticed the ground was covered with trash. The houses were no larger than a trailer home, or even smaller. There were two slabs of cement diagonal from each other on which they were to build houses.

The first day began by building the wall frames. The process would be to build the wall frames and then attach plywood on which they nailed chicken wire. The stucco was later applied to this wire.

Two sisters that were on the team distributed gifts that they had brought to the local children. They also played games with these children and began building personal relationships. This opened the way for recipients to receive Bibles and observe the love of Christ that existed among the workers.

By the end of the first day, the larger house had one long wall standing and the small house had both of the frames covered with plywood for the long walls.

Tuesday, August 16

The team began this day by reading I Corinthians 15, and then left for the work site. When it was time for lunch, the larger house's second wall was close to being done. The small house had both walls standing. Also, in the morning, our group leaders went with the local Mexican coordinators to look at a site that could possibly be a future project.

At the end of the day, the four walls of the smaller house plus the two long walls on the larger house were all standing.

Wednesday, August 17

This day began with devotions and prayer as do all of our days on a work team. "Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it." (Psalms 127)

By the end of this day, the smaller house had a frame of wood about half of which was covered with plywood.

Thursday, August 18

After devotions and travel to the site, the team applied themselves to the effort. "So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work." (Neh 4:6)

In the morning some people put the shingle paper on top of the small house, while others worked on the two inside walls in order to separate the bathroom and the bedroom from the living room. The big house also had a finished roof by the end of the morning.

After lunch some from the team helped to complete a clinic being built in the area, while the rest of the group went back to the two houses in order to finish up. Those at the two houses worked until 5:00 PM doing the last details of each house, such as nailing frames and also the inside walls until they ran out of plywood.

In conclusion

On Friday the whole team worked at the clinic. They were able to build five walls and put up four. Since this is an ongoing project, completion was not expected or required.

Anyone wishing to assist in the work in Mexico may communicate their desire to:

Mike Fiechter
6630 E 700 N
Ossian, IN 46777
219/597-7330 Phone
219/597-7475 Fax

APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN HOME FOR THE HANDICAPPED

Another month, another year, another decade, another century, and yes, even another millennium is past. What have we learned, experienced, been blessed with, tried with, rejoiced in, hoped in, believed in, and trusted in? How have we prepared for this new dimension that even our oldest living relatives have never experienced? It seems that life just keeps going as normal. People still laugh, cry, get married, have babies, grow old and even die.

We as a nation have spent millions of dollars, a lot of hours and many resources in preparation and anticipation of what this millennium might bring because it seemed so uncertain. We can read in Psalm 90:9-10 "...we spend our years as a tale that is told. The days of our years are threescore and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off and we fly away." It may be another month, year or decade before we are cut off and fly away; but we can be sure that the scriptures will be fulfilled.

Now we are challenged to put forth more effort, time, money talents, and resources to prepare men's hearts for the next dimension "Time without end." Eternity. May we start with but not limit ourselves to our family, neighbors, friends, coworkers, fellow students, teachers and even those we really have a hard time being friendly to. Too often we hear of someone who has been "cut off and flown away" and wonder whether they had Christ as Lord of their life.

During the month of December, our residents celebrated our Saviour's birth in many ways. Several groups of carolers came, uplifting the hearts of residents and staff. One group even put on a skit for the enjoyment of residents at Timber Ridge. Another highlight for Tim-

ber Ridge residents was participating in a Christmas party in Peoria on December 5.

FEBRUARY birthdays are all at TIMBER RIDGE: Matt Pumphrey (17), John Kamm (18), Lee Anne McKay (19), Ernest Perry (27) and Guy Masinelli (28).

GATEWAY WOODS APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN CHILDREN'S HOME

Janel Ramseyer

I have this little Mickey Mouse clock in my bathroom that I can totally ignore throughout the day. If I wake up in the middle of the night or try to go to bed before my mind is ready, however, it's almost impossible to not hear the ticking, especially if the house is quiet. Like a dripping faucet, it's one of those sounds that can echo in a person's brain. In the past five years, I have only once (that I remember) taken out the battery to just make it stop. I have often said that it would be nice if the world could stop for a day or two for everyone but me so I could get caught up while the rest of the world was frozen in time. I even have a magnet that says "Time flies whether you're having fun or not." And I know I'm not the only person who struggles with time. When you're young and it's summertime, there's never enough.

When you're older and alone, there can be way too much. And yet we all have the same amount.

I have struggled with the way others choose to spend their time, especially when their priorities were different than mine. And I have self-righteously blocked off time for myself and my all-important projects or personal time and, as a result, have probably closed the door on God's right to change my near-sighted, limited, human schedule. I have wondered, lately, why God would seem to emphasize waiting and prayer when they seem to be the hardest thing

for us humans to do. Because He knew it would be hard and that we would ignore them and "...careful and troubled about many things?" (Luke 10:41). Because He knew we would benefit the most from waiting on Him and not from doing? I believe there is a time to move and to act and to speak and to "take the land" (Joshua 1 and 4). I like those times because God designed my personality as one that is able to accomplish many things, but I have to re-remind myself often that while it may count for something on this earth, it means less than nothing in His kingdom. Only the time spent with Him can free the Spirit to move in my life and only the Spirit moving in life can really affect change in my life. I have to keep reminding myself to reconsider what I want my end result to be: a calendar with lots of check marks or a life of peace and calm and confidence and trust and freedom in and through Jesus. My goals should drive my actions, not the other way around. And maybe He wanted to remind you of this, too. So the next time the Spirit wakes you up in the middle of the night to your very loud clock or the leaky faucet you haven't fixed yet or the baby that's hungry again, remember that there's more to life than schedules and tasks. There are people and hearts and souls. And I'll try to remember, too.

We are glad to welcome Michael to the Wiegand House and look forward to getting to know Michael and his family and to helping them were we can. Gateway Woods has recently become approved to accept children placed by the Department of Corrections. We have a few openings on campus and we are prepared and ready to be full to capacity. Feel free to join us in praying that God will bring appropriate children and families to all of our programs.

Houseparent Sis. Naomi Wiegand was hospitalized in De-

ember as she experienced trouble with her pregnancy. How thankful we are for a prayerful church family and for a God who hears and answers our prayers.

We have three new children in our Foster Care Program. Crystal is two and has joined the Letz family. Crystal's sister Brittney is 5 and lives with the Kindigs. Amber joined Gateway Woods on December 10 when she moved in with Foster Parent Glenna Wilson. Gateway Woods continues to offer scholarships to those studying in the Human Services fields. If you would like further information regarding these scholarships, please call our office at 219/627-2159.

We also have two staff openings. Sis. Terri Gramm will be leaving in March of 2000 after almost four years as an Assistant Houseparent. If you are interested in the Assistant Houseparent position, please contact Bro. Ed Graf at the Gateway Woods office. Sis. Rachel (Gehring) Fessenden (Bro. Jerry) will be leaving her position as Education Coordinator in May of 2000 to stay at home and raise their first child. If you are interested in the Education Coordinator position, please contact Bro. Jeff Schumacher at the Gateway Woods office. (See ads in this issue.)

Thank you for your generosity over the past few months. We've received many of the gifts we requested through our fall issue of The Gate Post and have also received many contributions of money. These have come at a very critical time for us. We are humbled by your love for us as evidenced by your giving. May God richly bless you.

**APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN
PRESCHOOL
Athens, Alabama
Joan Reinhard**

It has been a very busy first semester this year so far at the Pre-

school and we are looking forward to (hopefully) a less eventful last semester. In November the students learned about nutrition, Thanksgiving, and the color brown. They had a Thanksgiving "Feast" and dressed in outfits they made to reenact the first Thanksgiving. As we finished out the year, the students learned what Christmas is really about and how God gave the gift of His Son to come to earth to save us from our sins. This was our main theme for the month of December and with all of the commercialism of the season, we had our hands full to fight off the influences of the world. We are thankful for the innocent, pliable hearts of the children, and we realize this time of their lives is so crucial to their development. We would appreciate your prayers and support as we do this work in shaping lives for eternity.

We want to thank each one who has been helping the Preschool to operate. First, to those here in Athens who have given of themselves on a regular basis for the school to function each day; second, to our volunteer board who help with the decisions and policy making; and last, but not least, to each of those who have helped out with the financial end of things. We have been getting some sponsors to help with the cost of running our Preschool and we hope each one realizes the investment they are making in the lives of the students here. We would like to encourage anyone who is interested in becoming involved in this Sponsorship Program to give us a call for more information. This is a great project for Sunday Schools and other groups to get involved in, or even individual families. We hope you will feel the Lord's blessings as you continue to give to him. Thank you for giving.

We will be doing some more changing regarding some of the staff here at the Preschool. Bro.

Tom Schrenk will be taking over the coordinator position in February with his wife, Sis. Joan, helping him. Bro. Sam Schlatter and his wife, Sis. Linda (Junction, OH), will fill in until Bro. Tom and Sis. Joan return from Zapata. Sis. Monica Steffen (Milford, IN) will be helping out here again on a temporary basis until we find a full time teacher to teach our four year old class. If you or someone you know would feel led of the Lord to give of yourself to teach at our Preschool, please call Bro. Lavoyd Moore at (256) 232-2035.

ALABAMA, ATHENS

Joan Reinhard

Our prayers are with Bro. Ed Haggemaker as he is recovering from a broken ankle. He was hospitalized for a time, and is now recuperating at home. We pray that he will continue to heal and regain his strength.

We also extend our prayers to Sis. Nancy Sizemore as she is recovering from knee surgery. Sis. Nancy is very hopeful that this surgery will correct a long standing problem and give her some relief from pain. Again the healing is in the hands of the Great Physician, and we pray His will be done.

December 11 was the date for our annual Christmas dinner and Secret Pal exchange. This is always an enjoyable evening and a time that we, as a church, share a special closeness. We had a fairly good turnout and it is nice to be able to be together as we celebrate the birth of our Lord. We especially appreciated Sis. Dessie Sinard putting forth the effort to come. Sis. Dessie's health has not been good in recent months and we just are thankful for any time when she can assemble with us.

Christmas caroling is an established tradition here for two Wednesday evenings before Christmas. We enjoyed traveling to

various homes and singing carols that tell what Christmas is really about. The season hardly seems complete if these occasions are missed.

Our Sunday School classes have their own traditions and one of these is putting on a Christmas program for the church. This program was held on December 19 and we appreciate the effort put forth by each one to make this event possible. We cannot emphasize enough the gift that was given to each of us when God gave His only Son. "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)

ARIZONA, PHOENIX
Ron and Ev Hoerr

"Abide in me, and I in you..."
John 15:4

Heaven, revisited almost:

Every December we get a taste of what Heaven must be like. It was on December 12 at our Sunday School Christmas program. Our children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews and friends sang and recited scripture to our delight. After the program refreshments were served and we all enjoyed an abundance of God's love and fellowship.

Love is the greatest gift of all. We appreciate and thank our teaching staff for their efforts. May God richly bless you.

On November 20, Stacey Emch and Greg Janis exchanged vows in a garden wedding. Their parents are Bro. Don and Sis. Cathy Emch and Lynn and Marilyn Janis. We pray God will be with you now and forevermore.

Thanksgiving Day services were well attended with visitors, too. Being in church with other believers is showing God respect and

love on special holidays as well as Sundays and Wednesday nights.

Richard Kraft had heart surgery and appreciates your prayers. Sis. Shirley Mohrman is able to be in church after back surgery.

"Repent and be baptized."
Acts 2:38

Heather and Chris Thorpe have peace and are awaiting baptism. Bro. Al Frautschi must be rejoicing in Heaven over his beloved granddaughter as her parents, Bro. Ed and Sis. Connie Frautschi, are here. We are so happy for our beloved Chris, too.

When Herb Knochel, Jr. became our new minister, Bro. Nate Knochel became our Sunday School Superintendent and Bro. Mark Steffen our assistant Superintendent. We are thankful for brothers who are willing when God asks them to serve us. If God be for us (our church), who can be against it!

Mark and Stacey Steffen are happy parents of Emma Nicole born on December 19. Hannah and Jonah love their special early Christmas present that will last for years. Happy grandparents are Bro. Robert and Sis. Christine Baum and Bro. Carl and Sis. Myrna Steffen. Great-grandparents are Bro. Richard and Sis. Barbara Schupbach and Sis. Helen Steffen. We welcome Emma Nicole into our church group.

ARIZONA, PRESCOTT
Jane Hodges

Progress on the church building continues with dry wall, painting and staining being done in preparation for the carpet laying scheduled for the third week in January. Our brethren are thankful that they started the work in the summer and are now working indoors, because even though we haven't

had much snow and the sun is shining, it has been cold and windy. Open house and dedication are tentatively planned for the beginning of March.

Last month our small group sang Christmas carols at the Alzheimer's Center and also Granite Gate where Bro. Henry Volz (sorry for the misspelling in the Nov. issue) resides. We were thankful for the additional support of Bro. Herb Jr. and Sis. Laurie Knochel and family and Bro. Jake and Sis. Wanda Hoerr and family.

Our ministering brothers last month were Elder Bro. Dennis Warner (Lester, IA), and Bros. Roy Koehl (Morris, MN), James Emch, Ken Lawson and Herb Knochel Jr. (all of Phoenix). Bro. Herb Jr. is the new minister in Phoenix and we have been blessed to have him with us twice in the last month and see the Lord work in his life and ministry. We are so thankful to all the brothers who have come to minister to us and pray the Lord will richly bless them for their service.

ARIZONA, TUCSON
Lisa Knapp

We enjoyed our annual evening of Christmas caroling last Friday night. Young and old alike strolled the halls of some local nursing homes. We enjoyed singing carols and watching the delighted reactions of the elderly people as they watched the children and listened to the familiar songs. As always, we returned to the church to have a hot meal together and enjoy some holiday fellowship. We thank the Sunday School for hosting this special evening.

We had a bit of a cold spell over the Thanksgiving holiday; our highs were in the 50's and 60's and we had windy days. We have warmed up a bit heading into Christmas with the daytime highs in the high 60's and low 70's and

our calm, sunny days back. It was kind of fun to start my holiday shopping wearing a jacket but alas it's back on the hook for now!

We are praying for a safe, quiet start to the year 2000 and the return of some of our winter visitors in the coming weeks.

CALIFORNIA, ALTADENA
Jim Klotzle

"For the kingdom of heaven is as a man traveling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents; to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey."

Matthew 25:14-15

Dear brothers and sisters, our Heavenly Father has entrusted each of us with different talents. Some more weighty than others, but all of great importance in God's kingdom. One gift that is given equally to believers is the salvation of our undying soul. How we apply that salvation is important to the One who redeemed us. Will Christ return to find our sanctified soul merely hidden away and protected? (And possibly a bit dusty?) Or will we take what He has given us and invest it, exercise it and have something stored up when our pilgrimage on this earth is complete?

Our visiting ministers this month were Bros. Nelson Beer (Milford, IN) and Frank Sauder (Roanoke, IL). We thank these brothers for their service on our behalf.

Bro. Bob Crockett appreciates many prayers for a swift recovery after his knee surgery. Sis. Judy Crockett has returned from treatment and needs our prayers as well. Bro. Richard Aberle is also re-

covering successfully from recent surgery.

Our prayers are with Steve Cser and family. His mother, who lived in Hungary, recently passed away. We trust that God will comfort her dear family.

CALIFORNIA
SAN DIEGO
Peggy Jevremov

Greetings in the name of our Lord. We have been blessed with numerous visitors this past month.

With thankful hearts we want to share with you that Bro. Denes and Sis. Joy Fulop and their family have received an extension to stay in the U.S. until June 20, 2000. We pray they will be able to stay permanently, Lord willing.

We are looking forward to our Christmas program on Christmas day after services. The children have been working hard on reciting their pieces and sharing the story not only of Christ's birth, but of the wonderful plan of salvation available to all who will come through the shed blood of our dear Lord Jesus. May we treasure and remember at this season and all year long, the greatest Gift to mankind from our great God and Father in Heaven.

KITCHENER, ONTARIO
CANADA
Laura Baxter

"All scripture is given by the inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

II Timothy 3:16-17

Elder Bros. Mark Bahr (Detroit, MI) and Jesse Beer (Milford, IN) were with us this past month for

the reading of the Memorandum. We thank God and them for their loving exhortations and encouragement. We are thankful that we are not left alone to interpret scripture and that God, knowing our weak flesh and our natural inclination towards individualism, has established the institution of the Church. Having established this authority on earth that is accountable to Him in Heaven, we can be instructed in righteousness, corrected, reproofed and follow Biblical doctrine in unity. May we submit with willing, joyful hearts.

Elder Bro. Ed Schwartz (Bluffton, IN) and Bro. Duane Reutter (Rockville, CT) labored in the ministry for us this past month and we thank them for their loving service. We also thank all our other visitors and God for the blessings of this beautiful, Christian fellowship.

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

Psalms 127:3

Bro. Tim and Sis. Melanie Tomic became first-time parents with the birth of their son, Christopher Mark Tomic. We are thankful for his safe arrival even though it was a bit early. May God bless this family with wisdom and love as they raise this precious little child. Grandparents are Costa and Urna Tomic (Kitchener, ON) and Bro. Kurt and Sis. Luanne Kaeb (Alto, MI).

We welcome all visitors to worship with us. Please contact Bro. Mike Ursu (519) 669-8515 or Bro. Wayne Saddler (519) 662-6834 for more information and directions.

COLORADO, DENVER
Mark and Kelly Ramseyer

Once again we experience the joy of welcoming another couple to

our church. Bro. Mike and Sis. Tammy Gerber from Bluffton, IN have joined us. We're glad that God has directed them to move to the Denver area and we're glad that they have listened and obeyed. We look forward to creating new friendships with them and hopefully with their visiting families. Mike and Tammy, we welcome you and pray that God will increasingly show you His grace and wisdom in our church and through our lives. With the new addition, over 40% of the male members in our church are named Mike, Doug or Eric. This is an amazing fact when you consider how unique our church is. I'm just glad they leave room for the rest of us.

December 12 we held our Christmas program. This was a very successful program in that every student bravely said his piece, with most of the pieces memorized. Even many of the songs were memorized. Just a few hours earlier some of the students weren't so brave, forgot some of their pieces and with the help of a teacher completely forgot the second verse of The First Noel (There's no need to ask why I remember this so well). But with a little more practice and a couple more prayers, we peaked at the right moment. The program ended with Bro. Verne Lehman helping us all feel the love with his final remarks and closing prayer.

Sometimes to make us all pay a little more attention, God allows heartache to come into a good friend's life. As each of us heard about Sis. Deb Leman having breast cancer, each of us felt a heavy heart and shared her family's grief and experienced some of their joy. Yes, joy. Both she and her husband, Bro. Mike, were joyful most of the day. They were joyful that they found the cancer early. They were joyful the expected prognosis was not worse. They were joyful to be in church praising God

with their friends. They were joyful that God always was, and is and always will be in total control. What a blessing to be able to praise God in sickness and in health! Now this doesn't mean the battle is over. Only God knows what lies ahead. So will you please take a moment right now to say a prayer for Sis. Deb and her family. Let us continue to use the power of the large circulation of this publication for something truly useful. Please say a prayer now. Thanks.

As another year begins, remember that today is the first day of the rest of your life. All that has happened previously can be forgiven and forgotten. At this point in time, all that matters is what we do with our lives right now. We can redouble our efforts to spend more time with God and more time doing God's will, or we can procrastinate once again. It matters little if you obeyed Him last month or spent lots of time with Him last week, if you're going to disobey or neglect Him today. Today may also be the last day of your life. If today is the last day of your life, what would you want to be doing? Today is the accepted day of grace. Today Jesus is calling all of us to follow Him.

**CONNECTICUT
ROCKVILLE
Cherie Galat**

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

Hymns of Zion #150

As the dawn of the new year breaks forth to light up the sky, may we ever keep our eyes focused heavenward to seek His guidance and direction.

"...and the eunuch said, See,
here is water; what doth hinder me

to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

Acts 8:36-37

We heard the testimonies and witnessed the baptisms of three dear souls: Sis. Heidi Carlson (Bro. Walter Jr. and Sis. Judy), Bro. Kirby Reutter (Bro. Duane and Sis. Kay) and Bro. Nathan Zahner (Bro. Curt and Sis. Sally). Elder Bros. Ed Lanz (Oakville, IA) and Ron Schambach (Elgin, IL) assisted our Elder Bro. Kevin Ryan in this service. Bro. Andy Virkler (Croghan-Naumburg, NY) also served us in past days. We thank these dear brothers for their efforts of love.

"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."

Genesis 1:27

Two engagements were announced in our congregation: Bro. Glenn Bahler (Bro. Owen and Sis. Donna) and Sis. Erika Hoffman (Bro. Michael and Luann); and also Bro. Kent Zahner (Bro. Curt and Sis. Sally) and Sis. Karen Goric (Bro. Dan and Sis. Mary Lou). May God guide each one as they plan for the future.

"And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply..."

Genesis 1:28

We rejoice with two dear families who welcome little bundles of love into their lives. On November 10, Alenah Deborah was born to Darrel and Sheila King (WA) joining her two sisters, Emmah and Hannah. Grandparents are Marion King and Mary Thompson and Bro. Ernie and Sis. Aline

Ballasy. Kate Lynn was born to Bro. Brent and Sis. Naomi Walder on December 2 and joins sister Emily at home. Grandparents are Elder Bro. Robert and Sis. Gloria Walder (Congerville, IL) and Bro. Ken and Sis. Kay Luginbuhl.

Our prayers are with our brethren who have suffered sickness or undergone surgery: Walter Erismann (Ruth), Sis. Amber Herzig, Ernie Kupferschmid, Ernie Limberger and Sis. Anna Tschudin.

Silver Lining Collection: We will be collecting for Silver Lining starting January 2000. Please give cash or check for \$11.00 to me. Thank you.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA WASHINGTON Henrietta Meyer

Best wishes for a blessed new year from all who assemble with the Washington, DC congregation. May we not quickly forget the reason for the holidays we just celebrated.

Our visiting ministers this past month were Elder Bro. Nathan Steffen (Elgin, IL), Bro. Vernon Wettstein (Congerville, IL) and Bro. Ben Wiegand (Philadelphia, PA). Other visitors this month were from Cissna Park, Fairbury, Forrest, Gridley and Princeville, IL; Bluffton, IN; and Rittman, OH. We are always glad when business or holidays brings loved ones to our area.

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. Song service beings at 10:15, worship service at 10:30. 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. Barry Steffen (410) 569-3635 or Bro. Matt Fetter (703) 860-5749.

FLORIDA FT. LAUDERDALE Gretchen Webb

Our Sunday School Christmas program was held on the evening of December 12. The Sunday School reminded us of the true meaning of the season through songs and scripture from Luke 2 and II Peter. Afterwards, the choir sang several selections. The evening was a blessing to all who attended.

On December 18, we gathered to Christmas Carol at three of our local nursing homes. After the caroling, we all gathered back at the fellowship hall and enjoyed an evening of fellowship.

We would like to thank Bro. Wayne Lehman (Sis. Shirley, South Bend, IN) for sharing the Word with us. We pray that God will bless him for his efforts.

We're thankful that Sis. Elsie Bolliger is back worshipping with us after a brief illness. We're always thankful for moderate health and strength.

The strong South Florida economy has many employment opportunities available. Brothers and sisters considering relocating should prayerfully consider Ft. Lauderdale. We will give you a warm welcome into our fellowship.

FLORIDA NORTH FT. MYERS Anjie Baum

We trust all of you had a blessed Christmas. On Sunday, December 19, our small congregation held our annual Christmas program. Being so small, most everyone participates in scripture reading and in song. We are particularly thankful

for our Sunday School girls, Lindsey Steffen (9 yrs) and Shelby Baum (4 yrs), for enthusiastically singing for us. They did a great job.

We would like to thank ministering Bro. Dave Wiegand (Champaign, IL) for visiting us this past month.

Our Bro. Roland and Sis. Viola Keller have both been ill and unable to attend services. Sis. Viola was recently hospitalized but has now returned home. We miss their presence and pray the Lord will grant them healing and comfort.

Our prayers are also with our friend, Clarence Peters. Clarence has moved to Shell Point Village, a retirement village, and his health is improving.

We want to thank all our visitors this winter. We look forward to our post-holiday winter residents. It is such a blessing to see the many familiar faces return to us each year. We invite each of you to include North Ft. Myers in your vacation plans.

As we approach the New Year, the word "new" always stands out. We usually have resolutions that we may or may not keep. We usually want to make a new start, whether it is dedication to studying our Bibles, attempting to live more faithfully, being bold in witnessing to unbelievers, etc. Personally, I have trouble keeping my resolutions. "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do." (Romans 7:18-19).

Knowing our unfaithful flesh, aren't you so thankful that God is faithful and merciful, anew each day? "This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope. It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morn-

ing; great is thy faithfulness." (Lam. 3:21-24).

Let's still make our resolutions with the knowledge that we are only able to keep them through His grace and His mercy. Let us pray that many people will turn to the Lord and acknowledge their ways this new millennium and particularly that our country will return to the foundation it was built upon: obedience to our God and Saviour.

FLORIDA, SARASOTA

Rachel Sabo

Three precious souls were taken into the fold during the weekend of November 27-28. Our new brothers in Christ are John Krstec, Virgil Kaeb and Timm Kaeb. We were thankful for all the visitors who could share this special occasion with us, including Elder Bro. Charles Sauder (Tremont, IL), and Bros. Mike Ursu (Kitchener, Ontario) and Ron Heiniger (Bloomington, IL).

Elder Bro. Dale Eisenmann (Chicago, IL) also shared the Word with us this past month. We always appreciate the efforts of our visiting ministers.

"Easter is a Christmas Story" was the theme for our annual Sunday School Christmas program held December 12. It was followed by cake and punch. We want to sincerely thank everyone who participated and helped with the program.

Our prayers continue for Bro. Rich Martin who was in the hospital this past month.

We want to extend our heartfelt sympathy to Bro. Sid Leman (Forest, IL) in the loss of his helpmate. Bro. Sid and Sis. Helen have been winter residents at Sarasota for many years.

Note of Thanks:

We wish to thank everyone who remembered us with phone calls,

cards, and letters of encouragement through our conversion. It was very humbling for us to hear from so many loved ones. May God bless each of you.

Bro. Virgil and Bro. Timm Kaeb

GEORGIA, ATLANTA Keith and Carol Kaufman

The time flies on and death
draws nigh;
Unite us, Lord, with Thee on
high!
Prepare us now to live with Thee
forever in eternity!
Grant to Thy servants grace and
might
And wisdom, working virtues
bright,
That in this time good seeds they
sow
From which eternal fruits may
grow.
Zion's Harp #188

It seems that the older you get, the faster the time goes. We are so thankful that God's Holy Spirit is ever present guiding us on the pathway to Heaven. Bros. John Laukhuf (Latty, OH), Lyn Stieglitz (Leo, IN) and Dave Obergfel (Peoria, IL) were our visiting ministers this past month. May the Lord richly bless you and your wives for taking the time to come and serve us.

We were reminded by the Sunday School children of the greatest gift that was ever given. The younger children told of Jesus' birth and the older children told us of the various people who were waiting for Christ's birth. They also emphasized the reason that Christ came is far more important than His birth. May we always remember that Jesus came to earth to die upon the cross for our sins and that He rose from the grave to go and prepare a place in Heaven

for us.

Later that day we had the opportunity to sing some Christmas carols for residents at two different nursing homes. What joy it brought to their hearts to hear those familiar songs and to think that they were not forgotten. Let us remember through the year that those same people are lying in their beds waiting for someone to come visit them.

Phil and Deon Snare along with Tory and Garrett, welcome Katherine Alexandria into their hearts and home. Bro. Art and Sis. Joy Bauer (Princeville, IL) and Gladys Snare (Anna Maria Island, FL) are the happy grandparents.

Sunday services begin at 10:15 and 12:30. Song service is held the second and fourth Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. The church is located at 6225 Campbellton-Fairburn Rd., Fairburn, GA. Take I-85 south to Exit 13. Go west four miles. The church will be on your left. We look forward to having visitors and would like to be able to plan some fellowship. Please contact Bro. Linn Stoller (770) 631-4554, Bro. John Brewer (770) 463-0701 or Bro. Keith Kaufman (770) 304-8335.

ILLINOIS, BELVIDERE

Doreen Moser Sheila McCoy

We plough the fields and scatter
The good seed on the land,
But it is fed and watered
By God's almighty Hand:
He sends the snow in winter,
The warmth to swell the grain,
The breezes and the sunshine,
and soft, refreshing rain.

He only is the Maker
Of all things near and far:
He paints the wayside flower,

He lights the evening star;
The winds and waves obey Him,
By Him the birds are fed;
Much more to us, His children,
He gives our daily bread.

We thank Thee, then, O Father,
For all things bright and good,
The seedtime and the harvest,
our life, our health, our food
No gifts have we to offer,
For all thy love imparts,
But that which Thou desirest,
Our humble, thankful hearts.

Chorus: All good gifts around us
Are sent from Heav'n above;
Then thank the Lord, O thank
the Lord
For all His love.

—*Matthias Claudias - Johann
A.P. Schultz
Men's Hymn Sing, Elgin, IL*

As we celebrated Thanksgiving
this past month, this song came to
mind. We should be thankful each
and every day. As the song says, the
Lord really does give us just what
we need, just when we need it, if we
can just give Him our humble
thankful hearts.

We are thankful for the visiting
minister we had this past month.
Bro. Chuck Kellenberger and his
wife, Sis. Debbie, spent the day
with us. May the Lord bless you for
your time and effort.

Our monthly church service was
held in Madison, WI on December
2. We were blessed to have Bro.
DeWayne Dill (Minneapolis, MN)
to share the Word with us. His mes-
sage was on gifts and was very
timely with the Christmas season
so close. As we go to loved ones and
spend the holidays with our arms
full of gifts, may we pause to re-
member who gave us the greatest
gift of all and it is one we can never
repay.

O how shall I keep my Christ-
mas?
As they keep it in heaven above;
O keep it with peace and
thanksgiving,
And kindest deeds of love;
And share with the poor and
needy
The joys which the Lord gives
thee;
And thy heart shall keep with the
angels
The Lord's nativity.

The Christmas story that never
grows old was once again pro-
claimed by our precious children.
The pieces and songs were enjoyed
by the congregation. Thank you,
Sunday School teachers; your time
and effort is much appreciated.
Christmas caroling at various
nursing homes took place after our
program. We hope we were able to
share the peace and joy of the sea-
son with some who are unable to
get out and attend these activities.

Wishing everyone a blessed holi-
day season from Belvidere. As the
New Year approaches, may we seek
to draw closer to the Lord and be a
light in this dark world.

**ILLINOIS
BLOOMINGTON-NORMAL
Sara Streitmatter**

Bro. Andy Hodel and Sis. Marla
Knobloch (Peoria, IL) were mar-
ried on November 21. Bro. Andy's
parents are Bro. Dave and Sis.
Maxine Hodel and Sis. Marla's par-
ents are Bro. Loris and Sis. Pat
from Peoria. We welcome Sis.
Marla to our Bloomington-Normal
church. May your marriage be a
light to those around you in this
dark world.

Bro. Dale Leman's mother
passed away this month, Sis. Helen
Leman (Fairbury, IL). May God
comfort Bro. Dale and Sis. Mary's
family in their loss. Sis. Kathy

Sauder's grandmother, Mary Ruth
Riviere, from Roanoke, also passed
away this month. We know Bro.
Phil, Sis. Kathy and family will
miss her a lot.

We welcome two families to our
Bloomington-Normal church. Bro.
Mike and Sis. Barb Meece and Bro.
David and Sis. Christine Zeller and
family. We are thankful for the
building plans underway as our
church continues to grow.

Sis. Helen Bauer was in the hos-
pital this past month. We thank the
Lord that she is back in church and
pray for her continued healing.

Visiting ministers this month
were Bros. Brian Huber
(Francesville, IN), Byron Stoller
and Clark Stoller (both of Gridley,
IL). We thank you for your willing-
ness to serve the Lord through
preaching His Word.

We had some engagements this
month. Bro. Jeremy Schieler (Bro.
Darland and Sis. Cindy) was engaged to
Sis. Tonya Huber from
Francesville, IN. Her parents are
Bro. Chris and Sis. Sharon Huber
(Francesville, IN). Sis. Jodi
Hohulin (Bro. Wes and Sis. Joyce,
Goodfield) was engaged to Bro.
Eric Strassheim from Indianapo-
lis, IN. His parents are Bro. Dale
and Sis. Carol Strassheim.

We have enjoyed some Christ-
mas activities in December. On De-
cember 8, we had a Christmas Bible
Study. Bro. Mark Streitmatter
spoke on the topic of "God With
Us". Our church family also spent
time on Saturday, December 11,
Christmas caroling to the various
nursing homes in town; with chili
and fellowship afterwards. May we
each focus on the true meaning of
Christmas in this holiday season.

**ILLINOIS, BRADFORD
Chad and LauraLee Plattner**

Our Bro. Weston Stahl (Sis.
Charlotte) was married to Sis. Jill
Herrmann (Bro. Howard and Sis.

Mary Ann) of Princeville on November 28. How thankful we should be that God's Holy Word contains the promises for a fulfilling marriage if we but follow its instruction. We pray that God will give this new couple His grace to this end.

It was a blessing to have Bros. Don Manz (Junction, OH), Robert Miller (Portland, OR) and Elder Bro. Robert Walder (Congerville, IL) with us this past month to minister the Word to us. May God be their rich rewarder.

Our prayers are with Bro. Jordan (Sis. Sharon) Elsasser and Sis. Martha (Bro. Nathan) Stoller who recently underwent surgery and hospitalization. We trust that God's healing hand will be upon them as He wills.

Note of Thanks:

We wish to thank everyone for their cards, prayers, food, flowers, memorials, and all other acts of kindness extended to us during Sis. Emma's illness and since her death. May God bless you for your deeds of kindness.

Bro. Clarence Knobloch and family

ILLINOIS

CHAMPAIGN-URBANA

Samuel and Pamela Furrer

College students are pretty busy people with their classes, studies and travels. However, our church has recently been blessed by the giving Christmas spirit of many of these young people. On a Saturday in early December, students continued a long-standing tradition of watching the young children of the congregation while parents did Christmas shopping. Later in the month, a large group of students had a full evening of singing Christmas carols at the homes of several of us "permanent" folks. Being neither "shut in" or "aged", we were a

bit surprised when the students asked if they could come sing to us. Their enthusiasm and voices filled our homes with the joy of Christmas. We thank them for fitting us into their busy schedules at the end of the semester.

Sunday School students prepared a beautiful program entitled "Wise Men Rejoice!" as their way of re-telling the familiar Christmas story for the congregation. Numbering about thirty students from pre-kindergartners through high school, each student had a very important part in telling us of the prophecies of our Lord's coming, the seeking of the wise men of old, and the wisdom in all of us seeking Jesus every day. This year, we had an exceptionally good turnout from visiting grandparents, which made it a more special day. Our students and their teachers are to be commended for another thoughtful program.

Our Sis. Karen Kaiser has suffered the loss of her father, Bro. Vernon Kaiser, of Morton. Following a period of ill health, Bro. Vernon left his earthly life on December 4 at the age of 89 years. From his many visits to Champaign over the years, we had the opportunity to know him as a loving and sincere older soldier of the Lord. Our prayers go out to those who knew him well and will surely miss him very much, particularly our dear sister and her family back in the Morton area.

Ministering Bros. Gary Endress (Bradford, IL), Wayne Grimm (West Bend, IA), Art Mueller (Belvidere, IL) and Elder Bro. Jon Kokanovich (Phoenix, AZ) gave of their time and talents to bring the Word of God to us during this past month. We thank each of these men for both coming to visit members of their families and sharing of themselves for our edification.

Note of Thanks:

Thank you for the cards and flowers sent to me and to my family, and for the prayers offered on our behalf in the passing of my Dad. God bless you!

Karen Kaiser

ILLINOIS, CHICAGO

Jill Rager

We feel privileged to welcome in the New Year with joyous news, particularly for my personal family. On December 14, little Holly Janean Rager joined our family (Bro. Kent and Sis. Jill) and has made the celebration of Christmas and the New Year even better. Holly's big sister, Allison, and big brother, Kendall, have left no doubt in her mind that she is loved. Holly's proud grandparents are Bro. Walt and Sis. Sharon Rager (Toledo, OH) and Bro. Jim and Sis. Eleanor Bogart (Francesville, IN).

We enjoy seeing more of Bro. Rick and Sis. Rachel Meyer as they are making Chicago their home, having taken employment in the area.

A big thank you goes to Bro. Marvin Dotterer (Forrest, IL) for presenting a topical Bible study entitled "Pilgrims and Strangers" on November 17.

Our Sunday School students presented the Christmas program on Saturday, December 11, focusing upon the role that the stars played in the Christmas story. The following day we sang the carols of Christmas to area nursing home residents and returned to church for more fellowship and supper.

May your New Year begin with forgiveness for the past mistakes and faith in God for what lies ahead.

Note of Thanks:

We want to express our deep appreciation for the love, cards, gifts and prayers for our 60th wedding anniversary and for the love shown

us throughout the years. May God richly bless all of you.

John and Pauline Schrenk, children and grandchildren

ILLINOIS, CISSNA PARK

**Darlene Walder
Cheryl Eisenmann**

We have just celebrated the birth of Jesus Christ and now we have joy in our hearts because of the relationship we have with the Father through Jesus. This gives us hope to press into the year ahead.

Bro. Bill and Sis. Wanda Maul and family have experienced grief over the loss of her mother. Her mother was Mildred Deck from Cissna Park.

Our visiting ministers this past month have been Bros. Bob Beebe (South Bend, IN), Randy Mogler (Washington, IL) and Marvin Steffen (North Ft. Myers, FL).

All-church Christmas caroling was December 5. It was a time of blessing for the giver and receiver.

Our Christmas program was December 22. Our children brought us the Christmas story. We thank our teachers and students for their willingness.

Bro. Melvin Stock had carpal tunnel surgery.

We wish God's guidance and direction to Donna Stock (Bro. Les and Sis. Arlene) and her husband, Kurt Mitchell, as they were married on December 4.

ILLINOIS, CONGERVILLE

**Ranae Dietrich
Glenna Rinkenberger**

"And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease."

Matthew 10:1

Note of Thanks:

We wish to express our love and sincere gratitude for all the cards, gifts, hospital visits, prayers and other acts of kindness for our daughter, Rebekah, during her illness. What a blessing your support and prayers were during the past months.

Bro. Clarence and Sis. Luann Zobrist and family

November 17 we were pleased to go to church on Wednesday night and have two visiting ministers, Bros. Ken Knapp (Taylor, MO) and Tom Stock (Cissna Park, IL). Bro. Tom was in the area on business and we were thankful he spent the evening with us and was spent for us.

On Thanksgiving Day, Bros. Don Gudeman (LaCrosse, IN) and Tim Zimmerman (Lamont - Gridley, KS) shared the pulpit and the Word. Special occasions are always enjoyed that bring visitors and family.

Bro. Gene Lehman (Wolcott, IN) was with us on December 5.

"Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

Job 42:6

Jay Hartman, son of Sis. Carrie Hartman, has turned from the world and is seeking a new life in the Lord. We rejoice with the Hartman family, as we were told of Jay's brother, convert Mike Hartman, has peace and is awaiting baptism on January 8.

Sis. Beth Zobrist (Bro. Clarence and Sis. Luann) is engaged to Bro. Brent Kellenberger (Bro. Randy and Sis. Karen) from Kansas City, MO. We pray that God's will be done in their lives as they live it as One in Him.

Our Sunday School program was enjoyed once more as the children told through verse and song of

God's plan fulfilled.

Before this is published, Y2K will have come to pass as all things do. We were questioned by one of our ministering brothers on this subject. We worry in a fleshly way if all our computers, etc. are compliant. But what about our hearts? Are they compliant with the Word?

ILLINOIS, ELGIN

**Peggy Heiniger
Norma Schambach**

Sis. Jenny Schambach (Bro. Ed) spent some time in the hospital due to surgery. We are thankful she is home and recovering.

Bro. Matt and Sis. Renee Schambach welcomed another son, Jacob Dylon, on December 3. Excited for a baby brother are Tyler and Katlin. Grandparents are Bro. Tom and Sis. Connie Schambach and Bro. Gary and Sis. Edie Anliker.

We again thank our visiting ministers who brought us the Living Word. They were Bros. Dan Koch (Tremont, IL), Greg Stieglitz (Indianapolis, IN) and Brad Gudeman (Bradford, IL).

ILLINOIS, EUREKA

Janet Zimmerman

Here we are again at the beginning of another new year — what does it contain for each of us? A deep feeling of rest and peace are given, knowing that all is in the Master's hands.

What great love the Saviour has for mankind! We are happy for Jill Blunier (Bro. Myron and Sis. Elaine) and Emily Fehr (Bro. Ken and Sis. Sandy) as they have begun their repentance. May God grant them grace to submit all to Him.

We rejoice with Lowell Stoller (Bro. Jim and Sis. Jane) and Matt Schmidgall (Bro. Mike and Sis. Kary) as they were announced as having peace with God and man.

May God be with them and meet their every need as they wait to give their testimony and are baptized.

We have four new babies to report this month. A precious baby boy, Jason Robert, was born to Bro. Chris and Sis. Marlene Leman December 10. Happy to have a little brother are Jarod, Rebecca, Miranda and Jonathan. Sis. Verna Wettstein and Bro. Bruce and Sis. Marge Leman are thankful grandparents.

Bro. Bill and Sis. Heidi Wettstein welcomed Molly Ann and Mitch William born on December 10. They join their big sister, Abbie, who is happy to have two babies to love. Grandparents are Bro. Art and Sis. Donna Wettstein and Bro. Sam and Sis. Pat Plattner of Goodfield.

God has blessed the home of Bro. Matt and Sis. Sara Zimmerman with a precious baby girl, Lena Laurene. Her big brothers are Kyle and Noah. Thankful grandparents are Bro. Leland (late Sis. Laurene) and Bro. Bill and Sis. Karen Ringger (Bradford, IL). Lena was born December 18, Grandpa Leland's birthday!

May God bless these dear families as they love and nurture their children in the fear of the Lord.

We rejoice with Sis. Erin Knobloch as she gave her testimony of faith and was baptized the weekend of November 21, at Lester, IA. We are glad to have Sis. Erin assembling with us as she goes to college. May God be with her always.

We appreciated our visiting ministers on Thanksgiving Day: Bro. Lenny Meyer (Chicago) and Bro. Craig Martin (Princeville). We also appreciated the visit of Bro. Neil Ramseyer (Bay City, MI). We thank each one and may God bless you.

We rejoice in the engagement of three young couples. Bro. Jake Wiegand (Dale and Sis. Freidora)

and Sis. T. Anne Rudin (Bro. Craig and Sis. Trudy) of Forrest announced their engagement on November 28.

Sis. Holly Feuchtenberger and Bro. Dan Bradle became engaged December 12. Their parents are Bro. Wallis and Sis. Diane Feuchtenberger (Morris, MN) and Bro. Roger and Sis. Ila Bradle. Sis. Denise Knecht and Bro. Tony Manz (Junction, OH) made their engagement known on December 12 also. Their parents are Elder Bro. Ervin and Sis. Sandy Knecht and Bro. Ken and Sis. Gwen Manz (Junction, OH). May His wisdom guide each of these dear couples as they make plans for their marriage.

Our hospital patients this month are Sis. Stephanie Martin (Bro. Bruce and Sis. Sheri), Bro. Jack Prather (Sis. Milly), Sis. Marilyn Nenadov (Bro. Paul), Sis. Dorothy Gandel, Sis. Fannie Wiegand, and Sis. Aldine Leman. Our prayers ascend to our Father's throne in behalf of those who are in need. We are thankful for His healing power on some and for His continued comfort for those whose suffering is so great. May God bless and be with each one.

We extend our sympathy to Sis. Vi Schweigert on the death of her sister, Sis. Bernice Frank, of Tremont.

Sunday evening, December 12, we gathered together for our annual Christmas program. What a joy it was to see and hear the true meaning of Christmas in word and song. May God bless each one for their efforts in bringing forth the wonderful Christmas message.

I WONDER

What does the future hold for me
In the mystical long eternity?

Shall I hear the Master say,
"Well done"

When the sands of time have finished the run?

Will I use my talents as I should
By shunning evil and seeking good?

Will some life be better because of me?

Will I a worthy example be?
Have I eased the burden of someone's worry

in a world of never-ending hurry?
Have I taken the time for the kindly deed

Or a word of courage in time of need?

What will my portion be at the end of strife

When the Angel opens the Book of Life?

What does the future hold for me
In the mystical long eternity?

Note of Thanks:

I would like to thank everyone for the many prayers, cards, gifts, food and visits that you have blessed me and my family with since my accident. It is humbling to receive such an outpouring of love. May God bless you for your thoughtfulness and kindness.

Bro. Philip Stoller

Reminder:

January is collection for the Silver Lining in Eureka. Address changes would be appreciated.

ILLINOIS, FAIRBURY Sally Fehr Joann Zehr

Dear Master, as the old year dieth soon,

Take Thou my harp,
And prove if anything be out of tune,
Or flat, or sharp!

Correct Thou, Lord, for me
What ringeth harsh to Thee,

That heart and life may sing, the
New year long,
Thy perfect song!
—Mountain Trailways for
Youth

So much emphasis is being placed on the new millennium this year as we near the year 2000. And yet...January 1, 2000 (if indeed it arrives) will be just another day. Another day to war against Satan and the flesh, another day to overcome self by the grace of God, another day to rejoice in God's goodness. None of us know what the New Year (or the new millennium) will hold (either in our individual lives or collectively), but He who tells us to "take no thought for the morrow" has promised to provide our every need. We can trust only in this.

Two young men will face the new year with new hope as they have made a beginning in repentance for their sins. We are very thankful for Barry Koehl (Bro. Dale and Sis. Lili) and Trevor Stoller (Bro. Randy and Sis. Ronda). Barry is currently attending the Remington, IN church. We wish them the grace of God.

We also rejoiced with our new brothers, Kyle Steidinger (Bro. Randy and Sis. Dawn) and Brent Young (Bro. Norman and Sis. Lollie) as they were proved and baptized on the weekend of November 27-28. Elder Bro. Dennis Warner (Lester, IA) assisted in this work.

Other ministering brothers who blessed us with their willingness to speak the Word have been: Bros. Galen Rokey (Bern, KS), Bill Gerst (Alto, MI), Jerry Wagenbach (Oakville, IA), and Glenn Riggensbach (Smithville, OH). We deeply appreciate your visits and invite you to return anytime.

First-time parents, Bro. James and Sis. Carrie Tate, were blessed with the arrival of Jonathan Mi-

chael on November 21. Jonathan's grandparents are Bro. Harlan and Sis. Jean Knapp (Forrest, IL) and Don and Marilyn Tate.

Landon Fehr welcomed little brother, Levi Joseph. Levi was born on November 24 to Bro. Anthony and Sis. Lila Fehr. Grandparents are Gene Schmidt (Winthrop, MN) and the late Sis. Ella Mae and Bro. Wayne and Sis. Norma Fehr.

Those with medical difficulties recently include Helen Rapp, Bro. Alf Steffen (Sis. Fannie) and Willard Walter (Arlene). May the Lord lay upon them His healing touch.

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints."

Psalm 116:15

Sis. Clara Broquard, 93, went to her eternal rest on December 19. Our prayers are with her family: sons, Bro. Donald (Sis. Ione), Bro. Wayne (Sis. Roberta, Forrest), and Bro. Duane (Sis. Carol, Bay City, MI); daughters, Sis. Suzanne Bahler (Elder Bro. Art), Sis. Elaine Wieland (Bro. Merle, Bay City, MI) and Carol (Clifford) Wieland, Syracuse, IN; 23 grandchildren; and 56 great-grandchildren. After a long and full life, Sis. Clara was granted that "sweet release" as God gently called her Home. We have been blessed by her example in our congregation.

Our sympathy and prayers are also with others who have lost loved ones recently: Charles (Arlene) Farley and family whose mother, Elizabeth, passed away; and Keith (Laurie) Schweigert, in the loss of Keith's father.

Note of Thanks:

Our heartfelt thanks to all for their prayers, cards, gifts and kind deeds during the illness and passing of our loved one. May God bless you.

The family of Bro. Ezra Steffen

ILLINOIS, FORREST

Jean Knapp Linda Anliker

This is the beginning of a New Day.

God has given me this day to use as I will.

I can waste it or grow in its light and be of service to others.

But what I do with this day is important because I have exchanged a day of my life for it.

When tomorrow comes, today will be gone forever.

I hope I will not regret the price I paid for it.

Day follows day and it seems like only yesterday we opened the calendar to January, 1999. Was each day well spent in service to the Lord or were some days perhaps wasted? Let us invigorate our efforts in God's service that we may be entire, lacking nothing.

Our young children relayed to us the story of our Savior's birth through the Sunday School program held December 15. May the seeds be planted in tender hearts during their years in Sunday School.

We are thankful to see the seeds of salvation come to life as many turn to the Lord in repentance. Corbin and Martin Anliker (Bro. Bob and Sis. Linda), Melodee and Paula Bachtold (Bro. Marvin and Sis. Mary), Trent Schmidgall (Bro. John and Sis. Janet), Tory Zimmerman (Bro. Wayne and Sis. Nancy), Heidi Rudin (Bro. Craig and Sis. Trudy), Wendy Dotterer (late Bro. Wendell and Sis. Kathy), Denise (Bro. Arlen) Leman, Jay and Jolene Mueller, Mark and Ruby Bolliger have heeded the call of our Saviour. May they grow in His light unto perfection.

Giving testimony of their faith

and making a covenant with God in the waters of baptism, were Bros. Joe Rudin (Bro. Craig and Sis. Trudy), Bryan and Shawn Aberle (Bro. Mark and Sis. Laverne), Nathan Bachman (Bro. Larry and Sis. Donna). In humbleness may they remain faithful to their high calling as servants for the Lord.

Two couples have reached a milestone in their lives as they celebrated 50 years of marriage. Bro. Leland and Sis. Marge Kuntz celebrated their golden anniversary on November 26 and Bro. Elmer and Sis. Rosetta Stoller on November 27. May the Lord continue to guide them as they walk this path of life.

As two couples celebrate 50 years of marriage, two couples are making plans to become husband and wife. Bro. Jake Wiegand (Dale and Sis. Freidora, Eureka, IL) and Sis. T. Anne Rudin (Bro. Craig and Sis. Trudy) are planning a January 30 wedding. Making May 20 wedding plans are Jayne Bahler (Jim and Rita, Fairbury, IL) and Kevin Eisenmann (Bro. John and Sis. Bev).

First-time parents, Earl and Krista Leman, welcome Collin Robert into their hearts and home. Grandparents are Steve Edwards (Forrest, IL) and Sharon Brydon (Forrest, IL) and Sis. Donna Leman. Collin shares his middle name with his grandfather, the late Bro. Robert Leman.

We are thankful for the many ministers visiting us this past month. Serving us from the pulpit were Elder Bros. Lavoyd Moore (Athens, AL), Art Bahler (Fairbury, IL), Andy Stoller (Smithville, OH), Wendell Gudeman (Francesville, IN) and Bros. Doug Grimm (Sabetha, KS), Bill Hodel (Roanoke, IL), Sid Kaufmann (Cissna Park, IL), Brian Waibel (Champaign, IL), John Stoller (Leo, IN), Trent Meiss (Eureka, IL), Dave Graf (Akron, OH), and Art Mueller (Belvidere,

IL).

“O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?”

I Corinthians 15:55

The sudden death of our Sis. Helen Leman has brought sorrow to her husband, Bro. Sid, and their children, Sis. Marge (Bro. Bob) Rumbold (Peoria, IL), Bro. Dale (Sis. Mary Ann) (Bloomington, IL), Sis. Susan (John) Stella (Gridley, IL), and Bro. Jerry (Sis. Kathy). We also extend our sympathy to siblings, Sis. Carol Bucher (Francesville, IN), Sis. Lorna Putt (Francesville, IN), George Erb (Ft. Wayne, IN), Neil Erb (Francesville, IN), Glenn Erb (Irvine, CA), Max Erb (Monon, IN).

Laying down his armor after battling a lengthy struggle with cancer and liver disease was our Bro. Wendell Dotterer. May the Lord provide the needs for those he leaves behind: his wife, Sis. Kathy, and seven children at home, Converts Lisa and Wendy, Sis. Shara, Alex, Wesley, Jenna and Evan. His parents, Bro. John and Sis. Betty (Smithville, OH), one sister, Marlene (Roy) Blackford (Hartford, OH), five brothers, Keith (Rittman, OH), Dale (Sis. Elaine), Bro. Dave (Sis. Luanna), Bro. Joe (Sis. Rose) (all from Smithville, OH) and Bro. Marvin (Sis. Nancy) also grieve his death. We pray for comfort and healing for these dear families as they feel the loss of their loved ones.

Those spending time in the hospital this month were Bro. Meredith Ricketts and Sis. Marian (Bro. Rich) Rieger. May God restore health and strength according to His will.

Notes of Thanks:

We wish to thank everyone for the kind deeds, cards, and gifts for our 50th anniversary. May God bless each one.

Bro. Leland and Sis. Marge Kuntz

We wish to thank everyone for all that was done for Bro. Art while he was in the hospital and since returning to Fairview Haven. Words cannot express our thankfulness for everything done for him. We pray that God will be with us each day and that we can accept His will, whatever it may be. Thank you.

Bro. Art and Sis. Velda Huette

We would like to thank everyone for all the cards, gifts, food, phone calls, prayers, help on the farm and at our home. We were overwhelmed by all that was done for us during Bro. Wendell's illness and since his death. Everything was greatly appreciated and we pray that God will richly bless you.

In Christian love,

Sis. Kathy Dotterer & family

Bro. John & Sis. Betty Dotterer & families,

Bro. Ivan & Sis. Kathryn Steidinger & families

I wish to thank you all for your prayers, cards and expressions of love and especially my family for all you did for me during and after my surgery. May God bless you all.

Helen Fehr

ILLINOIS, GOODFIELD Heather Hohulin

Our hearts ache for dear little Faith Weinzierl (granddaughter of Dave Knapp and Sis. Becky Knapp) as her brother, Evan, was taken from this life. Our thoughts and prayers continue to be with this family. May they feel the comfort that God provides.

Our thoughts and prayers are also with our dear Sis. Shirley Debolt. She is in our Eureka nursing home and is having a lot of pain. We hope she can feel God's Spirit of peace and comfort, as well as the

prayers of her brothers and sisters.

We were excited to hear the wedding engagement of Sis. Jodi Hohulin (Bro. Wes and Sis. Joyce) to Bro. Eric Strassheim (Bro. Dale and Sis. Carol) of Bloomington. May God bless them as they plan a wedding, and more importantly, the rest of their lives together.

November 29 was the wedding day of Shannon Rocke (Bro. Steve and Audrey) and Christy Brady (Rita and Greg Church of Eureka and Steve and Laurie Brady of Bloomington/Normal). May God richly bless them in their new walk together.

December 12 was the day Bro. Ryan Knapp (Bro. Jon and Sis. Pat) and Sis. Elizabeth Schieber (Bro. Mike and Sis. Mary) of Congerville were joined as one. We also wish them God's richest blessings.

Our dear Sis. Florence Bauman won her earthly battle. Our sympathy goes to her family. She was such an example of a faithful servant.

The weekend of December 18-19 we heard the testimonies of faith, and witnessed baptisms of Sis. Jennifer Wiegand (Bro. Larry and Sis. Lori) and Sis. Joy Wiegand (Bro. Wayne and Sis. Rosemary). How uplifting to see lost souls turn to Jesus in true repentance. May the Holy Spirit continue to fill their hearts with peace as they (and all of us) battle Satan and strive towards Heaven.

We think of Sis. Brenda Hinrichsen as she had surgery and is recuperating at home. We hope she can feel God's healing hand.

Visiting ministers this last month were Bros. Don Manz, Tom Bolliger, Jeff Thames, Mark Streitmatter, Frederick Knapp, Mike Rinkenberger, Darren Plattner and Elder Bro. Ervin Knecht. We thank you for serving our congregation. May God bless you.

ILLINOIS, GRIDLEY

Perry A. Klopfenstein

As we enter the year 2000, we are a blessed people. We have far more than we need in a material sense. We should be content, and give God all the praise and glory.

The Bible teaches: "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life..." (Psalm 23:6). Each of us as believers can confirm we have been beneficiaries of much goodness and mercy each day as we serve God. Truly, there is no joyous life outside our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

On December 12, our Sunday School children presented a Christmas program to the church. More than 130 youngsters did their best to give the season's message, both verbally and in song.

On November 26, Bro. Jeff and Sis. Cindy Stoller became the parents of their second child, Faith Lynn. She has a brother, Jeremiah, age 1. Grandparents are Bro. Joe and Sis. Karen Stoller and Bro. Gary and Sis. Elna Wettstein (Eureka, IL).

Karly Daniele Pannier was born on October 23 to Daniel and Karin (Kiefer) Pannier. She has a sister, Kaitlyn, 7. Grandparents are Bro. Larry and Sis. Barb Kiefer, Gridley; Don and Robyn Pannier, Benson; and Dale and Connie Fletcher, El Paso.

Bro. John Butikofer was announced for marriage to Sis. Andrea Denes (Detroit, MI). His parents are Bro. Bill and Sis. Norma Butikofer (Gridley, IL) and she is the daughter of Sis. Kosana Denes (Detroit, MI) and the late Bro. Frank Denes, who passed away in July of this year.

Visiting ministers were Bros. Robert Miller (Portland, OR), Ron Bollier (Indianapolis, IN), Brace Wieland (Leo, IN) and Tim Hohulin (Roanoke, IL).

Those hospitalized were Sis. Mary Stoller and Elaine Stoller.

Our sympathies are extended to Sis. Sue Stella over the loss of her mother, Sis. Helen Leman, of Forrest.

Willis and Sis. Joan Aupperle observed their 50th wedding anniversary.

ILLINOIS, MORTON

Phyllis Farney

Cheryl Wuthrich

Sis. Mary Ann Gorsage died on November 20 at the age of 96. May the Lord comfort her family; one stepson, Robert Gorsage; five step-grandchildren; five step-great-grandchildren; and many nieces and nephews.

Bro. Vernon Kaiser was called Home on December 4. May the Lord's presence be felt by his beloved family; his wife, Sis. Anna; his son, Gerry Kaiser; his daughter, Sis. Karen Kaiser; his two brothers, Bro. Orman and Bro. Harold; his three sisters, Elma Rinkenberger, Beulah Muehling, and Anna Sommer; and his two grandchildren.

Sis. Olga Frintz died on December 12 at the age of 94. May the Lord comfort and bless her son, Donald; her daughter, Mary Kaufmann; her 7 grandchildren and her 14 great-grandchildren.

We would like to report that Alvin Haerr, of Peoria, the brother of our Sis. Virginia Hunziker, passed away on November 17. May the Lord comfort his wife, Donna; his two daughters, Debra Victor and Diana Kohn; his two sons, Mark and Eric; and his siblings, brothers Louis and Donald; and his other sister, Norma Welch. He had four grandchildren.

As the old pillars of the church pass on, the Lord renews us by allowing other souls to turn to Him. We rejoiced as we heard the testimonies and witnessed the baptisms of three young ladies on December 4-5. They were Sis.

Laura Mott (Bro. Dennis and Sis. Beth), Sis. Heidi Knobloch (Bro. John and Sis. Cheryl) and Sis. Amanda Zimmerman (Bro. Mike and Sis. Sue).

After the wonderful day of baptisms on December 5, the evening brought more joy. The Sunday School presented their annual Christmas Program. It was a time to reflect on our Saviour's birth as we were again told the old story in song and verse.

On December 12 the annual church Christmas caroling took place. This was again a time when the young and old could all join together in an activity. What a strengthening to our church family.

We would like to thank Elder Bro. Charles Sauder and Bros. Greg Rassi and Glen Funk and their families for their visits this past month. We appreciate the visiting ministers and thank the Lord for them and the effort they put forth.

Note of Thanks:

Words cannot express our appreciation for the prayers, cards and gifts given during the illness and death of our dear husband and father and grandfather. Also the many memorials given. May God bless each one of you.

The Family of Bro. Vernon Kaiser

ILLINOIS, PEORIA

Peter and Mabel Weber

November 21 was a special day...it was the Sabbath and wedding day of Sis. Marla Knobloch and Bro. Andy Hodel (Bloomington, IL), with many visitors and Elder Bros. Earl Ringger (Gridley, IL), Everett Hari (Bloomington, IL), Bros. Dave Marquart, Kent Heimer (Taylor, MO), Ron Heiniger and Dennis Kaufmann (Bloomington, IL). When are we

the happiest? When we take faith in God and serve Him. The price of salvation isn't getting any better, so don't wait any longer (Bro. Dave Marquart). Elder Bro. Earl mentioned that the Lord thinks about us all the time, has a map for our lives laid out with an expected end and we have to be willing to follow it with commitment and all our heart. Bro. Ken Hoerr meditated on I Cor. 13. Love has three characteristics: it is kind (with deposits of love and kindness and withdrawals of harsh and angry words); not easily provoked (touchy, irritable) and with toughness around our spiritual heart; never fails but needing commitment and perseverance as long as we live. Vows are easy in good times. Be one in Christ and be together in Christ. Faith and hope are the foundation out of which love is born.

Bro. Ken Ober and Sis. Stephanie Pflederer were married the same Sunday in Tremont, IL and we wish both couples the blessings of the Lord in their married lives.

Elder Bros. Chuck Hemmer and Roy Grimm (Taylor, MO) were able to add seven converts to the small church of Ixtlan, Mexico, during their last trip (November 18-22), share Communion with the 26 members and join a brother from the sister church of Argentina to the membership.

The last Thanksgiving service of this century reminded us to be thankful for His shed blood; having peace with God, our Creator, for the hope of eternal life and the Holy Spirit to guide us. In ten years a lot of things don't matter any more, but it will matter how we praise the Lord. Remember what He has done and cast your cares upon Him, for He cares. We are not a thankful nation, but we must be a thankful congregation and a very thankful individual (Bro. Dave Obergefel 11/15/99).

"The Meaning of Christmas" —

We should not stay at Bethlehem but go with Christ to Calvary. What evidence do we need that the Babe of Bethlehem was the promised Messiah according to Zech. 9:9? Many prophecies were fulfilled and He did many miracles. God left enough room for doubt to leave room for faith. When we are in a glorified state, we will see the Babe of Bethlehem in His glory, face to face. God reserved for Himself to wipe away the tears from our eyes. Do we believe the Christmas story? God gave us all the evidence we need, fulfilled the Scriptures and...the lame walk, the deaf hear, the dead are raised. Jesus knew the glory which will be ours and went to the cross so we can share His glory and fulfill His mission. The centurion recognized Him at the foot of the cross. Let's remember the true meaning of Christmas: He came to die for us! Are you ready to be taken, or will you be left standing at the mill? May He mold us into creatures of faith so we will not be left behind. Thanks, Bro. Tim Hohulin (Roanoke, IL), for your visit on December 1 for our family night service.

Grant Conrad, born November 21 to Bro. Frank and Sis. Jill Gutwein, joined Calen, Maggie and Avery and we extend hearty congratulations to his happy parents, grandparents, Bro. Herb and Sis. Nancy Stoller and Bro. Art and Sis. Mary Gramm (Leo, IN and North Ft. Myers, FL) and great-grandparents, Bro. John and Sis. Margaret Tanner (formerly of Bradford, IL, now at a Skylines duplex and attending Peoria church) and Sis. Martha Stoller (Gridley, IL).

Hospital patients were Don Geff, Bros. Jim Hoerr, Bob Plattner, Rolland Scholl and Sisters MaryLu Bowald, Mary Dreyer, Lucille Herman, Dorothea Kieser and Lillian Stahl.

Sisters Helen Leman (83) of Fairbury, IL (mother of Sis. Marjo-

rie Rumbold), Emily Simon (89), Anna Siebenthal (93) and Elsie Stickling (79) passed away this month and we express our deep sympathy to their families. Bro. Jim Hoerr conducted funeral home services for Anna Gerber on December 16. She was a daughter of Bro. Jake Schaer and we convey our condolences to her family.

Bro. Gene and Sis. Velma Kellenberger moved to the Washington Congregate Living condos and we wish them well in their new environment. Bro. Kirk Wagenbach (Oakville, IA) is attending the Peoria School of Medicine and we welcome him in our midst.

As we progress through life, we redefine our assessment of "Old Age". According to Numbers 14:29, twenty was the age of accountability; today it is a lot younger. Many young converts are given the opportunity to grow in Christ by attending the bimonthly sessions "Feeding on the Word", taught by Bros. Ken Hoerr and Dave Obergefel. They cover lessons from "Beginning our Christian Life" to "The Goal" and nurture the spiritual understanding towards "Showing ourselves approved by God." We thank these brothers for their dedication to this cause and trust their teachings will become a permanent repertoire of our young converts.

Congratulations to Sis. Renee Waibel (Bro. Dan and Sis. Karen) and Bro. Shane Robinson (Leon and Ellen/Bro. Ed and Sis. Bernie Meister) on their engagement, announced December 12.

The all-church Christmas caroling gladdened many private and nursing home residents on December 12. It was concluded with a meal at the Fellowship Hall and song presentation by the Young Group.

We thank Bro. Richard Sutter (Ft. Lauderdale, FL) for his minis-

try on December 19 (James 1 - We worship in vain if we don't worship from the heart). Bro. Jaye Rinkenberger (Goodfield, IL) and many guests were present in the afternoon for the wedding of Sis. Heidi Schmidgall to Bro. Steven LaFont. (Hebrews 12:1-3 - Look to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; Eph. 5:31-33 - One + one equals one in Jesus.) Bro. Jaye stressed balance, integrity, kindness and to erase all errors we make each day. Elder Bro. Chuck Hemmer read I Cor. 13:4-8, love and prayer are the essential ingredients for marriage. Fill your lives with love and bring them together with prayer. We wish them the rich blessings of God for their life together.

At this writing (12/20), possible computer glitches are getting increased press, but when you read this (ca 1/14/00), we will be proof there is life after Y2K and we trust you will have made a good beginning of the third millennium.

ILLINOIS, PRINCEVILLE Sheryl Martin

"Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth. The Lord of Hosts is with us: the God of Jacob is our refuge."

Psalm 46:10-11

As another year is dawning and we know not what the future may hold, let us always remember that God is our refuge and our strength.

On November 18, Bro. Brent and Sis. Debbie Graham are rejoicing in the birth of a daughter, Ellie Lauren. Her brother, Tanner, welcomes her home. Thankful grandparents are Bro. Richard and Sis. Jeanette Graham and Bro. Lyle and Sis. Betty Stahl. May the love of God dwell in their home as they raise their family.

A daughter, Cherelle Leora, was born to Bro. Matthew and Sis. Deanna Steffen on November 19. Her siblings, Myca, Quinn, Olivia, Paige and Ethan, welcome her home. Thankful grandparents are Elder Bro. Aaron and Sis. Loretta Steffen (Alto, MI) and Bro. Howard and Sis. Mary Ann Herrmann. May this family keep their trust and faith in God as they raise their children.

Bro. Rodney and Sis. Cathy Stahl are thankful as a daughter, Kami Beth, was born on November 24. Her sisters and brother, Kelsie, Kendall, Kristi, Kaylie and Kourtney, welcome her home. Also rejoicing are grandparents, Bro. Lyle and Sis. Betty Stahl and Jan Hoehn. May they feel the blessing of God as they teach their children the truth and righteousness of His ways.

May the love of God continue to reign in the hearts of first-time parents, Bro. Perry and Sis. Krista Kieser, as a daughter, Allison Nicole, was born to them on December 1. Thankful grandparents are Bro. Verle and Sis. Vonnie Kieser (Bradford, IL) and Bro. Bob and Arlene Scholl. May God grant this couple His strength and grace as they look to Him for guidance and direction.

Believing that God has brought them together in faith, Bro. Weston Stahl (Bradford, IL) and Sis. Jill Herrmann were married on November 28. Weston is the son of Sis. Charlotte Stahl and Dean Stahl and Jill is the daughter of Bro. Howard and Sis. Mary Ann Herrmann. May their home be built upon the Solid Rock as they begin their future together.

May Sis. Lillian Stahl and Sis. Clara Marie Gerber feel the healing hand of God as they were sick this past month.

We lay the body in its tomb
Until the Lord's voice bids him

"Come."

We sow the seed to rise a new,
And glorified, his God to view.

So now, redeemed one, sleep and
rest!

Homeward we turn to do our
best,
That we in joy and trembling be
Made ready for eternity.

Zion's Harp #248

Our dear Sis. Anna Siebenthal has passed from life to eternity on December 14. We wish to express our love and sympathy to her family, Sis. Martha Jane, Bro. Eugene (Sis. Kay), Kenny and the entire Siebenthal - Kieser family in the passing of their loved one. May the comfort and peace of the Holy Spirit fill the void in their life as their loved one is taken from their home.

Another Year is Dawning

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 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.

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

Hymns of Zion #150

ILLINOIS, ROANOKE

**Linda Hodel
Boni Stoller**

"And he gave some, apostles;
and some, prophets; and some
evangelists; and some, pastors and
teachers;

For the perfecting of the saints,
for the work of the ministry, for the
edifying of the body of Christ."

Ephesians 4:11-12

We appreciate so much our visiting ministers who willingly allowed God to use them in our behalf. Visiting us this month were Elder Bro. Wes Knapp and Bros. Gary Maibach, Kent Heimer, Randy Mogler, Don Braker and Jaye Rinkenberger. May God bless you and we welcome you back any time.

We have been blessed and uplifted with several baptisms this month. On November 20 and 21 we heard the testimonies and witnessed the baptism of Bro. Jeff and Sis. Jodie Sauder and Bro. Kevin Braker (Sis. Janice). Then again on December 4 and 5, Sis. Katie Hodel (Bro. Steve and Sis. Joyce) and Sis. Lisa Sauder (Bro. Bob and Sis. Jan) gave their testimonies and were baptized. We welcome these dear brothers and sisters and pray God will continue to guide them on their way.

Babies are so precious; new and fresh from the hand of God. Congratulations to Bro. Rol and Sis. Carol Rumbold on the birth of their first grandchild. Little Kaylynn Mae Schlipf made her entrance on November 20. She is the daughter of Bro. Jason and Sis. Jamie Schlipf.

Justin, Jordan and Jacob Fehr are happy to have another little brother to play with. Joel Benjamin was born on November 18 to John and Jill Fehr. Joyful grandparents are Bro. Ben Sr. and Sis. Helen

Fehr and Steve and Sally Onnen.

We pray God's blessings on Bro. Bob Zimmerman and Sis. Kathy Streitmatter as they believe the Lord has led them together and announced their engagement. Bro. Bob L. and Sis. Madlyn Zimmerman and Bro. Floren and Sis. Twyla Streitmatter (Princeville, IL) are their parents. They have set January 16 as their wedding date. May God bless them with harmony as their two paths become one.

We are sorry that several of our loved ones have had to spend time in the hospital. They are: Sis. Sandy Leman, Sis. Winnie Martin, Sis. Helen Zimmerman, little Noah Eckman (Troy and Jennifer) and Kelsey Sauder (Bro. Steve and Sis. Margie). The little Haitian boy, Willie Fortune, who has been staying with Bro. Dennis and Sis. Mary Beth Zimmerman has been having a very difficult recovery and is still in the hospital. We hope these loved ones can feel God's nearness and our prayers and will soon be feeling much better.

On November 21 many of us were able to enjoy an evening of singing and fellowship at our annual Thanksgiving singing. What a wonderful way to thank and praise our God.

December 3 was the date for our annual food drive. We have so much, surely it is good to share with those less fortunate. Thanks to all those who donated food and gave time to package and transport.

We spent a very blessed evening December 5 when a large group of brothers presented a special program of song and praise. Thank you for your efforts, Brothers.

It is such a joy to see and hear our precious children present the story of Jesus' birth. Their enthusiasm is so apparent and is passed on to all of us. Christ the Saviour is born!

Note of Thanks:

Mitch and Cara Manning wish

to thank all: family, friends, church sisters and brothers and anyone who thought or prayed for us during the loss of our three children, Casey, Codey and China. Our tragedy was felt across the world and expressed through cards, letters, pictures, angels, meals, flowers and many donations.

Your personal touch in our lives has helped us take little steps forward on our road to being with our three angels.

Believers in the Lord are made a promise by God to see loved ones in Heaven. All God's children go to be with our Lord above. That promise and all of you out there, keep Mitch and myself on the path of healing.

Special thanks to family and friends who flew us to Illinois for a change of scenery and all the special treatment we received, and Apostolic Christian Church for your many large contributions, for the benefit of our children. I do apologize if we have left out anyone because you all mean so much to Mitch and I. Due to our horrible loss, we don't remember who was all there for us, or all that was done, but we want you to know it has not gone unnoticed.

May God bless all of you.

Mitch and Cara Manning

ILLINOIS, TREMONT

Barb Dill

Barb Kaeb

We received much "food for thought" through the efforts of our visiting ministers. Visiting us were Bros. Clark Stoller (Gridley, IL), Richard Plattner (Peoria, IL), Dennis Rassi (Fairbury, IL), Greg Rassi (Chicago, IL) and John Steiner (Oakville, IA). We heartily thank them for their labors of love.

Our Sis. Stephanie Pfloderer (Bro. Steve and Sis. Barb) and Bro. Kenny Ober (Bro. Ken and Sis. Pam) of Peoria, IL were united in marriage on November 21. Kurt

Wagenbach (Si and Sis. Lavonne) and Krissy Croxton were married December 4. It is our prayer that God will be near and bless these couples as they go through life together.

Sis. Bernice Frank was called "Home" to be with her Heavenly Father on December 9. We extend our deepest sympathy to her daughters, Mary Lou (Al) Nimmo and Maizie (Bill) Hopkins, and son, Timm (Jeanise). She is also survived by her sisters, Sis. Viola Schweigert (Eureka, IL), Sis. Vera (Bro. Walter) Aberle (Morton, IL), Sis. Matilda Koch, Eunice (Harold) Rowell, and one brother, Bro. Chris (Sis. Ida) Schweigert, all of Tremont. We also remember her grandchildren and great-grandchildren who will miss their dear grandmother.

We think of Sis. Berniece Joos who recently spent time in the hospital. Our prayer is God will continue to be near her and all that are sick or shut in.

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

Psalms 127:3

Bro. Mike and Sis. Michelle Oswald welcome Leah Elizabeth born November 22. Jeremy, Caleb and Hannah are excited to have a baby sister. Grandparents are Bro. Marshall and Sis. Phyllis Holmes and Don and Marcelle Oswald.

Adam and Katie Reinbech welcome a new little girl, Rebecca Lynn, born November 27. Her sister, Rachel, and grandparents, Bro. Larry and Sis. Barb Reinbech and Paul and Cherie Strobe, welcome her.

Bro. Greg and Sis. Julie Blunier are parents of Isaac Nathanael born November 27. Isaac is welcomed by brothers, Luke, Judah and Ethan, and a sister, Sarah. Grandparents are Bro. Nick and

Sis. Jean Ricketts (Forrest, IL) and Wayne and Sis. Marjorie Blunier (Roanoke, IL).

First-time parents are Nathan and Jennifer Fuller who had a little girl, Alayna Lynn, born November 29. Happy grandparents are Bro. Fred and Sis. Jeanette Beutel and Dave and Jackie Fuller.

Bro. Darrel and Sis. Brenda Ehnle are parents of a girl, Vanessa Lynn, born December 7. Her brother, Cameron, and grandparents, Bro. Nelson and Sis. Kathy Rocke and Bro. Ed and Sis. Verla Ehnle (Bradford, IL) welcome her.

John and Misty Sauder are excited to have a little girl, Meadow Lake, born December 15. She joins sisters, Willow, Echo, and brother, Talon. Thankful grandparents are Elder Bro. Charles and Sis. Miriam Sauder and Jim and Shirley Green.

ILLINOIS, WASHINGTON

Denise Romersberger

Sue Ruppert

"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 7:14

The word "Immanuel" means "God is with us". God came to earth to be with man. His coming was promised and anticipated for so long. He came as a baby, grew to manhood, and died for our sins. Then He rose from the grave, a victor over death and sin, and returned to His throne in Heaven. But God is with us still. He resides in our hearts always. His Holy Spirit is with us to guide and to comfort. Long after the Christmas season is over, God is with us. He is always there at the point of our need. How grateful we must be for His presence, His love and His grace.

The Washington congregation

said farewell to our dear Sis. Emily Simon on December 12, when the Lord took her Home to be with Him. Our sympathies are with Sis. Martha and Sis. Edna and the rest of the family. Sis. Emily will be missed by all who knew her, but we are grateful for the assurance of her heavenly reward.

Sis. Lorraine Wiegand was hospitalized this month, and is now at home recuperating. Sis. Sue Ruppert continues to convalesce at home with an extended illness. May God continue to lift up and comfort these sisters and others who may be experiencing physical ailments.

The Sunday School children presented the Christmas story to appreciative parents, aunts, uncles and friends on Wednesday, December, 15. It is always good to be reminded of the old, old story, and of the childlike faith needed to receive the blessing of the Lord. Thank you to the children, their parents, the Sunday School teachers, and others who put such efforts into presenting this program.

The Washington congregation gathered on Sunday, December 12, for Christmas caroling. Blessings were received not only by those who were sung to, but by the singers as well. In addition, carolers visited the Galesburg and Canton prison to minister to the men in those facilities. It is always good at this time of year to be reminded of the need to reach out to those around us in the spirit of the season; that is the love of God.

Visiting ministers this month were Elder Bro. Phil Stettner (Bluffton, IN), Bro. Randy Kellenberger (Kansas City, MO), and Bro. Doug Wagenbach (San Diego, CA). Thank you, brothers, for sharing with us. God bless you for your efforts.

Note of Thanks:

We wish to thank our church

family for their continued support to Sue in the midst of her physical difficulties. So many people have lent themselves through staying at the house, bringing in food, sending cards, or calling on the telephone. We thank you most of all for the prayers said on our behalf and the many expressions of support you have given us. Though physical recovery is a slow process, we are uplifted every day by the love of our brothers and sisters. God bless you all!

Sis. Sue Ruppert and Sis. Denise Romersberger

INDIANA, BLUFFTON
Catrina Rinkenberger
Beth Aschliman

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

Luke 9:23

We have seven young people that have taken up their cross and chosen to follow Him. They are Rachelle Reimschisel (Bro. Todd and Sis. Lori), Clint Gerber (Bro. Keith and Sis. Kay), Byran Gerber (Bro. Leon and Sis. Pat), Amy Fiechter (Bro. Mike and Sis. Shari), Bethany Neuenschwander (Bro. Terry and Sis. Jean), Andy Bertsch (Bro. Jim and Sis. Christie) and Justin Imel (Bro. Dave and Sis. Sharon). We rejoice with each one of these converts and pray they will feel God's grace as they live for Him.

The engagement of Bro. Nathan Isch and Sis. Leslie Stoller was made known on November 28. Nathan's parents are Bro. Barry and Sis. Imogene Isch and Leslie's parents are Bro. Gary and Sis. Nancy Stoller (Bluffton North). Also making their engagement known was Bro. Eric Tonner and Sis. Lanae Reinhard. Bro. Eric and Sis. Ronda Tonner and Bro. Kenny and Sis.

Ann Reinhard are their parents. May God continue to guide them as they prepare for their special day.

December 5 was a special day for Bro. Darin Laukhuf and Sis. Erin Kipfer as they were joined together as one. May God be in the center of their married life together and be the one they look to.

God has blessed the lives of Bro. John and Sis. Irene Neuenschwander as they celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. We congratulate this special couple and may they have many more years together.

Bro. Bill and Sis. Heide Carrico were blessed with a precious baby boy on September 25. They have named him Joel William. Big brother, Caleb, as well as grandparents, Bro. Lyle and Sis. Connie Kaehr, are sure excited to have him, too! Bro. John and Sis. Juli Kaehr are the parents of a darling daughter, Abigail Maria. She was born November 20. Abigail's siblings are Sis. Sarah, Jesse, Hannah, Lydia, Esther, Samuel and Luke. Grandparents are Sis. Pat Kaehr and Bro. Ken and Sis. Carolyn Isch. May God bless both of these families as they are raising their little ones for Him.

We ask God's healing hand on those who have been in the hospital this past month. They are Bro. Ralph Schwartz (Sis. Leona), Sis. Leona Schwartz (Bro. Ralph), Bro. Curt Tonner (Sis. Jeanette), Sis. Marcene Gilliom (Bro. Dave), Bro. Gerald Feichter (Sis. Eunice), Bro. Don Gerber (Sis. Mary), Bro. Bill Gerber (Sis. Carolyn) and Galen (Dean) Gerber who has now been moved into healthcare.

A huge thank you goes out to our visiting ministers as they so willingly gave of themselves. They were Bros. Jim Ramseyer (Sis. Marlene, Bay City, MI), John Laukhuf (Sis. Marcia, Latty, OH), Dave Sinn (Sis. Joleen, Ft. Scott, KS) and Bill Waibel (Sis. Carol, Bay

City, MI).

We say goodbye to Bro. Michael and Sis. Tammy Gerber as they move out to Colorado and will be worshipping at the Denver church.

**INDIANA
BLUFFTON NORTH
Rhonda Maller
Ann Meyer**

"In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me."

Psalm 56:11

We are very thankful to have Jesse Frauhiger (Bro. Steve and Sis. Irene) make a decision to put his trust in God. The Spirit is truly calling in the Bluffton area and many souls are coming to the Lord in repentance. For the combined singings we have each weekend in Bluffton/Bluffton North, we need to squeeze way over a hundred into a basement. This is exciting for our churches, but sometimes our young members are given a hard time at school. It's not always easy to be ridiculed for your faith, so please pray that they can put their trust in God and not be afraid of what man can do.

Trusting that it is the Lord's will for their lives, Sis. Leslie Stoller (Bro. Gary and Sis. Nancy) and Bro. Nathan Isch (Bro. Barry and Sis. Imogene, Bluffton) announced their engagement. We wish them much happiness as they make plans for their new life together.

There are times in our lives when all is wonderful and we wish we could freeze those days to make them last. Then there are those days in the valley when fears arise and illness strikes. These are the times when we can say, "I need the prayers of those I love". Needing our prayers are Sis. Deanna Brinneman (Bro. Dave) and Sis. Becky Bertsch (Bro. Lonnie) who

were just diagnosed with illnesses. Those that had surgery or were hospitalized this month were Bro. Dale Gerber (Sis. Carol), Sis. Rosemary Mounsey (Bro. Rod), Bro. Eugene Maller (Sis. Delores), Bro. Mick Culp (Sis. Coleen) and Sis. Rochelle (Bro. Rod) Gerber. Sis. Bethany Maller (Bro. Ed and Sis. Rhonda) is recovering from her surgery a few months ago. May we still remember Sis. Clarice Isch (Bro. Harry) as she continues her treatments.

As we start this New Year, a new millennium, we can't help but wonder...is this the time for Christ's return? Let's keep looking to Jesus!

**INDIANA
FRANCESVILLE
Lily Pelsy**

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

Philippians 4:19

We express sympathy to Sis. Lorna Putt and Carol Bucher as their sister, Sis. Helen Leman (Forest, IL), went to her reward.

May God comfort Bro. Virgil Von Tobel (Sis. Viola) in the passing of his brother, Paul.

To be brethren of our Lord Jesus is a sobering position. We thank Elder Bro. Alfred Bahler (Wolcott, IN) for assisting with Holy Communion. We are grateful that Elder Bro. Curt Frank (LaCrosse, IN) came to read the Memorandum. Thanks also to Bros. Steve Ringger (Bluffton North, IN) and Neil Widmer (Wolcott, IN) for sharing the Word with us.

We are glad that minor surgeries of two children went well. They were Courtney Wuethrich (Bro. David and Sis. Mim) and Erik-Andres Neilsen (converts Lars and Janice). Our Sis. Mil Clauss (Bro. Bob) had a brief hospi-

talization.

We are happy for our loved ones who have felt God's will. These couples have announced their engagements: Bro. Luke Gutwein (Sis. Donna) to Sis. Jenny Bahler (Bro. Ed and Sis. Annette, Remington, IN); Sis. Tonya Huber (Bro. Chris and Sis. Sharon) to Bro. Jeremy Schieler (Bro. Darl and Sis. Cindy, Bloomington, IL); Chariti Wuethrich (Bro. Rick and Sis. Judy) to Rick Gilchrist of Lafayette.

We sincerely welcome Bro. Linc and Sis. Catrina Rinkenberger and their children from Bluffton who are making their home here.

**INDIANA
INDIANAPOLIS
Gail Bradford
Lauretta Schafer**

"And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

II Corinthians 12:9

We ask God's healing mercies to be with our Sis. Kathy Lee as she recovers from back surgery.

There are new faces in our Indy congregation. We welcome Bro. Bert and Sis. Karen Aeschliman from Bluffton North to our congregation. Also, it is with joy that we welcome the first child of Bryan and Sis. Jenny Cook, Olivia Kathryn, born November 3. Grandparents are Herb and Sis. Susan Cook (Francesville, IN) and Rick and Patty Cornforth (Indianapolis).

Bro. Bruce and Sis. Lauretta Schafer are glad to welcome their first granddaughter, Madeline Marie Schafer was born December 2 to Alan and Katie Schafer (Minneapo-

lis, MN). Sis. Marie Schafer (Peoria, IL) is the maternal great-grandmother.

Our little Indianapolis congregation had the special privilege of hosting the World Relief Committee Meeting December 3-5. It was enlightening and encouraging to know that our donations are greatly needed and wisely administered. There are many people in this world who have no promise for daily bread and yet are so grateful for Godly salvation. Give all you can and then some. God will bless you for giving from the heart.

Visiting ministers have been Elder Bros. Alfred Bahler (Sis. Frances, Wolcott, IN), Phil Stettner (Sis. Maureen, Bluffton North, IN), Roy Grimm (Sis. Dona, Taylor, MO), Ron Messner (Sis. Pam, Washington, IL), John Lehman (Sabetha, KS), Jon Kokanovich (Phoenix, AZ), Marvin Leman (Sis. Jane, Bradford, IL) and Bros. Jaye Rinkenberger (Sis. Peg, Goodfield, IL), Jeff Grimm (Sis. Ruth, Goodfield, IL), Jerry Bauman (Sis. Martha, Rittman, OH), Arnold Gerst (Sis. Marge, Taylor, MO), Kent Heimer (Taylor, MO), Roger Sauder (Sis. Judy, Ft. Lauderdale, FL).

It was announced that our friend, Wayne Anliker (Sis. Dawn), has peace and is ready to give his testimony and be baptized. Our hearts rejoice with him and Sis. Dawn and their children, Tyler and Danielle.

Our Sunday School presented the blessed Christmas story and had the privilege of singing Christmas carols to families in the community.

Now that the year 2000 is here, may we realize even more that Jesus is coming soon. Are you ready?

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he

doth judge and make war...And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean...And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

Revelation 19:11,14,16

INDIANA, LACROSSE

Anna Marie Stoller

Word has reached us that Sis. Grace Heinold (Bro. Aaron) has been admitted to the hospital. Sis. Grace has felt ill for several weeks, and the prayers of the brethren arise for her and Bro. Aaron during this trying time.

Sis. Lucille Heiniger is back in her home after a time in the hospital and a recovery period at her daughter's home.

Two sisters graduated recently from college. Sis. Diana Heinold received a degree from the University of Indianapolis and Sis. Julie Roche (Bro. Brad) achieved her diploma from Purdue.

The annual Christmas program was held. Each of our Sunday School students told of the events surrounding the Christmas season and many beautiful carols were sung. By the end of the day, one of those dear students had taken the lessons of the day seriously enough to seek her Saviour. Turning to God in tearful and humble repentance is Jessica Feller (Bro. Joe and Sis. Jackie). Tonight Jessica stands around the piano singing praises to the Lord with other sisters from the single group, and our hearts rejoice with her.

The following poem was submitted by Bro. Ed Frank in memory of his wife, Sis. Lea. The words were written by their granddaughter.

"In the Cemetery"

Walking through the cemetery
finding the stone cold grave

of the one I loved so dear.

My heart...
Empty,
Sad,
Lost with the thought.

With shaking hands
I place a beautiful rose with pedals soft as silk
in front of the grave.
With all of my love.

Standing there...
A cool breeze flowing through my hair,
memories rushing through my head,
and floods of tears streaming down my face,
as I think of you.

As I stand there alone
everything seems so peaceful
the crisp air smells so sweet,
and the birds singing sounds like music to my ears.

Knowing how the angels
must sound as they sing joyfully to you in heaven.

With the taste of salty tear drops on my lips,
reminds me of the times we would sit and eat popcorn together.
All of these memories I still hold so dear deep in my heart.

With the selfish thought of why?
Why did it have to be you?
Even though I know everything happens for a reason.

Someday I know I will see you again,
this thought comforts me.
And as I stand with sorrow and pain

inside me here, I know there will
be
No tears up there.

**INDIANA, LEO
Ethelyn Schlatter**

"Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all."

I Chronicles 29:11

Bro. Wayne Laubscher (Cissna Park, IL) read David's prayer of Thanksgiving from this chapter and exhorted us to be thankful. We appreciated his and Sis. Gloria's visit.

Thanksgiving Day brought no guest ministers, but all our local ministers were home and we were thankful, as Bro. John Stoller blessed us with God's message. We were also blessed and greatly encouraged on Sunday as Bro. Greg Stieglitz (Indianapolis, IN) ministered to us closing with Psalm 139:23-24.

On Sunday, December 5, Bro. Ron Bollier and family (Indianapolis, IN) visited. He blessed us with a message on obeying instructions. Thank you, brothers.

Bro. Eugene Stoller is still at Regency Place Health Care Center receiving therapy. He was allowed to spend Thanksgiving Day at home with visiting family. His hand is slowly healing.

Sis. Wanda Halte was hospitalized with double pneumonia, but she is now staying with her sister, Sis. Ruth Garman. She is still on oxygen.

Sis. Naomi Wiegand is hospitalized with a troubled pregnancy and may need to remain there for several more weeks or until the baby is born.

Tod Klopfenstein faces another surgery on December 21. We rejoice he has been able to attend church services in a wheel chair. They all need our earnest prayers. "...the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (James 5:16)

On December 10, a large group from our fellowship went Christmas caroling. We divided into groups. The youth group went to Byron Health Care to carol on December 17.

Our Christmas program was the evening of December 12. The Christmas story was very impressive as it was portrayed in Old Testament prophesy and hymns.

"And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him."

Genesis 2:18

Bro. Brace Wieland exhorted us all at the marriage of his daughter, Sis. Daisha, to Bro. Stuart Reynolds. Elder Bro. Earl Ringger (Gridley, IL) pronounced the nuptial vows. He also proclaimed the truth at the morning service. Other guest ministers attending for the day of December 19 were Bros. Steve Ringger, Robert Meyer (Bluffton North, IN), Mark Gerber, John Reinhard (Bluffton, IN), Brian Huber (Francesville, IN) and Ron Bollier (Indianapolis, IN). It was a day of blessing and our prayer is the Lord's blessing and presence be with this new couple who are now one in Him.

Elder Bro. Phil and Sis. Maureen Stettner (Bluffton North, IN) visited on a Wednesday evening. He encouraged us with a message on faith.

Now we all face a new year, a special year to us; but to God numbers are not important and as we look to the future, let us remember...

"Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord."

Jeremiah 9:23-24

**INDIANA, MILFORD
Pam Beer
Marguerite Hoerr**

December 18-19 was a noteworthy weekend for our Milford congregation. Shane Beer (Bro. Steve and Sis. Connie), Jeff Beer (Bro. Fred and Sis. Pat) and Rob Schlipf (Bro. Rich and Sis. Kathy) all gave their testimonies before the church and told of their surrender to the Lord and the peace and joy that has been part of their lives ever since. Sunday afternoon the baptismal service was held and Milford church now has three new brothers in faith.

We had the pleasure of having Elder Bro. Wendell and Sis. Marcy Gudeman (Francesville, IN) here for the weekend. Bro. Wendell assisted Bro. Jesse in this work. On Saturday evening we were privileged to have Bro. Bob and Sis. Ann Meyer with us, too.

When the Spirit stirs the hearts of men, as it did last weekend, it's so gratifying to know that three other souls have confessed their need for the Lord. Julie Beer (Bro. Dan and Sis. Deb), Christy Schlipf (Bro. Rich and Sis. Kathy), and Clint Steffen (Bro. Dick and Sis. Gwen) are the three young people who want to make God the center of their lives.

Sis. Monica Steffen graduated from Purdue University this mid-

term, receiving her degree in Elementary Education, with a minor in Special Ed. We extend our congratulations to her for this accomplishment.

Bro. Arthur Haab voices his appreciation in this note: "I would like to thank everyone connected with the funeral of my mother, Bernice Haab Wenger."

We're looking forward to being with all of our five children and their families for three days following Christmas. They travel from five states to be with us and it's a very blessed time for these two parents. We thank God for the love that prompts their coming together.

INDIANA, REMINGTON
Rochelle Ward
Beth Virkler

"For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh."

Eph. 5:31

We are happy to announce the engagement of Sis. Jenny Bahler (Bro. Ed and Sis. Annette) to Bro. Luke Gutwein (Eric Gutwein and Sis. Donna Gutwein) of Francesville. We wish them God's blessing as they prepare for their wedding next year.

Our prayers for a speedy recovery are with Shane Gish (Joe and Sis. Cheri Frantz) as he was recently injured in a construction accident.

We have so many things to be thankful for in this holiday season. In our Christmas program a group of young men sang the song, "There Is A Redeemer". The chorus really touched me and made me think of how thankful we really should be. Thanks also to all who participated in the program to make it such a blessing.

"Thank You, oh my Father, for giving us Your Son, and leaving Your Spirit till the work on earth is done."

(chorus of There is a Redeemer)

Note of Thanks:

We want to thank all who helped to make our 60th anniversary the happy and memorable occasion it was. Thanks for all the beautiful cards, gifts and best wishes. They are greatly appreciated. We wish to express a special thanks to our children for giving us a day to be treasured. May the Lord bless one and all in His special way.

Bro. Herbert and Sis. Mary Jo Schieler

INDIANA, SOUTH BEND
Jennifer Mangold
Sue Ann Beebe

As we enter a new year, we are reminded of the swift passing of time. It often seems to amaze us that it is "already" January, or "already" 2000. And yet the Scripture says, "For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away." (James 4:14)

As the year unfolds before us, we have choices to make. Will we spend our time and talents wisely?

We held our annual business meeting on December 8.

Our all-church Christmas caroling was held on December 18, followed by a chili supper and a time of fellowship.

During the past year we have had 1 birth, 1 wedding, 2 baptisms, 3 repenting and 1 death.

We were blessed by the visit of Bro. Walt Rager (Sis. Sharon, Toledo, OH) on November 28.

"...exhort one another daily, while it is called Today, lest any of

you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence unto the end."

Hebrews 3:13-14

INDIANA, VALPARAISO
Hope Bucher

O come let us adore Him
 For He alone is worthy
 We'll give Him all the glory
 Christ the Lord!

What a wonderful time of the year to reflect on all the blessings our Lord has given us. May each one of us take time to adore Him not just because of the blessings He so generously gives but because truly He alone is worthy of our praise and adoration.

This month we had the opportunity to attend the reading of the Memorandum. Elder Bros. Dale Eisenmann and Curt Frank were present with us for the evening. We wish to thank them for ministering to us in this way.

Our recent Wednesday night children's activities consisted of preparing gift packages for children in Angola, residents at Lifecare Nursing Center and children in Jamaica. We were also able to Christmas carol at Lifecare and allow the children to participate in sharing the gift bags with the residents there.

We are thankful for the time and effort put forth by the Sunday School children in preparing a special Christmas program. The program was entitled "A Night to Remember". They brought the beautiful Christmas story to us again and reminded us that God did not choose the most well known, highest, most intelligent people to be a part of bringing His Son to this earth, but He chose special people! And He is still choosing special peo-

ple, like you and me, to share the saving grace that He offers through His Son Jesus Christ.

INDIANA, WOLCOTT
Beckie Lehman
Mary Beth Lehman

As we begin a new millennium, we reflect back on the closing events of 1999.

Mike Minnear (Bro. Mike and Sis. Glenna) was married to Kelly Strasburger. We wish them God's blessings in their life together.

Brian and Lorrene Furrer welcomed Callie Rae into the world, joining Briana, Mark, Heather, Luke, Amber and Andria.

Our Sunday School shared the true meaning of Christmas with us. It's always a special time to hear the culmination of many hours of practice as their pieces are recited and songs sung in joyous melody.

Visiting ministers included Elder Bro. Wendell Gudeman (Francesville, IN) who came to share the Memorandum with us. Bro. Greg Stieglitz (Indianapolis, IN) presented the Bible topic "Spirit filled life". And Bros. Tom Schambach (Elgin, IL) and Vernon Wettstein (Congerville, IL) shared the Word while visiting family. God bless each of them for their efforts.

As we begin a new millennium, century, and year, it's a good time to review our goals and priorities. Two verses come to mind. The first one for those who have not yet sought out Christ, and the second for those who are already on the way.

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

Matthew 6:33

"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it un-

til the day of Jesus Christ:"
Phil. 1:6

IOWA, BURLINGTON
Judy Gehring
Karla Gerst

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

Romans 12:15

The Burlington congregation has been rejoicing this past month. We wish the Lord's blessings and guidance to Bro. Lloyd Massner and Sis. Mary Metzger (Sis. Donna and the late Bro. Jake, Lester, IA) as they prepare to become one in the Lord.

We also rejoice with Bro. Michael and Sis. Rachel Messner in the birth of their first child, Micah Leo. Thankful grandparents are Bro. Dennis and Sis. Gail Massner and Bro. Tony and Sis. Nancy Messner (Morris, MN). May the Lord grant little Micah's parents and family the grace and wisdom to bring him up in His ways.

We want to extend our heartfelt thanks to the ministering brothers who have shared the Word with us over the past month. Elder Bros. Ron Messner (Washington, IL) and Ed Lanz (Oakville, IA) and Bros. John Steiner (Oakville, IA) and Bill Gerst (Alto, MI) were with us. May they feel the blessings and nearness of the Lord as they labor in Him.

Note of Thanks:

I wish to thank all my friends and relatives for all the cards, flowers and telephone calls I received on my 96th birthday and also while in the hospital. It was very much appreciated. God bless one and all.

Tillie Frank

IOWA, ELGIN

Gloria Frieden
Heidi Butikofer

*A Prayer For The Year
That Is Near*

Dear Master, for this coming year,

Just one request I bring.

I do not pray for happiness

Or any earthly thing;

I do not ask to understand

The way Thou leadest me;

But this I ask—teach me to do

The thing that pleaseth Thee.

I want to know Thy guiding

voice,

To walk with Thee each day.

Dear Master, make me swift to hear

And ready to obey;

And thus the year I now begin

A happy year will be,

If I am seeking just to do

The thing that pleaseth Thee.

—*author unknown*

Our Sunday School children presented their Christmas program to us again this year. It was such a blessing to hear of the old, old story of the Babe born in the manger and the shepherds and wisemen who came to see this wondrous sight. We thank the Sunday School students, parents, and teachers for their effort put forth to bring to us this joyous message of Christ's birth.

Our congregation held its annual Christmas caroling this past Sunday evening. What a joy to sing to the shut-in about the Christmas season.

We would like to extend our prayers and best wishes to Amy Butikofer (Bro. Tim and Sis. Kathy) and Rhett Jensen (Collin and Joan Jensen, West Union, IA) as they have made their engagement known. May they look to God as they make plans for their summer wedding and future life to-

gether.

I see not a step before me
As I tread on another year;
But I've left the past in God's
keeping,
The future His mercy shall clear.

IOWA, GARDEN GROVE
Laura Funk

We have been blessed by many visiting ministers this past month: Bros. Dewayne Dill (Minneapolis, MN), Arnie Gerst (Taylor, MO), Jim Kaeb (Bern, KS), Ben Wyson (Sabetha, KS) and Elder Bro. Doug Schock (Pulaski, IA). We received many blessings from these "messengers of the Word".

As Christmas is fast approaching, we celebrate Jesus' birth. We were reminded, it is Jesus' death that brings salvation.

This Lord is my King
A long time ago God did promise
to man,
Salvation to save them, it was in
His plan.
A Saviour would come as an in-
nocent child,
In lowly surroundings and man-
ner so mild,
A carpenter's son he could not
much afford,
The riches of earth yet they
called Him the Lord.

This man they called Jesus could
walk on the sea,
He healed ev'ry sickness, and let
the blind see.
He fed the five thousand and had
the lame walk,
Changed water to wine and told
deaf-mutes to talk,
With parable stories He taught
ev'ryone,
It soon became clear that this
Lord was God's Son.

Upon an old cross now He was
crucified,
"Forgive them, O Father" He
said 'ere He died.
His tomb was sealed up with a
stone right away,
But nothing could stop Him from
rising that day,
On Easter's bright morning He
won victory,
Eternal salvation for you and for
me.

Dear friend, please consider this
question today,
Is Jesus your Lord and Redeemer
this day?
The joy and the peace of this
Lord is for you,
To take as your own and to love
life anew,
So answer His call and His Word
now obey,
And trust in His grace as these
words you will say.

This Lord is my King and His
praises I sing—
Salvation He brings, He is King
of all Kings.
O sing, sing Lift up your voice,
O sing, sing Sing and rejoice
Redeemer and Saviour, He's
coming again
Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelu-
jah, Amen.
—R.L. Stoller

Wishing everyone a blessed holi-
day season and coming year!

IOWA, IOWA CITY
Janette Schulz

Greetings to all! We again thank
our visitors, including ministering
Bros. Ken Eisenmann (Cissna
Park, IL) and John Rowell
(Burlington, IA). May God bless
them for so willingly serving us the

Bread of Life, and all of those who
traveled with them to join in our
fellowship and worship services.

How often Jesus used children
to illustrate the desirable charac-
teristics of a true Christian! So we
can learn from our children today,
whether it be their zealous partici-
pation in caroling for those con-
fined to their homes, or from their
sincere innocence in portraying the
message of Christmas in the
Sunday School program.

During our program, the chil-
dren challenged us to imagine be-
ing the various people in the
Christmas story and how they
might have felt about and reacted
to the miraculous events that un-
folded. After presenting the cir-
cumstances confronting the angel
Gabriel, Zacharias and Elisabeth,
Mary and Joseph, the shepherds
and wise men, Simeon and Anna
and Jesus Himself, the focus
shifted to the reason why our Sav-
iour came—for each of us person-
ally, to save us from our sin:

"Imagine that you were a sinner
(that shouldn't be too hard). And
you knew you were a sinner, for all
have sinned and come short of the
glory of God. And you knew that
the wages of sin were death.

And if you were a sinner in the
field watching sheep, you under-
stand what it means to be a sheep.

Or maybe you were a sinner
bringing sacrifices to the temple
and heard Simeon or Anna. You
probably didn't understand it all,
but now you have a hope, a precious
hope, a real hope.

And if you are a sinner on this
very day, you know how the Fa-
ther's plan unfolded. Your hope be-
gins with Jesus. His life from birth
to death, "even the death of the
Cross" is for you."

"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

May the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ motivate us to deeper love, more willing service, reverent worship, and greater hope as we move past the Christmas season and into the New Year.

IOWA, LESTER
Sue Warner
Cindy Leuthold

We have so many reasons to assemble together in God's name. We especially rejoice to have heard the testimonies and witness the baptisms of five dear souls. We welcome our new brothers and sisters into the faith, Bro. Marti and Sis. Martha (Kuenzi) Knoblock, Sis. Erin Knobloch and Bro. Kjert and Sis. Michelle (Van Wyhe) Gramstad. We are thankful to have had Elder Bro. Bill Schlatter (Junction, OH) and Elder Bro. Ervin Knecht (Eureka, IL) with us for the occasion. Other visiting ministers with us this month have been: Bros. Mark Streitmatter (Bloomington, IL), Jim Plattner (Princeville, IL), Virgil Metzger (Chicago, IL), Beirne Messner (Morris, MN), Trent Meiss (Eureka, IL), Roger Aberle (Sabetha, KS), Pat Zaugg (West Bend, IA), Randy Mogler (Washington, IL) and Rex Frieden (Lamar, MO).

Heidi Bajema has been announced to have peace and is awaiting baptism. We pray for God's continual grace and strength for her.

We have two new babies to report. Tanner Earl was born to Kevin and Janet Oleson. His grandparents are Bro. Art and Sis. Kristy Metzger. Great-grandparents are Bro. Ernie and Sis. Ella Metzger. Tanner is joined by his sister, Maranda, and brother,

Tommy. First-time parents, Brant and Samantha Besonen, welcome little Chayla Nicole into their hearts and home also. Happy grandparents are Bro. Gary and Sis. Sue Schneider (West Bend, IA) and her great-grandmother is Sis. Martha Feucht. Our prayer for them is to seek God's guidance as they raise their little ones.

Believing that God has directed their lives to be together, we are happy to hear of the engagement of Sis. Mary Metzger to Bro. Lloyd Massner from Burlington, IA. Likewise, we rejoice with Bro. Walter Gerst (Oakville, IA) and Sis. Nola Wulf (Bro. Jacob and Sis. Alice) as they have been announced to be married. May they rely totally on God as they prepare for their wedding days.

November 27 was the wedding day chosen by Durwin Martin and Amy Reuter as they were united as husband and wife in Morris, MN. Parents of the couple are Ed and Judy Martin and Bro. Jim and Sis. Carolyn Reuter (Morris, MN). We extend our congratulations to the newlyweds.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Ray and Sis. Carol Cordrey as Ray was seriously injured in a motor vehicle accident. We pray that the Lord will heal Ray and stand by them through this difficult time. Other known hospital patients were Kerrick Knoblock (Bro. Trent and Sis. Heather), Whitney Metzger (Bro. Blair and Sis. Julie) and Sis. Emily (Bro. Art) Leuthold.

IOWA, OAKVILLE
Melody Steiner
Debra Wagenbach

We rejoice with our Bro. Walt Gerst (Bro. Paul and Sis. Elva) as his engagement was announced to Sis. Nola Wulf (Bro. Jake and Sis. Alice) from Lester, IA. We wish them God's richest blessings as they plan for a March wedding.

We are thankful for the instruction we have received from visiting ministers. Recent visits have been from Bros. Rod Bajema (Lester, IA), Garry Bucher (Valparaiso IN), and Jim Vierling (Eureka IL).

Our sympathy is extended to Sis. Luella Anliker (Bro. Dick) in the loss of her sister, Sis. Elsie Stickling, of Peoria.

Our annual Sunday School Christmas program was held on Sunday evening, December 13. As we listened to the children from the very youngest to those who are young adults, we were reminded of the real reason for this holiday. May we always remember that the greatest gift that ever was shared was the gift of God's only Son, Jesus. May we rejoice and give our lives completely to Him as we leave behind the year 1999 and enter a new century and millennium.

IOWA, PULASKI
Lisa Knecht

Greetings of love from Pulaski. We are grateful to Bro. Charles Marti (Sis. Alice, Lamar, MO) for visiting our congregation and sharing God's Word with us. May our Lord continue to inspire our ministering brothers each time they stand to bring the Gospel to us. Our thoughts and prayers have been with Sis. Evelyn Metzger (Roy) and Sis. Karoline Wuthrich (Bro. Russell) during their hospitalizations and recovery time at home. May God grant them courage and renewed strength in their time of need.

“He Leadeth Me” was sung as a farewell to Bro. William Wuthrich before he moved to Chillicothe, IL. We will surely miss him in our Pulaski church family. We sincerely pray for God's nearness and direction for him.

We are thankful for the safe return of several of our Bible Class students, their parents, and Elder

Bro. Doug Schock from their weeks stay in Juarez, Mexico. They traveled with several from the West Bend congregation. A very memorable trip was had by all. When commenting upon their experience, many students mentioned the continuous smiles on the Mexican faces of those who had so little.

Don't we often look into the future and wonder what lies ahead for us as an individual, a church, and a country?

Faith

It is not faith to look ahead
With worried doubts and fears,
And contemplate tomorrow's trials

Throughout the coming years;
But it is faith to look above
With confidence and trust,
Assured the way He overrules
Is even right and just.

It is not faith to be cast down
And overcome with doubt,
To wonder how the Lord can lead
To worry your problems out;
But it is faith to rest in Him,
And trust His guiding hand
He will uphold, sustain, and
keep,

Along the path He's planned.

—*author unknown*

May our faith be strengthened
and our trust increased in the One
who is able to sustain and keep us.

IOWA, WEST BEND Berniece Banwart Eunice Fehr

Ministers visiting our congregation this past month have been Bro. Bill Emch (Sis. Susan, Lamont-Gridley, KS) and Bro. Dean Messner (Sis. Wanda, Winthrop, MN). May they be rewarded for so faithfully preaching God's precious Word to us.

We rejoice with our converts, Jason Fehr (Bro. Dennis and Sis. Judy) and Dawn Grimm (Bro. Wayne and Sis. Rose), as they have found that wonderful peace. We are looking forward to hearing their testimonies in the near future.

Several of our brothers have been in the hospital. Bro. Dwaine (Sis. Lucille) Schmidt and Bro. Don (Sis. Verda) Bruellman submitted to surgery. Bro. Kent (Sis. Beth) Banwart and Bro. Walter Banwart received medical care. We pray God will restore health according to His will.

Three grandparents of our congregation are rejoicing over the birth of a new grandchild. Miriam Frieden has a new granddaughter born to Terry and Nora Frieden of Alexandria, VA. She has been named Kathryn Elizabeth. Joan Traub's son, Les, and Kim Traub welcomed daughter Parker Sue. Bro. Gary and Sis. Sue Schneider also are thrilled to have a new little granddaughter, Chayla Nicole, born to Samantha and Brant Besonen, Marshall, MN. We wish these families many blessings with their precious bundles sent from Heaven.

We held our annual business meeting on December 7. Thank you to all the Sisters and Brothers who have served their terms in various duties. May God bless them for so willingly giving of their time and talents. We appreciate the new ones who have been elected. In our kitchen, cooking committee Sisters are Lonnie (Bro. Kevin) Fehr, Audrey (Bro. Bruce) Messner, and Sharon (Bro. Jim) Fehr. Sis. Shirley (Bro. Harlan) Metzger was put on the cleaning committee and Sis. Doris (Bro. Martin) Zaugg will serve a term on World Relief. Several brothers who will serve are Bro. Larry (Sis. Carol) Fehr, church trustee; and Bro. Dan (Sis. Eunice) Fehr as Fellowship Center trustee; Bro. Ken (Sis. Ellen)

Dahlhauser, usher; and Bro. Jay Schmidt will help as a parking attendant. Bros. Matthew (Sis. Rachel) Fehr and Jim (Sis. Sandy) Knobloch will be helping with the microphone system.

There have been many questions, and much apprehension as to what the year 2000 will really bring for us. With the dawning of a new year, may we put our faith and trust in God who provides for us each day.

Trusting Jesus, That is All
Simply trusting ev'ry day,
Trusting through a stormy way;
Even when my faith is small,
Trusting Jesus, that is all.

Brightly doth His Spirit shine
Into this poor heart of mine;
While He leads I cannot fall;
Trusting Jesus, that is all.

Singing if my way is clear;
Praying if the path be drear;
If in danger, for Him call;
Trusting Jesus, that is all.

Trusting Him while life shall
last,
Trusting Him till earth be past;
Till within the jasper wall;
Trusting Jesus, that is all.

Gospel Hymns #581

JAPAN, SHIODA Akihiro Ito

We went to the Ichinomiya Hotspring Hospital to give Christmas cards and small presents and to sing Christmas carols on December 12. There were about one hundred patients. We were glad that they listened to our songs. But most patients are not Christian yet. We pray that our songs reach their hearts and give the opportunity to be Christian because most of their lives are not so long and they

are afraid to die. We want to continue such activities so that they will find who their Saviour is as soon as possible.

We had wonderful fellowship for Christmas service on the 19th. Because Bro. Ehnle and Sis. Lois will go to the USA before Christmas, we wanted to share those times with many members, as much as possible. There are many people who misunderstand about Christmas, especially in Japan. They are glad that they get many presents. They don't think of how important it is that Jesus was born. So we not only thank our God to give us Jesus Christ, but also to spread to others what the most important thing is about Christmas.

JAPAN, TOKYO

Marie Inoue

Christmas greetings! This month was joyful and busy for our assembly. We enjoyed the visit of Bro. Willis Ehnle (Sis. Lois) as he expounded the Scriptures to us on December 5. That day we also enjoyed the presence of Bro. John Grassi (Princeville, IL) who came here on CAT business and took time from a busy schedule to assemble with us. We appreciated his part in our services. Another person we welcomed was Kan Umemura who arrived home for the holidays. He is a student at the English Language Institute associated with ISU and regularly attends our Bloomington-Normal church. Several have commented that his stay in the U.S. has had a very positive effect on his life. We thank all those who have extended a warm welcome or showed any kindness to him.

Hospitalized this month was our Sis. Shizuko Utsuki. It was the first time in her almost 93 years that she has submitted to surgery. Her daughter, Nobuko, is also hospitalized for a weakened condition. We

pray for them and their families that they can all feel the Lord's nearness and be granted reasonable health again.

Explaining the story of Christ's birth at our ladies' meeting this month was Bro. Andrew Klaus. Some of the ladies have questions concerning this, and we were thankful Bro. Andrew was on hand to help them.

December 19 was our church Christmas which includes an afternoon Sunday School program and evening potluck meal together. We are thankful for an opportunity for the children to express the true meaning of this blessed season. Among the children reciting their "pieces" for the program in the Japanese language were the 3 older Klaus children, Caleb, Sarah, and Hannah. It is wonderful to know the gospel message in two languages.

Going home to be with family during the holidays are the Aberle and Klaus families. We miss them, but are glad they can be refreshed in the precious faith in their native language.

A thought for the new millennium and new year from a taped sermon: May we do everything possible to promote God's will and way instead of doing the least possible just to get by.

KANSAS, BERN

Jill Hartter

Holly Meyer

On the weekend of November 21, we were privileged to have Elder Bro. Ed Schwartz (Bluffton, IN) and his wife, Sis. Jeni, with us. Bro. Ed lent himself for a Bible Study at Kansas State University on Friday evening; for the Bern and Sabetha congregations on Saturday evening, and again for Sunday worship services. May God bless him for his willingness to be used by God.

On November 20, Dean Menold (Bro. James and Sis. Lou) and Sherri Matson (Sabetha), daughter of Ron Wittmer (Bern), were united in holy matrimony. May they feel God's nearness as they establish their home together.

Thanksgiving brought several visitors. Among them was Elder Bro. Art Metz (Silverton, OR). We are thankful to him being with us and lending himself to the Spirit.

"...there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

Luke 15:10

We rejoice with the angels in heaven that Steven Edelman has turned his heart unto repentance. He is the son of Eugene and Judy Edelman (Sabetha).

Two souls have been brought into the fold. Bro. Toni Frey (Dave and Joyce Frey, Sabetha) and Bro. Brent Strahm (Bro. Richard and Sis. Kathy) gave their testimonies and were baptized on December 12. We rejoice with them and welcome them into the family of God. We also appreciate Elder Bro. Gerry Hertzell (Sabetha) for assisting in this special event.

On December 10, we enjoyed an evening of Christmas caroling. Another opportunity to praise God, serve others and sing of the wondrous things He has done.

Bro. Tim Lehman (Elder Bro. John and Sis. Connie) and Sis. Marla Stoller (Bro. Arden and Sis. Dar) have graduated from Kansas State University this December. We extend our congratulations to them. Bro. Tim will be taking a position of employment in Kansas City, MO. We hope he feels welcome to visit us often. We are thankful we can keep Sis. Marla in our area. May both of them feel God's nearness as they enter a new phase of their lives.

A new baby girl has arrived in

the family circle of first-time parents, Jeff and Stacia Bone. Sophia Grace was born on December 16. Thankful grandparents are Bro. Steve and Sis. Lois Hartter and Robert and Judy Bone (Mayetta).

Our prayers continue to be with Sara, Ed, Hunter and Hogan Popkess and Sara's parents, Bro. Wilfred and Sis. Verona Strahm, and their families. Sara is undergoing extensive chemotherapy. May they find comfort in God's promises and the grace and strength to live out each day.

KANSAS, FORT SCOTT
Joleen Sinn

O God be praised, who reigns
above,
For granting us salvation!
We have through Jesus Christ,
His Son,
Obtained regeneration.
He cleansed us from each sinful
stain
Through precious blood of Jesus.
He did unite us then with Him,
From Adam's fall redeemed us.
O, therefore Zion, God's own
host,
Hold fast to faith's assurance;
Stay true, and thou shalt then re-
ceive
A crown for thy endurance!

December 18-19 was a very special weekend here as we heard the testimonies and witnessed the baptisms of our dear Bros. Tyler and Tim Banwart (Bro. Lon and Sis. Deb). We want to thank all the visitors that came and helped to make this an extra special time for Tyler and Tim. May God richly bless Elder Bros. Gene Marti (Kansas City, MO) and John Lehman (Bern, KS) for sharing with us.

KANSAS
LAMONT-GRIDLEY
Sarah Somerhalder

How blessed it was on December 12 to hear our Sunday School children present the traditional program of Jesus and the Christmas story. It is our prayer that in time each child may turn their heart to the Lord in repentance.

Later that afternoon, the Sunday School students, teachers and several others enjoyed caroling to several older brothers and sisters at their homes and to Sis. Matilda Beyer at the Burlington Rest Home and Bro. Floyd Isch and Sis. Hannah Grimm at the Madison Manor. After caroling, the whole church was invited to a sloppy joe supper at the Gridley Community Center.

Our sincere prayers are with our loved ones that are in hospitals, rest homes, or their own homes and are unable to assemble with us. May they feel the Lord's comfort and presence.

As we approach the year 2000 and not knowing what is ahead, may we ever trust in God to provide for us as He has in the past.

KANSAS, SABETHA
Brenda Grimm
Mary Kay Wenger

Bro. Keith Beyer (Detroit, MI) was our visiting minister this past month and we thank him for his willingness to be used in God's service to proclaim the true Word.

We rejoice there are still souls who realize their lost condition and are seeking the Lord in repentance. Our prayers are with Brett Kellenberger (Bro. Brad and Sis. Teresa) as he builds on the firm foundation of Jesus Christ.

We look forward to the provings and baptisms of Seth and John Hartter (Bro. Tim and Sis. Charleen) as they have been announced as having peace with God

and man. May we always be thankful for the hope of salvation God has given us in sending His Son to die for our sins.

Our prayers go with Bro. Gale Kellenberger as he will be assembling with the Rittman, OH, congregation for a few months this winter.

There have been several in our congregation who are afflicted with sickness or other health ailments. We especially think of Sis. Evelyn Wysong and Bro. Oliver Weiss who have spent time in the hospital this past month. Bro. Oliver's wife, Sis. Marie, has also experienced health problems for some time and our prayers are certainly with her. Our thoughts are with all those in affliction and pray they will feel God's loving touch.

Due to the fact we are not having Sunday School during the construction of our church, we did not have the opportunity to hear the children proclaim Christ's birth in verse and song this year. December 9 was our annual church Christmas caroling and it was truly a blessing to sing to the elderly. May they continue to feel our prayers throughout the year.

As we embark on a new year, may each of us strive with continued courage and zeal to live our life more perfectly in His will. It is so important that we never forget the hope that Jesus Christ brings to us and that we take time to thank and commune with Him.

Take time to be holy,
Speak oft with thy Lord;
Abide in Him always,
And feed on His Word...

Hymns of Zion #112

KANSAS, WICHITA
Emma Miller

Bro. Milton Bowers underwent a surgical procedure on his hands the 9th of December. At the last report he was mending nicely. Then on the 15th, his son, Bro. Phil, underwent surgery for his problems. Bro. Phil faces six weeks of bedrest. We praise God for the loving care the Bowers family provides for these brothers and we continue to lift them up in prayer for healing.

Bro. Godfrey Miller also was hospitalized for a period of time. He and I appreciate the prayers that were offered in his behalf.

Wichita woke up to a white world on December 5. Over eight inches of snow covered the ground. Our church, along with many other churches, canceled services for the day. The heavy snow caused numerous power outages. At times like these we are more aware of our dependence on God for His mercy.

Caroling has replaced mid-week Bible Study during the month of December. Also, the Sunday School teachers and children are preparing a Christmas program for the 19th of this month.

MEXICO, IXTLAN

Erica Schambach

Do we ever think that we are being such a good witness that God will surely use us to "win" a soul for His Kingdom? The apostle Paul reminds us in I Corinthians 3:7, "So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase." Thankfully, we have had a busy month filled with all three.

We were blessed to have many visitors, including Bro. Bryan Stoller (Fairbury, IL), an optometrist, and his team of four assistants and nurses who set up an Eye Clinic open to the community. They not only treated 231 people and distributed 146 pairs of prescription eye glasses in five days, but also took blood pressures,

passed out health kits, and advised the people on eating right and dental hygiene. Most importantly, however, the seeds of love and kindness that were sown, took root in many of the hearts, and our church attendance doubled that week. We are so thankful for each person who comes to share their gifts and talents. We never know what God may use to knock on the door of a heart.

Seven precious souls were given the grace to answer God's call, and after true repentance and conversion, were able to testify to the brethren on November 20 of the miracle that Christ had worked in each of their lives. Elder Bros. Chuck Hemmer (Peoria, IL) and Roy Grimm (Taylor, MO) came to share this special weekend with us and welcome into the brotherhood Bro. Jose and Sis. Irma Roque, Bro. Rogelio and Sis. Fernanda Cervantes, Sis. Pauli Angelito, Sis. Maria de Jesus (Chuya) Montejano, and Sis. Elsa Sibaja.

Our hearts rejoiced again as we came to church on Sunday morning and learned that another soul, Berenice Navarro, decided to forsake all and follow the Lord. Sunday evening, after the baptisms, we were privileged to share Holy Communion with our new Brothers and Sisters in Christ, in remembrance of our Saviour's broken body and shed blood. I don't think one heart walked away that was not overflowing with love and thanksgiving!

The doors of the church are always open, and various groups meet there throughout the week for classes. Early afternoon weekdays will find two Sunday School rooms occupied with between ten and fifteen children busy sounding out words, practicing how to write new letters, and counting fingers. Offered to both our church family and as an outreach to the community, the English class that meets

three times a week became so popular, that we decided to split it into two classes.

The teachers enjoy finding fun and interesting ways to get the students to practice reading, writing, speaking and even singing in English! Friday nights after English class, a group of eight students meet to explore the various tools and possibilities offered on Microsoft Computer programs. Several computers and software were brought down a few months ago and have gotten a lot of use already by our younger friends and members who are in school. Although a lot of teaching goes on each day, these classes are just a tool that have been instrumental in furthering the spiritual work that God calls every one of us to carry out.

As the Christmas season approaches, the Sunday School teachers, children, and Young Group are busy preparing to tell us the story of Jesus' birth. Christmas is an exciting time here, as many relatives return to their home village to celebrate the Holidays. This alters the make-up of our congregation during December and January, but what a wonderful opportunity to do some planting and watering in souls that have not yet heard what the baby Jesus was sent to this earth to do for them!

MICHIGAN, ALTO

Kristen Plattner

Michelle Oesch

Rejoice! It's Christmas!
 May the holy remembrance
 on the FIRST CHRISTMAS DAY
 Be our reassurance
 CHRIST is not far away...
 For on Christmas HE came
 to walk here on earth,
 So let us find joy
 in the news of HIS birth...

And let us find comfort
and strength for each day
In knowing that Christ
walked this same earthly way...
So He knows all our needs
and He hears every prayer
And He keeps all "His children"
always safe in His care...
And whenever we're troubled
and lost in despair
We have but to seek Him
and ask Him in prayer
To guide and direct us
and help us to bear
Our sickness and sorrow,
our worry and care...
So once more at Christmas
let the whole world rejoice
In the knowledge He answers
every prayer that we voice.

—*Helen Steiner Rice*

We hear a Christmas carol, we go to the mailbox and receive a few cards, the lights are lit, and we say to ourselves, "I can't believe it's Christmas!" Most of us are also saying, "I can't believe the new millennium is here." Two thousand years since that first Christmas when Jesus came to earth, born in a humble stable.

Life is a gift and our time here on earth is precious. The Word encourages us in Ephesians 5:16-17, "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be not unwise, but understanding what the will of the lord is." As Christians, we will be able to stand before our Lord and say, "I can believe this is the day of salvation." Our prayer is that none of us will be taken by surprise when the day arrives, but be ready, heart, soul and mind.

Congratulations go out to Samantha Oesch and Aaron Tripp as they were united together in one accord. Samantha is the daughter of Sam and Randi Oesch. Aaron's parents are Sue and the late Craig Tripp.

"Love your mate with abandonment. Don't measure your love and weigh what you receive in return. Be a lover who gives yourself today with no thought for the hurts of the past or the problems of the future." (from "Forever in Love")

Excited first-time grandparents are Bro. Curt and Sis. Luanne Kaeb. May God's blessings be with Bro. Tim and Sis. Melanie Tomic of Kitchener, Canada, as they begin to teach little Christopher Mark, born December 8, the love and fear of our Lord and Saviour. Also sharing the joy of being Christopher's grandparents are Kosta and Erna Tomic and they, too, live in Canada.

Also excited grandparents, though not the first time, are Elder Bro. Aaron and Sis. Loretta Steffen. Very thankful for the safe arrival of little Cherelle Leora are her parents, Bro. Matt and Sis. Deanna Steffen, from Princeville, IL. Coming earlier than expected, little Cherelle was born November 19 and weighed only 3.8 pounds. We pray that with hugs, love and physical nourishment, she will grow healthy and strong.

We are thankful for the lord's healing mercies as Jeff Oesch (Brenda) recovers at home from a hip replacement. May they feel the love and support of all as the time of healing takes place.

What joyful memories of fellowship together and singing Christmas carols. It is always so uplifting and encouraging to remember what our Lord truly did for us. He came as a child, lived and endured temptations and died the cruel death on the cross. All this so we can have "peace on earth, mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled."

Our Sunday School Christmas program was held the evening of December 19. Again, each one who attended and heard the children's verses and songs could not help but leave with a warm heart, touched

by God's love for all mankind. Are we smiling today because we can live forever in eternity? We should be!

MICHIGAN, BAY CITY
Rhonda Knochel
Peggy Jackson

Every year, as we close out that year and begin another, we reflect on what we hope will happen in the future and look back over the past to see what needs to be changed. Many of us make New Year's resolutions. I couldn't help but think how different our homes, our churches, our communities, and ultimately, our country would be if we made holiness, righteousness and Christ-likeness the focus of the changes we will be making in our lives in the year 2000.

We were richly blessed by our Sunday School this month. On December 19, our children praised God through song and scripture, as they remembered Christ's birth. One of our sisters had taught the little ones how to present "Away in a Manger" in sign language. It brought tears of joy to watch them, reaching even the deaf, with the message that Jesus has come!

Many in our congregation experienced physical difficulties this month. Some were hospitalized for longer periods of time than others, but the frailty of the body was felt. Those who were ill include: Alan Schlatter (Vicki), Sis. Lena Wieland, Bro. Howard Wieland (Sis. Pauline), Bro. Alf Kaeb (Sis. Hermine), Bro. Winsor Mosher (Sis. Loretta), Bro. Bill Waibel (Sis. Carol), Sis. Shirley Wright (Bro. Gary), Laurel Curtis (Jim) and Bro. Norman Knochel (Sis. Leanore). We are thankful that many have been restored to health and that others are recuperating. We pray that each of them will feel God's special nearness and comfort in the days ahead.

May God be your ever-present companion in the year ahead.

MICHIGAN, DETROIT

**Bonnie Bedolla
Crystal Ramsier**

"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

Isaiah 55:9

As scripture tells us, God's plan is so much more perfect than we here on earth could ever imagine. The Detroit congregation is looking forward to many changes in the New Year as God's plan is revealed. We are very thankful that Bro. Kevin and Sis. Kristine Kreuger have felt God's direction to relocate to our area from Sarasota, FL. We welcome them to Detroit and look forward to having them as part of our family. We certainly will pray for them as they make their home here.

We welcome new faces but don't like to see familiar ones leave. However, we do rejoice with Sis. Andrea Denes (Sis. Sanche and the late Bro. Frank) as she has felt God's direction to marry Bro. John Butikofer (Bro. Bill and Sis. Norma) in March. Lord willing, they plan to make Gridley, IL their home. May God bless them during their engagement period and throughout their lives together.

A tiny addition to our congregation is baby Kirk Joseph Maibach; sister Katie and brother Jack are thrilled to have a baby brother. We wish Bro. Doug and Carol all of God's richest blessings as their family continues to grow. Bro. Ben and Sis. Lorene Maibach are looking forward to having another grandson in the family.

This month Bro. Don Gudeman (Sis. Mary, LaCrosse, IN) shared the Word with us. We are thankful

for him and his family as they were able to worship with us. It is always a blessing when one is willing to preach God's Word. Bro. Bill (Sis. Carol) Waibel from Bay City, MI came to Woodhaven and held services for the residents. We certainly appreciate them making the long trip on a weekday evening.

Our prayers were with Sis. Arlene Belsley as she was hospitalized this past month. We are thankful the Lord has granted her a measure of good health and that she is able to assemble with us again.

We are grateful Lalo Ugalde has been announced for peace with our Saviour and plans to be baptized in His name. We will continue to keep him in our prayers throughout his life as he walks with God.

MINNESOTA MINNEAPOLIS Delores Sauder

We have heard a lot in the news media about being ready for Y2K. We should be more concerned about being ready for Christ's return.

Bro. Duane and Sis. Bonnie Rocke, together with Bro. Duane's Sunday School class, accompanied ministering Bro. Dewayne and Sis. LaRae Dill to Garden Grove, IA, when it was Minneapolis' turn to send a minister there. They had an enjoyable time.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Bro. Joe Bednarski (Sis. Ethel) as he has been in the hospital.

MINNESOTA, MORRIS Nancy Wulf Dianne Kellenberger

Our visiting ministers this past month were Elder Bros. Art Metz (Silverton, OR), Ed Lanz (Oakville, IA), Leroy Messner (Winthrop, MN), and Bros. Kent Mogler and

Dewayne Dill (both from Minneapolis, MN), Rex Frieden (Lamar, MO), Dwight Stoller (Latty, OH), Clark Stoller (Gridley, IL) and Ken Wuethrich (Indianapolis, IN). We're thankful for the message from our visiting ministers as well as those from our home congregation. The voices may vary but the message is unchanging. Praise God!

Now I have vowed to fear and
love Thee
And to obey Thee, Lord, alone;
I feel Thy Holy Spirit move me
And freely pledge myself Thine
own,
Renouncing sin to keep the faith
And war with evil unto death.

And never let my purpose falter
O Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!
But keep me faithful to Thine alter
Till Thou shalt call me from my
post.

So unto Thee I'll live and die
And praise Thee evermore on
high.

Zion's Harp #41

We all shared in a truly blessed weekend as we heard the testimonies and witnessed the baptisms of three dear souls on December 12. We welcomed Sis. Lori and Bro. Randy Fehr and Bro. Ryan Kellenberger into our family of believers. We pray they will follow in our Saviour's footsteps all the days of their lives and never look back.

We are so fortunate to have five more souls begin a new life in Christ. Mitchell Koehl (Bro. Randy and Sis. Shirley), Paul Wulf (Bro. Dennis and Sis. Judy), Savannah Gramm (Bro. Tim and Sis. Gwen), Kayla Joos (Bro. Harv and Sis. Debra) and Lindsay Gramm (Bro. Ted and Sis. Wanda) have turned their backs to sin and Satan. We

truly rejoice with them and their families.

We ask for God's blessings upon the marriage of Amy Reuter and Durwin Martin who exchanged wedding vows on November 27. Their parents are Bro. James and Sis. Carolyn Reuter and Ed and Judy Martin (Lester, IA).

We're happy to announce the engagement of Sis. Holly Feuchtenberger (Bro. Wally and Sis. Diane) to Bro. Dan Bradle (Bro. Roger and Sis. Ila, Eureka, IL). We pray for them as they plan their future lives together.

On December 17, little Bridget Lee was born to first-time parents, Lane and Beth Koehl. Excited grandparents are Bro. Ken and Sis. Karen Koehl and John and Dorothy Plummer (Martinez, CA).

In honor of our Saviour's birth, we went Christmas caroling on December 12 and also had our Christmas program on December 19. What a blessing to see and hear such "tender hearts" reciting pieces and singing hymns to remind us of the true meaning of Christmas.

Our dear Sis. Anna Fehr (Bro. Paul, Sr.) has been hospitalized this month, as well as Brent Koehl (Keith and Coleen), Bro. Don Schmidgall (Sis. Virginia), and Bro. Dave Schmidgall (Sis. June). May God's healing hand be upon each one.

As was mentioned this past Sunday in a closing prayer, "We know not what the future holds, but we know Who holds the future." As 1999 comes to an end, and another year dawns, let us ever draw nearer unto God and trust Him more earnestly. May God be with each one.

Note of Thanks:

A sincere thank you to everyone who sent me beautiful cards, gifts, flowers, prayers and the food brought in since my hip surgery.

Everything was appreciated very much. May God bless all of you.

Sis. Edna Zeltwanger

MINNESOTA, WINTHROP

**Carol Ann Messner
Becky Braulick**

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

Acts 2:38

We rejoice with Wesley Schmidt (Rhonda) as it was announced he has peace with God and man. Wesley is the son of Gene and the late Sis. Ella Mae, knowing there is great rejoicing in Heaven.

The wedding of Marc Messner and Tina Grams took place on November 27. Marc is the son of Elder Bro. LeRoy and Sis. Joanne. Tina's parents are Dennis Grams and Annie Fenske of Gaylord. We pray for God's blessings and guidance in their life ahead together.

A farewell singing was held for Bro. Jeff Leuthold who is returning to his home church at Lester. We were thankful for his fellowship while living here. We wish God's best for him in his future.

Sis. Florence Messner celebrated her 93rd birthday with an open house at the nursing home. She also had the privilege of our church Christmas caroling at the party. Christmas caroling was also done at the Gaylord and Lafayette homes.

On December 12, the Sunday School program was presented by our Sunday School students. A time of fellowship and lunch was enjoyed after the program. May the Lord bless our youth and the teachers for their time and efforts.

Our hospital patient this month was Bro. Roy Howk (Sis. Rose Alice). We are all thankful to the Lord

for His continued healing.

MISSOURI, KANSAS CITY Brent Kellenberger

On December 12, we had a blessed weekend of fellowship. During noon hour we enjoyed watching the annual Sunday School program. As usual, it was a unique reminder of Christ's coming to the earth and what this event means to us. The program is truly a sermon in itself. We are thankful for all the visitors that came to watch the children participate. Following the afternoon service, we went to some local nursing homes to carol. Afterwards, we returned to church for a chili supper.

On December 5, the engagement of Bro. Brent Kellenberger to Sis. Beth Zobrist (Congerville, IL) was announced. Brent is the son of Bro. Randy and Sis. Karen. Beth is the daughter of Bro. Clarence and Sis. LuAnn. We continue to pray for the Lord's guidance in our lives. We appreciate the prayers and support of our church in this time of change.

MISSOURI, LAMAR Carolyn Banwart Kristi Huber

Visiting ministers this past month were Bros. Darrel Stoller (Bern, KS) and Don Braker (Kansas City, MO). We pray that God will bless them for ministering the Word to us.

Kristi Braker (Bro. Roy and Sis. Judy) was a hospital patient this past month. We are thankful she had a short stay and is doing better.

The time flies on and death
draws nigh;

Unite us Lord with Thee on
high!

Prepare us now to live with Thee
Forever in eternity!

Zion's Harp #188

With another year before us, may God grant us each the grace and wisdom to walk faithfully day by day, redeeming our time.

MISSOURI, ST. LOUIS
Rachel Schrock

Our congregation periodically appreciates an evening potluck meal and "family" fellowship. One such event was a recent Christmas chili supper. We had enjoyed a couple of hours around the dinner table and were preparing to finish up when a little boy tapped our minister on the shoulder, pointed to the piano, and asked if we could sing Silent Night. From the mouth of a child we were reminded, once again, to never forget the One who gave us Christmas. As we begin a new millennium, we pray for the peace and presence of Jesus to remain with us and guide us.

We are thankful that the message of peace has sounded forth this month from our ministers. We have enjoyed our visiting brethren: Bros. Bob Stoller (Sis. Janice, Lamar, MO), Tom Troxel (Sis. Luann, LaCrosse, IN), and Paul Zimmerman (Sis. Loretta, Forrest, IL). We wish God's blessings on them for their willing service in His vineyard.

One of these ministers shared the thought that the Shepherd became the Lamb when Jesus came to the earth and went to the cross for us. As the year draws to a close and a new one begins, may we "go with Christ to Calvary's brow, beyond Jerusalem. 'Tis there men learn to know the Christ, For there He bore man's sin." (Hymns of Zion #36)

MISSOURI, TAYLOR
Peg Haerr

On December 12, our Sunday School children brought forth the message of our Lord's birth. It's always a joy to hear the true meaning of Christmas told by our young ones! Some of us enjoyed caroling the week before at the Quincy Veteran's Home.

We're thankful for God's healing mercies upon those recently in the hospital: Bro. Don Hoerr (Sis. Elaine), and Nikki Haerr (Bro. Norman and Sis. Sally). Our dear Elder Bro. Roy Grimm (Sis. Dona) is currently in the hospital and we pray for him also.

Our prayers are with Bro. Rusty Adrian (Sis. Amy) as his grandmother, Mary Whithaus, passed away recently. Fred and Dan Frieden passed away recently and we wish all their relatives our sympathy, also.

NEW YORK
CROGHAN-NAUMBURG
Anna Mellnitz

"Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is God with us. Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife; and knew her not till she had brought forth her first born son and he called his name JESUS."

Matthew 1:23-25

Well, Christmas is here; a beautiful time of the year when we celebrate Jesus' birth. We had a singing at Hallmark Nursing Home on Friday night, December 10. We had singing at Lowville Extended Care on December 17. The children had their Christmas program December 19. It is always wonderful to hear what they have learned about—the birth of Jesus.

Gilbert Widrick (Betty) has

been in the hospital for tests and is now home doing fine.

Note of Thanks:

I wish to thank everyone for their prayers, cards, gifts and visits during my knee surgery and recovery.

In Christian love,
Anna Mellnitz

OHIO, AKRON
Joyce Gasser

Bro. Jozsef and Sis. Susan Kocsis became a new father and mother as they were blessed with a baby boy born November 23 and they named him Jozsef. Grandparents are Bro. Sandor and Sis. Kathy Bako. May God be with the new parents in caring for him.

Sis. Alice Greenbank, 52, went on to be with the Lord November 28. She was the loving wife of Ken and loving mother of Alec, Lea, and Kevin, all of the home. Her mother, Patricia DeRivera; a sister; and three brothers live in California. We pray for God's presence in her home where her presence is now gone.

The Greenbank family wishes to express their heartfelt thanks for all the cards, gifts, meals, prayers, and other expressions of love during Sis. Alice's illness and passing.

Elder Bros. Andy Stoller and Ken Indermuhle assisted our Elder Bro. Gene Pamer in sharing the Memorandum with us. Bro. Ken stayed for Sunday and gave us inspiring messages.

We were thankful to have Bro. Todd Stoller (Latty, OH) minister to us on Thanksgiving Day.

Our Sunday School students presented a very inspiring and interesting program portraying the real meaning of Christmas. Everyone was welcome and we appreciated all that attended that Sunday evening.

Sis. Janet Graf, Bro. John Graf, and Sis. Evelyn Baumgartner have been hospital patients. We pray for them to recover strength again.

We rejoice that in the past year we had four new members; three births; and one marriage. There were six deaths.

OHIO, COLUMBUS

Anita Steiner

Our visiting ministers for this month were Bros. Gary Maibach (Smithville, OH), Bill Brake (Sardis, OH) and Ben Manz (Junction, OH). We appreciate their willingness to bring us the Truth.

On December 5 our Sunday School children recounted to us in song the birth of Christ. Throughout this time of the year, let us remember the true meaning of Christmas.

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

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

From heaven in the dark of
night,
He came and brought eternal
light.
Behold now how this light divine
Throughout this pilgrim's dale
doth shine.
Hallelujah!

And in the Father's image pure
He came earth's trials to endure.
He leads us with a gentle hand
To that long cherished, happy
land.
Hallelujah!

He, who in glory there doth
reign,
Did dwell on earth as humble
man;

That through His noble sacrifice,
We find the path to paradise.
Hallelujah!

And when our days here are complete,
As brethren, we our Lord shall
meet,
And be transformed before His
sight
To glory and celestial light.
Hallelujah!

Zion's Harp #7

OHIO, JUNCTION

Cindy Schlatter

"I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance."

Luke 15:7

Our congregation is very thankful that not one but three souls have decided to start living their lives for the Lord: Micah Gherian (Bro. Paul and Sis. Sharon), Gina Schlatter (Bro. Ray and Sis. Corrine) and Chad Manz (Bro. Les and Sis. Karen). We rejoice with these dear converts and their families, and continue to fervently pray for those yet outside the fold that they will come in humble repentance while it is still the day of grace.

Love, of all gifts, is the greatest
Which the Spirit does bestow.
Though I had a voice like angels,
Lacking love, I truly know
That I'd be a tinkling cymbal
Or a wretched sounding brass;
For although the sound were
present
Lifeless through this world I'd
pass.

Zion's Harp #37

Bro. Tony Manz (Bro. Ken and Sis. Gwen) and Sis. Denise Knecht (Elder Bro. Ervin and Sis. Sandra) of Eureka, IL have announced their engagement. We wish them God's richest blessings and direction as they make their wedding plans.

OHIO, LATTY

Heidi Hackenjos

Kathy Sinn

This month our Sunday School and Bible Class put on a beautiful Christmas program. They reminded us of Jesus' birth through their songs and recitations. They also reminded us that the gift of salvation does not stop at the manger and that Jesus went to the cross to be the Holy sacrifice for our sins if we will only believe in Him.

We have cause for rejoicing in our midst as Blane Stoller (Bro. Craig and Sis. Ruth) and Aaron Stoller (Bro. Jim and Sis. Tam) have begun their repentance. We pray God will be near them and give them the grace to build a firm foundation.

We are thankful that Matt Miller has been given the wonderful gift of peace. We look forward to hearing his testimony of what God has done for him.

What a blessing to hear the testimony and witness the baptism of our new sister in faith, Jessica Greutman (Bro. Greg and Sis. Kristy). May the Lord watch over Jessica as she begins her walk as a child of God.

Bro. Darin Laukhuf (Bro. Rod and Sis. Edie) and Sis. Erin Kipfer (Bro. Ron and Sis. Linda, Bluffton, IN) were united in marriage this past month in Bluffton, IN. We welcome Sis. Erin to our congregation in Latty and pray the Lord's blessing on the newly established family.

We are thankful for many visiting ministers this past month:

Bros. Don Gudeman (LaCrosse, IN), Earl Beery (Rittman, OH), Dale Wulf (Lester, IA), Dan Stoller (Remington, IN), Steve Gutwein (Francesville, IN), and Chris Wuethrich (Francesville, IN). Many came to visit with family over the holidays.

Sometimes our physical bodies need a healing touch. Spending time in the hospital this past month were Brian Wenninger (Bro. Dave and Sis. Deb), Philip Stoller (Bro. Leon and Sis. Deb), Bro. Dwight Stoller (Sis. Laurie) and Bro. Marvin Klopfenstein (Sis. Mary). May God grant a speedy recovery to these dear souls.

OHIO, MANSFIELD

John and Marci Pfeiffer

Our hospital patients this month were Bro. Phil Keiper (Sis. Theresa) and Bro. Ed Beer (Thelma). We are glad they are both able to gather with us again.

Bro. Sam Schlatter (Junction, OH) ministered unto us on November 21. May God bless him for his labor of love. In the evening, our church had a potluck supper and singing for our retired Elder Bro. Ken Sauder and his wife, Sis. Sue. We thank retired Elder Bro. Henry Dotterer (Rittman, OH) and Elder Bros. Merle Hartzler (Rittman, OH), Ken Indermuhle (Sardis, OH), Gene Pamer (Akron, OH) and Andy Stoller (Smithville, OH) for their services that evening. From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same (Psalm 113:3), the Lord was in our midst. May God richly bless Bro. Ken and Sis. Sue in their retirement.

On Thanksgiving weekend, we were blessed with the visit and service of Elder Bro. Aaron Steffen (Alto, MI). We appreciated his labors on our behalf.

We were privileged to hear the Conference Memorandum brought to us by visiting Elder

Bros. Bill Schlatter (Junction, OH), Andy Stoller (Smithville, OH) and our Elder Bro. Mark Masters on December 4.

Call and cry, ye watchmen,
boldly;

Call aloud and spare them not!
Truly stones could not help crying

If the watchmen's call would
cease!

Zion's Harp #112

Elder Bro. Bill Schlatter kindly ministered to us in the morning and afternoon on Sunday, December 5. May God reward him.

Our newly elected trustee is Bro. Mick Hill (Sis. Delores) and retiring is Bro. Tim Gerber (Sis. Wendy). Sis. Delores Hill (Bro. Mick) was voted onto the kitchen committee replacing Sis. Sieda Hill (Bro. Chip). Elected to World Relief sewing was Sis. Lilly Baumann (Bro. Mike, Jr.). Completing her term was Sis. Lillian Miller (Bro. John).

Our friend, Jon Hill (Bro. Chip and Sis. Sieda), has turned his life from the world and has made a beginning in the Lord through repentance. May God continue to be with him.

We are grateful for our Sunday School teachers for their service unto the Lord. We appreciated our annual Christmas program listening to the perfect praise of our children.

Sis. Leora Bocka and her son, Bro. Larry, are seeking assistance with domestic and other duties in their home. Please contact Bro. Larry at (419) 756-0716 if you have an interest in this opportunity.

Note of Thanks:

We would like to thank our brothers and sisters in Christ, our family and friends, for the many prayers, cards, gifts, and letters of

encouragement during the time of my surgery and recovery. May God bless each one.

Bro. Ken and Sis. Pat Beer

OHIO, RITTMAN

Lucy Gasser

Lynda Beery

Several of our loved ones have been suffering physical ailments for which they needed hospitalization: Mabel Goodwin, Bro. Jack Maibach, Bro. Glenn Gasser and Sis. Laura Queen. We wish them the blessing of our Lord's nearness each day.

On November 25, little Claudia Michelle was born to Bro. Jon and Sis. Mary Hartzler. She is welcomed into the family circles by grandparents, Bro. Vince and Sis. Jane Hartzler and Bro. Dave and Sis. Eileen Emch.

Sis. Alice Greenbank (Akron) was laid to rest in our church cemetery on December 1. Sis. Alice had been baptized in the Rittman church several years ago. Funeral services were held at the Rittman church by Elder Bro. Andy Stoller (Smithville, OH), Elder Bro. Gene Pamer, Bro. Dave Graf and Bro. Steve Pamer (all of Akron). We are glad that Sis. Alice could be released from her suffering, but our hearts go out with sympathy to her husband, Ken, and three children, Alec, Lea and Kevin.

Also laid to rest this past month was our dear retired Elder Bro. Joseph Ramsier. He faithfully served the Rittman church as Elder from 1973 until 1989. May our Heavenly Father comfort his family: son, Bro. Marvin (Sis. Terri); grandchildren, Bro. Dean (Sis. Julia) Ramsier, Sis. Linda (Bro. Nathan) Schar, Bro. Joe (Sis. Kendra) Ramsier; sisters, Sis. Anna Blough and Sis. Esther Saurer. Many visitors, including a number of ministers and Elders, came to pay their last respects to our Bro. Joe. Those

who assisted with the funeral services were Elder Bros. Gene Pamer (Akron, OH), Andy Stoller (Smithville, OH) and Ben Maibach (Detroit, MI). Bro. Joe will be sorely missed by our congregation, but we are thankful for his faithful example and loving service to the Lord and His Church.

Bro. Todd Stoller (Latty, OH) also visited us during the past month and brought to us the Word of Life. We thank God and our brothers who so willingly serve us time after time.

We are rejoicing that God is still calling souls to come to Him to find the more abundant life, and that Jesus' blood still has the power to cleanse their hearts. Stacy Bauman (Sis. Nancy) has heard that call and is seeking to find forgiveness and peace. We pray for her and all others who are in repentance, that they may in due time become God's children.

OHIO, SARDIS Angie Figel

December 13 was our annual Sunday School Christmas program. The innocent voices of our children singing praises to God for what He has done for us all caused many of us to get lumps in our throats, and tears in our eyes. It is our prayer that one day they too will be overwhelmed by the true, and full meaning of what Christ's coming to earth as a baby, and dying for our sins as a man, is all about.

OHIO, SMITHVILLE Edith Miller Ruth Gasser

May grace be with us ever,
The grace of Christ, the Lord,
May He, as here we journey,
His grace to us afford

Though sorrow be increasing
In faith we look to Thee.
Thou art the blessed Savior;
Thy coming we would see!

Thy grace we need forever
Without it we would fail.
In patience we shall conquer,
Through faith we shall prevail.
Zion's Harp #134

The grace of God was evident in the lives of four dear souls who gave their testimonies, and on November 28 became our brother and sisters in the Lord. They are Bro. Andy Dotterer, Sisters Becky and Bonnie Dotterer (Dale and Sis. Elaine) and Sis. Jessica Dotterer (Bro. Dave and Sis. Luanna). May they find this grace sufficient for each day in their new walk of life.

Two more souls have allowed the Lord to lead them through a conversion and now await baptism. We rejoice with Amber Miller (Bro. Max and Sis. Diane) and Arlene Troyer, and encourage them to continue in God's grace during this time. May their faith continue to grow. Marcia Martin (Adam), daughter of Bro. Mark and Sis. Sue Steiner, has recently begun her walk with the Lord, and is seeking her salvation through repentance. Surely God is good, and His grace greater than any of our needs.

We appreciate the labors of our Elders and ministering brothers who have served us recently from the Smithville pulpit. Elder Bros. Wayne Anliker (Forrest, IL), Merle Hartzler (Rittman, OH), and Bill Schlatter (Junction, OH) assisted with testimonies and baptisms. Also Bros. Marvin Dotterer (Forrest, IL), Mark Ramsier (Sardis, OH), and Larry Wenninger (Latty, OH) have faithfully served us "in season and out of season". May they feel the Lord's blessing and our prayers always.

Dan and Amy Blough became

first-time parents on December 15. Their precious blessing, Holly Christine, arrived in time for Christmas. The happy grandparents are Bro. Elmer and Sis. Lorene Blough and Evelyn Kaufman. May God give wisdom in their role as parents and grandparents. A young child is such a blessing, and adds new dimension to life - no wonder the Lord said we should become as little children.

Sorrow has had a part in the lives of many of our loved ones this past month. We extend our sympathy to Barbara Carmany in the loss of her father-in-law. Also, the family of Sis. Alice Greenbank of the Akron congregation is in our hearts and prayers. Her parents-in-law, Bro. Gordon and Sis. Emily, and sister-in-law, Sis. Janice Rufener (Bro. John), certainly feel the loss as well as Sis. Alice's husband and children.

Bro. John and Sis. Betty Dotterer have our prayers and sympathy in the loss of their son, Bro. Wendell (Forrest, IL). His brothers in our congregation are Dale (Sis. Elaine), Bro. Dave (Sis. Luanna), Bro. Joe (Sis. Rose), and sister-in-law, Sis. Linda Dotterer. May they feel our support in prayer.

Our former shepherd, retired Elder Bro. Joe Ramsier, laid his armor down on December 6, leaving his earthly house for "an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (II Cor. 5:1). We regret the loss of a "father of faith", but rejoice that his victory is won. We wish God's comforting Spirit for those left behind.

Those hospitalized in recent weeks are hopefully on the mend: Jeni Klotzle (Bro. Bob and Sis. Shirley), Elmer Zeiker, (Annabel), and Sis. Clara Hartzler. Sis. Inez Ramsier (Bro. Bob) received a cornea transplant, and we pray that it will be successful. May the Lord grant healing and faith to each one

in need of the same.

OREGON, PORTLAND

Louisa Gallup

Greetings everyone!

On November 24, family and friends gathered at the care facility where Sis. Margaret Banwart (Zaugg) resides to wish her well on her 90th birthday. That is quite a milestone. It was very nice of her daughters, Idl (Robert, dec.) Higgins, Betty Rae (Bob) Meyer and Elsie (Neil) Dryer to organize this special time to honor their dear mother.

Sis. Margaret is not able to assemble with us any more on Sundays; let us not forget to visit her when we can. Some day we may be in the same situation. Wouldn't we also welcome some companionship and support then?

We wish to thank Bro. Ed and Sis. Judie Knecht (Silverton, OR) for their support this month. Bro. Ed held our Thanksgiving service and one of the Sunday services as well. May God bless him for his willingness to serve. We also thank all our other visitors. We have been blessed with a fair number of them this past month. It is appreciated so much.

OREGON, SILVERTON

Rosa Lee Kuenzi

We have all been enjoying the various Christmas activities, some as participants, some as givers and some as receivers. Some have been busy baking cookies, Christmas breads and special family recipes for holiday meals, while others have been the thankful recipients of the same. Some have enjoyed lending their voices in the harmony of the beautiful Christmas carols and others have been privileged to sit and listen. While some people have shopped for or hand-crafted their gifts; others

have been the pleased receivers of, not only the gift, but the warmth of heart to know they were remembered. And many of us have been really privileged to be able to be both a giver and a receiver. Whenever we found ourselves this blessed holy day season, hopefully we did remember to be especially thankful for that first Christmas Day and all that our Lord has done for us ever since.

We had several of our dear brethren in the hospital this past month and are thankful all are recovering well at this time. They were Bro. Lewis Kuenzi (Sis. Gloria), Sis. Judie Knecht (Bro. Ed) and Sis. Janet Kuenzi (Bro. Jack).

PENNSYLVANIA PHILADELPHIA

Nathan Gasser

We're delighted to welcome Bro. Kurt and Sis. Kristin Slagel to our congregation from Fairbury, IL. Bro. Kurt has accepted an internship in our area starting in January 2000 and we look forward to sharing fellowship and worshipping with them.

This December brought many opportunities to worship our Lord in song, as many joined in several evenings of caroling, and we were blessed to witness our annual Sunday School Christmas program. We're so thankful for the many dear children in our congregation, and for the dedicated service of our Sunday School teachers. May we all learn from the children's example of simple faith and joy in praising our God.

We again have cause to praise and thank our merciful God for His healing power. Our dear friend, Keith Baer (Ed and Connie), is recovering remarkably from an auto accident last month. We're thankful he was able to return home from the hospital in time to spend Christmas with his family. May

God continue His healing work, and may He provide comfort and grace to Keith and his family.

We were also thankful last month to have our Elder Bro. Kevin Ryan and his wife, Sis. Cheryl, with us as we read the Memorandum. The exhortation to a greater faithfulness, the reminders of the blessings of the Faith we have been called to, and the warnings of the worldly influences that can creep into our lives as well as the church were all very timely, and helped each one of us to examine our lives in the mirror of God's Word. We appreciate Bro. Kevin and his family's efforts on our behalf. We were also thankful to have Elder Bro. Duane Farney (Croghan-Naumburg, NY) with us this last month, and appreciated his willingness to share God's Word to us.

TENNESSEE, NASHVILLE

Mike and Monica Fritz

This past month, we welcomed ministering Bros. Randy Kellenberger (Sis. Karen, Kansas City, MO) and Keith Beyer (Sis. Alisa, Detroit, MI). We thank these brothers for ministering to us from God's life-giving Word, and for the precious fellowship we enjoyed. We pray that God will bless them and their families for their efforts in the Lord's service and on our behalf. We were also privileged to enjoy fellowship with many visitors from Congerville, Eureka, Forrest, Princeville, and Roanoke, IL; Francesville and Remington, IN; and Latty, OH.

If you are traveling in the Nashville area, please plan to worship with us. We have visiting ministers scheduled on the first and third Sundays of each month, and tape services on the other Sundays. The following churches are scheduled for services in the near future: Bradford, IL (February 6); Latty,

OH (February 20); Remington, IN (March 5); and Athens, AL (March 19). If you are planning to worship with us, please call ahead to confirm our schedule. Contacts are Bro. Don and Faye Sauder (615) 373-8928; Bro. Mike and Sis. Monica Fritz (615) 952-9933 (email: Michael.Fritz@juno.com); and Sis. Gwen Leuthold (615) 662-2946.

**TEXAS, CENTRAL
Dan and Pam Sauder**

By now the media will have picked a man of the year and man of the century. Someone who has had a great impact on mankind. In the eyes of the believer, Christ can easily be chosen as the man for all ages. Isn't it amazing that 2000 thousand years after He walked here on earth men still find faith to believe on Him, and continue to watch and pray for His return?

Visiting ministers who have shared the Word with us this month were Bros. Jim Plattner (Sis. Marlene, Princeville, IL) and Ron Schambach (Sis. Nancy, Elgin, IL).

Our February schedule of worship services and churches sending

ministers include: the 6th at Austin (Congerville, IL), 13th at Austin (Wichita, KS), 20th at San Antonio (Bluffton, IN) and 27th at Bill Zeltwanger's home in Round Top (Fairbury, IL).

Visitors are always welcome. For your benefit, please call ahead to confirm our schedule. Contacts are Bro. Bill Zeltwanger (409) 249-5102; Brian and Terri Kaisner (512) 266-0178; Bro. David and Sis. Shella Brummitt (512) 360-3379; Sis. Dorothy Martin (210) 658-1968; and Bro. Dan and Sis. Pam Sauder (210) 651-4996.

**TEXAS, ZAPATA
Viola Perdelwitz
Melva Messner**

Not only are we coming to a New Year, but also to a New Millennium. Only God knows what the future holds in store for us.

A few verses taken from "The New Year" by Bro. Henry Beer states:

The years that come, the years
that go
As volumes written plain,
Are stood upon the shelves of

time
Where memories remain.

Each year is like a little book
With leaves and covers bound
Our deeds and acts are written
there,
The year's events are found.

We trust He may now record
Some deeds of truth and light!
May goodness in our life abound
To make the pages bright.

"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, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels."

Revelation 3:5

Elder Bro. Wayne Fehr (West Bend, IA) very ably exhorted us on this chapter. His prayer was that we adhere to God's precious Word and strengthen the things which remain. We want to thank Bro. Wahis willingness to serve us.



Sermon continued from page 2

miracle.

When a person has walked here in this life and taken on all the evil and all the things that confuse and confound the person, then they realize they are going nowhere. They decide their heart is far from God. They need to make some kind of a change...something has to be done if I have ever to see the Kingdom of God. Now that might not be very important to a lot of people in our world today, but I think it is important for everyone who is here. I don't believe there is anyone here (when we speak of this) that would scoff at that or have any other idea except that someday, "I would like to see that Kingdom."

Certainly in the world today as we go about our occupations and schooling and whatever it is, it seems that it is pretty unimportant to worry about seeing the Kingdom of God or to be a Christian person.

Just recently I was visiting with a young man and we were talking about what a good and what a bad thing it is to be on the Internet. Well, I am ignorant of that. I am not on it and I don't understand it. In his words, he was talking about how many evil things you can access on the Internet. So they decided to see how many good things there were to access, and he said it wasn't a fraction of good, Christian wholesome things that you could find as opposed to those that were evil. It was totally disgusting.

So we see that the odds are very, very stacked against Christianity, even perhaps as they were in that day. When one person in our country can have their voice heard to remove prayers from schools and do different anti-Christian things—and there are hundreds and hundreds and perhaps thousands of people who wanted to go the other way—but that one voice is able to turn it all back. There is something very wrong.

I guess that should not be surprising to us today. I guess that we

should realize how far humanity has slipped, and perhaps how close the return of our Lord is, because I think we definitely are synonymous with the return of our Lord and the evil and the ungodliness of this world.

So we see that which is flesh is not that which is of the Spirit. They have no dealings one with the other. They are completely opposite. So we have to understand that the rebirth of the Spirit must take place in the life of a grown person...a person who has the understanding to know what they are doing. It is not an emotional high. It is not something that we all of a sudden are hit with and then it kind of goes away and doesn't mean much. It is a true conversion that we get from God and from Jesus Christ.

Jesus said, "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." Because He said this is how elusive it is what I am trying to tell you. Because He said, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." (John 3:7-8). That is how elusive the comprehension of what the Spirit is and what the Spirit can do.

We don't see the outward, but we see the results, don't we? We see the results of the wind, and we see the trees bowing in the wind. We see the grass bending and whatever else, like the wires jumping when the wind is blowing. Obviously, we see the results. We see the results of God's Spirit. We see what that Spirit does in the lives of people, but we don't see the Spirit, do we?

It is something that we have to have faith in. We have to believe. We have to have a lot of faith; not just a little, but a lot of faith to believe that we can be born again of the Spirit, and that the power of the Spirit will direct us and will help us and It won't abandon us ever. God's Spirit is never going to and It never

has abandoned anyone who has made this beginning.

Nicodemus was still confused and said, "How can these things be?" (John 3:9). He just couldn't see it. Well, he was fleshly, wasn't he? He had no spiritual understanding, no enlightenment whatsoever from the Spirit. We are no different than he. "I just don't understand. It just doesn't mean anything to me. It just doesn't move me," we might have said or we might have heard someone say. I am sure we have.

This is what Jesus said to him, "You are a master of Israel, you are a leader, a Sanhedrin, and a ruler." He said, "You don't know these things?" (see John 3:10). Have we been brought to the Apostolic Christian faith for fifteen, eighteen, thirty, sixty, or seventy years and we don't understand these things? Maybe we do understand them. Why don't we do anything about them, I wonder? What will it take?

He said, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen, and ye receive not our witness." (John 3:11). I guess that is the answer right there, isn't it? We have spoken of these things and we told you, but you don't receive them. You don't hear them. You have no interest. Things are more important of this world, evidently.

He was chastising Nicodemus, wasn't He? He said you were not listening and that is why you can't understand how the Spirit works and what the Spirit can and will do for you.

He said, "Now if I have told you about earthly things, if we start talking about things of this world," then He said, "... and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?" (see John 3:12). So I guess He was comparing here (I was thinking) earthly things that we would visit about and understand and comprehend those things, but He said here, "If I have

Sermon continued next page

Sermon continued...

told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?" (John 3:12)

"And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:" (John 3:13-14). "One more time, Nicodemus, let Me teach you what the prophets of old have said...what Isaiah and many of the other prophets wrote about what is to take place and about what happened in the Old Testament Scriptures when Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness and all who looked upon it."

We are not slain by the serpent or the bite of a deadly serpent. Sin is certainly likened quite often to the bite of that deadly serpent, isn't it? It is fatal. It is spiritually fatal to be bitten with the serpent of Satan, his sin and things that he would lead us into.

"That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. 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 3:15-16). I think every converted soul and perhaps even some children know John 3:16. We have known that verse for a long, long time, haven't we? What a wonderful and beautiful verse it is! It says it all, doesn't it? It says everything that a Christian needs to know. It gives us hope. It gives us a desire.

"For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." (John 3:17). Did Jesus ever come and condemn this world as He taught here? He didn't condemn, did He? No. He is our Saviour.

He came to save us from eternal destruction. He came to spare us all the heartache and problems that we

have. It is our fault that we won't let Him. We restrain the workings of God's Spirit, don't we? We hold them back because of our weakness and because of our desires to do other things. We hold the power of that Spirit back.

"He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already," (John 3:18). Do we realize that? When you think about that, if we do not believe, and when we do not believe, it means that we are not doing anything about our soul's salvation. That is not believing, because we heard the Word this morning and we say, "I know that Jesus came and walked here and I know all the things that Jesus did and I believe that there was Jesus," but we don't believe because we don't do anything about it. So that is the kind of unbelief He is talking about and He says that with that mind, you are condemned already. Your life is lost. Your eternal spirit is lost if you do not believe enough to do anything about your salvation.

"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." (John 3:19). We say Amen to that, don't we? The deeds of this world and the darkness of this world is a force. A force that we cannot comprehend—we see it and we try to shield our children from it and we try to keep ourselves from it. We battle against that darkness every day. Every soul in this room battles against the darkness of Satan, because the deeds are evil. We know that most crimes are committed at night.

"For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved." (John 3:20). We read here in Isaiah about the wicked where God said, "There is no peace...to the wicked." (Isaiah 57:21). Jesus was being really hard on those who are wicked and those who are evil, and

He should be.

"But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God." (John 3:21). If we have any desires to change our life to do better, to do the things that we know, we must bring all our deeds to light, don't we? We found that out. If we have ever held anything back in repentance, we know it was a weight upon our back and we had to get rid of it. It all had to be brought to light. There is nothing dare to be hid from God, or from man at that point.

"After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judaea and there he tarried with them, and baptized. And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized. For John was not yet cast into prison." (John 3:22-24). Just the beginning here of our Lord and Saviour's ministry. Just the start. He said John was not yet in prison and we know that shortly after this, John sent a message and said, "Is Jesus really the One?" He had doubts in his mind, too, and here he was in prison.

"Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying. And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him. John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven." (John 3:25-27). Everything that we hope to receive in the Spirit (forget all material things now as we are not talking about any blessings of any kind in a material way), but everything that we receive in the Spirit, every bit of grace, every day that we overcome, every day that we have the strength to go on when some terrible tragedy befalls us is straight from Heaven.

CARIBBEAN BOARD PROJECTS - 1999-2000

All volunteers should contact the project coordinator. Should you not be able to contact the coordinator, for Haiti direct your inquiry to Bro. Tom Hitz, Ph. 734-454-9229. For Jamaica, direct your inquiry to Bro. Kevin Sauder, Ph./Fax 309-925-2409. Note: Bro. Harold Witzig has retired from the coordinating position.

COUNTRY	GROUP	DATE	AREA	COORDINATOR	PROJECT	CAP.	FULL
Haiti	AWA-FRW	Oct 21-29, '99	Les Cayes	Duane Schieler	Vocational Sch.	4	100%
Haiti	AWA-T	Oct 21-29, '99	Les Cayes	Earl Sauder	Water Aid	4	100%
Haiti	MEBSH	Dec 2-10, 99	Les Cayes	Les Gerber	Grade School	11	100%
Haiti	MEBSH	Jan 6-14, '00	Les Cayes	Craig Emch	Grade School	11	100%
Haiti	AWA-FRW	Jan 20-28, '00	Les Cayes	Duane Schieler	Vocational Sch.	4	100%
Haiti	AWA-T	Jan 20-28, '00	Les Cayes	Earl Sauder	Water Aid	4	100%
Haiti	MEBSH	Jan27/Feb4, '00	Les Cayes	Dean Pashak	Grade School	11	100%
Haiti	SEED	Feb 17-25, '00	Les Cayes	Bob Beebe	Agriculture Aid	11	100%
Haiti	MEBSH	Feb24/Mar3, '00	Les Cayes	Jim Walter	Grade School	11	100%
Haiti	Palm Grove	Mar 3-11, '00	Puits Sales	Tom Hitz	Grade School	11	100%
Jamaica	CCCD	Mar 3-11, '00	Kingston	Terry Miller	Deaf School	40	100%
Jamaica	CCCD	Mar 10-18, '00	Deaf Village	TBA	Work Place	40	100%
Haiti	SEED	Mar 30-Apr 7, '00	Les Cayes	Art Mueller	Agriculture Aid	11	100%
Haiti	MEBSH	Mar 23-31, '00	Les Cayes	Phil Isabel	Grade School	11	40%
Jamaica	CCCD	Apr 13-21, '00	Kingston	(1) Roanoke Bible Cl.	Deaf School	40/50	100%
Jamaica	CCCD	May 12-20, '00	Deaf Village	Andy Bauman	Work Place	40	100%
Jamaica	CCCD	May 12-20, '00	Montego Bay	TBA	Deaf School	40	100%
Haiti	Palm Grove	May 20-27, '00	Puits Sales	Tom Hitz	Grade School	11	100%
Haiti	AWA-FRW	May 25/June2, '00	Les Cayes	Duane Schieler	Vocational Sch.	5	40%
Haiti	AWA-T	May25/June2, '00	Les Cayes	Earl Sauder	Water Aid	5	40%
Jamaica	CCCD	June 3-10, '00	Deaf Village	(4) Taylor/Princeville Sunday School	Work Place	40/50	100%
Jamaica	CCCD	June 10-17, '00	Kingston	(2) Morton Bible Cl.	Deaf School	40/50	100%
Jamaica	CCCD	Jul 15-22, '00	Knockpatrick	(3) Mansfield Bible Cl.	Deaf School	40/50	100%
Haiti	AWA-FRW	Oct 19-27, '00	Les Cayes	Duane Schieler	Vocational Sch.	4	50%
Haiti	AWA-T	Oct 19-27, '00	Les Cayes	Earl Sauder	Water Aid	4	50%
Haiti	MEBSH	TBA	Les Cayes	Bob Pflederer	Hospital Lumiere	TBA	0%

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

Palm Grove = Mission of Haiti
 A.W.A. - B. = Apostolic Water Aid/Bluffton
 A.W.A. - FRW = Apostolic Water Aid/Francesville,
 Remington, Wolcott
 A.W.A. - T = Apostolic Water Aid/Tremont

COORDINATOR	PHONE	FAX
Earl Sauder	309-387-6357	309-387-6357
Duane Schieler	765-567-2922	765-567-2922
Craig Emch	330-939-4591	330-939-4591
Dean Pashek	517-662-7685	517-662-7099
Jim Walter	815-692-3158	815-692-2851
Bob Beebe	219-291-2158	219-299-8173
Phil Isabel	219-261-3541	219-261-2885
Terry Miller	309-747-2212 or 941-485-4302	
Tom Hitz	734-454-9229	TBA
Bob Pflederer	309-266-5853	309-676-8455
(1) Kevin Fischer	309-923-7684	
(2) John Knobloch	309-263-1092	
(3) Pete Webel	419-756-2587	
(4) Kent Heimer	573-393-2440	
Andy Bauman	309-965-2174	309-691-6739
Les Gerber	219-824-2734	219-824-8048
Art Mueller	608-676-4365	608-676-5200

Mexico Work Teams

Construction - Rio Bravo (ICCD)

*International Christian
Center for the Deaf*

February 19 - 26, 2000

Contact Bro. Mike Fiechter
(219) 597-7330

Team Leader - Bro. Chad Lantz
(219) 565-3463

Medical - Juarez

February 23 - March 1, 2000

Contact Sis. Cheryl Herrmann
(309) 385-1082

Construction - Juarez March 4-11, 2000

Contact Bro. Kurt Ifer
(219) 824-2829

Construction - Juarez March 11-18, 2000

Contact Bro. Jeff Sauder
(217) 367-1427 or (309) 925-3215

Construction - Agua Prieta March 11-18, 2000

Contact Bro. Wayne Lehman
(219) 773-4373

Construction - Juarez March 18-25, 2000

Contact Bro. Jay Grube
(219) 565-3402

Construction - Juarez March 25 - April 1, 2000

Contact Bro. Jeff Leman
(219) 565-3815

U.S.A. Work Projects

We currently have opportunities for Work Teams for after-flood rebuilding in North Carolina and Virginia. Weekly openings are available through March. As soon as a desired date is known, it is recommended that the time slot be reserved. The openings often fill up early. Please contact Bro. Arnold Gerst by phone (217) 223-8424, fax (217) 223-0116, or e-mail agerst@rnet.com.

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.

USED EYEGLASSES ARE NEEDED FOR FREE IXTLAN CLINIC

A free eye clinic is being established in Ixtlan, Mexico, by Bros. Dr. Loren Schrenk and Dr. Bryan Stoller. Used eyeglasses are needed to support this effort. Please send your used prescription eyeglasses (with cases if available) to:

Bryan Stoller
817 S. Locust
Pontiac, IL 61764

Gateway Woods Auction Saturday, August 19, 2000



ASSISTANT HOUSEPARENT OPENING

Gateway Woods has appreciated the Lord's blessing of being fully staffed with Houseparents for some time now. Sis. Terri Gramm will be leaving Gateway Woods in March of 2000 so we will have an opening for a single sister, directed of the Lord, to work in a full-time ministry with troubled children. The Assistant Houseparent position offers competitive wages and benefits and a close relationship with brothers and sisters whose hearts and lives are dedicated to a mission with an eternal reward. If you feel the call to explore the possibilities, please call one of the brothers listed below.

Jeff Schumacher
Residential Program Director
PO Box 151
Leo, IN 46765
(219)627-2159

Phil Stettner
Counseling Elder
1780 N 450 E
Bluffton, IN 46714
(219)565-3499

- 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.

**WE DO NOT ACCEPT ZION'S
HARP HYMNALS SINCE WE DO
NOT HAVE ANY PLACE TO DIS-
TRIBUTE THEM.**

Continue to bring used Bibles, Bible Story Books, Hymns of Zion, Tabernacle, or Gospel Hymn Books to:

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

Director of Operations

(formerly Assistant Administrator)
Position available Feb/March 2000

Desired credentials:

Godly focus, committed to Church
Strong financial skills (CPA or equivalent)
Managerial experience (Staff supervision)
Skillful and comfortable with people
(Communication)

Benefits:

Attractive compensation and benefit package
Career Ladder: Opportunity for advancement
Positive, growth-oriented culture

Responses handled confidentially at:

Woodhaven Retirement Community

29667 Wentworth Avenue
Livonia, MI 48154-3256

Attn: Randy Gasser
(734) 261-9000

ANNOUNCEMENT REGARDING THE ZION'S HARP REVISION

The Elder Body has approved the publication of a revised Zion's Harp hymnal. The Apostolic Christian Publications has a very limited supply of the prior version on hand and these will be available for sale until the existing supply is exhausted. We will not be reordering any more of the prior version due to the need to move forward with the new version as quickly as possible. We are taking great care to insure that the new printing will be of high quality. For this reason the exact timing of the availability of the new edition is not certain. Lord willing, the new edition will be available in the first quarter of next year. Should you have a desire for a copy of the old edition, you may contact the Bookstore in Eureka. If the supply is exhausted you may wish to contact your local church or surrounding churches to see if they might have copies available to meet your needs. We will make an announcement in a future Silver Lining to inform you when the new edition of the Zion's Harp is available. Thank you for your understanding during this period of transition.

The Apostolic Christian Publications Committee

BIBLE DISTRIBUTION

The Bible Distribution Center which was formerly in Leo, IN has been moved to Bluffton, IN.

All books, including Bibles, in English and other languages, plus Bible Story Books which have been approved by the Apostolic Christian Mission Committee, are available for those who wish to distribute them in the name of Jesus Christ.

The book inventory is computerized, and the personnel at Bluffton can drop ship to nearly any address.

To order, contact,

Apostolic Christian Church
Bible Distribution
PO Box 30
1254 S. Main Street
Bluffton, IN 46714
Phone and Fax 219/824-5587

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ATTENTION WW II Veterans REUNION AT

Morton, IL, June 3-4, 2000

All veterans of WWII are invited. Brothers, sisters, and friends. Watch for Registration cards to be sent to all Apostolic Christian Churches.



Education Coordinator

Gateway Woods needs an experienced, organized, licensed teacher to fill the position of Education Coordinator. Responsibilities include: coordinate Gateway Woods School including teachers and students, organize Gateway Woods' summer program, teach remedial classes, supervise tutors in our after-school program, enroll residents in GWS or public school, serve as a liaison with public school, maintain education records and be a Christ-like example in serving others for His glory. If you feel the Lord leading you to inquire about this position, please contact us.

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This year, the "Remembering" column will feature a series of articles describing the most noteworthy events occurring in the church during the past 100 years. The following article could very well be placed at the top of the list.

The Trial of 1908

The adjustment to a new country was not always easy for the brethren when they came to America. Back in Europe—as a new group of believers disdained by the state church—they kept to themselves to avoid the eye of state authorities.

In America, they held to the same attitude. In some ways the wall of culture and language kept them separate from their "English" counterparts. They were somewhat as the "quiet in the land" like the Anabaptists three centuries earlier.

As a result, it was a significant jolt to the brethren when six officials were taken to court in 1908 following a lawsuit by a man who had been excommunicated at Roanoke, IL. Never had the church in America encountered anything like this.

The lawsuit asked \$50,000. This would translate to a huge sum in today's currency. Defendants were Elders Rudolph Witzig, Gridley, IL; Andrew Rapp, Morton, IL; Michael Mangold, Roanoke, IL; and Christian Gerber, Fairbury, IL. Also named were ministers John W. Schmidt, Roanoke, IL; and John W. Schneider, Peoria, IL.

These brothers were charged with conspiracy and persecution in connection with the plaintiff's expulsion from the church at Roanoke. The latter contended the church leaders pro-

hibited members from purchasing farm implements from him following his dismissal from the church.

The defendants hired counsel (a new experience for them) and attempted to defend themselves against what they considered erroneous charges. They pleaded "not guilty". Press coverage was sensational and the defendants — and the church — were subject to severe ridicule.

Newspapers presented the trial as front page news. Headlines were splashed on the pages of the Peoria dailies for the duration of the trial. Typical of these headlines were: "*Law invoked to end relentless rule of Czar of the New Amish Church;*" "*Accuser tells story of persecution: dramatic statements of Plaintiff;*" "*Curious crowds throng corridors.*"

The church was referred to as "New Amish"; and portrayed as very strict. It showed pictures of the Elders in long black coats with broad-rimmed hats.

Adding to an unfavorable image was the way in which the defendants were described in one article:

"They were all far past middle age and most of them old men, their faces lined with the marks indelibly stamped by the rigors of their years of self-repression, their shaven lips and bearded chins, dressed in plain garments, collars guiltless of cravats, unrelieved by any sign of color, they seemed men cut out of granite for whom all the pleasure and poetry of life had been denied and only the most rigorous of realities left."

Elders Witzig and Mangold, along with minister Schmidt took the stand. Bro. Mangold said the Bible guided the church, and was followed according to the definitions of the Elder

Body. He read New Testament verses pertaining to excommunication.

The ordeal ended when two Elders were found guilty. They were Bros. Rudolph Witzig and Mike Mangold. They were fined \$1,000. They paid the fine, and quietly went home. They did not appeal. Over the years very little was said about the trial. Generations grew up and knew virtually nothing about it. In the 1980's, when researching the history book, *Marching To Zion*, news of the trial surfaced.

For a church attempting to adjust to a new nation, and to hold fast to the newly-established faith, the trial's negative publicity and guilty verdict deeply affected the church leadership. It tended to arouse a stronger tendency of isolation from the culture around them.

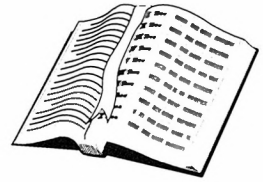
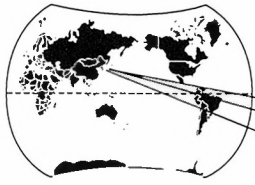
In retrospect, such a trial in America probably ended better than a similar accusation had it occurred in Europe, where the state was often hostile to groups such as those established by Bro. Froehlich. Here in America, the defendants could obtain counsel, conduct cross-examinations, and present evidence. A judge insured that fairness would favor neither the plaintiff or the defendants. The verdict, however, caused sorrow among the brethren.

*By: Perry A. Klopstein
Gridley, Illinois*

Next Issue:
The First Split in 1906

The Light Of Hope

From Across The Ocean



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“NEW”

Elder Bro. Willis Ehnle, Shioda, Japan

Most people like new things, a new house, a new car, new clothes. We also like to be a new person, clean, pure and holy. “Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.” (II Corinthians 5:17). Now we have a new year, the year 2000.

If “new” means purity and holiness, we are all for it. But we don’t want any new forms of sinfulness and ungodliness. In the new year, let’s go for the purity and holiness.

In Isaiah 42:10 we read, “Sing unto the Lord a new song.” Let’s learn more new hymns. In Exodus 1:8, we read, “Now there arose up a new king,” which is a reminder that Americans will choose a new president in the new year of 2000. Ecclesiastes gives a different thought by stating, “There is no new thing under the sun.” (1:9). To us, a computer which sends Email is a new device but the potential has always been there. Man just didn’t know how to do it. Lamenta-

tions 3:23 reads, “They (the Lord’s mercies) are new every morning.” Every morning is the beginning of a new and wonderful day, filled with the mercies of the Lord, if we are walking in His ways.

In Ezekiel 11:19 we read, “I will put a new spirit within you.” God was speaking of restoring Israel to their promised land and that at that time, He would put a new spirit of obedience in their hearts. In this new year, let’s pray that God will put a new spirit within us, also.

John 13:34 reads, “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.” Simply to love one another is not so new, but for each of us to love our church enough to die for our brothers and sisters, that’s something to strive for. We may not be there yet.

Hope is an essential part of human life. We need to have hope, we must have hope. Revelation

21:5 gives us hope. “Behold, I make all things new.”

In regard to the resurrection of the bodies of the saints, or believers, I Cor. 15:44 reads, “It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.” That’s a new body.

Thinking about the concept of “new”, something I memorized many years ago in my younger school days, comes flooding back. I do not have it in print but I have it in my heart. Neither do I know the author but I think the title is, “Look To This Day”.

“Look to this day, for it is life, the very life of life. In it’s brief course, lie all the verities and realities of your existence, the bliss of hope, the glory of action, the splendor of achievement. Today well lived makes every yesterday a dream of happiness, and every tomorrow, a vision of hope. Look well, therefore, to this day. (And to this new year, 2000).”

May God give each of us a new smile, every day of the new year.

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As the cold of snow in the time of harvest, so is the faithful messenger to them that send him: for he refresheth the soul of his masters.

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