



The Silver Lining

Consider the work of God: for who can make that straight, which He hath made crooked

February 2000

“FAITH IS SIGNIFICANT”

Sermon by Bro. Greg Rassi, Chicago, IL

Amos 9 and Hebrews 11

When we opened God's Word, we looked forward to seeing the scriptures that God would open unto us to help us to understand Him better. This morning we opened to the Book of Amos and read a chapter which really talks mostly about judgment, but also reminded us that even through that great judgment that fell upon the children of Israel, God still had His eye upon a remnant. The time would come when those people would be restored and we read this verse here which talks about, "I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them." (Amos 9:14).

We read that prophesy about them returning to their land and immediately our minds go back and think about what happened in 1948 when the Jews began to return. We think about how they have been preserved through war and how even though their neighbors hated them and outnumbered them and had great strength, we think about how they have been preserved through those different times of war.

They continue to be preserved today and we also think today about the peace that is being negotiated, and the struggles that are still taking place over there. We wonder how does that fit with these Scriptures we read. Did God foresee all those things? The answer is, "Yes, He did." God truly did foresee all these things.

Has God foreseen us? The answer is, "Yes, He has foreseen us." He sees us, loved ones, where we are. He saw us when we were born and He sees us as we live, loved ones. He also knows our end, doesn't He?

What is important is that we open the Scriptures to understand how God chooses those that are faithful unto Him. It is important, isn't it? Because when we read those Scriptures there about Amos, we don't want to be the ones that were cast out of God's sight. We don't want to be the ones upon whom the hills melted. We don't want to be the ones who were cast out of their land, had no inheritance, had no hope, or had no purpose.

That happened to those people, loved ones. Think about it. We have seen glimpses of it, even in our own day and time when people are thrown out of their homes, they are killed, they lose all their possessions, they are told to pick up what they have and to become refugees. We have seen that in our own day and time. Can we relate to that, loved ones? That is what it is like not to believe in the Lord and have faith. But that is the judgment that will come to everyone who fails to have a faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Can we relate that to the pictures we see in the paper? Can we relate that to ethnic cleansing?

We say God is merciful. He surely is, loved ones. He has great mercy. If we don't think He has great mercy, look through all these names that we read in the Book of Hebrews. Right from the very beginning, God has had mercy. Remember Eve and Adam disobeyed and they were worthy of death. God gave them one simple rule to obey there in the Garden of Eden, and they failed to obey it.

Yes, they were deceived, and, yes, I am sure there were many times when they wished they could have gone back and undone what they did. But God was merciful. He gave them a promise right from the beginning that a Saviour would come. The enemy would be defeated, but

they had to be faithful, loved ones, and that faith began there with Adam and Eve teaching it—teaching it to Cain. Yes, Cain was taught about faith, just like Abel was and like Seth was. They were taught about faith and what it meant to believe in God.

But there came a time when God asked them to show their faith.

Sermon continued on page 44

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

Light From The Word



Writings based
on God's Word

February 2000

Sowing Discord II

The previous editorial focused on the need to avoid sowing discord. This article focuses on some of the causes of discord.

We can find in Solomon's writings warning about attitudes that cause discord. "An ungodly man diggeth up evil:...A froward man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends" (Prov. 16:27-28).

There are individuals in the world, and possibly even within the church, who seem to derive pleasure in finding out about the failures and shortcomings of others (digging up evil) and spread them around for others to see. They use the weaknesses of others to make their lot even more difficult. This can cause discord in a family, a community, or a church. One who goes boldly, or anonymously (See Oct. '98 editorial) about, causing grief for others is surely guilty of causing discord. We would do far better if we would be desirous to help a struggling soul to find peace and contentment in the Lord, rather than to make his or her lot heavier.

A froward person is one who is stubbornly willful or contrary. A froward attitude is referred to numerous times in the scripture and is described as "...abomination to the Lord:..." (Pr. 3:32) and "...The froward mouth do I hate" (Pr. 8:13). Therefore, we can understand from scriptural teachings that if we have a froward, or contrary, attitude we will sow strife among those with whom we associate. If we find ourselves with a stubborn or contrary attitude, we need to seek the grace of God to change and become pliable and submissive to God's will.

Perhaps one of the most damaging activities that one can do to cause discord among friends is whispering, a form of gossiping. As indicated earlier, the scriptures tell us that this will even separate "chief" friends—those who are our best friends, the ones upon whom we depend most for support as we try to serve our God.

The scripture describes the agony caused by disappointment that comes when there is discord caused by those we love and trust. "For it was not an enemy that reproached me. Then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him: But it was

thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company" (Ps. 55:12-14).

Discord caused by those who count themselves as our enemy cause us pain and disappointment, but we can bear up under those circumstances. We almost expect Satan to bring some disruption to our lives when we deal with unbelievers. But when the discord comes from one with whom we took sweet counsel and with whom we walked into the house of God, the pain is much greater.

Therefore, we can readily understand that anything that we would do to cause this heartache would be an abomination to the Lord. Also, we must realize that if whispering will go so far as to separate chief friends, what devastating impact will it have on a relationship that is a bit more fragile?

There are probably few activities that can cause discord within the brotherhood more quickly than undermining the leadership of the church or not supporting the fundamental doctrine of the faith. We are instructed to be very careful that we are not guilty of these sins.

"Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses" (I Tim. 5:19). The Apostle Paul understood the devastating impact that undermining leadership would have on the Church. This does not mean that church leadership is above receiving criticism. It does mean that such criticism must only be done when we are certain that our information is an accurate description of the problem and, it must only be done in a manner that will bring forth results that will strengthen the individual and the church. If we have a concern about the leadership of the church, we should prayerfully consider the matter before taking any action. We need to be certain that we are following the leading of the Holy Spirit and not our own emotions. Often when accusations are made, they are based on incomplete information which leads to an inaccurate conclusion. When one believes it to be necessary to approach church leadership in this manner, it must be done with humility and a deep concern for the welfare of the individual and the

brotherhood.

Rather than undermining the leaders, we need to provide prayerful support. Every brother and sister has a responsibility in this work. If each of us will do what the scripture teaches, it will provide significant support for the undershepherds of the flock and ministers of the gospel.

In addition to undermining church leadership, we know that the time will come when some "...will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (II Tim. 4:3-4).

How serious is this offense? "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" (Heb. 10:28-29). Quite obviously, the offense is a very serious one.

To help ourselves eliminate the likelihood of sowing discord we should "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Tim. 2:15). Also, if we "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you" (Heb. 13:17), we will strengthen the brotherhood.

We are also instructed to remember to lift up the hands of those who are in positions of responsibility and "Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified..." (II Thess. 3:1).

Each of us has an obligation and an opportunity to strengthen the brotherhood and help preserve the faith that has been given to us. One way we can do this is to sow peace and harmony rather than 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

A Continuing Report

Church in Ukraine

Sunday, October 3, 1999

After a long day on Saturday, October 2, at Elder Karcia's, the travelers finally got to bed about 11:30 PM. Morning seemed to come quickly. Some are feeling sickness coming on, and are taking antibiotics that they brought along. We hope no one gets sick!

About 8:50 AM we set out over the dirt roads and paths to the Korovia church. On our first trip here in 1992, the building was under construction, and we filled it with the semi load of consumer goods we brought in from the West. Since everything is now available in the country, they have asked that we bring money instead of goods, which is far easier for us. Anyway, there was the typical order prior to and during services. Ernst Pfister had services with Phillip Augustinov translating.

About 12:30 PM a meal was served in the home just across the courtyard from the Korovia church. Elder Peter Karcia's daughter lives in this home, and has all the necessary facilities. There is also a telephone there, and some of the group called home, which they really appreciated.

Afternoon visiting

Following lunch the travelers made house calls all afternoon. First visit was to the Predji family who had the terrible explosion that killed the father and burned others. The American brethren compared notes in the van afterwards concerning assistance to this family. There has been a lot of interest among the American brethren about this situation, and the group tried to

evaluate the present circumstances of this family.

Evening services in Ostrita

In the evening the group went to the Ostrita church which is in Elder Vasile's home. This is the largest congregation in Bukovina, and they really need more room. Actually, the number of people crowded into this small assembly room with a balcony is dangerous. Bro. Phil Stettner kept eyeing the situation with the prayer that the balcony didn't collapse under the huge load. Services began when everyone was there, sometime after 5:00 PM. Bro. Phil preached with Janos Namenji translating into Romanian. He is from Hungary and does very well with the English language.

Needs for this winter

When our brethren discussed the horrible economic situation of the Ukrainian brethren during the Saturday meeting, they told them that it is their purpose to try to assure that no one is cold or hungry this coming winter. When Elder Vasile told the congregation that following the evening services, the old sisters sobbed aloud.

After the long process following services, they began singing about 8:10 PM. The singing was just beautiful. Everything finally settled down about 10:00 PM after which the group had supper in Vasile's family quarters. Following this they retired to their beds for what was left of the night.

New church in Ostrita

Since the visit of our American brethren to this church, a number of things have occurred. Elder Vasile Paladean has traveled to and visited

in Germany, and numerous telephone conversations have been the result of that visit.

At the present time, the congregation in Ostrita has been given approval by the European Board as well as the Mission Committee to proceed in planning and hopefully building a new worship facility for this congregation.

Several Ukrainian brothers have banded together and received approval from the authorities to build a multi-family house which would include a large room to be used for church services. Because the group does not see the way open to register themselves as a church, they must build a residence. At this time the American brethren are awaiting further information.

It is our hope that they could begin building in the Spring of this year, and at last have a facility which could accommodate this large congregation.

What the future holds

No one knows exactly what will come, but the European Board is encouraged with the progress of the work in Ukraine thus far, and trust that God will open the way for us to assist these needy brethren both materially and spiritually. Our American brethren obviously have a heart for this work, and we hope to continue to keep them informed as events progress.

Further information

Trip diaries are available from several travelers. For information write:

Gene Lehman
16112 West Street
Remington, IN 47977



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

Caribbean Board News Update

The Caribbean Board has made some changes recently that affect the make up of the Board. Presently the coordinators and Board consist of Bros. Ron Messner, (Washington, IL) Counseling Elder; Roger Sauder (Ft. Lauderdale, FL) Chairman; Robert Pfladderer, (Morton, IL) Medical; Robert Beebe, (South Bend, IN) Agricultural; Earl Sauder, (Tremont, IL) Trade schools; Kurt Munsel, (Bay City, MI) Jamaica Material Aid; Tom Hitz, (Detroit, MI) Haiti Work Teams; Kevin Sauder, (Tremont, IL) Jamaica Work Teams.

Bro. Harold Witzig (Morton, IL) will assist Bros. Tom Hitz and Kevin Sauder during the work team season then rotate off the Board in April. We thank Bro. Harold for his many years of World Relief work and his contribution to the Caribbean Board.

Haiti coordinators

Bro. Eric and Sis. Rhonda Tonner, (Bluffton, IN) with the support of the World Relief Committee and the Mission Committee have been sent to Haiti to oversee our work teams and other projects on a full time basis. They will be coming home for two weeks at Christmas and two months in the summer.

They have been joined by Bro. Jan and Sis. Val Gutwein and their three children who plan to stay from January 14 through March 11.

Their duties in addition to helping with the work teams, consist of communicating needs for sea container shipments, water and trade school projects and as always in Haiti, preparing for the unexpected.

The current work team season schedule is located in the back of this issue.

Evaluation trip

Four members of the Board and three of their wives made a trip to Haiti on October 20-27. It is our responsibility to make sure the funds that are given in love for this work are spent properly and as directed. We meet with the staffs of the various projects and hospitals to ascertain the effectiveness of our work and to gather the current needs and make any changes deemed necessary to achieve the World Relief goals.

Political situation is still unstable

The political and economic climate is still very unstable. However, the churches seem to be growing as people turn to the Lord in dire times.

We did see improvement on the roadways. New asphalt is being laid in several areas, making travel much more comfortable as compared to the rough unfinished roads that remain.

We traveled in a one year old air conditioned Toyota van that was purchased through World Relief funds. All the team members are thankful for a safe trip and for your prayers.

New projects

In addition to our ongoing projects several more opportunities have been shared that will facilitate more work teams to be able to share in the work.

- Projects at Hospital Lumiere for additional storage will be considered.
- A school for handicapped students will be given start-up funding.
- Funds to repair the generator that provides electricity for the mission compound and future upgrading of the system have been approved.
- We are considering another irrigation project as water is such a

precious commodity and many areas are drought stricken. Clean water continues to be one of the greatest needs, not only in the Caribbean, but also throughout the developing nations of the world.

Requests for support of new projects

We receive inquiries from brothers and sisters from time to time about projects they have become acquainted with and would like World Relief to assist them with funding.

Many of these projects are large in scope and although they may be good projects to help the needy, with our limited funding we do not feel it would be prudent to become involved with projects that would take away funding from existing projects.

However, from time to time some additional funds become available and new visions can be entertained, so we ask that brethren would continue to keep the Caribbean Board informed as to special needs that they discover.

Heartfelt thanks to our faithful supporters

We want to thank brothers, sisters, and friends for their prayers and financial support of the Caribbean projects. Many hours are spent in gathering materials for sea containers and preparing for work teams.

Without the support of large numbers of people, each of whom contributes their own efforts to the ongoing programs, little could be done.

The recipients in Haiti as well as all those who plan and coordinate thank each of you for your continued support.

APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN HOME FOR THE HANDICAPPED

Someone who devoted her life to working with the poor and disadvantaged once said, "We can not do great things; only small things with great love." Of course, the great love being Jesus Christ. When we serve God where He wants us to serve then we are doing small things with great love. In thinking about our people, it's not the big things that stand out. It's the many, many small things that show how much our people care. When a friend is down you may see someone offer to play a game or hold their hand. When a friend has good news, the people will share in the news as well. Our people may not always show great strides but we often say, "if we could just love as our people do." Our people don't care what your job is but how you do your job. Since the great love is Jesus, couldn't we say that Jesus doesn't care where we live but how we live. Let's remember it is the small things done with great love. To celebrate the Valentine's Day, our group homes will attend banquets at local restaurants. It is always fun to dress up and go out to dinner with your friends.

Our dear friend, Mike Bodtke, passed away on December 27 rather suddenly. He had lived with us for over 24 years, lastly at Hazelwood. We know that his roommates and staff will miss Mike's wide range of trivia facts and mischievous smile. We want to remember Mike's mom, sister and brother as we know that Mike will be missed at the family times.

MARCH birthdays at **TIMBER RIDGE** are: Judy Grimm (6), Margo Ebert (12), Susan Crose (15), Jeff Zimmerman (17), Tom Christensen (20), Edna Haynes (23), Jon Wilhelm (26) and Nancy Meister (31). At **OAKWOOD ES-**

TATE: Maretta Rokey (6) and Sheila Steffen (9). At **207 WAGLER:** Anna Eberhard (15).

GATEWAY WOODS APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN CHILDREN'S HOME Jan Baumgartner

The New Year started out with excitement for the Wiegand family as Bro. Chuck and Sis. Naomi were blessed with a little girl on January 1st named Gabriella. She was born quite prematurely, weighing 2 pounds and 11 ounces at birth. They were not able to bring their precious little bundle home from the hospital as she had many complications from her early arrival. She is making slow improvement and was recently taken off the respirator so is now breathing on her own, and is starting to drink a little milk as has been fed intravenously. Her brothers, Demetrius and Sebastian, are anxious for their baby sister to come home, but she will be in the hospital at least 2 more months. The Wiegands are thankful for the past prayers and for each little step of progress, but there is a continued need for prayer for little Gabriella and the Wiegand family.

Houseparents, Bro. Arlo and Sis. Lisa Kipfer, welcomed Isaac Jadon into their family on January 4. Isaac joins his big brothers, A.J. (4) and Luke (2 years, 4 months).

Sis. Aimee (Meyer) Stoller has joined the Gateway Woods staff as a Counseling Intern for the next few months. This internship will help Aimee complete her Bachelor's degree in child Development and Family Studies. Aimee will also assist Houseparents in the absence of an Assistant Houseparent and will work with Bro. Kevin Fiechter in the Home-Based Program. We welcome her and thank her for helping us in this special

way!

We have all been forced on campus to slow down and look at the beauty of God's creation with the closing of school and cancellation of many things because of snowy road conditions. The changes on campus and in foster care have slowed recently to give us time to reflect more intently on the children already in care. We did welcome Lisa F. on January 8 in the Bauman House, and it is anticipated that John H. will be returning home soon. Also Marie C. should be leaving foster care soon to live with her maternal aunt.

There are anticipated changes in residential staff here that involve openings for Assistant Houseparents, Alternate Houseparents, and the Education Coordinator positions. Please see the articles about these positions for more details.

We also are in need of more specialized foster homes. We presently have 17 foster children in care and have 19 licensed foster homes, but are still in need of more homes. Several of our foster homes are only licensed to provide Respite Care or relief for our foster parents when they need a break. Every foster home has limitations in the age, sex, or type of child they can deal with especially considering their own and other foster children in the home. We have had several referrals recently for a child that we had to turn down as we just did not have the right foster home to fit that child's needs. Foster parenting is a service that can be done right in your own home as more and more abused and neglected children need to experience a stable Christian family with a Mom and Dad. Most of the children in care have not had a Dad in their home, let alone the experience of seeing a Christian marriage and family. The children placed in fos-

ter care through our program are sometimes former residents of Gateway Woods who are ready to leave the residential program but can't return home to their own families. We also place children directly from their own homes or other placements through the Department of Family and Children in different Northeast Indiana counties. Therefore, we have children ranging in age from 1 year to 17 years of age with a variety of special medical, educational, and emotional needs. At this time we can't license homes a great distance from Leo as we supervise the homes from Leo, but we recently sent out a survey to determine the feasibility of supervision and licensing foster homes outside of our area.

I have a saying posted in my office: "A hundred years from now it will not matter what my bank account was, the sort of house I lived in, or the kind of car I drove—but the world may be different because I was important in the life of a child." When we think about the Word of God influencing the life of a child, and that child influencing their children, there is hope for this dark sinful world. It is also a ministry for the entire family that teaches your own children to give to others in a real way. If you are prayerfully considering a residential position, contact Bro. Jeff Schumacher, or Bro. Phil Stettner. If you are considering being licensed as foster parents, contact Bro. Bill or Sis. Jan Baumgartner at the Gateway Woods office.

All are welcome to our Representative Meetings to be held on March 11 in Leo, Indiana, and on March 18 in Goodfield, Illinois. If you are interested in Gateway Woods, would like to learn more about our various programs, and meet with current Gateway Woods staff members, please join us. Con-

tact the Gateway Woods Office for more information (toll-free: 888/443-4283).

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

After a two week break for Christmas, phrases like "Welcome back" and "Did y'all have a nice Christmas?" were heard Monday morning, January 3. It is great to see the students come back with eagerness and anticipation of what the day holds.

We started the New Year with the monthly themes of Manners, Family and the color Purple. It is a good time to evaluate how we are doing when it comes to good manners. As the teachers know and realize, so much of what children do is what they see the adults in their lives do. We tell our children to say "Please" and "Thank you", "You're welcome" and "I'm sorry", but do we remember to say these special words ourselves? They will learn from our example more than from our words.

As we work with the topic of Families, it makes us realize how few students still have what we would consider to be complete family. So many, even at the young preschool age, have the heartache of a broken family, or a single parent family. It is hard for some of them to relate to the loving, two parent family that God intended for them to be raised in. Please say a prayer for these students and also for the work being done here.

We still have an immediate need of another teacher here at the Preschool. If you or someone you know would be interested in serving the Lord here at the Preschool, please call Bro. Lavoyd Moore at (256) 232-2035.

**ALABAMA, ATHENS
Joan Reinhard**

On New Year's Eve we had a service and chili supper at the Fellowship Hall. It was an enjoyable time for all who could come, and a good way to bring in the New Year. As we discussed our thoughts about the year 2000 and our plans (Lord willing), the comment was made by one brother that he had the goal of getting closer to the Lord this year. It sounds like such a simple goal and yet as we look into it further, we find that it is all encompassing for the Christian. The closer we are to our Heavenly Father, the more we will be like Him in our thoughts and actions. What more could we be striving for than to be more Christ-like. We pray that this new year could be a time of blessing for all.

Bro. Tim and Sis. Joan Reinhard have a special new blessing this year already. Hannah Marie was born on January 13. She was eagerly welcomed by her big sisters, Sis. Kristin Meister, Sarah and Bethany. Also happy about her safe arrival are grandparents, Bro. Dan and Sis. Deloris Reinhard (Bluffton, IN) and Bro. Paul and Sis. Rhonda Meister (Peoria, IL).

We would continue to ask for prayers for our Bro. Ed Haggemaker. He is recovering from a broken ankle, but his recovery has been slow and painful. He has still not been able to fellowship with us yet and any cards or words of encouragement would be appreciated. His address is: 26647 Henderson Rd., Madison, AL 35756.

We are thankful for the arrival of Bro. Sam and Sis. Linda Schlatter (Junction, OH) to our area for a while. They will be helping out at church and the preschool as Bro. Tom and Sis. Joan Schrenk are in Zapata for about six weeks.

We always appreciate visitors and to have them here for an extended time is a special treat. We also had Bro. Tom and Sis. Sue Waldbeser (Atlanta, GA) here for a weekend. We appreciated Bro. Tom's willingness to minister to us and enjoyed having his family here with him.

Anyone else who will be traveling in the area is invited to come and worship with us anytime. Fellowship is so vital to us as we encourage each other in our walk with our Lord.

ARIZONA, PHOENIX Ron and Ev Hoerr

"He that handleth a matter wisely shall find good: and whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy is he."
Proverbs 16:20

The winter months bring many visitors and our "winter residents" return. Having so many families reunited for Christmas is good cause for all to rejoice.

Likewise, a large group of single members from the midwest came for New Year's Eve services — 8:00 p.m. to 12:30 a.m. After our church service, World Relief activities, church singing, a buffet lunch, our choir singing, folks bid farewell, for the year 2000 had arrived.

Let us all spend more time with God. He is surely trying to get our attention. Need proof? The weather—everywhere!

Elder Bro. Willis Ehnle and Sis. Lois were in the States for family visits, and was also their son Tony's first anniversary of death when they stopped in Phoenix on January 5 for church services.

Other visiting ministers were Bros. Dean Messner (Winthrop, MN) and Beirne Messner (Morris,

MN).

We are grateful that Bro. Dick Beery is home from the hospital. We need prayers for several on our sick list, including Bro. Richard Schupbach and Sis. Irene Emch.

We rejoice with our friends, Steve and April Young, for the birth of a new daughter, Hope, on October 28, 1999. Big brother Quinton is excited to have a sister.

Proverbs 3:6 makes for a great life.

ARIZONA, PRESCOTT Jane Hodges

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

Psalms 122:1

Open house and dedication of our church is planned for the weekend of March 11-12. The schedule is as follows:

Saturday, March 11

Open House 10 am - 2 pm

Dinner 4 pm

Conversion testimony 7 pm

Sunday, March 12

Dedication 10 am

Baptism 12:15 pm

Dinner 4 pm

Communion 7 pm

At this writing, Elder Bros. Phil Stettner (Bluffton North, IN) and Jon Kokanovich (Phoenix, AZ) are scheduled to be with us. All are invited to attend, but we would appreciate an RSVP by March 1 to Bro. Jim and Sis. Rowena Furrer (1-520-443-0218) or to any of the Prescott congregation, so we can plan the meals.

Elder Bro. Jon Kokanovich, Bros. Tim Hohulin (Roanoke, IL), Herb Knochel and James Emch

(both of Phoenix) were our ministering brothers the last month. May God bless richly all the brethren who serve in the ministry and especially those who travel away from their home churches to serve churches who do not have their own ministers.

ARIZONA, TUCSON Lisa Knapp

December 19 was our Christmas program. We had twelve students in our program this year and as always they did a great job of reminding us what Christmas is really about. May God bless the teachers and students for their hard work and for a very special evening.

The new year has once again brought some familiar faces to the Tucson area as some of our winter visitors have arrived. Tucson is welcoming them with above normal temperatures for this time of year. We have set record highs for five days in a row now. High temperatures have been in the mid 80's and lows in the 50's. There is a cooling trend in sight in a few days so that those of us that live here can pretend it's winter! We will get back to temperatures in the high 60's and low 70's.

Our prayers are with Bro. Steve and Sis. Maria Bauer and their three girls as they struggle with a serious illness in Sis. Maria's family. We pray God will be their constant companion in the months ahead. We know God can provide for all their needs and one way He does that is to provide brothers and sisters in faith to help us out in times of need.

CALIFORNIA, ALTADENA

Jim Klotzle

“Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

Matthew 22:37-40

The unfathomable love that Christ had when He gave His life for us and all of mankind defeated Satan for eternity. But our enemy has tried, as with so many of God's good gifts, to copy and pervert perfect love. In place of Christlike love, he has clouded our culture's perception of love with heart-shaped cards and crooned songs. Loving something no longer means being willing to die for it. Love has become selfish, not selfless as it was intended. Instead of doing something kind for our brother because we love him, we too often find ourselves loving others only when it feels good to us. Let us rather nourish the same love that Stephen did when he asked the Lord to forgive those who were stoning him, and commit ourselves to doing acts of charity like Lydia and Dorcas of the early church. This is true love in action.

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

I Cor. 13:13-14

We thank Bros. Frank Sauder (Roanoke, IL), Herb Knochel (Phoenix, AZ) and Doug Wagenbach (San Diego, CA) for ministering to us during the holiday season.

Bro. Bob Crockett is recovering from knee replacement surgery.

His wife, Sis. Judy, had spent several weeks receiving treatments in Mexico. We pray for both of them that healing will take place. Bro. Bill Witzig recently received a pacemaker implantation and seems to be responding well.

CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

Peggy Jevremov

On Christmas Day after services we were blessed to have our small Sunday School and recent converts present to us the real meaning of Christmas in their Christmas program. They put a lot of effort into learning their pieces and songs. We pray that those words will sink deep into their hearts and will bear fruit in their future lives.

We again have been privileged to have had many visitors this past month. We appreciate each and every one of you. We were thankful to have our Elder Bro. John Klotzle and his wife, Sis. Lois, with us last weekend for our annual business meeting. We pray the Lord's blessings upon Bro. John for lending himself in ministering God's Word to us.

As we go forward in this new year, may we place our trust and hope in our Heavenly Father and His promise to never leave us.

KITCHENER, ONTARIO

CANADA

Laura Baxter

“The glory of the Lord shall endure for ever: the Lord shall rejoice in his works. I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the Lord.”

Psalms 104:31,33-34

Looking at the above verses, it

was inspiring to feel the devotion and love the psalmist had for the Lord. He uses words such as rejoice, sing, praise, sweet and glad to describe the Lord and the relationship he plans to have with Him. May we be as the psalmist: full of joy and praise for the Lord, sing praises to Him as long as we live, and have sweet meditations and thoughts about Him. And be glad in Him!

We are thankful for our visitors this past month. We thank Elder Bro. Mark Bahr (Detroit, MI), Bro. Don Manz (Junction, OH) and our own ministering Bro. Mike Ursu for their service to the Lord in the ministry in Kitchener. God has been so good to us!

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.

Reminder: March is the collection month in Kitchener for Silver Lining donations.

COLORADO, DENVER

Mark and Kelly Ramseyer

Congratulations and many blessings extend to Bro. Mike Katanic on his engagement to Sis. Heather Pelfrey (Bro. Dale and Sis. Beth, Rittman, OH). What a joy it must be for God to see two of His children in love with each other and with Him. What a joy it must be for God to bless children who have committed their lives to Him first.

We in the Denver church would like to wish them many blessings and make one point perfectly clear—we will not approve of Mike moving to Ohio, but have already approved of Heather moving to Colorado. More than likely, Heather's parents, Bro. Dale and Sis. Beth, are not too thrilled about

having a daughter (and son-in-law) 1500 miles away. Also, Mike's mom, Maria Katanic, also from Ohio, may be equally dismayed about her son, along with a new wife, staying so far away. However, we are certain that cars and planes can make the journey quite safely and quickly because we have used them ourselves to make similar trips to the Midwest. Heather, we look forward to adding you to our congregation. Congrats. (In case they really do decide to live in the Midwest, we'll still love them.)

Recently I was conversing with a mom whose daughter is in my daughter's kindergarten class. She told me that she taught Sunday School at her church. As the conversation continued, she commented on how their church doesn't necessarily believe everything in the Bible is literally true. A specific example she gave was the story of Jonah. I was dumbfounded. All I could say was, "I believe it's true." Later that evening I was thinking about how fortunate we are to have a heritage like we do. We believe that the Bible is the literal true Word of God. Do we really appreciate what we have, or do we take it for granted? If we appreciate it, do we share it? There are souls out there that have not had the privilege that we have had. That should really convict us, not make us complacent. If these are the "latter days", what are we doing about it? Do we really have the love and concern Christ does or do we quickly react like the Pharisees, wanting to stone the adulterous woman or condemn a stumbling brother? My prayer is that we can make a difference wherever we are and to be the light we need to be so others will look at our lives and see Christ living in us.

CONNECTICUT ROCKVILLE Cherie Galat

We welcome home Bro. Guy and Sis. Beth Gottier as they have returned from spending four months in Hungary. We rejoice with them on their adoption of little Janelle from Romania to join the rest of their family, Bruce, Kevin, Julianne and Justin. Janelle will have new grandparents, Warren and Sis. Carol Gottier and Bro. Roy and Sis. Joyce Schneider.

Also blessed is the family of Bro. Doug and Sis. Jane Schneider upon the arrival of their twins, Jesse and Jennie, born on December 20. They join their brother and sisters at home, Andy, Laura and Lanae. Grandparents are Bro. Roy and Sis. Joyce Schneider and Bro. Everett Gerber. We ask God to bless these two dear families in raising of their children in the fear of the Lord.

"Haste and seek your soul's salvation; Heed the Word of God today!..." Repent Ye! (Zion's Harp #52). We are thankful that Michael Zahner (Bro. Warren and Sis. Bonnie) has turned his back on Satan and has now made the decision to live for Christ. May God give him the grace as he continues upon the narrow way of life.

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,..."

Ephesians 5:25-26

Bro. Glenn Bahler (Bro. Owen and Sis. Donna) and Sis. Erika Hoffman (Bro. Michael and Luann) were married in December. We also witnessed another marriage in January, Bro. Kent Zahner (Bro. Curt and Sis. Sally) and Sis. Karen Goric (Bro. Dan and

Sis. Mary Lou). As both of these couples walk as one, may they look to Him above for all future decisions in life.

We thank Bro. Brian Webb (Ft. Lauderdale, FL) who recently shared out of God's Word with us. What a blessing it is to know that there are faithful brethren who are willing to be used in God's service.

Our prayers arise to God on behalf of our loved ones who recently have been hospitalized or are ill: Bro. Lester Heintz (Sis. Helen), Bro. Emmanuel Kloter (Sis. Helen) and Bro. Ed Luginbuhl (Sis. Alma). May God restore health according to His good and blessed will.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA WASHINGTON Henrietta Meyer

While most of our congregation stayed home for Thanksgiving, many traveled during the Christmas holidays. We did not have services the day after Christmas. Our visiting ministers this past month were Bro. Trent Meiss (Eureka, IL) and Bro. Jerry Isch (Philadelphia, PA). Other visitors this month were from Bloomington, Fairbury, Forrest, and Princeville, IL. Most of our visitors were brethren on their way to North Carolina to aid hurricane victims. We welcome other work teams to visit us; but please let us know you are coming.

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 begins 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, assis-

tance, 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**

The annual father-son pig roast and camp out was held January 15. The women heard the men enjoyed the many blessings during the weekend. Thanks to Bros. Richard Sutter and Ron Jones for organizing the weekend.

Bro. Roy Van Norman has been hospitalized recently. Our prayers are with Bro. Roy and his wife, Sis. Delores, during this difficult period.

We're thankful for several ministering brothers this past month: Bros. Tom Bolliger (Sis. Jane, Tremont, IL), Steve Baner (Sis. Donnalou, Gridley, IL), Doug Grimm (Sis. Jeryl, Sabetha, KS) and our counseling Elder Bro. Joe Braker (Sis. Shirley, Morton, IL). We pray they will be richly blessed for their willingness to share the Word.

**FLORIDA, SARASOTA
Rachel Sabo**

Our prayers ascend for our dear winter resident, Bro. Emmanuel Kloter (Sis. Helen), who was hospitalized back home in Rockville, CT.

We have been blessed with visiting ministers this past month. Our sincere appreciation goes to Bros. Paul Butikofer (Elgin, IA), Dennis Rassi (Fairbury, IL), Chris Huber (Francesville, IN), Marvin Stieglitz (Leo, IN), Doug Grimm (Sabetha, KS), Ted Hirstein (Morton, IL) and Carroll Gerber (Bluffton North, IN).

**GEORGIA, ATLANTA
Keith and Carol Kaufman**

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

Hymns of Zion #289

We are grateful that Bro. Chuck Kellenberger (Elgin, IL) and Dan Stoller (Rockville, CT) were willing to come and preach God's Word. May the Lord richly bless them and their wives for coming to be with us.

We were saddened to hear of the sudden passing of Sidney Udenfriend (father of Elliott Udenfriend, Washington, IL). May the Lord comfort Elliott, his mother, Shirley (Atlanta), and his sister, Alice Livingston (Atlanta).

The weekend of February 18-20, we hope to be planting many shrubs and some trees around the church. Anyone who can come and help with this project will be appreciated. May God bless all who have already helped us on the church and all who will be helping.

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 time of fellowship with you. Please contact Bro. Linn Stoller (770) 631-4554, Bro. John Brewer (770) 463-0701 or Bro. Keith Kaufman (770) 304-8335.

In anticipation of dedication and open house, we are collecting names and addresses of those who live in the Atlanta area. Please submit names, addresses and phone numbers to: Tom Waldbeser, 2910 Maple Vista Ln., Lawrenceville, GA 30044 or call (770) 935-1451. Thank you!

**ILLINOIS, BELVIDERE
Sheila McCoy
Doreen Moser**

"Stand in the court of the Lord's house, and speak unto all the cities of Judah, which come to worship in the Lord's house, all the words that I command thee to speak unto them, diminish not a word."

Jeremiah 26:2

Likewise, we are thankful unto our ministers for bringing forth the Word of God led by the Holy Spirit. Our visiting ministers this month have been Bros. Gary Anliker and Edwin Strahm (Elgin, IL).

Our building committee has been working on getting the permits on the proposed lot and looking at blueprints for our new church. We pray for God's direction on this large project.

The wedding engagements of Angela Mueller (Bro. Art and Sis. Marlene) to Josh Flickinger (Tony and Cindy) and Alisha McCoy (Dave and Sis. Sheila) to Bob Maly (Robert and Jan) were recently announced. May they look to God as they plan their future together.

Funny

Funny how a \$100 looks so big when you take it to church, but so small when you take it to the mall.

Funny how long it takes to serve God for an hour, but how quickly a

team plays 60 minutes of basketball.

Funny how long a couple of hours spent at church are, but how short they are when watching a movie.

Funny how we can't think of anything to say when we pray, but don't have difficulty thinking of things to talk about to a friend.

Funny how we get thrilled when a baseball game goes into extra innings, but we complain when a sermon is longer than the regular time.

Funny how hard it is to read a chapter in the Bible, but how easy it is to read 100 pages of a best selling novel.

Funny how people want to get a front seat at any game or concert, but scramble to get a back seat at church services.

Funny how we need 2 or 3 weeks advance notice to fit a church event into our schedule, but can adjust our schedule for other events at the last moment.

Funny how hard it is for people to learn a simple gospel well enough to tell others, but how simple it is for the same people to understand and repeat gossip.

Funny how we believe what the newspapers say, but question what the Bible says.

Funny how everyone wants to go to Heaven provided they do not have to believe, think, say or do anything.

Funny how you can send a thousand jokes through e-mail and they spread like wildfire, but when you start sending messages regarding the Lord, people think twice about sharing.

"And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection."

Luke 8:14

Our monthly topical Bible study was about "Bearing Fruit". We were exhorted on what must take place in our lives to bear fruit and what things can hinder us in bearing fruit. One point that struck me was, there are things in our lives that God has called each of us to, such as our jobs, being parents, taking care of a home, etc. These are definitely not wrong or sinful, but when we become overburdened or consumed with them and our focus of total surrender and service to God becomes blurred, we will become unfruitful.

We enjoyed the message of Jesus' birth brought to us by our Sunday School children through the Christmas Program. We were reminded of Christ's humble beginnings and His life that led to Calvary, where we must each go for our salvation.

December 19 was the wedding day for Bro. Steve LaFont (Robert and Marjorie, Edwards, IL) and Sis. Heidi Schmidgall in Peoria (Bro. Steve and Sis. Christine, Peoria). We wish them God's nearness and blessings in their new life together.

We enjoyed our visiting minister, Bro. Mark Gerber (Bluffton, IN). It is always a blessing to have him and his family spend the day with us.

We are thankful for two more souls that have surrendered to God's call. Our prayers are with Heidi Hartter (Bro. John and Sis. Bev, Eureka) and Danae Dallas (Doug and Kathy, Mahomet, IL).

We welcome Bro. Kurt and Sis. Kelly Eastman and their children, Anna and Caroline, as they have begun worshipping with us.

In the past month, Stan Knapp (Sis. Tonei), Sis. Carolyn Fischer, and Sis. Alma Wackerle (Bro. Frank) have each spent time in the hospital. Also, Bro. Lynn Young (Sis. Anne Marie) has undergone out-patient surgery. We pray God will place His healing touch on each of them.

We extend our sympathy to Bob Hany at the passing of his brother and pray for God's nearness and comfort to him.

ILLINOIS, BRADFORD

Chad and LauraLee Plattner

We have had many special days in Bradford this month. Foremost was Christmas day, in which we remembered the birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and the reason He came.

On January 8-9, we heard the testimonies and witnessed the baptisms of Jeb Joos (Bro. Ralph and Sis. Jenny) and Brent and Michelle Knobloch. We are thankful to receive them as brothers and sister in Christ.

January 14 was a day of rejoicing as Gabriel Nathan Stahl joined Bro. Wendell, Sis. Linda and Joel. Grandparents are Dean Stahl (Kewanee, IL), Sis. Charlotte Stahl, and Nathan and Esther Martin (Princeville, IL).

It was announced on January 16 that Sis. Suanne Elsasser has the faith to believe God has led her to become the wife of Bro. Chuck Schafer (Princeville, IL). We wish them God's blessings.

Robert Ehnle (Paul and Cheryl) was hospitalized this month, and Sis. Barb Klumpp (Bro. David) had minor surgery. We pray for a complete recovery for both of them.

**ILLINOIS
BLOOMINGTON-NORMAL
Dana Knapp
Sara Streitmatter**

We were thankful to have several visiting ministers this month. Bros. Andy Klaus (Tokyo, Japan) and Don Manz (Junction, OH) were with us over Christmas. Elder Bros. Jesse Beer (Milford, IN) and Lawrence Luthi (Lamar, MO) shared in the duties of testimonies and baptisms, and Bros. Dean Steffen (Belvidere, IL) and Rex Frieden (Lamar, MO) joined them on the pulpit. May God bless them for their willingness to serve.

ILLINOIS CHAMPAIGN-URBANA Samuel and Pamela Furrer

In a recent sermon, the minister made the point that though it sometimes seems that believers are few, we should not become discouraged. We actually don't always realize how many are around us and perhaps how their light and ours are shining. He related a story of his recent trip out of our country. He happened to strike up a conversation with the elderly man who served as the hotel's doorman. The question of what the doorman enjoyed in life revealed that he loved to sing gospel music, sharing the joy of Jesus with others. Though the people who walked through his hotel's door probably never heard him sing, they likely had the light of that believer shining for them. The day following this sermon, I was listening to the radio when an advertisement came on that complemented this story and made more of a complete illustration for me. This ad was for an employment service. Their message was that if you want to have a rewarding life, you should think how you'd like to be remembered after you've died. It said that now is the time to make those decisions that will bring about the end result. As we are still in the begin-

ning of a new year, beginning a new job, or simply continuing our earthly journey, we can all benefit from knowing that there are indeed other believers around us doing the everyday things as we do. As we do those things, we are indeed writing the story of how we will be remembered.

The first semester of school has ended for our college students. They've all traveled to their families and other destinations, and the second semester is now well under way. A few completed their degrees at the end of the fall semester in December, and they have now moved on to other locations for employment. Those students include Bro. Jason Dotterer who has returned to the Forrest area and will be working in Bloomington. Bro. Neil Banwart of our congregation and Bro. Mark Triplett of Peoria will be living together and working in Chicago. Milwaukee, Wisconsin will be the new home and workplace of Bro. Benji Hodel of Peoria. We enjoyed their company, and now wish each of these young men much success as they leave the secure and familiar university lifestyle and begin the careers for which they have been preparing. Surely they will be shining lights for others in their new settings.

While we had many people traveling to other places over the Christmas break, we also had a number of visitors who came to Champaign to visit their family members. A few of those visitors grew up in our church, and we are always especially happy to see them as they mature in their adult lives and establish themselves with families, careers, and so on. Visiting ministers this past month were in scarce supply. On Christmas Day, we had Bros. Jaye Rinkenberger (Goodfield, IL) and Ben Wiegand (Philadelphia, PA)

with us as they visited their families here. We were glad that these brothers and their families were with us.

ILLINOIS, CHICAGO

Jill Rager

Our New Year in Chicago began as do most years—some joy, some sadness. How would we cope if a year held only joys or only sorrows? A year of joy sounds inviting, but would we be able to bring forth fruit in such a situation? My guess is that we would have a tendency to become complacent rather than thankful. A year of sadness would probably consume us. Aren't we glad God promises not to give us more than we can bear? The sad times do stretch and strengthen our faith just as physical exercise does for our muscles.

Elder Bro. Willis Ehle (Shioda, Japan) ministered to us one Sunday this month. We were challenged to look at our blessings, as they really are blessings for which we are to give thanks! We were also challenged to extinguish any habits of complaining. It is easy to say "Oh, I shouldn't complain", but it is much more difficult to really do! Many thanks to Bro. Willis for being a willing vessel through which the Lord could challenge us.

Two of our church families had to bid farewell to earthly loved ones in the midst of the holiday celebrations. Bro. Tom and Sis. Jean O'Shea are mourning the loss of Tom's father, John O'Shea. Bro. Mike and Sis. Gretchen Zimmerman said their earthly farewells to Bro. Mike's mother, Sis. Laurene Zimmerman (Eureka, IL). We extend our prayerful support to these families as they "heal" from these losses.

Katrina Schlatter (Bro. Jim and Sis. Kathy) announced her engage-

ment to Aaridio Cordero from the Dominican Republic whom she met during her work in the Peace Corps. Katrina and Aaridio are planning a June wedding, and we offer them our prayers and warmest congratulations.

ILLINOIS, CISSNA PARK
Cheryl Eisenmann
Darlene Walder

Is your place a small place?
 Tend it with care!
 He set you there.
 Is your place a large place?
 Guard it with care!
 He set you there.
 Whate'er your place,
 it is not yours alone, but His.
 He set you there.

—*John Oxenham*

“With infinite care and forethought, God has chosen the best place in which you can do your best work for the world.” Be a light that illuminates the darkness. God will do the rest.

Our visiting ministers this month have been Elder Bro. Alfred Bahler (Sis. Frances, Wolcott, IN) who helped at our monthly friends' class and also served us in afternoon church; and Bros. Jim Kaeb (Sis. Diane, Bern, KS), Kevin Knapp (Sis. Dixie, Bloomington, IL), and Art Mueller (Sis. Marlene, Belvidere, IL). Their lights certainly illuminated the sanctuary. God bless each one.

We hold those who have undergone physical hardships in the past, up in prayer. For this month they are Sis. Lorene Rocke, Astrid Kellerhals (Bro. Bob), and Sis. Elaine Sauder (Bro. Curt).

We had our annual meeting for 2000 and wish to extend a thank you to those that served our church in any way in the past and are

thoughtful of those that are taking on new positions in the church. Our out-going Sunday School teachers are Bro. Jim Walder, Sis. Lisa Kaufmann, and Sis. Judy Edelman. Retiring from Trustee is Bro. Steve Kaeb and from the Fellowship Hall Committee is Bro. Fred Maul. Those that will assume these positions are Bro. Hartzell Kaeb, Sis. Denise Walder and Sis. LaNae Rudin for Sunday School, Bro. Doug Walder for Trustee and Bro. Jon Anderson for Fellowship Hall Committee. May they feel the guidance of the Holy Spirit in fulfilling these tasks.

Also at the Annual Meeting it was made known that our church has been blessed to start a Church Choir. Ministry through song can reach so many hearts. The choir's theme is first and foremost to glorify God. As we unify our voices, may our hearts become more and more unified.

We hold Sis. Mary Lou Kaeb and Bro. Elmer and their family and Melvin and Marilyn Young and family up in prayer at the passing of Sis. Alma Steidinger (Fairbury, IL). She is Sis. Mary Lou's brother Maurice's wife and Marilyn's aunt. “When a Christian dies, precious is the prize. Lasting joys for days of sorrow, rest from conflict on the morrow. Follows when he dies, follows when he dies.”

We wish Bro. George and Sis. Gladys Winger a big congratulation for faithfully staying at each other's side for 75 years. God bless them in the days ahead as well.

Note of Thanks:

Special thanks to all who remembered us on our 75th wedding anniversary. May God bless all of you.

Gladys and George Winger

ILLINOIS, CONGERVILLE
Glenna Rinkenberger
Renae Dietrich

Thankful for being blessed by those who provide the Word, our cups were filled as we heard Bros. Bob Stoller (Lamar, MO), Jon Zeller (Morton, IL) and Elder Bro. Joe Stoller (Princeville, IL) this month.

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

Matthew 5:6

We rejoice with Bro. Mike Hartman as he did hunger and thirst after righteousness (son of the late Bro. Gene Hartman and Sis. Carrie Lou). As we witnessed another soul partake of His grace, we saw how the Lord does fill. What wonderful blessings we received the weekend of January 9 as we heard his testimony. May the Lord continue to be with Bro. Mike and his wife, Paula.

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

Genesis 2:18

With the help of the Lord, Sis. Denise Banwart (Bro. Jerry and Sis. Arlene) has chosen to accept the proposal of Bro. Brian Rokey (Bro. Allen and Sis. Glenda) of Bern, KS. May they continue to feel the prayers of the church as they seek His will in preparing for their lives together.

Samuel Steiner welcomes a baby brother home. Bro. Dave and Sis. Sandy thankfully announce the birth of Aaron Eli, born January 10. May the Lord be with them as they raise these little boys to know and love Him.

ILLINOIS, ELGIN
Peggy Heiniger
Norma Schambach

"...and whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it;"

I Cor. 12:26

This scripture has recently been borne out in our midst. Many of you have probably heard of the disappearance of Brian Welzien, the son of Sis. Stephany and the late Rick Welzien. Brian spent New Year's Eve in Chicago with a group of friends and has not been seen since early New Year's Day. Many from our congregation and the Chicago congregation have spent countless hours trying to assist in every way possible. As of this writing, God alone knows where Brian is. We prayerfully wait on Him. May Sis. Stephany continue to feel our fervent prayers.

Amid our anxious waiting, we find reason to rejoice as four dear souls have found the need to turn their lives over to God. They are Chad Heiniger (Bro. Don and Sis. Peggy), Matt Schmidgall (Rick and Sis. Cindy), and Mark and Keith Schambach (Bro. Les and Sis. Alison). We wish them abundant grace as they begin their pilgrim journey.

Bro. Albert (Sis. Dorothy) Schambach and Sis. Hilde (Bro. George) Schumacher recently spent time in the hospital. We are thankful God has restored a measure of health. We always miss our loved ones when they are absent from us.

We extend our sympathy to Bros. Albert, Charles, Bill, Ed, Sis. Gert Sauder, Sis. Elizabeth (the late Bro. John) and Elder Bro. Ron Schambach in the loss of their sister, Sis. Laurene (Bro. Leland)

Zimmerman of Eureka. Though she has been relieved of her suffering, she will be missed by her family and loved ones.

We enjoyed our visiting ministers this month: Bros. Ken Dietz (Bradford, IL), Dale Frank (Oakville, IA), John Stoller (Leo, IN) and Elder Bros. Phil Stettner (Bluffton North, IN) and Ron Messner (Washington, IL). May God bless them as they willingly feed and guide the flocks.

ILLINOIS, EUREKA
Janet Zimmerman

"Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

St. Luke 15:10

We are very happy to report that we have five new converts in our congregation. They are Marla Schmidgall (Bro. Mike and Sis. Dianne), Bethany Martin (Bro. Craig and Sis. Marilyn), Jena and Julie Fehr (Bro. Dan and Sis. Diane) and Amy Blunier (Bro. Kurt and Sis. Livy). We wish them a rich measure of God's grace during their repentance and throughout their new way of life in the Lord.

Our church potluck and hymn sing was held Sunday, January 9. It was a very good turn out and was enjoyed by all.

Our visiting ministers this month were Bro. Floyd Frieden and Bro. Kent Getz (Elgin, IA), Bro. Mike Rinkenberger (Congerville, IL), Bro. Wayne Wiegand (Goodfield, IL) and Bro. Brad Gudeman (Bradford, IL). We are thankful to those brothers who give of themselves so willingly. May God bless you.

Very happy and thankful for a precious baby boy are Bro. Craig

and Sis. Marilyn Martin. Jedd Timothy was born on January 17. He has four sisters, Bethany, Jennifer, Rachel and Angela. His grandparents are Sis. Verna Wettstein and Bro. Nelson and Sis. Mary Ellen Martin.

When death comes and takes a loved one, it leaves a sorrow that can only be comforted with the thought of meeting them in Heaven. Our dear Sis. Laurene Zimmerman was called to rest the morning of December 30. We are thankful the Lord called her Home, for her pain here was so great. We extend our love and sympathy to her husband, Bro. Leland, and children, Bro. Mark and Sis. Cheryl, Bro. Matt and Sis. Sara (Eureka), Bro. Mike and Sis. Gretchen (Chicago, IL), Bro. Kevin and Sis. Denise Kilgus, Bro. Fred and Sis. Brenda Leman (Forrest, IL) and to all of her dear grandchildren. We also extend sympathy to her brothers, Bro. David Schambach (Rittman, OH), Bro. Albert, Bro. Charles, Bro. Edward, Bro. William and Bro. Ronald Schambach (Elgin, IL); her sisters, Sis. Martha Schneider (Rockville, CT), and Sis. Gertrude Sauder (Elgin, IL).

We extend our sympathy to Bro. Lloyd and Sis. Sherry Stoller and their family on the death of Bro. Lloyd's father, Bro. Ed Stoller of Gridley. He died January 3. May each one feel God's comfort.

SAFELY HOME

I am home in Heaven, dear ones;
 Oh, so happy and so bright!
 There is perfect joy and beauty
 In this everlasting light.

All the pain and grief is over,
 Every restless tossing passed;
 I am now at peace forever,
 Safely home in Heaven at last.

Did you wonder I so calmly
Trode the valley of the shade?
Oh! but Jesus' love illumined
Every darkened fearful glade.

And He came Himself to meet me
In that way so hard to tread;
And with Jesus' arm to lean on,
Could I have one doubt or dread?

Then you must not grieve so
sorely,
For I love you dearly still;
Try to look beyond earth's shadows,
Pray to trust our Father's Will.

There is work still waiting for
you,
So you must not idly stand;
Do it now, while life remaineth
You shall rest in Jesus' land.

When that work is all completed
He will gently call you Home;
Oh, the rapture of that meeting,
Oh, the joy to see you come!
—*Author unknown*

Note of Thanks:

Words are hard to find at a time like this to express our appreciation for all that was done for my dear wife and our dear mother, Sis. Laurene, during her illness and for us after her death. For the love that was shown to her in so many ways, your prayerful support, cards, tokens of love, food and visits. It is hard to give up a dear loved one, yet we know that God does not make a mistake.

May God bless each and every one.

Bro. Leland Zimmerman and family

ILLINOIS, FAIRBURY

**Sally Fehr
Joann Zehr**

May God bless our two families that have welcomed new babies. Janessa Chantille was born December 27, 1999, to Bro. Kirby and Sis. Gwen Knapp. She is a sister to Lenae, Natasha, Sharnell, and Kyler. Grandparents are Bro. Merle and Sis. Marge Kaisner and Sis. Laura Knapp.

Dylan Derek was born January 13 to Bro. Derek and Sis. Julie Rabe. He is a brother to Durelle, Adrian, Julissa, Dustin, Quinton, Benson, and Carly. Grandparents are Sis. Loretta Baumgartner, Don Rabe, and Julia McDugle.

We rejoice with Sis. Melanie Schneider (Bro. Don and Sis. Sandra) and Bro. Ed Teubel (Walter) of Forrest. Their engagement was announced January 16, and we wish them God's leading and grace.

We extend our sympathy to the family of Sis. Alma Steidinger, 71, who passed away on January 17. May God be near her husband, Bro. Maurice; and children, Sis. Elaine (Dale) Mowery; Bro. Randall (Sis. Dawn); Bro. Martin (Sis. Trish); Sis. Phyllis (Bro. Donald) Welborn; Bro. Keith (Sis. Christine); and Bro. Douglas (Sis. Dixie), all of Fairbury; and Sis. Janet (Bro. Todd) Sinn of Latty, OH. We are thankful she could be relieved of her earthly afflictions with the hope of a "better Home".

Several from our congregation who have been hospitalized are Kathy (Bro. Richard and Sis. Colleen) Walter, Bro. Willis (Sis. Elna) Nussbaum, Sis. Janice Nussbaum, and Sis. Kathryn Kaisner. May they feel God's healing power.

We extend a sincere thanks to our visiting ministers, Bros. Ben Wiegand (Philadelphia, PA), Dewayne Dill (Minneapolis, MN),

Gary Brown (Forrest, IL), Paul Gasser (Akron, OH), Jim Kaeb (Bern, KS), Brian Waibel (Champaign, IL), and Jerry Wagenbach (Oakville, IA) who visited us during Christmas.

We bid farewell to Bro. Kurt and Sis. Kristen Slagel. They have moved to Pennsylvania where he is doing an internship and will be attending the Philadelphia church. Their parents are Bro. Ray and Sis. Gladys Slagel and Barry and Sis. Rosemary Koehl. Their new address is 355 Lackawanna Street 6-12, Reading, PA 19601 and the phone number is 610-374-8114.

As we reflect back on 1999, we had 5 weddings, 5 deaths, 13 baptisms, 2 testimonials, and 12 births. We are thankful that God knows the future and will help us, if we but ask.

ILLINOIS, FORREST

**Jean Knapp
Linda Anliker**

"Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee: and let such as love thy salvation say continually, Let God be magnified."

Psalms 70:4

Seeking the Lord in repentance are Kristi Bachtold (Bro. Marvin and Sis. Mary), Ashley Aberle (Bro. Mark and Sis. Laverne), Amber Kilgus (Bro. Kevin and Sis. Denise), Ben Leman (Sis. Donna), Amy Schlatter (Sis. Sherri), Tami Young (Bro. Terry and Sis. Peggy), Stacey (Tonda) Mueller, Ron and Vicki Mueller, Ryan and Tabatha Honegger.

Giving testimony of their faith in Christ and baptized were Sis. Brenda Bachtold (Bro. Marvin and Sis. Mary) and Sis. Emily Wenger (Bro. Ed and Sis. Renee). May these new sisters in faith and those

seeking the Lord in repentance, as well as all of us, let the Lord be magnified in our lives.

The engagement of Sis. Melanie Schneider (Fairbury, IL) and Bro. Ed Teubel was made known. Their parents are Bro. Don and Sis. Sandy Schneider (Fairbury, IL) and Walter Teubel (Fairbury, IL). As they make wedding plans together, may they feel the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

May God bless our Sis. Sherri Schlatter for her 10 year service as Sunday School teacher for our beginners Sunday School class. As the young children left their mothers' laps and were introduced to Sunday School class, her kind instructions and teachings of Jesus set them on their journey through Sunday School.

Visiting us and sharing from God's Word were Elder Bro. Art Bahler (Fairbury, IL), and ministering Bros. Art Mueller (Belvidere, IL), Paul Gasser (Akron, OH), Ken Schneider (Remington, IN), Gary Anliker (Elgin, IL), Virgil Metzger (Chicago, IL), and Jim Rinkenberger (Bluffton, IN). We thank them for serving us.

As we say farewell to Bro. Bud Manz who has moved back to Junction, OH, may God continue to guide him through life.

We extend our sympathy to Bro. Wayne (Sis. Roberta) Broquard and family in the passing of his mother, Sis. Clara Broquard (Fairbury, IL). Also, needing our prayers for comfort are Sis. Denise (Bro. Kevin) Kilgus and Sis. Brenda (Bro. Fred) Leman and their families in the passing of their mother, Sis. Laurene Zimmerman (Eureka, IL). Even though their earthly pilgrimage is over, may the teachings of mother be extended to further generations.

May the Lord be near Bro. Elmer (Sis. Rosetta) Stoller and other relatives in our congregation, as his brother, Bro. Ed Stoller (Gridley, IL), has passed from this life into eternity. Also, our prayers and sympathy are with Sis. Pauline Wiegand in the death of her sister.

Our Sis. Kathryn Schneider, Bro. Terry (Sis. Peggy) Young, Bro. Art (Sis. Velda) Huette and Joel (Lana) Brown spent time in the hospital this past month. May the Lord grant healing according to His will.

Note of Thanks:

I would like to thank everyone who remembered my 80th birthday with cards and good wishes. God's blessings to each of you.

Bro. Rich Rieger

**ILLINOIS, GOODFIELD
Heather Hohulin**

On Sunday we heard of the rich man in hell that begged for just one drop of water to cool his tongue. The reality of "eternity" really hit home when the brother then said, "Can you imagine how thirsty he must be after two thousand years?"

We were blessed this month to have several visiting ministers: Bros. Brian Huber, Darren Plattner, Mike Rinkenberger, Fred Knapp, and Clark Stoller. We really appreciate their willingness to serve us. May God richly bless them.

Sis. Mary Drayer passed into eternity. She had been a resident at our Peoria home for quite some time. Our love and prayers are with her family.

Bro. Carl Knapp also passed away. He had been at our Eureka home. Our love and prayers are also with his family.

Joshua Wyss, Troy and Donna Young and Rachel, Tim and Ben Currier were announced for upcoming testimonies and baptisms. We are so thankful that God has worked in their lives and provided His peace. We look forward to welcoming them as brothers and sisters.

Our prayers are with Bro. Luke and Sis. Jill Rocke. She is in the hospital for a lengthy stay, awaiting the birth of their first child. We hope they can feel our love and prayers, and that the time passes quickly.

Pat Riley, who has been assembling with us lately, was also in the hospital this month. We hope to see him back with us. May God grant His healing touch.

Another hospital patient was Bob Hess. Again, we hope he can feel the prayers of our church and the hand of the Lord.

A sweet baby girl was born to Bro. Ted and Sis. Kenda Taufer. Tori Kathryn was welcomed with open arms by her sister, Tedi, and her brothers, Ty and Tate. What a blessing a new baby is!

We extend our congratulations to Cendra Martin and Donovan McCabe who were united in marriage on January 21. May God be with them in their new walk together. Their parents are Bro. Denny and Sis. Carol Martin and Deb Riffey and the late James Riffey.

**ILLINOIS, GRIDLEY
Perry A. Klopfenstein**

Our congregation was saddened by the passing of Bro. Ed Stoller, 86, on January 3. Yet, it is comforting to note God gave him many years of life, and thence relieved him of declining health.

He is survived by his dear wife, Sis. Marie, and four sons: Bros. Joe

Stoller (Bloomington), Byron Stoller and Curtis Stoller (Gridley) and Lloyd Stoller (Eureka); 14 grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren; one brother, Bro. Elmer Stoller (Forrest); two sisters, Sisters Lola Schlipf and Martha Stoller (Gridley).

Bro. Ed had lost his first wife, Sis. Alberta (Zurlinden) Stoller in 1952. He was left with three little boys. He was acquainted with grief and sorrow.

His distinguishing characteristics were faithfulness and quietness. In the former he was diligent in worship attendance. In the latter, he was a man of few words, but was highly respected. "He that hath knowledge spareth his words" (Proverbs 17:27).

Louis "Ed" Burgess, 86 died on December 31, 1999, at his home in Chenoa. He is survived by two sons: Jim Burgess of Decatur and Ken Burgess of Chenoa; and one daughter, Melba J. Hohulin-Kasprzak, Mishawaka, IN. His wife, Naomi Ruth Burgess, passed away on December 27, 1977.

Ed Burgess liked to visit and express himself; and he enjoyed worshipping with us. The Burgess family had attended our church since the 1950's.

On January 9, Sis. Debbie Martin was married to Bro. Grant DesCarpentrie (Washington, IL). She is the daughter of Byron and Sis. Katie Martin. He is the son of Bro. Stan and Sis. Jane DesCarpentrie. May God give them much happiness in their married lives.

Visiting ministers on January 9 were Elder Bro. Ron Messner and Bro. Ed Fritz (both of Washington, IL). Bro. Roger Aberle (Sabetha, KS), an uncle of Sis. Debbie, was here for the wedding, too.

We welcome Bro. Brandon and Sis. Sonja Endress and their son,

Mitchell, to our congregation. They live in Colfax where he works as a loan officer in the local bank.

We also welcome Kyle and Monica Edelman and their children, Drew and Kyler, of Fairbury, to our Gridley congregation.

ILLINOIS, MORTON

Phyllis Farney

Cheryl Wuthrich

We rejoice in the engagement of our Sis. Janelle Strunk to Bro. Scott Sauder of Tremont. Sis. Janelle's parents are Bro. Gene and Sis. Joyce and Bro. Scott is the son of Bro. Marvin and Sis. Mary. We wish them the Lord's richest blessings and His continued guidance during their engagement period.

We wish to thank the brothers and their families that visited us in Morton this month and preached the Word to us. They were Bros. Greg Rassi (Chicago, IL) and Jaye Rinkenberger (Goodfield, IL). May the Lord richly bless them.

Notes of Thanks:

My sincere thanks to all who remembered me with prayers and deeds during my surgeries and recoveries. May God richly bless you all.

Sis. Norma Zeller

Thanks to all who remembered me with prayers, visits, cards or gifts following my knee surgery. May God bless you.

Sis. Emma Dale Baer

With a grateful heart I truly want to express my thanks and appreciation to everyone who sent me cards and gifts. Thank you also for the visits, calls and most of all the wonderful prayers that I received during my stay in the hospital and during my convalescence at home. It was all appreciated more

than anyone will ever know. May God richly bless each and every one.

Love and greetings to all,
Sis. Dorothy Belsley

ILLINOIS, PEORIA

Peter and Mabel Weber

Postscripts to...

CHRISTMAS - A day to remember in all eternity; a miracle, which has never happened before and will never happen again; God as man, and "He shall save His people from their sins", as the prophets of old said. Jesus wanted Herod's heart, not his throne. May not one soul waste His precious blood (Bro. Mike Rieker). When Christmas has come to an end, will He continue to be as real? How do we stand compared to ten years ago? (Bro. Ken Hoerr).

NEW YEAR - At a division of time, we look backward and forward. God has given us many blessings and many trials, but we still have the Lord, and God has brought us to this place. We have no predictions for 2000, but if He would come, would we be called to holiness? Who shall abide the day of His coming? Our God is a consuming fire. He will let us walk the way we want, but when we submit ourselves, there is nothing better than to come under the scrutiny of God. Do we love to tell the story as we should? (Bro. Rick Plattner). Tonight is a special night as we go to 2000. 1999 was good for some, for some not so good. Are we totally in the will of God and submit ourselves to the Lord? This is the time to do it. (Elder Bro. Chuck Hemmer). "One Thing is Needful" was the closing hymn of 1999 (ZH #65). At the beginning of a New Year, Jesus offers us a new start: to commit to Him totally. Jesus and Nicodemus talked together and we

can have a private audience with Him...right now! All the conversation about Y2K doesn't mean anything. But when Jesus speaks, it counts as we hear words for eternity, and we must listen (Bro. Mike Rieker).

When Job's friends, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, "heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came every one from his own place; for they had made an appointment together to come to mourn with him and to comfort him and *sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him*" (2:11-13). Then young Elihu comes along, anxious to express his opinions, and contradicts Job and his friends (32:6 thru chapter 37). "Behold, my belly is as wine which hath no vent; it is ready to burst like new bottles" (32:19). The Word of God is inerrant, our opinions are not, and evil communications corrupt good manners (I Cor. 15:33, Bro. Rick Plattner).

"Our Ever Faithful Friend" was the topic for our family night service on January 5. God called Moses (Ex. 33:11), Abraham (James 2:23) and Lazarus (John 11:11) His friends and says "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not" (Jer. 33:3). "There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother" (Prov. 18:24). Is He as close, or closer, than a brother? That's the relationship Jesus wants with us and it's His desire to know us so well that He can be our advocate before the Father and be right next to us. God walks with us every step of the way and wants us to have an abundant, joyful, content life in Jesus and express our faith by our works of love. ("Only one life, twill soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last"). Not everybody wants to

be our friend, but Jesus does, and will never leave nor forsake us. "I have called you friends" (John 15:15) and we also can have that kind of relationship with Him. Thanks, Bro. Dennis Kaufmann (Bloomington, IL), for your visit and ministry.

Don Geef, a resident at the Skylines since 1996, was baptized there on December 28. We welcome him to our brotherhood and thank Elder Bro. Wendell Gudeman and his companions from Francesville, IN for their visit and support.

Sis. Mary Dreyer (96) passed away at the Skylines on December 23 and we express our sympathy to her family.

Hannah Marie was born January 13 and we congratulate her grateful parents, Bro. Tim and Sis. Joan Reinhard (Athens, AL), and grandparents, Bro. Paul and Sis. Rhoda Meister.

Hospital patients were Bros. Dave Meister, Frank McCall, Herb Schwenk, Sisters Lucille Knobloch, Juliette Kurth, Lois Nelson, Marian Reutter and Elsie Fehr, Mildred Friederich, Emma Stoller and Gladys Welsh, and we hope they will soon experience better health again.

At our annual business meeting on January 9, Elder Bro. Chuck Hemmer thanked office holders for their services to the congregation, announced the election of Bro. Dan Waibel to a five year trustee term and reminded us of a few areas where improvements will be appreciated: be punctual and stay inside the sanctuary during services, limit visiting at lunch tables (don't linger while others wait to eat), don't be in the way of kitchen personnel (observe ropes), respect Church and Fellowship Hall as God's buildings and help keep them clean and presentable

(parents watch your children), park properly, honor fire lanes.

Average life expectancy is 76 1/2. Most seniors (and younger) are comfortable with established lifestyles and personal habits (Grandfather, with his long beard, had trouble sleeping after the little girl asked whether he puts it above, or below the blanket). But eventually the time comes to move to a smaller home, condo, apartment or retirement center. We enjoy one of the area's finest, which began in 1912 at 711 N. Monroe Street and was moved in 1965 to 7023 NE Skyline Drive (The "Skylines"), in a beautiful setting a few miles north of Peoria. It has 115 residents in 14 duplex units, 28 apartments, 29 shelter-care rooms, 86 licensed beds (16 Medicare-approved) and an Alzheimer wing with 17 beds. The budget is 2.9 mill in 1999, 97,000 meals were served and we thank the many dedicated volunteers for frequent Sunday and holiday meal preparations, also driving the bus and assisting with many important social functions.

Sis. Lena Grimm (West Bend, IA) observed her 100th birthday on January 10 with her 13 children and their families. May she continue to enjoy reasonable health as she looks towards her Heavenly Home. She is the mother of Sis. Eleanor Steffen and grandmother of Bro. Kent and Gordon Steffen and Sis. Wanda Grimm.

ILLINOIS, PRINCEVILLE Crystal Streitmatter Mary Ehnle

"Happiness and contentment is like a butterfly. If you chase it, it will elude you; but, if you turn your attention upon following the principles of God's Word and applying them and doing for others and living a life of righteousness, it will

come and sit softly on your shoulder" is quoted from a minister who visited our congregation this month. We have been blessed with God's presence as the following ministers assembled with us during the past month: Bros. John Grimm (Columbus, OH), Rick Plattner (Peoria, IL), Bob Stoller (Lamar, MO), Andy Klaus (Tokyo, Japan), Bill Hodel (Roanoke, IL), Gary Endress (Bradford, IL), and Elder Bros. Aaron Steffen (Alto, MI), Bob Walder (Congerville, IL) and Tom Hoffman (Roanoke, IL).

On January 16, we witnessed the wedding of Bro. Robert C. Zimmerman and Sis. Kathy Streitmatter. Sis. Kathy is the daughter of Bro. Floran and Sis. Twylla Streitmatter. Bro. Robert is the son of Bro. Robert L. and Sis. Madelyn Zimmerman (Roanoke, IL). May the Lord bless their marriage as they start a new life together.

The new year has brought a new life to the household of Bro. Kevin and Sis. Grace Herrmann. The new baby, Jesse Aaron, was born on January 1 and was the first baby born in Peoria County in the year 2000. Jesse is welcomed by big brother and sister, David and Tamera, paternal grandparents, Bro. Howard and Sis. Mary Ann Herrmann and maternal grandparents, Bro. Paul and Sis. Marilyn Nenadov.

Three recent engagements have unfolded in our congregation. Believing the Lord has brought them together in faith, Bro. Chuck Schafer and Sis. Suanne Elsasser (Bradford, IL) were announced on January 16 to be married. Bro. Chuck is the son of the late Fred and Sis. Esther Schafer. Sis. Suanne is the daughter of Sis. Violet and the late Bro. Bill Elsasser (Bradford, IL). Ryan Siebenthal (Bro. Eugene and Sis. Kay) is en-

gaged to Annie Johnson (Wyoming, IL), daughter of Gary and Kathy Johnson. Brad Bowdoin (Henry and Benola Bowdoin) is engaged to Chantel de la Torre of Prophetstown, IL, daughter of Bernie de la Torre and Joyce de la Torre. May the three couples seek the Lord's guidance as they plan their future together.

Our prayers and sympathy are with Sis. Janet Joos as her brother, Harold Price, has passed away.

We are thankful that Sis. Clara Marie Gerber has recovered from surgery and can assemble with us again.

Bro. Herman and Sis. Mary Baer celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on January 1. The following is their note of thanks: "We want to thank everyone for the cards, gifts, and good wishes sent to us for our 50th wedding anniversary. May God bless all of you, including our family, for the special love and memories we shared." Bro. Herman and Sis. Mary Baer

"Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it."

Song of Solomon 8:7

ILLINOIS, ROANOKE
Boni Stoller
Linda Hodel

"Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the spirit. Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil. Faithful is he that calleth you, who will also do it. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen."

I Thess. 5:16-22,24,28

We are rejoicing that God has lovingly continued to call souls unto repentance, and we pray that our new converts will heed the precious instructions in His Holy Word. They are: Jeremy Knepp (Bro. Bob and Sis. Ann), Sam Fischer (Bro. Bruce and Sis. Debbie), Bill and Betty Fehr, and Dave Brooks.

We also rejoice in the union of two dear souls, our Bro. Bob Zimmerman (Bro. Bob and Sis. Madlyn) to Sis. Kathy Streitmatter (Bro. Floran and Sis. Twylla) of Princeville, on January 16. May they strive daily to live for the Lord, and for each other, and keep their new Christian home unspotted from the world as they walk hand in hand toward their heavenly goal.

Our thoughts and prayers continue to be on little Willie Fortune who has been hospitalized for several months following heart surgery. Also, little Jonathan Sauder (Bro. Frank and Sis. Kathy) received surgery to help a leg length discrepancy and will need to be on crutches for several months, and endure quite a bit of pain as his bone stretches. Carol Whitten (Bro. Gene) has returned home after a short hospital stay. May God grant continued healing on them.

"For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be

caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

I Thess. 4:14-18

We were comforted with these precious verses during the funeral services for Bro. Ray Rechkemmer that were held on January 15. In recent years it was difficult for Bro. Ray to assemble with us due to declining health. And what a joy it will be when in Heaven we will have a new body not burdened with afflictions. May God provide the comfort to his wife, Florence, of almost 65 years; three sons, Norm, Ray, and Kenneth, and two daughters, Kathy and Edith.

We thank the Lord for visiting ministering Bro. Art Bauer (Princeville, IL) for his labors to us on December 26. May the Lord bless him and also Elder Bro. Ron Messner (Washington, IL) for a Bible study on the characteristics of Christ and the church; and when we finished he related that these characteristics should be in us, as we are to strive to be Christ-like and we make up the church. Truly we have a lot of work to do! A powerful thought he shared was when Jesus was struggling with His last breath on the cross, He gave instructions that His mother would be cared for, and Bro. Ron said "Who of us, when going through a trial, thinks of others?"

Our annual business meeting was held on January 12. Statistics for 1999 are: births-13; deaths-12; baptisms-17; weddings-6. We also welcome our new trustees voted in: Bro. Bob Bradle, church; Bro. Jim Byrd, nursing home; and Bro. Steve Sauder, fellowship hall. We also thank those who have labored in the past for the church.

As you travel on the pathway of life, may Christ go with you...
May He go before you, to show you the way;
May He go behind you, to encourage you;
Beside you, to befriend you;
Above you, to watch over you;
And within you, to give you peace.

ILLINOIS, TREMONT

**Barb Dill
Barb Kaeb**

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

Genesis 2:18

We extend our best wishes and the Lord's blessings to Bro. Scott Sauder and Sis. Janelle Strunk (Morton, IL) upon the announcement of their engagement and forthcoming marriage. Their parents are Bro. Marvin and Sis. Mary Sauder and Bro. Gene and Sis. Joyce Strunk.

Sharing the Word with us this month were Bros. Dennis Rassi (Fairbury, IL), Ed Fritz (Washington, IL) and Dewayne Dill (Minneapolis, MN). May the Gospel message always inspire us to walk a "Closer Walk with Thee."

Bro. Kevin and Sis. Tammy Schaefer were blessed with the arrival of a precious baby girl, Emily Marie. She is a sister of Mary and a granddaughter of Bro. Maurice and Sis. Marjorie Schaefer and Bro. Gene and Sis. Joyce Strunk (Morton, IL).

Bro. Ken and Sis. Sandy Dill are the happy grandparents of little Tanner Lee. Tanner's parents are Bro. Kyle and Sis. Tanya Dill.

Our hospital patients this month were Bro. Melvin Kaiser

(Sis. Marlene) and little Leah Oswald (Bro. Mike and Sis. Michelle). We are thankful that God has touched them with His healing hand and that they are both home again.

We want to extend our sincere sympathy to Sis. Beverly Staker in the passing of her sister, June Devore (Bellflower, CA).

Note of Thanks:

Our special thanks to our children and all those who sent cards, flowers and gifts to us for our golden wedding anniversary. It was much appreciated.

Bro. Paul and Sis. Florence Koch

ILLINOIS, WASHINGTON

**Denise Romersberger
Sue Ruppert**

"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. And I will be found of you, saith the Lord."

Jeremiah 29:11-14

Isn't it good to know that we are in the hands of a God that loves us? He is a God that wants peace for us, not evil. His love is so rich toward us that we may never fully understand how much He loves us until we are able to be with Him in eternity. He is so powerful and holy, and yet He can be found of us if we seek Him with all of our heart, and He hears our prayers. Do we take all of this for granted, or do we thank and praise Him for making Himself available to us? Our God

truly is amazing and deserves much more praise and honor than we can give. Still, He delights in the praise that we raise to Him. "Praise God from whom all blessings flow..."

Thank you to the brothers who came to minister to us this month. On Christmas Day we were blessed with Bros. Virgil Metzger (Chicago, IL), Darren Plattner (Champaign, IL), Andy Klaus (Tokyo, Japan), Randy Kellenberger (Kansas City, MO) and Greg Rassi (Chicago, IL). God bless you for your continuing efforts on behalf of the Word of God.

Hospitalized this month were Bro. Keith Steffen, Sis. Denise Romersberger and little Anna Teubel. All are now recovering very well.

Shiloh Bay is the newborn son of Bro. Chris and Sis. Stacey Ledford. Grandparents are Bob and Barb Ulbricht and Margaret Ledford. All of his brothers and sisters welcomed him home. Congratulations!

We also celebrated the wedding of Bro. Grant DesCarpentrie to Sis. Debbie Martin on January 9. Parents are Bro. Stan and Sis. Jane of Washington and Byron and Sis. Katie Martin. We wish you God's rich blessings in your new life together!

Notes of Thanks:

We wish to express our appreciation for all the food, flowers, gifts, cards, phone calls, and expressions of love that have been showered on us as we mourn the death of our dear sister, Emily. Also, the many prayers of the brethren have helped sustain us.

Sis. Martha and Sis. Edna Simon

Many thanks are sent to those who have prayed, who have shown

support in so many ways, from cards, hospital visits, flowers and meals brought in to simply voicing support in our time of need. God has blessed us with many things, including a wonderful church family. We know that the many prayers lifted to our Father in Heaven contributed to the peace that was experienced and to the rapid recovery that is occurring.

Sis. Denise Romersberger and Sis. Sue Ruppert

INDIANA, BLUFFTON **Catrina Rinkenberger** **Beth Aschliman**

"By the word of the Lord were the heavens made: and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him."

Psalm 33:6,8

This morning we woke up to a beautiful snow. Every time I see this awesome sight I am reminded of God's great power. We are so weak and He is so strong and faithful. We must trust Him every day. Bluffton has been blessed with three new converts: John Sprunger (Bro. Kent and Sis. Sheila), Jameson Ringger (Bro. Kendall and Sis. Sandy) and Travis Frauhiger (Bro. Kris and Sis. Ann). We rejoice with these families.

We had a beautiful weekend bringing four souls into the fold as we witnessed baptisms. Our new brothers in Christ are Bro. Jim Agler (Sis. Pam), Bro. Jesse Kaehr (Bro. Jon and Sis. Juli), Bro. Blare Gerber (Bro. Rex and Sis. Lavon) and Bro. Nick Bertsch (Bro. Stan and Sis. Cindy). Elder Bro. Jesse Beer (Sis. Shirley, Milford, IN) helped Elder Bro. Ed Schwartz with the baptisms.

Also visiting were Bros. Steve Frauhiger (Sis. Irene, Bluffton North) and Doyle Frauhiger (Sis. Jane, Bluffton North).

January 9 was an exciting day for Bro. Matt Pfister (Bro. Ted and Sis. Rose) as he was united in marriage to Sis. Andrea Rager (Bro. Bill and Sis. Lou Ann). Visiting Bluffton and helping with this special event was Matt's brother-in-law, Bro. Lynn Stieglitz (Sis. Leonda, Leo, IN).

Celebrating 50 years of marriage are Bro. Kenneth and Sis. Elizabeth Schwartz and Bro. Don and Sis. Justine Gerber. What a wonderful heritage and example to give to their children. Congratulations!

We were saddened by the death of Karen Snider, mother of Bro. Mike Snider (Sis. Deb). She passed away December 24. Our prayers are with this dear family and also with the family of Galen (Dean) Gerber who passed from this life on December 20. His brothers and sisters are Bro. Luther (Sis. Sharon), Marilyn (Willy) Prichard, Herb (Betty), Sis. Maxine (Charles) Fiechter, Bro. Russell (Sis. Susie) and Glen Gerber. We grieve with these dear families.

We have death and we can also celebrate new life as a new baby girl, Maranda Kay, was born January 12 to Bro. Jason and Sis. Gwen Craighead. Grandparents are Bro. Keith and Sis. Kay Gerber and Bro. Mike and Sis. Kay Craighead. We pray for them as they start their journey as new parents.

Spending time in the hospital this month were Sis. Connie Aschliman (Bro. Keith), Bro. Curtis Tonner (Sis. Jeanette), Sis. Becky Caffee (Bro. Dennis), Bro. Dwight Gerber (Sis. Lucille), Bro. Elmer Isch (Sis. Minnie), Bro. Ervin Aeschliman, Sis. Justine Baumgartner (Bro. Paul), Bro.

Kenneth Shaefer and Sis. Carol Compton (Bro. Roger). We wish them a speedy recovery.

**INDIANA
BLUFFTON NORTH**

**Ann Meyer
Rhonda Maller**

“Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”

Isaiah 1:18

We rejoice that Nathan Mueller (Bro. Dave and Sis. Terri) has believed in this promise. He has repented and confessed his sins before the Lord. We pray that he will know peace and joy in his new life with Christ. We also rejoice to announce three converts who have found peace and look forward to baptism. They are Abby Ringger (Bro. Sam and Sis. Becky), Ashley Meyer (Bro. Bob and Sis. Ann) and Laura Kipfer (Bro. Lyn and Sis. Val).

Several couples in our congregation have welcomed new grandchildren this past month. Bro. Gary and Sis. Nancy Stoller welcome grandson, Jonathan Elias (Eli). His parents are Jon and Tammy Leman of Kennewick, WA. Eli has two older sisters, Elsie and Lillian. Bro. Dick and Sis. Patty Troxel take great delight in their grandson, Gabriel Richard, born to their daughter, Terri, and her husband, Brad. Little Isaac Jadon brings joy to his grandparents, Bro. Lyn and Sis. Val Kipfer. Isaac is the son of Bro. Arlo and Sis. Lisa Kipfer (Leo, IN). He is blessed with two big brothers.

With heartfelt love and prayers, we uplift Sis. Deanna Brinneman (Bro. Dave), Sis. Becky Bertsch (Bro. Lonnie) and their families be-

fore the throne. We are thankful their surgeries went well and extend comfort and support as they face the future. We know that they rest in the hands of our Saviour and King. May He touch them both with healing. We also pray for Sis. Edna Neuenschwander (Walter), Kevin Gerber (Bro. Vic and Sis. Julie) and others who have faced illness, surgery and/or hospital stays.

“Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me and I shall be saved: for thou art my praise.”

Jeremiah 17:14

Note of Thanks:

Thanks to all who remembered us so kindly during the illness and death of our loved one. The cards, phone calls, prayers, etc. are very much appreciated. God bless you all.

The Obed Gerber family

**INDIANA, FRANCESVILLE
Pam Huber**

“Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.”

James 4:8

This verse has always been a favorite of mine and recently I came across an example of this in action in Genesis 18:23, “And Abraham drew near...” He was interceding on behalf of his nephew Lot before the Lord. Abraham as well as Noah, Moses and many others provide us with excellent examples of what a life given to God can be. Yet we also see many examples of their failures. None of us are perfect alone, but as we join together in the body of Christ, we can make up for each other’s shortcomings and lift one another up. We are all needed for that, however, and any loss is as

if a part of our physical body were removed.

Our prayers are with Cameron Wuethrich (Bro. Brad and Sis. Nancy) and Bridget Laposi (Steve Laposi and Brenda Burge) as they have chosen each other as partners in marriage. May the Lord bless them and guide them during their time of engagement. Also engaged are Samuel Gutwein (Bro. Phil and Sis. Carol) and Carrie Lankford (Terence and Mrs. Robert Lucas). We also pray God’s grace be with them as they prepare for such a holy sacrament.

Sis. Emilie Anliker (Bro. Elmer) spent some time in the hospital last month and is thankfully home again.

Many thanks to the ministers who shared God’s precious Word with us this past month: Bros. Nelson Beer (Milford, IN), Dan Kilgus (Remington, IN), Neil Widmer and Greg Lehman (both of Wolcott, IN).

To our dear brothers, sisters and friends who go south for the winter, “And Mizpah; for he said, the Lord watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another.” (Gen. 31:49). You are greatly missed!

**INDIANA
INDIANAPOLIS
Lauretta Schafer
Gail Bradford**

“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.”

John 1:12

Many brethren, friends and family gathered together on the weekend of January 15-16 to witness the testimonies and baptisms of Sis. Melanie Levy (Bro. Roger

and Sis. Sue) and Bro. Wayne Anliker (Sis. Dawn). No matter how long we have been converted, we gain encouragement as we hear how God touches hearts. Visiting ministers on this happy weekend were Bros. Gary Anliker (Elgin, IL), Don Braker (Kansas City, MO), Brian Huber (Francesville, IN), William Emch (Lamont-Gridley, KS), and Elder Bros. Wayne Anliker (Forrest, IL) and Alfred Bahler (Wolcott, IN).

Other visiting ministers supporting our Indianapolis pulpit recently were Bros. Nile Bucher (Bluffton North, IN) and Gene Lehman (Wolcott, IN).

We notice that these willing brothers frequently bring their wives and other family members on these visits. It reminds us what continuous sacrifices these servants make on our behalf.

We are thankful that Sis. Connie Witzig (Bro. Bill) is home recuperating from a hospital stay and that their son, Robby, is recovering from a pedestrian-vehicle accident. Sis. Jeni Hart (Bro. Doug) is also feeling better after a hospital visit.

We fondly remember Sis. Esther Bucher, mother of Bro. Ardie (Sis. Leann), who recently went to be with her Lord. We appreciated her friendly countenance and gentle conversation when she visited in Indianapolis.

Uplifting those we love in prayer, whether in response to a traumatic event, or in the course of our daily lives, is our Christian duty. What a comfort to know that God provides the courage we so often lack.

"He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength."

Isaiah 40:29

INDIANA, LACROSSE

Anna Marie Stoller

Coming to church on time Sunday after Sunday, greeting the brothers and sisters with a fervent, loving greeting, and contagious smile was our Sis. Lina Bock. When we were not sure we should greet with the holy kiss due to a cold or cough, Sis. Lina would pull us forward and say, "I don't care. I want to greet you anyhow!" Thirty-five of Sis. Lina's 93 years were spent serving her Lord, and she has now gone onto her eternal home. Two sons, Robert and Henry, and a daughter, Marianne (Jim) Roushlang, survive.

Sis. Mary Troxel became suddenly ill and was transferred to Chicago with a failing heart. The damage to her heart was too severe causing Sis. Mary to succumb to her eternal reward as a result. "Our songs of praise ascending In heaven's melody, There in Thy glorious kingdom We'll ever worship Thee." (ZH 138). Those left to picture their mother in that glorious kingdom are Sis. Barb Troxel, Bro. Ed and Sis. Carol Troxel, Bro. Tom and Sis. Luann Troxel from our La-Crosse congregation; Marcia and Gary Blumenthal of Westchester, PA; Norma and Tom Mark, Annie and Dale Fischer, and Becky and Glen Minich (all of LaPorte); as well as many grandchildren. This dear family will be in our prayers as they adjust to the absence of one who was deeply involved and interested in each of their lives, and who showed her love in many ways. Tuesday was the day Sis. Mary would deliver her fresh baked goods to each of her children, so that day of the week will not be the same in their lives.

We miss the presence of Bro. Lynn and Sis. MaryAnn Feller as

they are spending several months in Florida. Also, our concern and prayers are for Sis. Liz Pfladderer who has been very ill with the flu virus.

"To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die,"

Eccles. 3:1-2

Our congregation has experienced both seasons of life recently with the passing of our two dear sisters contrasting with the joy of new birth. Kyler Owen Gudeman was born to Bro. Owen and Sis. Nicole Gudeman on the same day as his Dad's birth. Big sister, Jaela, is learning to share time within the family circle with Kyler. Bro. Don and Sis. Mary Lou Gudeman of La-Crosse and Bro. Ken and Sis. Ellen Dahlhouser (West Bend, IA) are the happy, helpful grandparents of these two precious children.

Pondering the lives of the two dear sisters who left us this month, it felt like we were losing a link with the past. Both lived long, productive lives and experienced many of life's joys as well as hardships. There is a quote that reads, "It's not important who you are but Whose you are!" When life is over, all of the tests, trials and joys are not too different from what most people encounter. It is our response to these experiences which determines Whose we are. As the choir sings the last hymn for us, may our life history be rich with examples of love for God.

INDIANA, LEO

Ethelyn Schlatter

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends..."

*John 15:13**What Is A Friend?*

An athlete said: "In my opinion, a friend is a balancing pole that enables us to walk the tight-rope of life without falling."

Said a physician, "I believe a friend may be likened to a soft bandage and a soothing ointment of the cuts and bruises of life."

To a botanist it seemed that, "A friend is a vine that clings to us and hides the discrepancies and rough places of life;" to which a florist added, "Yes, and the greater the ruin, the closer a friend clings."

"A friend is a golden link in the chain of life," said a jeweler.

A woman in mourning responded, "A friend is one who comes in when the whole world goes out."

"The best friend of all," said a white-haired man of eighty, "is Jesus, who said 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.'"

(Streams in the Desert, Vol. 11)

Love much. There is no waste in
freely giving;
More blessed is it, even, than to
receive,
He who loves much, alone finds
life worth living;
Love on, through doubt and
darkness; and believe
There is no thing which Love
may not achieve.

—*Ella Wheeler Wilcox*

At our New Year's Eve services, Bro. Brace Wieland said, "We have 1440 minutes in every 24 hours, we should make each minute count...live each minute faithfully for good."

This service was followed by a program (looking back to our roots to guide our future). Our congregation is made up of so many who

have moved here from other areas, and they do not know what Leo was like. A few who have their roots here reviewed the past, which proved very interesting.

Bro. Chuck and Sis. Naomi Wiegand had a little girl, Gabriella Kay, on January 1, 2000. She remains in the hospital, being premature, and weighed in at 2.11 lb, but is now off the respirator, breathing on her own and gaining slowly. Her two brothers, Demetrius and Sebastian, are delighted to have a baby sister. She is also welcomed by grandparents, Dale and Sis. Freidora Wiegand and Herman Braun.

A baby boy, Issac Jadon, arrived January 4 to bless the home of Bro. Arlo and Sis. Lisa Kipfer and brothers, A.J. and Luke. Grandparents are Russ and Sis. Pat Mikel (Milford, IN) and Bro. Lynn and Sis. Valerie Kipfer (Bluffton, IN).

Sis. Wanda Haltee is again worshipping with us.

Bro. Eugene Stoller has returned to his home again.

Tod Klopfenstein is home again from the hospital following unexpected surgery for an infection. He is on an IV to help promote healing.

We praise God for His intervention in answer to our prayers. We rejoice with Louis and Sis. Ruth Garman, their daughter, Judy, and her husband, Chris Eckert, who had a successful liver transplant. Miracles still happen.

We are grateful for the service of Bros. Greg Stieglitz (Indianapolis, IN) and Randy Gasser (Detroit, MI) who ministered to us on Christmas Day, and also Bro. Ron Bollier (Indianapolis, IN) on Sunday. It was good to fellowship with all three families as they returned for the holiday.

On a Wednesday evening, Bro. Steve and Sis. Irene Frauhiger and

Elder Bro. Phil and Sis. Maureen Stettner (Bluffton North, IN) visited. Elder Bro. Phil and Sis. Maureen returned on Sunday and brought Sis. Maureen's mother, Sis. Lucile Frank. We are thankful for the messages and fellowship we shared.

INDIANA, MILFORD

Pam Beer

Marguerite Hoerr

Milford church has had New Year's Day services for many years. This year we decided to have a New Year's Eve service instead. It began with a regular evening church service. Our guest minister was Bro. Andy Moser (Valparaiso, IN). His wife, Sis. Diane, was with him. After this service, refreshments were served to everyone in our dining room. Following this everyone congregated in the fellowship hall for an evening of sharing with each other. There was group singing, individual songs, sharing of experiences, poems, readings. All of these inspirational offerings lasted long into the night and blessed our entrance into the new millennium.

Bro. Mark Beer and Sis. Jodi Dotterer of Rittman announced their engagement on the last Sunday of the old year. Mark is the son of Bro. Lee and Sis. Sandy of our congregation and Jodi's parents are Bro. Rick and Sis. Dawn Dotterer of Rittman. This young couple has set April 2 as their wedding date. We're happy for them and wish them God's richest blessings.

Bro. Roy Lehman spent some time in the Goshen Hospital and is back in his home at Lakeland Rehabilitation Center.

Making her appearance on the second day of the new millennium was little Hope Marie Beer (Bro.

Brent and Sis. Pam). Her big brother, Austin, helped welcome her home. What a wonderful way to start the year 2000! As God was with them in this past year, we know He'll be with them as they journey into the future. Grandparents of little Hope Marie are Bro. Bob and Sis. Linda Beer and Sis. Irma and the late Millard Stoller (Latty, OH).

Bro. Carlton and Sis. Mary Ann Beer added another great-grandchild to their family tree. Sis. Lisa and Bro. Arlo Kipfer welcomed their third son, Isaac Jadon, on January 4. May God shower His blessings on them also. Isaac's grandparents are Sis. Pat and Russ Mikel and Bro. Lynn and Sis. Valerie Kipfer (Bluffton).

Our annual business meeting was held on January 5 in our Fellowship Hall. Bro. Bill Troup began the meeting with a prayer. Presiding over the election of offices was Bro. Jesse Beer. The following persons were elected: Bro. John Hurd (Trustee); Bro. Dick Steffen (Bible Class teacher). Teaching in the younger classes are: Bro. Dean Lehman, Bro. John Schlatter, and Sisters Pat Beer and Rachel Beer. Our new church secretary is Sis. Judy Longcor. Bro. Bob Hoerr was elected as Treasurer. Other elected persons were as follows: Sis. Kathy Schlipf (Food Committee); Bros. Stan Wuthrich and Sam Beer (speaker system); Sis. Dorothy Steffen (women's sewing projects); and Bro. Marvin Wieland (representative to Gateway Woods). Grateful thanks were expressed to everyone who so faithfully served in the past year.

Bro. Alvin Haab had surgery and Sis. Carol reports he is home and recuperating quite well. Bro. Alvin is one of the "doers" in our church. If anything is in need of repair, he seems always to have the

talents to fix it. We wish him a rapid recovery, and as he has talents to fix things for us, we know God has talents to fix health problems for him.

We want to take this opportunity to wish everyone a millennium of blessings as we enter a new century. As we all are looking to the future with resolves to give the Lord our complete confidence and our complete devotions, we hope to make this world a better place by our living out our dedication to Him.

INDIANA, REMINGTON

**Beth Virkler
Rochelle Ward**

"And ye shall serve the Lord your God, and he shall bless thy bread, and thy water; and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee."

Exodus 23:25

Our prayers for the Lord's healing are with Sis. Emma Beckley and Sis. MaryJo Scheiler (Bro. Herb) as they have both been hospitalized. May they feel His nearness and rely upon His strength during this time.

Bro. Walter Bahler (Sis. Esther) is recovering from open heart surgery. May he too feel the healing power that only the Lord can give.

"A man's heart deviseth his way: but the Lord directeth his steps."

Proverbs 16:9

We give Bro. Rustin Meister (Bro. Dick and Sis. Sharon) our prayerful support as he has felt led by God to help the less fortunate in Mexico. He will be there for several months and will be living in the church with Bro. Lonnie Vogt from

Francesville.

We also ask that God will be near Sis. Charity Isabell (Bro. Phil and Sis. Diane) who will be moving to Bloomington, IL. We will miss her here in Remington and wish her the best as she seeks the Lord's will in her life.

We would like to thank Bros. Ed Strahm (Elgin, IL) and Dean Steffen (Belvidere, IL) as well as their families for being with us on January 16. We had many visitors who "came home to Remington" for possibly the last time before we move to our new church.

We would like to extend an invitation to anyone who would like to visit before we move in the middle of April.

The new church is coming along very nicely and for that we thank the Lord. We will announce dedication and open house dates later for those who are interested.

A special thanks to Bro. Dick Graham (Princeville, IL) who came out to help us paint. Your hard work was thoroughly appreciated. Also to those who continue to donate their time and energy we wish you God's blessings.

INDIANA, SOUTH BEND

**Lavilla Langhofer
DeAnn Schlatter**

The new year is upon us. We thank the Lord for His provision through the past year, and pray for His blessings in the coming year. May our prayer be that we will always be open and willing to hear God's voice and obey His will.

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

Hymns of Zion #150

We have been blessed to have

the frequent visits of Bro. Walt Rager and his wife, Sis. Sharon (Toledo, OH). We thank them for sharing with us again on December 26.

South Bend has felt the hand of God moving among its young people. In our small church, especially, we appreciate His being present with us and blessing us in this way. We rejoice with Bro. Scott and Sis. Gigi Schafer and their family as their daughter, Samantha, turns her life over to her Lord. May His grace always be with her, and the nearness of His presence always be felt.

"He shall receive the blessing from the Lord..." (Psalm 24:5). Children are truly a blessing from the Lord. How many times have we felt we have learned much from even a small child! Our Sunday School blessed us with a beautiful Christmas program. We were reminded of the prophecies and fulfillments of Christ's birth, as well as having the treasured songs of Christmas sung to us, including some in Spanish.

So often Milford has taken our little church under their wing, and included us in their activities. For this we are thankful, and pray God will bless them for it. Again they have invited us to join them, this time for monthly hymn singings.

During the winter months through March, South Bend has a schedule of meeting in nursing homes and the private homes of our brethren on Wednesday evenings. We encourage you to join us—more voices to raise a "joyful noise" are always welcome.

Please call one of our ministers to find out where we will be meeting: Bro. Robert Beebe (219) 291-2158 or Bro. Wayne Lehman (219) 773-4373.

INDIANA, VALPARAISO Hope Bucher

As we begin a new year, new decade, new century, and new millennium, may each one of us strive to more fully know Jesus Christ in a real and personal way. We also pray that the beauty and excitement that we experience during the Christmas season as we celebrate the Saviour's birth, will encourage and strengthen our hearts all year long.

Our thoughts and prayers are with the family of Sis. Esther Bucher, as Esther went to be with the Lord this past month. It is always difficult to say goodbye to someone we love dearly, but we are thankful for the assurance that the Father will take His children Home to live with Him forever. Bros. Ron Heiniger (Bloomington, IL) and Nile Bucher (Bluffton North, IN) were present with us for Sis. Esther's funeral.

We are blessed to have a young couple with us at Valparaiso church, even if only for a short time. Bro. Steve and Sis. Heidi LaFont (Peoria, IL) are spending the month in our area as Steve is getting some special training for his job.

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart..."

Proverbs 3:5

INDIANA, WOLCOTT Beckie Lehman Mary Beth Lehman

This morning as I looked outside on our first good snowfall of the winter, I marveled once again at the intense whiteness all about. A landscape so dead looking just yesterday was blanketed with such purity and beauty. The sun makes it sparkle, and it seems to glow in the moonlight. I was reminded of

the verse, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow;" (Isaiah 1:18). What a precious promise! Those who have been washed in Jesus' blood making their sins white as snow now have the opportunity to keep stains of sin from appearing. Thanks be to God for His grace each day.

We congratulate Kelli Waibel (Bro. Gerry and Sis. Marcia), who graduated from Purdue in December. We pray God will direct her life and heart in the future.

Our annual meeting is held in January. There are new responsibilities for many brothers and sisters, and also terms of service are completed. Thanks to each one who willingly serves not only our congregation, but more importantly, the Lord.

IOWA, BURLINGTON Brenda Schulz Karla Gerst

Another month has gone by and we have started on our journeys of another year. We are thankful that we have brothers who are willing to bring us instruction for our walk as children of God. May the Lord richly bless Elder Bro. Ed Lanz (Oakville, IA) and ministering Bro. Bill Gerst (Alto, MI) for their labors in His service as they visited our congregation.

We also wish to thank the brothers and sisters that recently finished their terms in various church duties. Bro. Michael Messner replaces Bro. John Buster as the new trustee. Sis. Gail Massner and Sis. Ruby Eberhardt are taking Sis. Jean Eberhardt's position on the Women's Committee. Sis. Brenda Schulz will replace Sis. Judy Gehring as a Silver Lining correspondent. May each of these brethren

ren feel God's guidance and blessing as they labor to His name's honor and glory.

IOWA, ELGIN
Gloria Frieden
Heidi Butikofer

"Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord..."

Psalm 127:3

With thankful hearts Bro. Scott and Sis. Leona Fehr welcome Sarah Jean into their family circle. Big sister Kari is also happy for her future playmate. Sarah, who arrived on January 7, is also welcomed by her grandparents, Gene Schmidt (the late Sis. Ella Mae) of Winthrop and Bro. Melvin and Sis. Glenagene Fehr of West Bend.

We are thankful to report that our retired Elder Bro. Paul Butikofer is home and gaining new strength daily after having major surgery. We are thankful to God for answering our prayers on his behalf.

With February often being considered the heart month, the words of this song came to my mind:

Is thy heart right with God,
Washed in the cleansing flood,
Cleansed and made holy
humble and lowly
Right in the sight of God?

Have thy affections been nailed
to the cross?
Countest thou all things for Jesus
but loss?
Hast thou dominion o'er self and
o'er sin?
Over all evil without and within?
Is there now no more condemnation
for sin?
Does Jesus rule in the temple
within?
Are all thy powers under Jesus

control?
Does He each moment abide in
thy soul?
Art thou now walking in
heaven's pure light?
Is thy soul wearing the garment
of white?

Is thy heart right with God,
Washed in the cleansing flood,
Cleansed and made holy,
humble and lowly,
Right in the sight of God?

Reminder: Silver Lining collections are due in February for Elgin, IA. Address changes would be appreciated.

IOWA, GARDEN GROVE
Laura Funk

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

Luke 2:11

The Sunday School children presented the story of Jesus' birth through verse and song. The story seems new no matter how many times we hear it.

Ministers visiting our congregation this past month included Elder Bros. Doug Schock (Pulaski, IA), Jay Luthi (Lamont-Gridley, KS), and Ed Lanz (Oakville, IA). Bro. Duane Metzger (West Bend, IA) was here December 26 which allowed Brad and I to gather with family. We truly appreciated Bro. Duane and Sis. Ruth's generosity to minister in Garden Grove, as Brad can only be gone when a visiting minister is here. We sincerely thank all who come to worship and fellowship with us.

We received a great blessing January 2. We started a New Year by partaking of Holy Communion with Elder Bro. Ed Lanz. A peace-

ful way to end the hustle and bustle of the holidays and begin a new year with strife between brethren laid to rest.

Communion Hymn
O, Spirit of God's strength and
might,
Create in us new life and light;
O, join us all in heart and mind,
That access to God's throne we
find
Within Thy light!
Zion's Harp #200, vs. 1

IOWA, IOWA CITY
Janette Schulz

Greetings to all! We sincerely thank all of our visitors this month, including ministering Bros. Jeff Grimm (Goodfield, IL) and Elder Bro. Curt Frank (La-Crosse, IN), their families and others who traveled to worship with us. Over the holidays our congregation was often much smaller than normal, so each of you were every much appreciated. May God bless your willingness to not be just guests but participants in every aspect of our worship and fellowship.

In one of our recent sermons we were exhorted to be Christ-like in our every day dealings with our family, friends and co-workers. We're thankful for each word recorded in the Bible about our loving Saviour. Oh, to be more like Him! To hate sin and "touch not the unclean thing" and yet love and interact with sinners, to know when to be silent and when to rebuke sin, to be utterly selfless and tirelessly meet the needs of others, to have intimate communication with God the Father and yet to be able to relate the Plan of Salvation to sinful men in terms they can understand, to have the power of God and the holy glory of Heaven and yet ever be humble in dealing with

the unholy, the irreverent, and the unloving!

The Image of Christ

O, Saviour, might I thus as Thee,
Like-minded, pure and humble
be!
With Thee, O Lord, I'll walk
aright,
A child and servant in Thy sight.

My duty in Thy life I see;
My light and mirror shalt Thou
be.

Our likeness, Lord, is far from
Thine.
Thy form and image is divine!

How firm in God didst Thou con-
fide,
That He with Thee would e'er
abide.
Do share Thy grace that I might
be
In bonds of faith thus bound to
Thee!

Alone out on the mountain's
height,
When round Thee drew the
shades of night,
Thy pray'rs arose to God alone
Such zeal my heart does wish to
own!

Thy helping hand and loving
heart
To sick and lost didst Thou im-
part,
And constantly for all didst care;
Thy virtues, Lord, to me do
share!

Rebuke of man didst Thou en-
dure,
Thus as a lamb so meek and
pure;
But Thou couldst glorify the
name
Of God with earnest zeal and

fame.

Thy fearless zeal wilt Thou im-
part;
With courage do inflame my
heart!
Discreetly let me walk with Thee;
Let all my motives holy be.
Zion's Harp #164

**IOWA, LESTER
Cindy Leuthold
Sue Warner**

We are so thankful for the la-
bors of our ministers who share
with us God's Word. Visiting min-
isters include Bros. Roger Aberle
(Sabetha, KS), Larry Bahr (Ft.
Scott, KS), Roy Koehl (Morris,
MN), Kent Mogler (Minneapolis,
MN), Randy Mogler (Washington,
IL), and Jon Schmidgall (Oakville,
IA). May God bless them and their
wives and grant them much grace
to preach the gospel of truth.

Our year ended on a joyful note
as we heard that another soul has
found the grace to repent. We re-
joice with Marcy Van Wyhe (Bro.
Pete and Sis. Susan), and pray that
God will be near her.

On New Year's Eve we heard
that in the year 1999 our congrega-
tion had 5 deaths, 14 births, 17
baptisms, and 8 converts. What a
blessing that God is still calling,
and what a responsibility we have
to preserve our faith for those who
are being born in our midst.

We congratulate Sis. Tina
Knoblock (Bro. Roger and Sis.
Janet), Bro. Kjert Gramstad (Sis.
Michelle) and Brent Bosch (Bro.
Tony and Sis. Pam) who have grad-
uated from college. We pray that
God will direct their paths.

On January 6, Avery Michelle
was born to first-time parents,
Blake and Denise Wysong. Loving
Grandma is Sis. Janet Wysong. We
wish them many blessings.

Bro. Jacob and Sis. Alice Wulf
celebrated their 50th wedding an-
niversary on January 8. We pray
they will continue to feel God's
nearness as they walk the path of
life together.

On January 13, Sis. Emma
Gerber turned 90. Many family
members and friends gathered to
help her celebrate this milestone.
We pray that God will be near her
in the future as He has the past.

Brian Metzger (Bro. Tom and
Sis. Deb) and Angie Kerkvleit
(Greg and Kathy) were united in
marriage on January 15. We wish
them many blessings as they walk
the path of life together.

Our prayers are with the many
loved ones in our midst who have
suffered bodily afflictions. Our
prayers are with Morris Metzger
(Bro. Glen and Sis. Joyce) who had
arm surgery following an injury,
and hospital patients, Cari Moser
(Bro. Rick and Sis. Lori), Liz Wulf
(Emil), and Ray Cordrey (Sis.
Carol). We are thankful that
Karoline Doorneweerd was spared
serious injury and is home from the
hospital following a car accident.
We pray God will heal where it is
His will.

**IOWA, OAKVILLE
Debbie Wagenbach
Melody Steiner**

We recently had our annual
business meeting to take care of
our committees that help maintain
the physical aspects of our church.
We are thankful for each brother
and sister who has completed their
terms, for their faithfulness in
serving and willingness to be used.
Our support and prayers are with
those who have been elected to
serve new terms. They are Bro.
Dave Wagenbach, church trustee;
Bro. Ron Lanz, cemetery commit-
tee; Bro. Bob Kuntz, Fellowship

Center committee; Bro. Brian Wiegand, usher; Sisters Cindy Wiegand and Connie Hay, Sisters Committee; and Sis. Julie Schmidgall, World Relief Sewing.

The betrothal of Bro. Trent Kuntz (Bro. Bob and Sis. Edra) to Sis. Laura Steiner (Bro. Tom and Sis. JoAnn) was recently made known to our congregation. May the Lord be near these dear ones as they plan and prepare for their life together as one in the Lord.

We are very thankful for our visiting ministers this past month. They were Bros. Garry Bucher (Valparaiso, IN), Gary Endress (Bradford, IL), Bill Gerst (Alto, MI), Joe Gerst (Iowa City, IA), Jim Vierling (Eureka, IL) and Elder Bro. Wayne Banwart (Champaign, IL). We thank each one of them for their labors and willingness, through the Spirit, to lead and direct us on the right path.

IOWA, PULASKI Lisa Knecht

"Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counselors there is safety."

Proverbs 11:14

On Saturday, January 15, we were privileged to have the Memorandum shared with us. We want to thank Elder Bro. Ron Schambach (Sis. Nancy, Elgin, IL) for assisting Elder Bro. Doug in this work. While living in a society that wants no absolutes, aren't we grateful for clear, life giving instruction that is based upon God's Word?

Our prayers have been with Bro. Jeff Birkner (Sis. Angie) and Bro. Cleo Rinckenberger (Sis. Esther) during their recent hospitalizations.

IOWA, WEST BEND Eunice Fehr Berniece Banwart

We appreciated the visits and services from Bros. Gary Brown (Sis. Jane, Forrest, IL) and Joe Gerst (Sis. Connie, Iowa City, IA) and Elder Bros. Wayne Banwart (Sis. Charlen, Champaign, IL) and Curt Frank (Sis. Lyla, LaCrosse, IN). May God bless them and their families for coming and lending themselves to be used in our behalf.

Our congregation and community had Christmas season saddened when we heard of the tragic car accident of Wendy (Clay) Schmidt and their 20-month-old son, Dylan. Many prayers have been said in their behalf and we are thankful that after two weeks in very critical care, Wendy is showing some signs of improvement. Dylan spent several days in the hospital and now is in the care of Grandpa and Grandma (Bro. John and Sis. Paula Schmidt).

Helen Gerber had the misfortune of fracturing a hip and is recovering in the hospital. Bob (Kay) Banwart was also a surgical patient. We are so thankful that we have an Almighty God to turn to in time of need and may all these hospital patients feel our prayers.

We rejoice with another convert, Ruth Zaugg (Bro. Martin and Sis. Doris), who has found peace. We look forward to hearing her testimony on January 29 with baptism the next day.

Congratulations and best wishes go to James and Sarah Montag as they became husband and wife on December 18. Parents are Ed and Luan Montag and Bro. Pat and Sis. Julie Zaugg.

We extend our sympathy to Bro. Mark and Sis. Deb Bruellman on the passing of her father, Donald

Cook. May they feel God's loving arms around them to comfort them and fill this empty spot in their family.

Steven and Sis. Kris Banwart, along with Elijah and Gabriel, are thankful for the arrival of Isaiah Kristian on December 14. Sis. Pat Banwart is the grandmother of these three little boys.

JAPAN, SHIODA Ayako Inoue

Dear brothers and sisters in faith,

We rejoice in our Lord, and send our loving greetings to you in the beginning of this new year. The number 2000 written on the new year's greeting cards (which is a custom in Japan) makes me think this means that 2000 years have passed since our Saviour Jesus Christ was born, and He is still watching over us, and calling us and being an intercessor for us every day. I should add this, too, that He will never change.

Our dear Elder Bro. Willis Ehnle and Sis. Lois returned from their stay in the States over the winter holidays and we were happy to see them again. Bro. Willis was hospitalized soon after his return to undergo prostate gland surgery. We pray the Lord will be with both Bro. Willis and Sis. Lois and strengthen and guide them.

This month we lost a dear friend, Mr. Otagiri, who came often to Tamahata church. He was found to have progressive cancer and had been hospitalized a number of times since last September. We will miss him greatly and will be praying for their family.

This past Sunday, we heard the message "Seek those things which are above" (Colossians 3:1). We were reminded to lift up our eyes not toward the visible things in the

world, but to our Lord in Heaven.

JAPAN, TOKYO

**Chris Aberle
Marie Inoue**

This month began with some anxious anticipation from all of us. As believers, we may have been less concerned about the effects of Y2K, yet our "comfort zone" was threatened. In the year 2000, we will surely be faced with situations that cause us to "fear the unknown". As we are dealing with difficulties in our career, families, or within our selves, let's remember II Timothy 1:7. "For God hath not give us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind (self discipline)." The power of the Holy Spirit can help us overcome our fears, and we can continue to do God's work.

"God be with you til we meet again," was sung for Kan Umemura as he heads back to the U.S. (Bloomington-Normal) to resume language study. We enjoyed his presence in our assembly and gathering for young folks.

Dismissed from the hospital was Sis. Shizuko Utsuki and her daughter, Nobuko. May God give Sis. Hiroko and her sisters spiritual and physical strength as they care for the needs of their aged mother.

Along with the Shioda church we are praying for the needs of Bro. Willis Ehnle (Sis. Lois) as he recently submitted to surgery and is now at home. Further testing requires that he receive medication, and may God provide wisdom and knowledge for the doctors to give him the best care possible.

KANSAS, BERN

**Jill Hartter
Holly Meyer**

On Sunday, the 18th of December, our Sunday School children brought forth the Christmas message. It is always special to witness our young people sing about Christ's humble, yet glorified, birth. Can you imagine what it was like to be a shepherd and have the night's dark sky burst into an awesome light of angels proclaiming the birth of a King? Can you imagine what it will be like when Christ comes again in the clouds to take the redeemed to His heavenly mansion?

Wanting to join Him in the clouds is Jason Rokey (Bro. Galen and Sis. Nancy) and Tanya Rokey (Bro. Allen and Sis. Glenda). We rejoice that they are seeking the Lord in repentance.

Two upcoming marriages have been announced in Bern recently. Bro. Brian Rokey (Bro. Allen and Sis. Glenda) is engaged to Sis. Denise Banwart (Bro. Jerry and Sis. Arlene, Congerville, IL) and Bro. Dominic Meyer (Earl and Sis. Darlene) is engaged to Sis. Jenny Plattner (Bro. Donald and Sis. Ada, Sabetha, KS). Our prayers and best wishes are with them as they began blending their lives together in preparation for their upcoming weddings.

During the past month we have welcomed several new babies into our hearts and lives. Sis. Miriam and Clayton Strahm are the blessed grandparents of Aaron James. He was born to Tim and Chris Moore (Hiawatha, KS) on December 6. Big sister, Abby, and big brother, Abraham, welcome this little one home. Rachel Ann was born to Bro. Todd and Sis. Cynthia Fehr on December 28. Logen and Leanna are the proud siblings in this home. Rachel's grandparents are Bro. Warren and Sis. Shirley Fehr (Fairbury, IL) and Bro. Fred and Sis. Joann

Edelman. Double cousins, Kristen Marie Rokey, born on December 31, and Dillion Jay Rokey, born on January 9, are sharing both sets of grandparents. They are Bro. Allen and Sis. Glenda Rokey and Eugene and Judy Edelman (Sabetha, KS). Kristen's parents are Bro. Todd and Sis. Sheila Rokey. Hannah and Travis welcome their little sister home. Dillion's parents are Bro. Dwight and Sis. Anita Rokey. Leigha, Amanda and Benton welcome him home. May all of these families feel God's blessings and guidance with their new additions.

Over the holidays we were blessed to have a few visiting ministers with us. They were Bro. Roger Aberle (Sabetha, KS), Bro. Edwin Strahm (Elgin, IL), and Bro. Don Braker (Kansas City, MO). We appreciate each one for being with us and sharing the Word.

Hospitalizations this month have been Sis. Lucy Rokey (Bro. Roy) and Sis. Nancy Baumgartner (Bro. Leonard). We remember those with the afflictions of the flesh in our prayers. May God be near them and strengthen them physically and spiritually.

KANSAS, FORT SCOTT

Joleen Sinn

It was a delight to watch and listen to our Sunday School students as they presented the Christmas story in song and verse. We pray that these truths will be deeply planted in their hearts so that when our precious Saviour calls them, they will hear and follow in His footsteps.

We are so thankful that our dear Sis. Marie Zaugg is home from the hospital and feeling much better. Sis. Marie has voluntarily come to church early for many years setting tables, helping fill trays, mak-

ing coffee and many more things that we are just finding out as she has felt the need to retire her many duties. We thank you for your many years of loving service and look forward to having you assemble with us again.

KANSAS, KIOWA
Jenny Stewart
Laura Wagenbach

Many enjoyed a wonderful afternoon caroling at various houses, rest homes and hospitals. The blessings we receive are truly wonderful. Sharing the love of God and the special birth of His Son, our Saviour, always warms the heart.

We held a New Year's Eve service to worship our Lord and God for the end of another year. After services many stayed to play games and share snacks. There is no better way to bring in a new year than with praises and prayer. May God richly bless you, and always abide with you throughout this new year.

Abide with me!
Fast falls the eventide,
the darkness deepens
Lord with me abide!
When other helpers
fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless,
oh, abide with me.

Hymns of Zion #110

With the wonderfully mild winter weather the Sunday School had its first ever winter picnic, hike and scavenger hunt. A great time was had by all, and there were many requests to make this an annual outing.

Our hospital patients this month were Bro. Elmer and Sis. Alice Tanner. We pray for their strength and good health to re-

turn. Bro. Raymond Roth is now residing at the Kiowa District Hospital Manor.

KANSAS
LAMONT-GRIDLEY
Sarah Somerhalder

Among our visitors this month were ministering Bros. Shawn Metzger (Philadelphia, PA), Jeff Bahr (Kiowa, KS) and Brandon Emch (Kansas City, MO). We thank them for sharing God's Word with us.

We rejoice, along with the angels in Heaven, as Rick and Mary Jane (Kraft) Anliker have found the grace to repent. Rick is the son of Bro. Glen and Sis. Lorean Anliker and Mary Jane is the daughter of retired ministering Bro. Lloyd and Sis. Nadine Kraft. May we pray for them and encourage them in this most important step.

We will miss the smile of our Bro. Floyd Isch who went to be with the Lord on January 1. Our sympathy and prayers are with Bro. Ron Isch (Sis. Jane) and his family in the passing of his father.

Sickness from influenza caused the cancellation of New Year's Eve service and many to be missing from our assembly Sunday, January 2. We listened to tapes in church Sunday, as all three of our ministers were sick.

Our hospital patients this month were retired Elder Bro. Sam Anliker (Sis. Clara) and retired ministering Bro. Lloyd Kraft (Sis. Nadine) who both underwent hernia surgery.

Several from our congregation traveled to Indianapolis, IN to hear the testimony and witness the baptism of Bro. Wayne Anliker (Sis. Dawn), son of Bro. Glen and Sis. Lorean. We wish him God's blessings in his new walk.

For one of our local World Relief projects, the church skirted and insulated the bottom of a trailer for a mother and her two children. Next month, the church will help to lay a foundation for a house for Habitat for Humanity.

KANSAS, SABETHA
Mary Kay Wenger
Brenda Grimm

We appreciated visits from ministering Bros. Keith Beyer (Detroit, MI) and Edwin Strahm (Elgin, IL).

We remember Bro. Loren Strahm in prayer who spent time in the hospital.

Our church is rejoicing with converts, Tiffany Kellenberger (Bro. Brad and Sis. Teresa) and Keith Grimm (Bro. Doug and Sis. Jeryl). May God grant them much grace to serve Him.

Our sympathy to Bro. Martin Beyer (Sis. Karen) on the passing of his stepfather, Bro. Floyd Isch (Gridley-Lamont, KS).

Sabetha's first 2000 baby was born January 7 to Bro. Klinton and Sis. Kara Beyer. They are first-time parents of a son, Wyatt Scott Beyer. Grandparents, Bro. Martin and Sis. Karen Beyer, and Bro. Rodney and Sis. Arlene Grimm, rejoice with their new grandson.

We are happy to announce the engagement of Sis. Jennifer Plattner (Bro. Don and Sis. Ada) and Bro. Dominic Meyer (Earl and Sis. Darlene). A May wedding is planned.

It was a blessing to hear our church remodeling is nearing completion. At this time we are tentatively hoping to return to our church for services beginning January 23.

KANSAS, WICHITA**Emma Miller**

On the Wednesday after Christmas, over twenty brothers, sisters and friends from the church came over to El Dorado so Bro. Godfrey and I could enjoy their songs and fellowship. We value their efforts because we know it was a sacrifice of time and effort for each of them. We thank God for a loving church family.

Worship services were held Christmas morning and on New Year's Eve. The many who had come home for the holidays enriched our fellowship.

As reported last month, Bro. Phil Bowers had his surgery. Recently he had a set back and was hospitalized again but now he is at home for an extended bed rest. Please continue to keep him in your prayers.

Bro. Tim Zimmerman (Lamont-Gridley, KS) was our visiting minister on January 9. We appreciate the sacrifice of time and energy that he and Sis. Barbara made for the benefit of the Wichita church.

Bro. Max and Sis. Judy Reimschisel were made grandparents again when Samuel Douglas was born on January 10 to Andrea and Stuart Nelson. Little Samuel has two older sisters.

KENTUCKY, LEXINGTON**Alex Neukomm**

A new millennium has begun. How have we begun this new millennium? With work beginning again and school starting, how will we glorify God as we start out the year and remain close to Him? Our lives can sure get busy in a hurry and I can see mine beginning to unravel before my eyes as I start classes tomorrow.

Let us remember, as Paul re-

minds us in II Timothy 1:6-7, that we should stir up the gift of God, which is in us by the putting on of hands; God hasn't given us a spirit of fear or timidity, but of power, of love, and of a sound mind or self-discipline. I was just reading this today and what a great reminder it was to me that God has given these things to us. In Christ...we have power, love and self-discipline. Let's use them to glorify God in this new year!

We are very grateful for the visiting ministers the last weekend in November and December. They were Bros. David Zehr (Gridley, IL), Andy Stoller (Smithville, OH), Merle Hartzler (Rittman, OH) and Nelson Beer (Milford, IN). May the Lord richly bless them!

Saturday evening, December 11, Bro. Merle Hartzler (Sis. Bonnie) brought a nice group down with them from Rittman. We had a potluck at church followed by a singing. Everyone enjoyed a blessed weekend.

We extend a warm welcome to everyone to visit Lexington in the New Year. Please contact Bro. Lester Huber (606) 745-2541 or Bro. Jan Neukomm (606) 273-8574.

MEXICO, IXTLAN**Erica Schambach**

"Suffer the children to come unto me."

Luke 18:16

The other teacher was unable to come that day, and only one student showed up for class, not exactly thrilled to be there. Getting her to read the assigned Bible story was difficult and filling out the accompanying workbook pages even more patience-proving. After one too many pleas of "Can't I finish

this tomorrow?", I calmly responded, "But Yessica, what if tomorrow never comes?" Silence. She had stopped scooting toward the door and was looking up at me, puzzled. "What if Jesus comes back tonight?", I asked her. Her eyes widened, "Where will He come?" "From the sky," I replied. "Some day, and none of us know when, Jesus will return to Earth in the clouds to take God's children back to Heaven with Him. It could be today, tomorrow or hundreds of years from now." Nothing more was said about waiting until the next day to finish the assignment. Are we expectantly awaiting our Lord's return, or are we hoping He'll delay His coming a little longer so we can accomplish an assignment He's asked us to do?

New Year's Eve was our annual Christmas Program and potluck. Although the turnout was lower than usual, partly due to a water line break in a neighboring village, it was a memorable and blessed evening for all who came. Everyone brought a dish to share for the "comida" following the program, and children and adults alike participated in the traditional pinata breaking on the patio. We completed the purchase of a house/church in December which will be occupied by our three members from Morelia, Bro. Rogelio and Sis. Fernanda Cervantes, their son Booz, and Sis. Paula Angelito. Morelia, the state capital, is a two hour drive from Ixtlan and we currently hold a service there every other Saturday. With the completion of a second story on the house in February or March, we plan to use it for a place of worship and have services there once a week, Lord willing.

Although some have had the opportunity to help with the work here and fellowship with our con-

gregation, others are probably wondering, "Who are our Mexican brothers and sisters?" and "What brought them to our church?" We hope to answer these questions by introducing you to one of our members each month.

Meet Sis. Carmen (Lira Rodriguez) Cervantes:

Sis. Carmen was the first believer in Ixtlan, converting eight years before our church was established in this mountain village. Raised in a highly superstitious environment, she practiced all the things she had been taught were necessary to be a "good person". Sis. Carmen married young and bore 15 children, nine of which are still living. When her oldest son was 16 years old, he left home due to a poor relationship with his father. After leaving, he converted, was baptized and married in the Apostolic Christian Nazarene Church in Tecate, Mexico. He and his wife returned to Ixtlan to visit and share the Gospel with his family. During these visits, they explained that the rituals and practices that Carmen had been taught and devotedly followed would not save her soul. They pointed out their contradictions to God's Word and encouraged her to stop seeking after these false teachings. After some time, the Holy Spirit brought conviction and she was given the grace to repent of her sins and dedicate her life to serving the One true God. Apart from her oldest son and his wife, the reactions of her family and friends were anything but encouraging. Why did she need to change? Why had she stopped practicing all those things she had been so devoted to before? It was a difficult time of testing and temptations, but the Lord provided and never left her to fend for herself. One of the things that she struggled with

after making this life-changing decision was her inability to read. How would she learn and grow if she couldn't even read what was contained in God's Word? Her converted son lived several days journey from Ixtlan and couldn't be there to guide her through each valley. But the Shepherd was, and He never failed to provide all that His lamb needed. Although others read to her, she didn't learn to read herself until after our church was established here. Sis. Carmen was baptized on July 23, 1987. Elder Bro. Horacio Roldan of one of the Apostolic Christian Nazarene Churches in Argentina and counseling elder for the Tecate church baptized Sis. Carmen in a dam up in the hills of Ixtlan. Since then, five of her nine children have converted and been baptized, and one is repenting. Her mother and two sisters also surrendered their lives to the Lord after her. After being interviewed by several of our Elders, Sis. Carmen's membership was transferred to the Apostolic Christian Church on November 24, 1997. Sis. Carmen is grateful for the way God has worked in her life and the people He has used to help her learn about and grow in Him.

MICHIGAN, ALTO
Kristen Plattner
Sandy Schutte

We have now passed the turn of the century, entered a new millennium, and set our calendars for a new year. Here at Alto, we were reminded before these events by Elder Bro. Aaron Steffen that no matter what happens, we should remember we have each other. More importantly, we have our precious faith in God through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 reminds us, "Two are

better than one; because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe unto him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up." Let us remember these words and work together to further the work of God's kingdom and strengthen our faith in Him.

As the new year has begun, we have done exactly that at our annual business meeting, by prayerfully filling the positions that have been vacated. As trustee, Bro. Tom Oesch replaces Bro. Fred Oesch. On the kitchen committee, Sisters Susan Daniels and Terri Huber replace Sisters Liz Blough and Kristen Plattner. Bro. Nathan Steffen replaces Bro. Ron Erismann as Sunday School Superintendent, and Bro. Eric Spangler replaces Bro. Wes Daniels as usher. On the World Relief Committee, Sis. Kim Koehl replaces Sis. Marguerite Blough, and as Silver Lining correspondent, Sis. Sandy Schutte replaces Sis. Michelle Oesch.

We would like to thank all those who are stepping down from their faithful years of service. Our prayerful support is extended to those that are taking over these jobs, knowing that any job done for the Lord is not a little job, and any time given to the Lord is time well spent.

We would like to welcome two new arrivals to Alto this month. Alissa Lucile to Aaron and Samantha Tripp (grandparents are Sam and Randi Oesch and Joanna Tripp); and Joanna Jane to Jerry and Annie Link (grandparents are Bro. Fred and Sis. Donna Oesch and Bill and Mary Link). We rejoice in the birth of these two new souls and are reminded in Proverbs 22:6, "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old

he will not depart from it.”

Our prayers of healing go out for Sis. Margaret Jackson who is recovering from surgery, and to Sis. Susan Daniels and Danielle Oesch who are dealing with some physical ailments. May they find comfort in knowing that the Lord is in control of all our needs. I Peter 5:7 reminds us, “Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you.”

Those that have gone to a warmer climate for the winter are Sis. Helen Steffen to AZ, Sis. Bertha Wingeier to FL, Bro. and Sis. Lyman Feldman to FL, and in February Bro. Bill and Sis. Judy Gerst to TX. We will sorely miss them, and eagerly await their return in the spring. May God watch over them all.

MICHIGAN, BAY CITY

Rhonda Knochel

Peggy Jackson

Psalm 116:15 says “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.” How reassuring this verse is when we lose loved ones. I’m sure that verse meant a lot to Sis. Elaine Wieland (Bro. Merle) and Bro. Duanne Broquard (Sis. Carol) and the rest of the Broquard family as well as they experienced the loss of their beloved mother, Sis. Clara Broquard (IL). It is our prayer that the entire Broquard family feel God’s nearness as I am sure that their sweet mother will be very missed. Isn’t it wonderful to know that we will meet again in Heaven someday?

Our prayers are also extended to two dear sisters who have struggled with the weakness of the physical body. They are: Sis. Hermine Kaeb (Bro. Alf) and Sis. Blanche Wieland. It is our hope and desire that they recuperate quickly and will soon be joining us in Sunday worship.

We’ve had our first real snow-storm here in mid-Michigan and it was wonderful. The beautiful fresh snow was such a powerful reminder of how clean our hearts can be when we ask Jesus to cleanse us. What a wonderful Saviour we have and what a wonderful plan of salvation He has given us.

May your month be filled with God’s grace and mercy.

Reminder: February is collection month for Bay City!

MICHIGAN, DETROIT

Bonnie Bedolla

Crystal Ramsier

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

Ecclesiastes 3:1

We’ve reached the part of the year that can seem pretty dreary in the midwest; with bitter cold temperatures and gray skies. Yet God can use even miserable weather to teach us. I’m much more likely to remember to pray for the homeless when a cold wind in my face has reminded me of the many hardships they face. When I see a cold and lifeless winter landscape, it makes me truly appreciate the beauty and warmth of the other seasons.

Elder Bro. Dale Eisenmann (Chicago, IL) assisted our Elder Bro. Mark Bahr in sharing the Conference letter with our congregation. It was a blessing to be reminded about our real mission in life and to spiritually refocus. We appreciated Bro. Dale’s willingness to serve on our behalf and enjoyed having him and Sis. Judy spend the weekend with us.

We want to extend our gratitude to Bro. Doug Harmon (Toledo, OH) for hosting a service at Woodhaven this month. These ser-

vices provide a neat chance to get to know the residents of our assisted living home a little better.

The Detroit Church continues to enjoy the myriad of people who come here to take advantage of the many employment opportunities that exist. One of those opportunities is right next door to the Church at the Woodhaven Retirement Community. We welcome the opportunity to explore the position of Director of Operations further with any interested brothers or sisters (see brief ad in the back of this Silver Lining issue). Anyone wanting a detailed position description should feel free to call Randy Gasser (734) 261-9000 or write Woodhaven Retirement Community, 29667 Wentworth Avenue, Livonia, MI 48154 or E-Mail woodliv@concentric.net. All requests will be kept confidential.

MINNESOTA MINNEAPOLIS

Delores Sauder

The Sunday School children eagerly brought forth the story of Christ’s birth in verse and song on December 19, 1999.

We enjoyed a visit from our Elder Bro. LeRoy Messner (Winthrop, MN) and thank him for sharing with us from God’s Word.

Many of our congregation traveled to be with family and loved ones over the holidays. We are thankful for God’s traveling mercy and everyone returned home safely.

Lori Schmidgall (Bro. Neil and Sis. Linda, Morris, MN) and Delayne Stickling (Bro. Dale and Sis. Diane, Lester, IA) announced their engagement. We wish them God’s blessings as they plan their life together.

Our dear Bro. Joe Bednarski finished his earthly race on Decem-

ber 17. Our prayer is that God will comfort his dear wife, Sis. Ethel, and family.

God looked around the garden
and found an empty space
He looked down upon the earth
and saw your tired face
He put His arms around you and
lifted you to rest
God's garden must be beautiful
for He only takes the best
He saw that you were weary and
He knew you were in pain
He knew that you would never be
well on earth again
He saw the roads were getting
rough and hills were hard to
climb
So He closed your weary eyelids,
and whispered "Peace be
thine."

—author anonymous

Note of Thanks:

We would like to thank everyone for their love and support in prayers, visits, phone calls, food, cards and sympathy in the passing of our dear brother in faith, husband and father.

The family of Bro. Joe Bednarski

MINNESOTA, MORRIS
Dianne Kellenberger
Nancy Wulf

"O sing unto the Lord a new song: sing unto the Lord, all the earth. Sing unto the Lord, bless his name; shew forth his salvation from day to day."

Psalms 96

When the burdens of life become too heavy to bear, sing! Nothing praises the Lord like singing (even if it is a song in your thoughts). It comforts and draws

you near the Lord, to find a hymn to help you through your lot in life. He is always there. May you always find it so.

We are always grateful for the labors of visiting ministers on our pulpit. We thank Elder Bro. Wayne Fehr (West Bend, IA), Bro. Kent Mogler (Minneapolis, MN), and Bro. Doug Grimm (Sabetha, KS).

Rejoicing greatly over the calling of one soul to repentance, we thank God for the answering of the heart of Tom Koehl (Bro. Karl and Sis. Marilyn).

On December 26, Callie Marie came to warm the hearts and home of Bro. Eric and Sis. Kim Koehl and her big brother, Benjamin. Thankful grandparents are Bro. Ken and Sis. Karen Koehl and Bro. Wally and Sis. Diane Feuchtenberger.

Also rejoicing over the blessed arrival of a little one are Bro. Kevin and Sis. Julie Koehl and Nathan who welcomed Kaleb Peter on January 12. His grandparents are Bro. Harv and Sis. Wilda Koehl and Bro. Beirne and Sis. Joyce Messner.

But into each one's life, some rain must fall, and our sympathies are with the family of Bro. Henry Nohl who died December 27. May God be the comfort and stay for his wife, Sis. Anna, and their children, Bro. Lloyd (Sis. Joyce) of Mission, TX; Lucille (Harland) Steuber of St. Paul; and Bro. David (Sis. Eileen) of Morris; and all his grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Also, our hearts go out to his remaining sisters, Sis. Lillian Koehl (Zapata, TX), Sis. Naomi and Sis. Nettie (Morris) and Cora Hedstrom (Warroad, MN).

On December 18, 1999, Bro. Harold and Sis. Ila Gramm celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. Surely it is a time of rejoicing, to think of all that God has blessed you with in those 50 years. May God's rich blessings

continue to be upon you. They wish to thank all their church family for the cards and good wishes sent to them in honor of this special occasion.

In need of God's healing strength this month is Sis. Edie (Bro. Albert) Joos. It was good to see her in church again.

God has blessed our congregation in many ways this year. We have had 11 births, 5 funerals, 9 converts, 5 baptisms, 1 wedding, and 2 friends' weddings. May this new year of 2000 be filled likewise with the love of our Heavenly Father in all things.

MINNESOTA, WINTHROP
Carol Ann Messner
Becky Braulick

"As the father hath loved me, so I have loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

John 15:9-12

February is celebrated as the month of love in the United States. Consider in your thoughts the love Christ had for each of us. There is no greater love than His!

Our sympathy is extended to the following families in the death of their loved ones: Edward Ahrens (TX), grandfather of Bro. Ed and Sis. Ginny Stoll; Judith Kintzi (New Ulm), sister of Mona and Duane Messner; and Margaret Kreft (Gibbon), mother of Sis.

Marilyn and Bro. Bill Messner. May the Lord heal their grieving hearts.

Hospital patients were Ellie, baby daughter of Dan and Karen Messner (Gaylord), and Bro. Leo Messner (Sis. Georgia) wintering in Texas. We pray for God's healing touch on them.

Note of Thanks:

Bro. Roy and Sis. Rose Alice Hawk and their families wish to thank everyone for thoughts and prayers while they were in the hospital. Both of them are home and doing well.

Bro. Roy and Sis. Rose Alice Hawk

**MISSOURI, KANSAS CITY
Brent Kellenberger**

As another year and century begins, it is with great comfort that we can turn to God's Word and read "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (Hebrews 13:8). As many of us return to college, we pray God will once again provide His grace in abundance, that we may be overcomers. Satan works to create a double standard in all of our lives, especially when we are away from home. We must remember that God knows all that we do, say and think. "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Phil. 4:8). If we can truly reflect on this verse and how it applies to us, we will be able to fulfill the next verse, which exhorts us to be doers of the Word.

We are thankful for the ministering brothers that have shared

the Word with us this month. Bro. Dean Steffen (Sis. Carol, Belvidere, IL) was with us on the evening of December 24. On December 26, Dean was joined by Elder Bro. John Lehman (Sis. Connie, Bern, KS). Bro. Roger Aberle (Sis. LaVonne, Sabetha, KS) was also with us this month. We hope you had a blessed time in Kansas City and look forward to seeing you again, Lord willing.

We welcome two brothers into our church and singles group. Bro. Korbin Beyer comes to us from Sabetha, KS and Bro. Tim Lehman comes from Bern, KS. We are thankful that the Lord has directed you to our area, and we look forward to fellowshiping with you.

**MISSOURI, LAMAR
Kristen Braker
Kristi Huber**

We rejoice with Mindy Braker (Bro. Jerry and Sis. Carol) who feels she has peace with God and man. We pray that she may always feel God's nearness and grace.

Visiting ministers with us this past month were Bros. Myron Knobloch (Lester, IA) and Mike Rinkenberger (Congerville, IL). We trust the Lord will bless them for their labors in His service.

Our annual business meeting was held on January 11. May God bless those who have been given various responsibilities, and also those who have fulfilled their terms.

**MISSOURI, ST. LOUIS
Rachel Schrock**

If a single fervent prayer
of a soul prevailing
on the tender heart of God
brings its fruits unailing,

how much more
is in store,
when whole congregations
bring their supplications?

Zion's Harp #174

In a recent sermon we were encouraged to not only pray for our own children's spiritual standing, but also to pray for others' children that all may come to know the Lord before it is forever too late. The power of a praying congregation is greater than we can imagine. We were also encouraged not to give up when it seems that our prayers are not being answered as God's timetable is much different than our own. Let us join forces even from congregation to congregation, praying for our youth as they are our future church.

We were reminded recently that God answers prayers faithfully, even if they exist merely as a passing thought. On the way home from church on a recent Sunday, we were feeling bad for our home ministering brother who had given a number of sermons in a row by himself. We mused, "If only we had a brother from a nearby church whom we could call and invite to our Wednesday service as a surprise." Our silent prayers were answered when a ministering brother from Central Illinois called, saying that he and his family would be in town on a short vacation and were wondering if we had Wednesday evening services. What a joyous blessing this evening was as it is very rare for us to have Wednesday visitors! Thank you, Bros. Rick Plattner (Sis. Mary Ann, Peoria, IL) and Tom Bolliger (Sis. Jane, Tremont, IL), for lending of yourselves in the ministry to our little congregation this month.

We would like to encourage any who may be passing through the St. Louis, MO area to join us for our

worship service on Sundays. We have recently come through a rather "dry spell" of visitors and miss the fellowship that you bring with you. Any of the St. Louis members would be glad to give suggestions for activities here for a group of young singles, a family, or even a potluck group. We would love to have you come and visit us. And, if you would feel so moved, we would encourage you to join us after church as we praise our Lord and Saviour in a song service at a nearby Rest Home.

MISSOURI, TAYLOR

Peg Haerr

Recovering from surgery recently is Dana Pearn (Tom), John Hoerr (Bro. Don and Sis. Elaine), Annalynn Knochel (Bro. Eric and Sis. Penny), Connie Page, Irene Riney (Gene) and Bro. Brent Hoerr (Sis. Charlotte. We pray that God will lend His healing hand in their lives.

Our annual business meeting was held January 12. Bro. Kent Heimer (Sis. Jan) was chosen as our new deacon. May God continue to grant him wisdom and direction as he assumes this new role. We welcome Bro. Brent Hoerr (Sis. Charlotte) as our new trustee and Sis. Kay Sutter (Bro. Richard) will be serving on our kitchen committee. We thank Bro. Shon Haerr (Sis. Peg) and Sis. Deb Sutter (Bro. Steve) for their past service.

Note of Thanks:

Thanks to all of you loved ones for your kind expressions of sympathy after our dear Dad, Ezra Feller, passed away. We also want to express heartfelt thanks to all who remembered Roy with cards, gifts and phone calls since his surgery. May God bless each kind deed.

Roy and Dona Grimm

NEW YORK CROGHAN-NAUMBURG Anna Mellnitz

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

A blessed New Year to all. We should think of how the Lord has blessed us in the past year.

We had a covered dish meal on New Year's Eve and services after.

Joseph (Linette) Bush had surgery on December 16, 1999. He is doing good, and we pray for his continued recovery.

We had a singing at Bro. Andy and Sis. Becky Virkler's on January 16.

OHIO, AKRON

Joyce Gasser

Bro. John and Sis. Jan Graf will be observing their 40th wedding anniversary March 12. May God give them more happy years together.

Mara Henico (Bro. Greg and

Sis. Sarah) has turned to the Lord Jesus for her Saviour and received peace with God. May the grace of God continue to be with her.

Sis. Eszti Zsoldos has returned home from being in the hospital. We wish her a speedy and full recovery.

We appreciate our brothers and sisters in various church offices and duties and thank those retiring, and welcome those coming on. Those retiring are Sis. Lynell Palitto on the kitchen committee, Bro. Dan Reljin as usher, Bro. Don Steidl as Sunday School superintendent, and Sis. Eszti Zsoldos and Bro. Glenn Greenbank as Sunday School teachers.

The ones coming in are: Sis. Joanne Schar on the kitchen Committee, Bro. Mike Palitto as usher, Bro. Brian Palitto as superintendent of Sunday School, and Sis. Michelle Steidl and Bro. Eric Graf as Sunday School teachers. We appreciate all the kind and loving help we get. Some duties are defined by positions described, but there are many kind deeds that are done and assistance given in addition to the committees mentioned.

We appreciated our visiting ministers, Bro. Gary Maibach and Bro. Glenn Riggensbach of Smithville. Bro. Gary also spoke to the older Sunday School class regarding non-combative service.

OHIO, COLUMBUS

Anita Steiner

A World Relief night was held January 7. Many from our congregation were able to attend to make it an enjoyable evening. Although the assembly of the neonatal kits seems quite simple, we are thankful that others are able to benefit from them.

We are appreciative of our ministers who stand Sunday after

Sunday to bring God's Word to us. Visiting us this month were Bros. Ron Palitto (Akron, OH) and Jerry Bauman (Rittman, OH). May God be their rich rewarder.

OHIO, JUNCTION
Cindy Schlatter

On Sunday afternoon, January 2, we gathered together for the funeral of our departed Bro. Buzz Rose. Our thoughts and prayers continue to be with his wife, Sis. Inez. May God continue to be with you and grant you comfort as only He can.

We enjoyed hearing Elder Bro. Ervin Knecht (Eureka, IL) proclaim the Word of God to us. It surely is a blessing how we can travel to our various churches and also have visitors from our various churches and still feel the same unity and love of home. We trust God will bless you for your efforts and we look forward to having you visit us in the future.

We rejoice as another lamb was gathered into the fold. Bro. Greg Manz's testimony and baptism was January 15-16. Elder Bro. Wendell Gudeman (Francesville, IN) spent the weekend with us to assist our Elder Bro. Bill Schlatter. Other visiting ministers this weekend were Bros. Wallace Ramsier (Mansfield, OH) and Mark Ramsier (Sardis, OH). Many thanks for bringing the Word of Life unto us. May the Lord richly bless you and also the other many visitors that made the effort to be with us on this uplifting weekend.

Our Sis. Inez Rose spent some time in the hospital this past month, but we are thankful she is much better and assembling with us again.

OHIO, LATTY
Kathy Sinn
Heidi Hackenjoss

We enjoyed many visitors during the holiday season. The Lord also opened the way for visiting ministers: Bros. Walter Rager (Toledo, OH), Randy Gasser (Detroit, MI) and Dan Stoller (Remington, IN). We ask that the Lord would bless these brothers with His grace to continue to preach the truth in season and out of season.

Josi Evelyn joined the family of Cris and Sis. Amy Hopkins. Her big sister, Carli, welcomes her along with grandparents, Bro. Phil and Sis. Gloria Grant and Curt and Laurel Hopkins. We look forward to seeing Josi in church as her parents strive to raise their daughters in the fear of the Lord.

Several of our congregation were hospitalized or underwent surgery during the past month. We continue to ask for the Lord's healing hand of blessing for Bro. Walter Sinn (Sis. Renee), Sis. Dorothy Stoller (Bro. Wayne), Sis. Joanne Klopfenstein (Bro. Keith), Sis. Lisa Sinn (Bro. Kurt), and Sis. Buelah Stoller.

Following our New Year's Day service, we held our annual business meeting. During this time, Elder Bro. Ray Sinn updated us on the blessings which were afforded to our congregation. Those including: 11 births, 1 death, 10 weddings, 13 converts, and 10 baptisms. Our prayer would be for the presence of the Lord to guide and strengthen the faith of all those involved in these changes.

The first Sunday of the year the voting results were announced. We ask that these brethren will feel the Lord's blessings and our prayers as they strive to carry out their duties. New Sunday School teachers are: Bro. Dave Stoller (Sis. Patty), Sis. Sherry Rager

(Bro. Eric) and Sis. Kristy Greutman (Bro. Greg). Sis. JaNahn Sinn (Bro. Stan) was voted to the kitchen committee. Bro. Tim Sinn (Sis. Marlene) and Bro. Bruce Rosswurm (Sis. Amy) were voted in as Fellowship Hall Trustee and Church Trustee respectively.

We wish to welcome Bro. Oliver and Sis. Emogene Stieglitz and hope they will feel a warm welcome as they gather with us. We also welcome Sis. Erin Laukhuf (Bro. Darin) as she begins to assemble with us now following their wedding.

OHIO, MANSFIELD
John and Marci Pfeiffer

There are times we do not know who is sick or in need. Sometimes we do not know who needs our prayers. Sometimes we wait or fail to give relief. Bro. Ed Beer (Thelma) and Sis. Betty Beer have been hospitalized this month.

Other refuge have I none;
Hangs my helpless soul on Thee:
Leave, ah, leave me not alone,
Still support and comfort me!

Thou, O Christ, art all I want;
More than all in Thee I find;
Raise the fallen, cheer the faint,
Heal the sick and lead the blind.

Hymns of Zion #279

We rejoice with Nathaniel Ramsey (Bro. Ed and Sis. Laura) who has found peace with God and man. We are thankful God's hand is still stretched out calling souls unto repentance and baptism.

Many of our loved ones have traveled south for the winter months. We miss them and look forward to their return home.

OHIO, RITTMAN

**Lynda Beery
Beth Beery**

The New Year is here. As the Lord has provided mercy in the past, so mercy is needed in the present. MERCY - the act of treating an offender with less severity than he deserves (The Funk and Wagnalls New Standard Dictionary). We all need that mercy. Aren't we thankful the Lord took our punishment, that which we deserved? We want to thank all the brethren who visited a friend in the Marion Correctional Institution. "...I was in prison, and ye came unto me..." (St. Matthew 25:36). Let us pray the law and the offended will have mercy.

Related to mercy is forgiveness. FORGIVENESS - To cease to cherish displeasure toward; pardon; excuse (The Funk and Wagnalls New Standard Dictionary).

**GOD KNEW OUR
GREATEST NEED**

If our greatest need had been information

God would have sent us an educator

If our greatest need had been technology

God would have sent us a scientist

If our greatest need had been money

God would have sent us an economist

If our greatest need had been pleasure

God would have sent us an entertainer

But our greatest need was forgiveness

So God sent us a SAVIOR.

—*Author Unknown*

On December 19, the Christmas program was held. The children

and adults proclaimed Christ in song and word. During the program, a preschooler fell asleep, and as I held him in my arms, he was totally relaxed. Wouldn't life be less stressful if God's children would be totally relaxed (at rest) in His will and perfect time?

"And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go."

Genesis 24:58

In December, Bro. Mark Beer (Bro. Lee and Sis. Sandy, Milford, IN) and Sis. Jodi Dotterer (Bro. Richard and Sis. Dawn) announced their engagement. On January 9, we were privileged to hear the engagement announcement of Bro. Mike Katanic (Denver, CO, son of Maria (Akron) and the late Dunus) and Sis. Heather Pelfrey (Bro. Dale and Sis. Beth). May this period of preparation for the wedding be a blessing to all involved.

Another blessed event occurred on January 9 as Bro. Eric Gasser (Bro. Jerry and Sis. Ellen) and Sis. Lisa Steiner (Bro. Richard and Sis. Patricia) were united in Holy Matrimony. "And they twain shall be one flesh..." (Mark 10:8).

"And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power."

1 Corinthians 2:3-4

These words were read by our Elder Bro. Ray Sinn (Latty, OH) on December 19. Other visiting ministers during this past month include Bros. Randy Gasser (Detroit, MI), Fred Domka (Mansfield, OH), Steve Pamer and Dave Graf (Ak-

ron, OH), and Doug Harmon (Toledo, OH). We thank these brothers and their families for their labors of love as well as all our visitors. Also at this time, our congregation would like to thank our home Elder and ministers for their labor of love and for sounding the warning. May these teachings abide in our hearts.

Revelation 1:8, "I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning..." We rejoice in the birth of Abigail Marie, born December 23, 1999. Todd and Kelly Jenkins welcome her into their hearts and home, along with her three sisters, Rochelle, Kelsey, and Ashley, and grandparents Sis. Clara Jenkins and Carolyn Smith.

Two precious daughters were born on January 12. Bro. Rick and Sis. Dawn Steiner welcome their firstborn, Claire Madison, along with grandparents, Bro. Ronald and Sis. Ruth Steiner, and Bro. Ray and Sis. Carol Stoller (Latty, OH). John, Sheila, and Jacob Kries welcome Gabriel Verna. Grandparents are Tom and Eula Kries, and Bro. Isaac and Sis. Verna Rufener. May they be given much wisdom and understanding to raise these children.

Revelation 1:8, "...and the end." Our love and sympathy is extended to Bro. David (Sis. Connie) Maletich (Smithville, OH) and Rebecca Palmer (Nebraska) and their families in the passing of their mother and grandmother, Sis. Mary Maletich.

Sis. Matilda Saurer has also passed from this life into eternity. Surviving are her children, Richard Saurer, Donald (Pat) Saurer, Virginia (Merle) Moser and JeanAnne (Dennis) Adcock, and her siblings, Bro. Alvin Riggerbach (Mansfield, OH), Dora Smith, Sisters Laura Opplinger, Alma Cure, and Louise Spangler (Smithville, OH). May

they be comforted in God's Word and the precious memories. Bro. Robert and Sis. Neva Gasser returned to the Apostolic Christian Nursing Home after being hospitalized, but Bro. Robert soon went to be with his Lord. "...Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." (I Corinthians 2:9). May his wife, Sis. Neva, children, Sis. Jane (Bro. Kenneth) Hartzler (Smithville, OH), Bro. Fred (Sis. Mary) Gasser, Jerry (Deanna) Gasser (Castalia), Wanda (Dick) Perry (Wooster), Elsie (Jeff) Maibach, and families be comforted.

On January 15, Dale Hess was laid in the bosom of the earth. In his latter days Dale realized his need to prepare to meet his God, and after visiting with Elder Bro. Merle several times, confessed to have peace with God. We are thankful that God still extends His grace and mercy, even to the end. Our prayers and love are extended to his wife, Ellen; children, Jerry Hess, Dan (Pat) Hess, Mrs. Terry (Debbie) Boreman, Mrs. Bill (Sandi) Watson, and the extended family.

Sending cards/letters, visiting, and helping those in need are ways God allows us to show His love. We are thankful Bro. Harlan Stoller and Sis. Marjorie Weber can reassemble with us after being hospitalized.

In our Heavenly Highway Hymns, page 107, there is a song titled "Prepare to meet thy God". Two precious souls, Steven Gasser (Bro. Virgil and Sis. Lois) and Jessica Musser (Bro. Michael and Sis. Luann) are preparing to meet their God by working out their soul's salvation. May more souls realize the importance and the blessing of preparing to meet their

God.

OHIO, SARDIS

Angie Figel

Another millennium. Another century. Another decade. Another year. Another month. For some of us it feels like the carpet of time has been pulled from under our feet, and yet it is really just another day in God's eyes. People think that because it is a new millennium there is going to be some kind of change. It is such a great comfort to know that God's Word will never change. May God encourage and strengthen each and every one of us in this new year.

"Even unto this present hour we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place;"

I Cor. 4:11

OHIO, SMITHVILLE

Ruth Gasser Edith Miller

"...How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!"

Romans 10:15

We were blessed with the ministry of several brothers this past month. Bros. Ron Palitto (Akron, OH), Bill Brake (Sardis, OH) and Mark Ramsier (Sardis, OH) were used by God to bring forth the Word unto us. May God be their rewarder.

"...And he healed many that were sick of divers diseases..."

Mark 1:34

Those who spent time in the hospital recently were Bro. Mark Maibach (Sis. Julie), Bro. Denny

Nieman (Sis. Kay), and Sis. Margaret Marty. May each one experience God's healing.

"We are going down the valley one by one..." Several in our congregation have suffered the loss of a loved one. We extend our love and sympathy to three families who have had to part with one who was near and dear to them. Bro. Dave (Sis. Connie) Maletich's mother, Sis. Mary Maletich (Rittman, OH), passed away on December 24. Then on December 26, Sis. Tillie Saurer (Rittman, OH) went on to her eternal reward after many years of failing health. Her three sisters here at Smithville are Sis. Laura Oppliger, Sis. Alma Curie, and Sis. Louise Spangler. On January 5, Sis. Jane Hartzler (Bro. Ken) bid farewell to her father, Bro. Robert Gasser (Sis. Neva), of Rittman. May each one feel the Holy Spirit's comfort during this time of grief and adjustment.

"Take heed that ye be not deceived..."

Luke 21:8

We were recently exhorted by one of our ministers of some questions we should ask ourselves: Do we find ourselves frequently at odds with what the church teaches? Do we find ourselves searching the scripture for some little verse here or there that maybe we can use to excuse ourselves for doing something that the church says we shouldn't be doing? Do we find ourselves saying, "Since I don't have a conviction about [this or] that, if I go ahead and do it, then I'll just be a hypocrite?" Do we find ourselves making excuses for doing things that we know we've been taught that we shouldn't do? If we find ourselves in that position very of-

ten, we might want to give some every serious consideration—maybe Satan has been successful in bringing some deception into our lives, and we'll want to spend a lot of time searching the scriptures to find the truth.

OHIO, TOLEDO

**Rebecca Beard
Edie Fetter**

“For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death.”

Psalm 48:14

How wonderful it is to be directed by the guidance of our Lord. We need to ever appreciate being instructed in His Word, and thank Bro. Dwight Stoller (Latty, OH) for ministering to us.

OREGON, PORTLAND

Louisa Gallup

On December 19, the Sunday before Christmas, the Sunday School students presented us with their annual Christmas program. Five girls and one little boy stood before us and sang their best, their young voices sounding so sweet. May the Lord ever bless and guide them as they go through life. Later that day, the Sunday School students and others went to deliver food and gifts to a needy local family for which a collection had been taken up earlier. Christmas songs were sung there as well. Thinking back on that day, it was not that much extra effort on our part to make this family's Christmas a little brighter.

On December 24, Bro. John and Sis. Wanda Kinsinger returned from Vietnam, bringing with them their long awaited son, James Tuan. They adopted this precious little boy, who was born on July 26,

1999, from an orphanage in Hanoi. Grandparents are Bro. Bill and Sis. Sandy Kinsinger (Elgin, IL) and Ray and Sis. Janna Baer (Princeville, IL). In the few weeks that James has been here, he just blossomed into a happy, healthy baby and he has a ready smile for any one who cares to pay attention to him (there seems to be no lack of the latter!). We wish Bro. John and Sis. Wanda God's blessings and guidance as they take on their parental responsibilities.

We thank Elder Bro. Art Metz (Sis. Betty) and Bro. Todd Zollinger (Sis. Michele) from Silverton, OR for ministering unto us this past month. We appreciate them, as well as all the other visitors who blessed us with their presence and support.

OREGON, SILVERTON

Rosa Lee Kuenzi

At our recent annual business meeting, conducted by our trustee brothers, several brethren were elected to perform various duties in the physical care of our church building and activities, while others were relieved of these same duties that they have done for us in the past. Bro. Loren Dettwyler (Sis. Marlene) has finished his 3-year term as trustee and Bro. Myron Kuenzi (Sis. Diane) was given this new responsibility. Bro. Nathan Kuenzi (Sis. Sarah) was put in as usher, replacing Bro. Myron Kuenzi in this duty. Bro. Adam Kuenzi was added to the sound system group as Bro. Aden Kuenzi (Sis. Becky) has finished his term as well. Sis. Carolyn Bolliger (Bro. Ben) was voted in as chair of one of our three dinner committees, replacing Sis. Janet Kuenzi (Bro. Lee) who has finished her term of duty. The congregation appreciates all these retiring

brethren have done in humbly caring for the needs of the church and lends it's prayerful support to the incoming brethren. May God bless and send His much needed grace that all can be accomplished according to His will and Word.

Hospital patients this past month were Elder Bro. Art Metz (Sis. Betty) and Bro. Bob Kuenzi (Sis. Linda). In addition, many of our congregation have been ill with various nasty forms of flu virus, colds, and coughs that linger on for weeks. We pray for God's healing mercies. And we must admit we forget to be thankful enough when we are feeling good and go about our daily work and activity without pain or suffering.

We wish to thank Bro. Robert Miller (Sis. Pearl, Portland), for bringing the Word this past month. We always welcome visiting ministers.

PENNSYLVANIA PHILADELPHIA

Nathan Gasser

As we welcomed in the new year in January, we also welcomed a new member to our congregation. We're pleased that Sis. Melissa Kuenzi (Silverton, OR) has accepted a position in the area and plans to spend a year with us. We wish her the best in the year ahead and look forward to fellowshiping with her.

This month we held our annual business meeting, and took a moment to reflect on the generous contributions made by the many brothers and sisters who hold various positions in our church. We are so thankful to those who are willing to serve in whatever capacity is needed.

We were reminded this month of the importance of a loving attitude, toward others and toward

the Lord. We can read in I Corinthians 13 of how seemingly great and wondrous talents are worth nothing without love, and indeed we are nothing without love.

“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as a sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.”

I Corinthians 13:1-3

Let us remember God's great love for us, and strive to share that love with others.

TENNESSEE, NASHVILLE **Mike and Monica Fritz**

This past month we enjoyed the ministry and fellowship of ministering Bros. Byron Stoller (Sis. Carol, Gridley, IL) and Paul Gasser (Sis. Joyce, Akron, OH). We thank these brothers for bringing us God's Word of love, encouragement, and admonishment to Godly living. We pray that the Lord will bless them for their efforts in His service and on our behalf. We were also thankful for the opportunity to share a day of worship and fellowship with retired Elder Bro. Kenneth and Sis. Sue Sauder (Mansfield, OH) as they were traveling through our area. We were also privileged to enjoy fellowship with many visitors from Gridley and Tremont, IL; Sabetha, KS; and Latty, OH.

We (Bro. Mike and Sis. Monica Fritz) rejoice and are humbled by the birth of our daughter, Sasha

Adeline, born January 19. What a privilege and a responsibility the Lord has entrusted to us, to raise another precious child for His glory. She is welcomed by her sisters and brothers, Sis. Cheree, Jordan, Mahlia, Obed, Ezra, Simeon, Mieke and Selena. Grandparents are Bro. Harold and Sis. Sherry Fritz, Bro. Nate and the late Sis. Adeline Gutwein (all of Francesville, IN) and great-grandmother, Sis. Ruth Heinold (LaCrosse, IN).

Recently we were privileged to receive a baptismal for our church, which was donated by a loving family in another congregation. We are so appreciative of their efforts and look forward to the opportunity to use the baptismal to give witness to the conversion of a dear soul through God's limitless grace in the life of a new believer.

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: Remington, IN (March 5); Athens, AL (March 19); Champaign, IL (April 2); Bluffton, IN (April 16). 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**

Visiting ministers who have shared the Word with us this month were Bros. Todd Feller (Sis. Karen, LaCrosse, IN) and Roy Ehnlé (Sis. Donna, Princeville, IL).

Our March schedule of worship services and churches sending ministers include: the 5th at Austin (Smithville, OH); 12th at Austin (Morton, IL); 19th at San Antonio (Bern, KS); and 26th at Bill Zeltwanger's home in Round Top (Forrest, 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**

On Saturday evening, January 8, our hearts were filled with gratitude and thankfulness as we witnessed the transition of retired Elder Bro. Ken Sauder (Mansfield, OH) to Elder Bro. Ray Sinn (Latty, OH) as our counseling Elder. We appreciated having Bro. Ken serve us so willingly and we hope we all can as willingly support Bro. Ray.

After this occasion, the Memorandum was read. We were reminded to reason together and be spiritually minded, denying worldly lusts. If we are willing to carry our cross, we will be closer drawn together and not suffer spiritual paralysis. Bro. Ray Sinn was assisted by our Deacon, Bro. Leland Plattner.

Our other visiting ministers were Elder Bro. Wayne Fehr (West Bend, IA) and Bro. Tom Schrenk (Athens, AL) who has a residence and is spending several weeks here. Retired ministers visiting are Bro. Elmer Schmidt (Winthrop, MN) and Bro. Walter Steffen (Milford, IN).

Sermon continued from page 2

They went out there to sacrifice, didn't they? No, we don't do the same type of things today. We don't go out and kill a lamb or so forth. We are asked to show our faith, aren't we? We are asked to show what it means to believe in God, and how we want to be obedient.

Abel went out there, slew his lamb and made a sacrifice. God saw and was pleased by his obedience. Cain made the mistake, loved ones, that has been made over and over again by millions and millions of individuals since that very day. Cain thought to himself, "Why, I believe God. I believe that He is, but I can worship Him in my own way, and I can make my own decisions how to honor God." He went out there to offer up his vegetables.

Loved ones, when we really stop and think about it, God had no respect, did He, to Cain's offering? If it had just stopped there, there would have been still hope for Cain. He could have realized his mistake. Today we would use the words, He could have repented, could he not? He could have repented and realized the road that he was starting to travel, but instead he let that pride well up in his heart, didn't he? He said to himself, "I know better." It says his countenance fell, and he rose up and slew his brother Abel because Abel was more righteous than he.

There is another lesson there that we can learn. Since the beginning of time, people have been trying to put someone else down in order to raise themselves up. Don't we think that still occurs in our day and time, loved ones? It does, doesn't it?

That is why it is so important when we start looking into these Scriptures and start realizing what God has done and we believe it all with our whole heart. We take pride that tries to well up in each one of us and we get hold of it because it prevents us from doing things that are for our own welfare. Can we be too

proud for our own good? We are ashamed sometimes, loved ones. We are too proud to seek for help. We are too proud to confess that we don't know what to do.

That is really what it comes down to when we talk about someone trying to come to God in repentance. It is laying hold upon that pride of heart and realizing that God wants us to come with a broken heart and admit unto Him that we cannot manage our own lives, that we need His help, we need His guidance, and how much we need His love. Isn't that what repentance is about?

The enemy says, "Don't do that. Don't come and ask God for help. Try to do it on your own. Try to make all those decisions by yourself. You can make the decision how to gain salvation." Isn't that what he told Eve? "Just take a bite," in essence is what he said, "and you will be wise as gods, knowing good and evil." Which one of us, loved ones, really wants to know evil? What we really want to know is good, and the only source of good is God.

That is why when we look through these verses in chapter eleven, they are familiar verses, aren't they? They send the message to us. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." (Hebrews 11:1). Then we go into this part where it says, "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." (Hebrews 11:3).

Mankind searches to this very day, what is the origin of the universe. How was it put together? We need to understand those things so that we can understand life. Yet, they turn away, loved ones, they do. They will not accept that there was a God, a Supreme Being, that put the universe together. It had to happen by accident or happen in an explosion. It had to happen some way — anyway — other than by a Supreme Being. Why? Because then

they would have to admit the existence of God.

God simply says, "Where is your faith? Don't you understand that when I tell you something?" That is what God really does—He tells us something through His Word and asks us to believe Him. But mankind wants to know all the proof. It is built into us, isn't it? We want to know the proof. Loved ones, if we have to have the proof, we certainly don't have the faith. For us to see God, we have to have faith.

We go down through this list of these people and we read their names, and their names call to mind their stories, the activities, the events that happened in their lives. We see God working time after time after time, God worked in their lives. We see Enoch walking there and we think, "Oh, what a blessed thing happened to Enoch because he walked with God." It says, "...and he was not; for God took him." (Genesis 5:24).

Do you know how long he walked with God, loved ones? For one year, for ten years, for twenty years? No. For three hundred and sixty-five years Enoch walked with God, and then God took him. What a wonderful opportunity to walk with God! Do we think it is difficult to walk with God for a lifetime? God wants us to walk with Him. He wants our hand in His. He wants us to turn unto Him and put our trust in Him and depend on Him. What a wonderful testimony of faith—Enoch walked with God!

Noah. We could just go on down these verses. Noah spent one hundred and twenty years building an ark when it had never rained upon the earth! We think, "Oh my, what faith! What faith he had!" But we look back, loved ones, and we see it was faith that preserved Noah and his family. The world thought it was absolute foolishness.

A lot of the world today thinks believing in God is absolute foolish-

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ness, and that you are foolish to have faith. The only thing that counts is your own ability, your own energy, your own wisdom, your ability to be clever, and your ability to exploit the circumstances. Ask yourself if that isn't what the world values. Loved ones, we know those of us who are here today, that is not the source of spiritual welfare. It is faith! It is just that very simple word, faith.

Noah was faithful. He didn't do it all in one day. He did things that people didn't think were very smart, but he was faithful. Day after day he worked towards God's ends. Now we look back and say, "What a man of faith he was. Look how that ark floated. Look how it bore him up over the winds and waves of this earth and his family was preserved." What beautiful lessons the Bible teaches just because they were faithful!

We go on and that is really what happened here. It goes on and talks about Abraham and how long he had to wait for a child. In those days, if you didn't have a child to carry on your family name, you were looked down on. If you were a woman and hadn't born a child, you were looked down on. Look how long Abraham and Sarah had to wait, but God had many things to work in their lives. They made mistakes but they had faith. God took them across most of what was the known face of the earth at that time, from Ur of the Chaldees all the way down into the land of Egypt and back. It is the land of promise.

It says that they dwelt in tabernacles and tents. Today we would say that it would be a difficult life. They never really got to settle down, or build their houses, to be in one place their whole lives, to feel the solid part that a lot of us enjoy. We like having roots. Loved ones, I like coming back to Morton. I enjoy it. I love it. There is something about us that desires to have roots.

But more necessary than roots is

faith. Abraham had faith. When Isaac was how old? Abraham took him up to Mount Moriah and there Abraham prepared to slay his son because God had told him to do that. There he raised the knife and there he trusted that no matter what happened upon this earth, God was the one that Abraham would obey. It says that it was accounted unto Abraham for righteousness because he was obedient to God's Word.

Truthfully, when we read God's Word today when we have the benefit of the written word, we struggle sometimes with what It tells us to do, don't we? We pray about it that God would reveal what we should do. It was revealed to Abraham that he should do this thing, and he went steadfastly towards Mount Moriah. Oh, that we would have such faith, loved ones, to know that God does not error in our lives. He makes no error. He knows what we need. Sometimes we don't like the medicine, do we? We don't like the tests or those things that really are for our welfare.

Do we believe God is different? He will see something we really need to draw us closer to Him, to move us past that pride and to crush the pride. Do we have to get really, really sick in order for us to see God? Do we have to suffer tremendous loss in order to see God? I trust not. God takes no pleasure in those things. Do you think God wanted to destroy His people? Do you think He wanted to have them go out of their land? He wanted them to go to that land and be examples to all the peoples of the earth round about.

I believe God was thrilled when Solomon was worshipping Him and the people of all the lands came to see Solomon, to see his wealth and to see Solomon in his wisdom. Most of all, the Queen of Sheba said she came to see the way his servants were around him and the way he ascended up to the house of the Lord, and how man could interact with God. That is what the world was

seeing there in Solomon's reign. What a pity it went to Solomon's head. What a pity! We look back at Solomon right now and we don't know what happened in his life, but we know that he missed the turn somewhere.

God wanted blessings on His people. He wanted them to feel the blessing and to feel His presence. I believe God was never so happy as when the people were enjoying the presence of His Holy Spirit. He wanted them to be by their vineyards and wanted them to rejoice in Him. But mankind is really stubborn.

So the separation continues, loved ones, in our day and time just like it has throughout the ages of the Bible. The separating point is faith—faith in God—believing that He is and knowing what it takes to please Him and to be willing to go down that fork of the road, isn't it? It has been that way since the very beginning. It is still that way today.

We choose to go down that fork where we put our trust in the Lord. We are never going to talk ourselves into Heaven. We are not going to talk ourselves, at least I trust and hope it never happens, that we think we can take this Holy Word and we can decide we are going to offer it, interrupt it, and to rationalize it like Cain tried to rationalize his vegetables. "I can do it my way under my terms and God will accept me." Let's hope that never happens. I hope it never happens from the pulpit of this church, loved ones, but that the Word goes forth in the way it is described is a very straight way. It is read out of these pages, isn't it?

"I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." (Luke 13:3). It is what the Bible says. Does it sound harsh? It is not. What it really is, is a clear directive that all of us here today can understand. Ye must have faith.

"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh

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Sermon continued...

to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Hebrews 11:6). Let's believe that in our hearts, loved ones. It is a simple concept, isn't it? As we have faith, God is a rewarder of that faith as we diligently seek Him. He will be found of us. He is not playing a game of Hide and Seek and trying to draw away from us. That is not what He is doing at all. He wants to embrace us. He wants to love us and He wants us to love Him.

There is always going to be different opportunities to go different ways. Moses was an example. Here was a boy that was miraculously preserved by God, but was put in a place where he grew up with Pharaoh's daughter. The world was before him and it is hard for me to believe that there wasn't a place for him in Egypt. If he wanted to take his place in the world, he could have taken his place, but he made a choice, loved ones. He said, "That is not for me."

Did he understand God's ways at that time when he went out there and tried to kill the Egyptian overseer and tried to bring peace to his people and to say, "I am going to be your deliverer."? Did he understand God's ways during that time? No, I don't think he really did. But in his heart was this knowledge that God was there; yet, it took another forty years before God's timing was right for the people to be delivered out of Egypt, or was it Moses' heart needed to be adjusted so that they could be ready? Whichever, Moses had faith.

Can you imagine walking up to the Red Sea and raising your rod according to the Word of God and seeing the path go across? Can you imagine the people that walked through that path realizing it was salvation? Can you imagine them looking back and seeing the Egyptians drown and knowing the power of their God? God is able to overcome anything upon the face of this

earth because He created it.

We heard so much about the hurricane and so forth in the last few days and I thought, "I am really glad I live in the Midwest because we don't have two hundred mile wide tornadoes." If you knew a two hundred mile wide tornado was coming at you, what would happen? You would be fearful, wouldn't you? Now ask yourself if we knew a two hundred mile tornado was coming this direction, what would you do? Would you take precaution? Of course you would.

Because a tornado is only a few hundred yards wide or whatever or maybe a mile at the most or something like that, we tend to not take as much precaution, do we? We tend to take our chances, we say. The judgment of God and the certainty of prophesy is a whole lot wider than two hundred miles. It is coming straight at you in your life, and it is unavoidable. It will happen and you are going down the one branch or the other. Today the call is to take the branch that has faith and to go down that branch that leads to God's love and His mercy.

It seems those words seem so simple, but it changes our lives to take that branch, loved ones. It really does, and God knows how that works. Our life doesn't come to a spot and all of sudden all of those inclinations just disappear overnight. God has to work in our hearts. His Spirit has to touch the very essence of our life. Then we can overcome, loved ones, the temptations of this world.

God says, "There is no temptation but such has a way of escape." Are we willing to take the way of escape? Are we willing to take hold of that pride and put it away? Are we willing to lay hold of a way that has been written about and preached about and rejoiced in for all the ages, almost, of time? Since the beginning of time, there has been that remnant, loved ones, that have had faith and have walked that way and

have found the blessing of God.

This Book says you need to realize the benefit, and the reward. You may look at that reward and say, "That is not a very good reward for here on earth." It talks about those who were stoned and talks about one who was sawn asunder. That may be the Prophet Isaiah. There were others, but loved ones, when they closed their eyes in death, they knew where they were going. They knew that God cared for them and they knew that this was the way God had put in place.

May God give every one of us who are here today in our hearts that faith, because, loved ones, when we have been there ten thousand years, we want to see every one of us, don't we? We want to see every one of us there rejoicing in the Lord.

We think about these things and we think about the word Amos had to bring. He could sit there and come to the people and say, "The time is going to come and you are going to come back to your land. God is going to bring you back to your land." We think about how great that prophesy was and how wonderful it is that we can see fulfillment of it. When I think of the message that Amos had to bring and when I think of the message that we have to bring today, the message of the Lord Jesus Christ walking upon this earth humbly, calling unto His people to be obedient, to be faithful, what a message we have to bring today. What a beautiful promise! May every one of us rejoice in that promise and may every one of us truly believe on the Lord.



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	Postponed til '01	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 Houseparents Needed

Sis. Jill Gramm and Sis. Teri Gramm will both be leaving Gateway Woods in March of this year. As a result, we have two immediate openings for single sisters, directed of the Lord, to work in full-time ministry with troubled children. The Assistant Houseparent position offers competitive wages and benefits and a close relationship working with brothers and sisters working toward a common goal. If you feel the call to explore the possibilities, please call one of the brothers listed below.

Ed Graf or Phil Stettner
(Address and phone on next page)

- 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



Alternate Houseparents Needed

Gateway Woods has appreciated the Lord's blessing of being fully staffed with Houseparents for some time now. At this time, however, we are experiencing several staff openings. Bro. Arlo and Sis. Lisa Kipfer have informed us that they will be leaving their full-time Houseparent position in the fall of 2000. In addition, Bro. Matt and Sis. Lisa Waibel plan to leave their full-time Alternate Houseparent position and return to Foster Parenting. This offers an opportunity for two couples, directed of the Lord, to come to work in a full-time on going ministry at Gateway Woods. These positions offers competitive wages and benefits and a close relationship with brothers and sisters whose hearts and lives are dedicated to a common mission with an eternal reward. If you feel the call to explore these possibilities, please call one of the brothers listed below.

*Ed Graf or Phil Stettner
(Address and Phone listed below)*

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
E-mail: biblelist@parlorcity.com*

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.

World Relief Review

The Western World Relief Review will be held Saturday, March 11, 2000, at the Gridley Apostolic Christian Fellowship Hall, Gridley, IL.

Registration will begin at 9:00 am, with the meeting starting at 9:30. All brethren and friends are welcome. Invitations will be sent to each World Relief Representative in the churches west of the Indiana/Illinois line. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend.

Jerome Witzig fax: 309-744-2463



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.

Ed Graf
Child Care Supervisor
PO Box 151
Leo, IN 46765
(219) 627-2159
ed.graf@gatewaywoods.org

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



REMEMBERING

Our Spiritual Heritage

The First Split

The purpose of this article is not to draw attention to a negative aspect of our heritage, but to state the historical record so this and future generations can learn and benefit from past struggles.

Although the new church established by Samuel Froehlich in Europe had gravitated to America and continued to preach the doctrine of repentance and conversion, it encountered hinderances after a few decades. This culminated in a division in 1906-1908. Historically it has been called the "first split".

The Spirit's work in Switzerland during the 1830's, 1840's and 1850's moved rapidly. In 35 years, 110 congregations were formed. The doctrine spread as well into several Eastern European countries of varying cultural outlooks.

As church brethren immigrated to America, they brought a variety of ethnically differing habits. Two factors distinguished their groups. First, they brought with them an intense motive to keep the newly found faith and were often immovable in their beliefs. Second, there was no strong, central authority to resolve potential differences of opinion and outlook. Primitive travel conditions and slow modes of communication (among leaders) made the church somewhat ripe for disunity.

Because it was a good thing that a new church had been established (in the 1830's) on the Bible's foundation, and a bright spirit of fervor burned for several decades, Satan was resolved to destroy, or at least splinter, God's work.

A split in Europe had already oc-

curred in 1842. Seeds of discontent in America were existing already in 1866 when Elder Henry Geistlich (who visited all the existing churches) noted in a June 29 diary entry that "there appears a difference in the habits and customs of the various nationalities which cannot quite agree with each other, so this difference that appears to be here between them that came from the old country and the Americans who were here longer."

Differences continued and in the years from 1906-1908, a division took place. It was a sad time for the church and heart-rending sorrow occurred for many families who had to decide which "side" to support.

The disagreement centered on the wearing of a mustache, although other causes could be factored in as well. With the benefit of hindsight, a mustache seems minor, but to brethren in our churches who hailed from a Mennonite-Anabaptist background, a mustache was a symbol of militarism. Other brethren from the Balkan states of eastern Europe (who emigrated to America) were less sensitive to a mustache and many wore them. This caused an unsettling situation that became impossible to favorably resolve.

American and European elders wrote letters back and forth in an attempt to find concord. One compromise seemed feasible where brothers would trim their mustaches as closely as possible without removing them entirely. But finally this "solution" broke down and our churches split into two groups.

About twenty-five percent of the membership formed the Apostolic

Christian Church (Nazarene) under the authority (at that time) of the European elders. Seventy-five percent continued in the Apostolic Christian Church of America (our current body).

Elders of both persuasions agonized over this division and later regretted they let it happen. Over the years, efforts at reconciliation took place, but to no avail.

In 1947, a meeting of elders from both churches was held at Francesville, Indiana, to discuss unification. Prospects looked good but accord failed. Instead, the two church bodies decided to exist "side by side" and to "love and esteem each other".

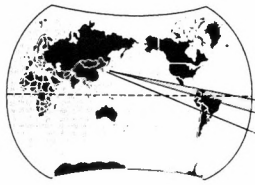
Again, in 1959, ten elders (five from each side) met at Mansfield, Ohio, to pursue unity, but the end result was the same as the 1947 meeting.

By the year 2000 the Apostolic Christian Church of America had approximately 13,000 members in the United States. The Apostolic Christian Church (Nazarene) had approximately 3,600 members in the United States and Canada.

By: Perry A. Klopfenstein

Next Issue:

Brethren jailed in Georgia



The Light Of Hope

From Across The Ocean

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“WHAT IS A CHRISTIAN”

Elder Bro. Willis Ehnle, Shioda, Japan

“And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.” (Acts 11:26). The word “Christian” is now used rather loosely; for instance, it may be said that Japan is a Buddhist nation but America is a Christian nation. However, we fear that most people in America are not living by the Bible. During my early years in Japan, at least on one occasion, the standards taught by our church were thought to be wrong because they were much more strict than the standards taught in American movies, and America is Christian, it was thought.

Many years ago, in visiting with Bro. Noah Schrock during one of his visits to Japan, he remarked that the word “believer” might be more appropriate than “Christian”. Considering how loosely the term “Christian” is used, he had a point, but the word “believer” emphasizes faith, one who believes, while the word “Christian” implies obedience as well as faith.

We need to consider the meaning of the syllable, ian. In the word, politician, it is tacked on to the word “politics” to bring about the meaning of “a person who is involved with politics, or government, or the making of laws.” In the case of the word “Christian”, it would bring about the meaning of “a person who is involved with Christ”, and involvement indicates something far more than a confession of faith. If you are involved with someone or something, in a positive way, you may become engrossed in it and it captivates your life.

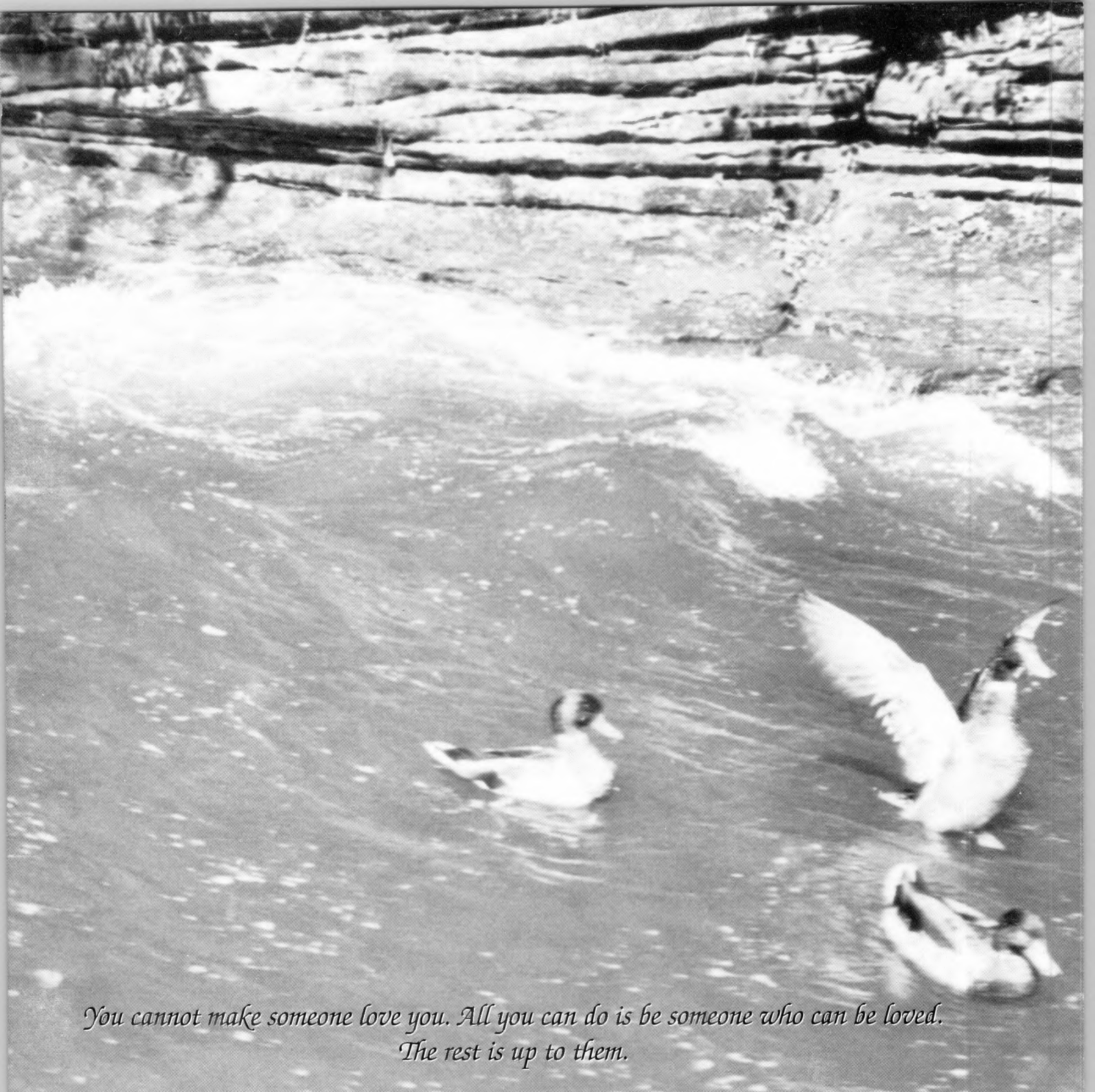
A Christian is someone who realizes he is not perfect and in God’s sight, is sinful in his natural condition. He therefore has repented, believed on Christ, and is determined to live by the Bible. He is always kind, loving, gentle, and never thinks of himself but he thinks of others and how he might help them.

A “Christian” is someone who

follows the teachings of Christ and a “Christian” church is a group of people who follow the teachings of Christ. Those teachings include, “I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven.” (Matthew 5:44-45). That is no small task.

The Holy Spirit is the author of the Bible and since Christ and the Holy Spirit are one, it may be said that the teachings of the Apostles are also the teachings of Christ. In Romans 6:8 we are taught, “Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him.” To be dead to self, with Christ, is an important condition for being a Christian. I know I’m a believer but I am still working on being a Christian. A Christian is someone who is completely involved with Christ.

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*You cannot make someone love you. All you can do is be someone who can be loved.
The rest is up to them.*

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