



The Silver Lining

*For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven,
and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud,
that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater.*

January 2002

“HEARTS REJOICE IN THE LORD”

Sermon by Bro. Brian Waibel, Champaign, IL
I Chronicles 29 and Mark 7:24-37

It seems no matter where we open in God's Word, we find that there are many teachings for us and much instruction. In this day, we come together, especially to consider the Thanksgiving season and the thankfulness that we feel. I believe it goes without saying that above all there is that thankfulness for this way, the way of salvation that is given to us each one. It is not something that just even as we read here in Mark's gospel, as Jesus' comment was here to the woman as she came. More or less He says, "This isn't meant for you." He says, "Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs." Mark 7:27. Really we might say it put her down.

Yet today as we can come together around His Word, we know that the invitation is to all, and that there are none that are excluded. But all have the opportunity to come to the foot of the cross, repent of their sins, be converted and to be able to possess that hope of eternal life, that hope and that longing to be healed. Even as we read there in Mark where we can just see how it would be and perhaps as a mother (many of you mothers can probably relate to this, can't you?), you think of how it is when one of your children are sick or ill or have an affliction of some kind, it is part of you, isn't it? That child is a part of you and there is that desire. I know that probably each one of you would be willing to take and to say, "Lord if it could just be me and that the child could be made whole. Let it be that my child, that all could be well for it." So she came to Him with that hope, maybe with that expectation

and with that knowledge to know that He could truly heal and cast the devil out of her daughter.

You notice that it says there, "...and entered into an house, and would have no man know it: but he could not be hid." Mark 7:24. It is kind of that way with the thankfulness, isn't it? We ought to have and possess within our hearts that thankfulness to the point where it can't be hid, and where there is no doubt in the mind of anybody around us that we have a thankfulness. A thankfulness to our God in heaven for whatever He has given to us, whatever He has allowed us to experience, whatever He has provided for us here upon this earth, and much more.

We know that it goes beyond that because the earthly things, whether they are the material things, as there in the Old Testament, we read about a number of the material things. We know that material things are fleeting, aren't they? We can have them today and they can be gone tomorrow. We can have good health, we can have strength today and it can be gone tomorrow. The things that pertain to this life, they can be so fleeting. But if we are truly to possess a thankfulness, it can't be upon those things, because one day we would be thankful, and another day we wouldn't have anything to be thankful about. But we can possess within our heart a thankfulness that we have One to go to, just as this woman did here, One that she could go to. Yet, we might even say as it was here, she was from another nation, and it wasn't necessarily in her place to go to Him. But we can today, can't we?

What is our expectation when we go to Him? The Word speaks to us pretty clearly that when we pray, we need to pray believing. When we seek of Him, we seek believing that He will provide. We have to recognize it isn't necessarily believing that He might provide

Sermon continued on page 44

The Silver Lining subscriptions are due from the following churches. Please collect in:

February

1. Taylor, MO
2. Winthrop, MN
3. Roanoke, IL
4. Toledo, OH
5. Kiowa, KS
6. Elgin, IA
7. Cissna Park, IL
8. Burlington, IA
9. Bay City, MI

Suggested Donation: \$11/subscription

Next correspondence due:
For February Issue
(16 Dec. News - 15 Jan. News)
Due: 20 January 2002

The Silver Lining (Vol. 56, #1)
1389 County Road 1600 N
Roanoke, IL 61561
USPS 496780
Published Monthly By The Apostolic
Christian Church of America

Counselors:

Ervin Knecht, Ron Schambach

SEND CORRESPONDENCE TO:

The Silver Lining
1389 County Road 1600 N
Roanoke, IL, 61561
309-923-7513 (phone) 309-923-7359 (fax)

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

The Silver Lining
1389 County Road 1600 N
Roanoke, IL 61561

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

Light From The Word



Writings based
on God's Word

January 2002

Denying the Obvious

Each of us make many decisions every day. Some of the decisions are minor, are made with little thought, and have only minor consequences on our lives and on the lives of others. Each of us also face situations in which we must make decisions that require much thought and prayer and have life changing consequences. Although many of our decisions fall somewhere between these two extremes, we need to be very careful about the decisions we make and consider the consequences of those decisions.

We face decisions in which the choice should be obvious, but for one reason or another we may not see the obvious nature of our situation. Satan frequently tries to blur the lines between right and wrong and causes us to struggle with these important issues.

Moses certainly recognized that he was in an unusual situation when he saw a "...bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed" (Ex. 3:2). In the conversation that followed, Moses knew he was speaking with God and he knew that God had a mission for him. In spite of many signs and promises of support, Moses resisted the obvious until "...the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses..." (Ex. 4:14). Moses resisted the obvious direction from God for quite some time and finally agreed to do as God requested.

The children of Israel, in their journey from Egypt to the Promised Land, saw many mighty miracles, yet time after time they resisted the promises and leading of the Lord. The result was that all but two who were over 20 years of age when they left Egypt died during the 40 years of wandering in the wilderness. They missed the opportunity to go to the Promised Land because they longed to return to the comforts of Egypt and denied what should have been obvious messages from the Lord.

Similarly, Elijah saw many miracles from God, including the fire sent to burn the sacrifice that Elijah offered as he withstood Ahab and the prophets of Baal. He witnessed the end of a long drought when he heard "...a sound of abundance of rain" (1 Kings 18:41). In spite of these miracles, Elijah felt so alone and afraid that he fled for his life. He over-

looked the obvious until the Lord reassured him that "...I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal..." (1 Kings 19:18). He then had the courage to go on and fulfill the work of the Lord.

The New Testament also records many examples of those who ignored the obvious. At the time of Jesus' arrest Peter cut off an ear of the servant of the high priest. Jesus "...touched his ear, and healed him" (Lk. 22:51) and most of those who were there barely seemed to notice that anything unusual had taken place. They denied the obvious power of Christ and sent Him to His death.

The soldiers who were securing Christ's tomb felt the earthquake, saw the angel of the Lord, "And for fear of him the keepers did shake and became as dead men" (Mt. 28:4). They knew something very powerful had happened and yet, after reporting it to the chief priests, were willing to take "...the money, and did as they were taught..." (Mt. 28:15). They were "taught" to lie and to deny the obvious that Christ had risen from the dead. They knew little about Jesus' mission, and lost an opportunity to learn about Christ's power and His love.

After Peter and John, through the power of faith in Jesus, healed the lame man, the Jewish leaders knew they "...could say nothing against it" (Acts 4:14) and acknowledged "...that indeed a notable miracle hath been done... and we cannot deny it" (Acts 4:16). Even after making such a statement, they still tried to deny what had happened. They conferred among themselves and decided that they would try to keep the news of this healing miracle from spreading. They threatened the disciples and "...commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus" (Acts 4:18).

The early Christians faced many trials as they tried to uphold the faith. Christians today must also expect to face difficulties as they serve God.

We are living at a time when the world seems to be encroaching upon our lives more than ever before. As technology advances

and our work becomes more entwined with those who are not of our faith, we must be very careful that we do not deny the obvious truths of the Bible and follow after the ways of the world.

The scripture instructs us to repent, to be converted, to live separated, sanctified lives, to be overcomers and to place God first in our lives. It is obvious that if we want to be a child of God, we must live by every word of God. It is just as obvious that there are many individuals that we come into contact with in our daily walk of life who either ignore the Word of God or choose to ignore many of the commandments because they act as though they are no longer valid in the twenty-first century.

Satan is making inroads into our faith and causing confusion in our brotherhood by trying to convince us that many of the ancient landmarks of our faith are no longer important. He wants us to believe that we can walk with God and hold hands with the world. To attempt to do this is as much of a denial of the obvious as the examples that were cited at the beginning of this article.

The scripture tells us that "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Mt. 6:24). It is obvious from the words of Jesus Christ that we must choose who we will serve. To try to serve God and Satan at the same time will result in serving Satan.

Jesus does not want us to deny the obvious. He wants very much for us to serve God and exclude Satan. He offers us protection. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, ...how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings and ye would not" (Mt. 23:37).

Not only did He want to protect us, His love for us was so great that He died for our sins and forgave us as He was dying. "...Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do..." (Lk. 23:34). He was willing to lay down His life for our sake. How can we deny such obvious love?



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

Current Status in Romania

As the year 2001 draws to its close, in retrospect it was a very active year as pertains to our efforts among the brethren in Eastern Europe. Travel is becoming more possible, not only for board members, but also for our brethren. Many of them have roots in Eastern Europe and from time to time submit a report to the European Board after having made a trip to their former homeland.

In a little departure from previous practices on this page, we are printing the communications received from one of these families and the subsequent action by the board.

The following report was written December 17, 2001.

Going back home to Romania

Bro. Jozsef Kocsis and his wife Susie (Bako) of our Akron Church visited his former home in Romania and they returned home last week. They reported that the Romanian brethren have cold weather and snow, coupled with an emergency in the cost of their heating - the cost of gas bills has gone up over 250% and most of the Church members can not afford to pay such costs. With an exchange rate of about 31,000 lei per dollar, gas bills that formerly were for about 500,000 lei now are about 2 1/2 times higher - 1,300,000 lei.

Alerting the European Board

Bro. Louis Bikadi, a member of the European Board from Denver, CO, called Bro. Albert Szabo, elder for the church in Tirnaveni, Romania by telephone. Bro. Albert was one of the first Romanian elders who came to this country after Communism fell. He

attended the brotherhood conference in Cissna Park, IL about 12 years ago. Throughout the ensuing years, our American brethren have come to know him well. We respect his judgement and his position as a shepherd of the Romanian flocks.

When asked about the crisis in heating fuel costs, Bro. Albert said that his last heating bill was about 1,200,000 lei (about \$39.00) and his pension income is about 1,400,000 lei (about \$45.00).



The children of Eastern Europe
thank you for your help

A bitter choice

The bitter choice is whether to eat or have heat, and they must eat to live, so many are living in very cold homes. As a recommendation to the European Board, Bro. Louie suggested that there may be about 300 families in our Romanian churches. If we paid half of their bills to give them heat some of the time, that it would take about \$20.00/month times 300 families, or \$6,000.00 per month.

What the Board did

Accordingly, the board acted as quickly as possible to send assistance. They asked for feedback from Bros. Szabo and Augustinov (elder in Arad, Romania) to see how much help this gives to the needy brethren there. If needed, they plan to continue this help for another 2-3 months.

Brethren were in Hungary

The cold and snowy weather was also confirmed by Bros. Phil Stettner and Wayne Fehr who attended a church dedication in Dunavesce, Hungary early in December. During this trip they were able to confirm the dire conditions existing in Romania and other East European countries.

What you can do to help

As the new year dawns, we find ourselves on the threshold of new opportunities to assist our brethren in Eastern Europe. By the grace of God we have been able to establish a chain of communications via telephone, fax, and e-mail that allows us to make easy contact and assess the needs of our brethren.

Although the needs are great, there is reason to hope and trust that our ongoing programs are and will continue to help our brethren cope with their circumstances. Food packages go each month to over 400 households in Romania. A number of programs of help for self-help are in place and working.

As we glance behind us to the years just past, it is quite evident that the generosity of our American brethren has eased the burden of faithful pilgrims in faith who will never know each other on earth. However, our great God is the rewarder.

Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the LORD will deliver him in time of trouble. PSALMS 41:1

Contributions to help support these programs can be sent to:

JERRY BAUMAN
APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN WORLD RELIEF
9652 STERLING ROAD
RITTMAN, OH 44270
(330) 925-6163



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

Navajo Christian Foundation Project

The USA Board, under the World Relief Committee, has been working with the Navajo Christian Foundation (NCF) in Dilkon, Arizona since 1996. Mr. Andy Shearer, a missionary and a brother-in-law to Brother Dan Beer, of our Milford, IN congregation, saw the need for a home for abused and neglected Navajo children. A site was granted for 2 1/2 acres from the Navajo Nation on February 29, 1995 and construction began in March on the first children's home.

Vision for the future

The vision of the Navajo Christian Foundation is to minister to all aspects of the Navajo family. The children's home is in place to provide Christian nurturing to abused and neglected Navajo children. As the children are reunited with their relatives, their goal is to reach the family for Jesus Christ.

The vision for the future is to provide more for the youth on the reservation by having a Christian youth recreation center. The goal would be to reach more Navajo youth for Christ by providing them an alternative to what the world offers. As the Lord provides, they would also like to develop a school for families desiring a Christian education.

Before this vision became reality, Andy was killed in a 1995 plane crash. The struggling NCF proceeded to work toward that realization. A building to house the children and an administration building were designed, with construction started by a contractor from Indiana.

World Relief involvement

World Relief's initial involvement in 1996 was the funding and installation

of water and sewer lines, connecting the site to existing public utilities. Our work teams then made changes to the "Hozho Ke Hooghan" (housing unit for the children), to bring the unit into code. The occupancy and operational permits were received on September 1, 1997.

Project approval

It became evident, that the building was not of proper design or size to hold a sufficient number of children with house parents. A proposal for a larger building was submitted at the December 1998 World Relief Committee meeting. The project was approved in principle, but was tabled until the NCF would be able to provide assurance of their planning and managerial capacities, and capability of securing the necessary finances to operate the facility. With their staff addition of Randy and Heather Stewart, missionaries from Indiana, the organization was able to provide the World Relief with the information requested. Randy, with his accounting expertise, was very instrumental in providing the financial information.



During the time of planning and organization, the HCF Board of Directors had opted for a smaller facility than we had planned to provide a better family atmosphere for the abused children. In November 2000, three members of the HCF Board were invited to tour the facilities at Gateway Woods and to discuss the management needs and procedures. This brought the NCF an appreciation for the larger facility. The building was redesigned, including suggestions from the Gateway Woods staff.

Work teams needed

A meeting was held at Dilkon January 30, 2001, with members of the NCF Board. At this meeting we reviewed their long-term goals and future vision, which was presented to the World Relief Committee at the April 2001 meeting. The committee gave full support to proceed with the project. Following the revision and approval of the new plans, a ground breaking ceremony was held on November 13, 2001, with Brothers Arnold Gerst and Richard Beery in attendance.

We will need volunteers for the following work teams:



Work Team Schedule

January 7-11

Footing, block stem wall, rough-in plumbing, and pouring of concrete floor.

January 14-18

Framing and roofing

January 21-25

HVAC



January 28 – February 1

Plumbing and electrical.

These dates may change, depending on progress and availability of volunteers.

Additional work teams will be added for drywall installation, painting, and trim finishing, etc.

Contact for work teams:

ARNOLD GERST
217-223-8424 PHONE
217-223-0116 FAX
agerst@rnet.com E-MAIL

**APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN
COUNSELING SERVICES**
History and Development
Part III - Funding

“For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened: But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality: As it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack.”

II Corinthians 8:13-15

This is a command to all churches that choose to serve God obediently. We are called to identify the needs of others and then to meet that need as the Lord gives us the opportunity to help. Our church has many programs and funds to address different needs. The board of directors of Apostolic Christian Counseling Services is aware that each church and each individual has different responsibilities and abilities to contribute to the many opportunities that we have to support the Lord's work.

The board of directors has been searching out God's will in how to fund ACCS. It is important that people who use the counseling services can contribute toward the services they receive as well as to be able to provide services at a price that does not prohibit people from coming to counseling at all. The board of directors also believes that it is important to make the church at large aware of the need of additional funds to cover the costs to maintain the service.

When ACCS was started, both

Apostolic Christian Home for the Handicapped and Apostolic Christian Gateway Woods made a commitment to provide startup funds. In addition, the Apostolic Christian National Endowment Fund made a donation for startup funds.

The board felt it would be appropriate to ask people to pay what they were able when they received direct counseling services. This is done on a sliding fee scale based on family size and annual family income to assure that no one is denied services based on inability to pay. Due to a variety of issues (e.g. legal issues related to providing mental health services in different states) the board decided that there would be no fee charged for callers using the Mental Health Hotline or for telephone consultations by the professional counselors.

The board is currently working on a plan to provide funds to operate the service on an ongoing basis. The amount needed per year is still not clear because the service is still in initial implementation. The amount of hours provided by staff has varied as the service has grown over time. In the last year the center had a monthly deficit of about \$8,000 and needs to seek other funding of between \$80,000 and \$100,000 per year.

Some of this deficit is being made up by individual and church donations. However, currently the number of these donations is quite limited. The board is working on plans to make the churches aware of the types of services offered by ACCS and the costs associated with providing those services. The board hopes that

some combination of fees, donations, support from church charity funds and/or church collections will provide the necessary funds. They believe that the Lord will move the hearts of people in the church to support the service in its mission to improve spiritual well being by maximizing emotional health and strengthening interpersonal relationships.

**APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN
HOME FOR THE
HANDICAPPED**

It was a special time of year as we celebrated the birth of our Saviour. It's fun to watch the residents of our homes enjoy the season. There were many Christmas parties to attend and shopping to do for loved ones. At the group homes, many participated in the holiday baking.

A special highlight during the month of December was having carolers come to sing. It brings pleasure to the staff to see the excitement in the ones they care for when so many come to carol.

The Home also gives a catered Christmas party for all employees each year. Many came to enjoy an "old-fashioned, American Christmas".

As the days of the new year turn into months, let's remember daily the most important things in this life: the things that will last eternally.

FEBRUARY birthdays at TIMBER RIDGE, 2125 Veterans Rd., Morton, IL 61550 are: Matt Pumphrey (17), John Kamm (18), LeeAnne McKay (19), Ernest Perry (27), Guy Masinelli (28). At OAKWOOD ESTATE, 2213 Vet-

erans Rd., Morton, IL 61550: Sean Wiggers (10).

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

Tim Sauder

I had a frightening dream just two nights ago. In it I was led by a man in his 20's to a dimly lit, narrow, dusty room. I waited in the doorway as the man briefly wrestled with a boy who was then thrown into a wood and rope cage on top of a high wooden platform. The unkempt boy, who looked to be about 13, upon being entrapped, stared right at me with a wild but longing and desperate look. Like a dog in an animal shelter cage, he seemed to say, "Have mercy, I'm enslaved, please do whatever it takes to get me out of this horrible condition." Then the dream was over and I was wide-awake!

I immediately sat up, turned on the light, jotted down the dream, prayed and wondered, "Dear God, what does this mean? Did that boy look like my own son? Did he represent all teens caught in the snares of sin or abusive situations? Who would do something to help him; me or would someone else?" Later I opened the Word. I Peter 1:13 reads, "Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." Another way to say it might be "Prepare your mind for action, get serious and do it with God's grace!"

I believe this call and responsibility is to all of us, including me and the staff at Gateway Woods. The Lord has made us aware of the needs, He has provided the means

and promised the grace and ability to reach out, stretch and do. He'll take care of the results. Please pray with us and work with us.

As we finished the year in which we celebrated 25 years and God's blessing on our ministries, we naturally look back with thanksgiving, look around with concern, and look forward with hope. We have children and families in residential care, foster care, and various kinds of counseling who have progressed victoriously onward, others who have plateaued, while still others act out, check out, bomb out or even run away. But any and all who are in our programs for a short or long time hear and see the gospel.

Our annual Local Church Representatives Meetings will be held in Roanoke on February 23 and in Leo on March 23. We want to encourage everyone, not just our Representatives, who have an interest in our services and needs of Gateway Woods, to join us.

With winter weather moving in, progress on our new school building slowed almost before we could start. Please consider a donation as we expand our campus and programs. A special thanks to all of you who responded so generously to our needs listed in The Gate Post and with cash donations at Christmas time.

Note: Our area code has changed and our phone number now is 260-627-2159. Please make a note of it.

**APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN
PRESCHOOL
Melinda Matuch**

"O give thanks unto the Lord: for He is good."

Psalm 118:1

"Praise ye the Lord: for it is good to sing praises unto our God."

Psalm 147:1

"Quit you like men, be strong."
I Corinthians 16:13

"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy."

Exodus 20:8

These are our weekly memory verses for the month of January. We start learning our verse on Monday, and by Friday the children can repeat it back to us on their own. When they do, they earn a treat. We have learned a memory verse for each letter of the alphabet, and many of the children can still repeat the first ones we learned with just a little prompting. Just the other day, when someone got in trouble, a small boy said, "Even a child is known by his doings." (Proverbs 20:11). We try to hide the Word in their hearts each and every day. Our hope is that they will remember these teachings when they are older and will come to trust in God.

For the month of January, our theme will be good manners. Here in the south, they are taught early to say "Yes, ma'am" and "Yes, sir", so we will try to reinforce this as well as "Please" and "Thank You" and better table manners. This month we will also have our annual pajama day, when we have our all-day slumber party. On a cold winter day, it will be nice to have a break from our regular routine.

January is also the month for annual resolutions. If you would

be interested in being a summer volunteer or a monthly sponsor, please resolve to do so now. Our children love visitors, and you will love getting to know them. We ask God to bless everyone who is helping and has helped in the past. Thank you.

ALABAMA, ATHENS

**Joan Reinhard
Louise Hall**

We were blessed with a good Thanksgiving time and we appreciate this reminder that our country has set up as an annual holiday. As Christians we are called to give thanks in everything so our attitude should be one of thanksgiving all year round, but what a good reminder to the world that we were set up to be a Christian nation. May we continue to pray for our government that we could return to those Christian principles of our forefathers.

Shortly after Thanksgiving, Bro. Tom and Sis. Joan Schrenk left for Zapata, TX, for the winter. Our prayers go with them and we eagerly anticipate their return in the spring.

Janice Flanagan (daughter of Bro. JR and Sis. Louise Hall) had surgery on December 11. We are thankful for the Lord's healing hand on her as she continues to recover.

Sis. Ruby Ross (Bro. Don) spent some time in Athens and Huntsville Hospitals as she has had some trouble with her heart. Sis. Ruby had an angioplasty done and is recovering now at home. I know she would appreciate cards or letters that anyone would want to send. Their address is: 14988 Brownsferry Rd., Athens, AL

35611. Their phone number is (256) 233-1459.

We were thankful for visitors from Leo, IN; Mansfield, OH; and some of Sis. Maryann Zamora's family from the Colorado Springs area.

As we entered the Christmas Season, we always enjoy the activities that go along with the celebration of Jesus' birth. We gathered as a church on the evening of December 8 for our annual Christmas Dinner. There was a good turnout and we appreciate the expressions of love in the gifts given. Then the next two Wednesday nights were set aside to go Christmas Caroling. We enjoyed singing carols to our Lord to celebrate His birth. Sunday, December 16, was the day for the Sunday School Christmas program. The children work together to bring forth some of the real meaning of Christmas. As they each one said their individual pieces, the whole of the program came together to give us the message of Jesus' birth. It seems to be a good example of how we as Christians should be presenting Jesus to the world. If one of the parts is left out, the message is not as clear. Each and every one of us have a part in the presentation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Please, let's work together to have a clear message to give to this needy world.

ARIZONA, PHOENIX **Ron and Ev Hoerr**

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting

strength:"

Isaiah 26:3-4

As we end 2001 and begin 2002, let us be encouraged to keep our mind "stayed" (fixed) upon God. The world troubles, the fear and unrest can rob us of His blessed peace.

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

Proverbs 22:6

Bro. George and Sis. Willow Gramm became first-time parents when Mya Rose was born on November 16. Mya's grandparents are Bro. Jim and Sis. Lois Beres and Bro. Don and Sis. Rosie Gramm (Gridley, IL). May God bless our new family.

We have heard the Conference tapes and will now have regular Wednesday night services.

We are looking forward to the wedding of Bro. Jeremy Ebert and Sis. Janelle Hohulin on December 30 in Goodfield, IL. Sis. Janelle attends school in Illinois and we have enjoyed her vacation times, but feel blessed to have her join us full time as Bro. Jeremy's wife. Their parents are Bro. Sam and Sis. Cindy Hohulin and Bro. Tom and Sis. Diane Ebert (all of Phoenix).

December 9 was a happy time for everyone as the Christmas carolers sang to the multitudes. What joy! A few days/nights later God blessed us with rain.

Arthur Stewart's funeral service was December 10. He is survived by his wife, Helen Baer Stewart, and sister - in - law, Sis. Ruth Baer. We extend our sympa-

thy to them.

There is power in prayer. Please join us as we pray for Sis. Lucille Richardson, Sis. Ruth Baer, Sis. Kathie Labudde; Evelyn Howley injured her shoulder. Sis. Marie Beery had hip surgery and Sis. Lois Niemeyer broke her wrist.

Our sympathy is extended to several who had relatives pass away this past month. Bro. Bill (Sis. Kathy) Woodruff's father, Sis. Jan Elsasser's cousin, Sis. Joyce Martin's uncle, and Sis. Evelyn Hill's brother - in - law.

December 16 was our Sunday School Christmas program — it was such a joyful time, our future church, great singing, a lovely group. As usual, the children and teachers presented a wonderful tribute to God. Those beautiful faces made this congregation grateful to call them our very own.

Keep looking up!

ARIZONA, PRESCOTT
Jane Hodges

“Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter into the joy of thy Lord.”

St. Matthew 25:21

This verse came to mind upon learning of the death of our dear Bro. Harvey Smith (Sis. Ethel). Although they moved to Fort Scott, KS, two years ago, they were responsible for the beginning of the fellowship in Prescott in 1984 and were the “backbone” of our church for fifteen years. Their love, dedication, beliefs, and faith are parts of the reason we

have a church building of our own today. We rejoice that Bro. Harvey left this life of pain and trial, but we grieve with Sis. Ethel in her loss. We will miss him, but will remember all their labors for the Prescott church.

A singing shower was held at Sis. Jan Elsasser's home on November 24 for our two newlywed couples: Bro. Tim and Sis. Janon (Fiechter) Furrer and Bro. Dan and Sis. Bethany (Furrer) Dubach.

The Christmas caroling was held after church on December 16. We visited three care centers in the Prescott area, including the center where Bro. Henry Volz resides.

Our ministering brothers this last four weeks were all from Phoenix, AZ, and included Elder Bro. Jon Kokanovich, and Bros. Ken Lawson, Herb Knochel Jr., and Jim Meiss.

ARIZONA, TUCSON
Lisa Knapp

We gathered, as we always do, the first Friday of December and visited several local nursing homes to sing Christmas carols and try to spread some holiday cheer. We enjoyed hot sandwiches and all the season's goodies at church later. Many thanks to the Sunday School for hosting this event again this year. It's always a highlight of our holiday season.

We once again enjoyed the Christmas program that our Sunday School children put on for us Sunday, December 16. This year we chose to start off our program with the children singing the first verse of “America the Beautiful” and the church joining them

for the last three verses. We couldn't help but think of the many families who will be celebrating Christmas this year without a loved one. May God comfort them all, and may His presence be felt.

Our Bro. Ben Gudeman has decided to relocate to the Bloomington, IL, area. Bro. Ben was with us for the Christmas program, and we were able to say farewell and wish him God's richest blessings as he starts a new life in Illinois close to family and friends. We will miss Bro. Ben, as we all know too well from past experience that even one person's absence is felt strongly in a little church like ours. We are thankful for the memories we have of watching Bro. Ben repent and come into the family of Christ and for the short amount of time we were able to fellowship with him as our brother in faith. Please come back and see us sometime, Bro. Ben!

As we say farewell to Bro. Ben, we are looking forward to seeing many familiar faces as our winter visitors are preparing to spend the coming months with us. We have been having some “almost winter-like” weather the past few weeks with some frost on our grass and cars and beautiful snow covering the mountains that surround Tucson on all sides. We know our winter visitors don't like to hear that, but it's really a nice change from all that sunshine!

Warm wishes to all for a new year filled with God's goodness and grace.

CALIFORNIA, ALTADENA Jim Klotzle

“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.”

Psalm 1:1

This familiar passage takes on a new meaning in an age of rampant pluralism. Not only those from whom we receive counsel can hugely affect our spiritual walk, but those we stand and sit with as well. It is important that we live peaceably with those around us, shining the light of God through our lives without conforming or compromising our own beliefs. So many times it's easier to agree to disagree when we should be taking more of a stand for that we know is truth. As doctrine is compromised in other faiths for the sake of church growth, so Satan wants to use small compromises in our lives to lead us to bigger ones. If he can't conquer us with a frontal assault, the father of lies will undermine our defenses by slowly dulling our resistance to evil.

“Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?”

I Cor. 6:3

“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil.”

I Thess. 5:20-22

Our friend, Ingrid (Steiner) Baigey, has chosen to turn to the Lord in repentance, devoting her life to following Him. We praise God for the work that the Spirit

has begun in her, and pray that He will lead and guide, step by step.

Ministering Bro. Jeff Luthi, upon further difficulty with his health, will be undergoing various tests and treatments in the near future. We ask for prayers on his behalf, and for his family.

Our annual Sunday School Christmas program served to draw us nearer to each other, and to the One for whom the season is dedicated. Caroling to several nursing facilities and a church dinner followed it. Thanks to all who worked to make the day possible.

Bro. Fred and Sis. Nancy Witzig and family are visiting his parents here in California. We thank him for serving us from the pulpit.

CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO Peggy Jevremov

We had our Christmas program last Sunday evening, and it was a blessing to hear about that same wonderful event, the story that never grows old. God's gift of His only begotten Son is the greatest gift one could ever receive. It is so sad that so many reject it and turn to this sinful world to try to find contentment and peace.

We were privileged to have Elder Bro. John Klotzle (Sis. Lois, Altadena, CA) with us this past month. We always appreciate it when they come down to visit us. May the Lord reward him for his service to us.

We have been blessed to have two Hungarian brothers assemble with us this past year. This month Bro. Nandor Albert and Bro. Peter Kocsis are returning to Hungary. We will surely miss them and wish them the Lord's guidance in their

lives.

2002 is quickly approaching, even though we may not be thinking about it with all the activities of the Christmas season. As our thoughts go back over the past year, we can truly say the Lord has richly blessed us, and His comforting hand has been with us in the times of sorrow and trial. We can't help but wonder what the new year will hold for us. But we know, above all else, that the Lord holds tomorrow, and He has promised in His Word, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” St. Matthew 28:20

KITCHENER, ONTARIO CANADA

Nathan Reutter

Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ. We wish you love, peace and grace from God our Father. We were thankful this month to have many visiting ministers this month. We were also blessed with the Memorandum. We were further blessed with a few hours of singing together and fellowshiping with precious brethren. These blessings have encouraged and edified us.

Our visiting ministers this past month have been as follows: Bro. Earl (Sis. Sue) Beery from Rittman, OH, Bro. Duane (Sis. Kay) Reutter from Rockville, CT, Elder Bro. Mark Bahr (Sis. Beverly) from Detroit, MI, and Elder Bro. Alfred Bahler (Sis. Frances) from Wolcott, IN. We are always encouraged when we have so many visiting ministers from different places and they have a consistent message. It is a unique opportunity our congregation experiences and we pray that our

church never loses this consistency of the ministry. If we base our preaching from the Bible, we never will. (Psalm 68:11).

We also appreciated the sounding of the trumpet from the walls of Zion as we experienced the Memorandum. We are always impressed when our Elders, in the spirit of Acts 15, exhort us to be holy and unblameable before God. Since the Elders have fulfilled their responsibility in Scripture, it is also our obligation to fulfill what was spoken to us. The Bible tells us to respect very highly those that have the rule over us, for their works sake. We show this best when we obey them.

This month we also enjoyed the times we could come together and sing hymns to honor and glorify our Saviour and Lord. During these times it is good to think that Jesus and His disciples sang an hymn together before they went out into the Mount of Olives (Mark 14:26). We should give thought and consideration to how that singing went and our singings should be no more complicated or fancy. The Bible tells us that we should sing with the spirit and with the understanding also (I Corinthians 14:15). That seems to tell me that my mouth, my spirit, and my understanding (mind) should be praising God all at the same time.

We trust God will see us through another month and trust God will provide for you, too. May His grace give you strength, and His Spirit give you understanding, and His Word give you knowledge so that His will can be done on Earth. Amen.

COLORADO, DENVER **Mike and Heather Katanic**

We enjoyed listening to the children from our Sunday School perform their Christmas program. Each of the children memorized a little piece to recite; even our youngest class took part. We want to thank the teachers who worked with the children this past year to teach them the truth.

December 8 we had a singing shower for Bro. Art Kellenberger and Sis. Kathy Leman. We are thankful for all that could attend. We are looking forward to their wedding December 30.

We hope everyone had a blessed Christmas and, Lord willing, will have a happy new year.

CONNECTICUT **ROCKVILLE** **Cherie Galat**

“And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.”

Luke 2:10-11.

May we remember Him each and every day in our hearts and worship our Father in Heaven.

“But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.”

Matthew 19:14

We rejoice over the birth of little Ruth Loretta born on November 16 to David and Tanya

Campbell. Brother, Aaron, and sister, Kate, have a little sister to love. Grandparents are Carl and Loretta Campbell and John and Sis. Ruth Kostuk.

One of the greatest joys in life is to hear another dear soul is repenting. Our prayer is that our Saviour lead, guide and direct Heather Mangold (David) as she takes the step in faith to turn her life over to Him.

May God be with three dear couples as their engagements have been known unto us. Bro. Derek Reutter (Bro. Duane and Sis. Kay) is engaged to Sis. Darla Schupbach (Bro. John and Sis. Janet, Elgin, IA). Bro. Kirby Reutter (Bro. Duane and Sis. Kay) is engaged to Sis. Areli Sibaja (Felix and Sis. Lourdes, Ixtlan, Mexico). Dan Fehr (Ralph and Martha) of Fairbury, IL, is engaged to Melinda Ryan (Fairbury, IL; daughter of Elder Bro. Kevin and Sis. Cheryl). May each couple look unto Him for guidance as they plan their weddings.

“There is beauty all around, When there’s love at home...” (Hymns of Zion #64). Bro. Gardy Moreau and Sis. Suzanne Hoffman were united in Holy Matrimony on November 25. Parents are Gregoire Moreau and Lucia St. Eloi and Bro. Mark and Sis. Luella Hoffman. May their lives be blessed with much joy, peace and grace as they walk together as husband and wife. Bro. Galen Rokey (Bern, KS) was here to share in their joy and ministered unto us that day. We are so thankful for dear brothers who share out of God’s Word with us. Also here recently was Bro. Shawn Metzger (Philadelphia, PA). May God bless

each one for their efforts to serve us.

Our prayers surely go out to our loved ones who have had surgery in the past days, Sean Crohan (Dan and Sis. Carole), Joel Hany (Bro. Paul and Sis. Betsy), Sis. Heidi Ludwig (Bro. Gerald), Sis. Eunice Schneider and Amanda Virkler (John and Sis. Maureen). May He watch over each one in the days ahead.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA WASHINGTON

Henrietta Meyer

By the time you read this all the decorations are put away, but may we never put away the real meaning of Christmas.

Visiting ministers this month were Bro. Lenard Meyer (Chicago, IL), Elder Bro. Ben Wiegand (Philadelphia, PA) and Bro. Jon Zeller (Morton, IL). Other visitors this month were from Fairbury, IL, and Rittman, OH.

Renaud and Suzi Subra received word his grandmother had passed away in France just as he and their son, Aidan, were getting ready to visit family there. We extend our sympathy to the family.

Bro. Barry and Sis. Doreen Steffen hosted our Christmas dinner. What a blessing to gather for fellowship and enjoy singing Christmas carols. All of our congregation was there, except for Renaud and Aidan who were still in France. Phil Steffen had just arrived from a business trip to Ethiopia at noon.

Our church 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 a.m., worship service at 10:30; afternoon service begins at 12:15 p.m. Over the next few months there will be a few Sundays when we cannot meet at the hotel, so we will be meeting in a home. Please call anyone in our congregation to find out the exact location and directions.

If you are planning to visit Washington, DC for vacation or business, please call Bro. Barry Steffen (410) 569-3635 for assistance and to let us know how many to expect for Sunday services. If you would like to get together on Saturday evening, please let us know that also. We would be happy to have an evening of fellowship and/or singing.

FLORIDA FORT LAUDERDALE

Nancy Rocke

Heav'nly Father, we beseech
Thee,
Grant Thy blessing as we part;
Take us in Thy care and keeping,
Guard from evil ev'ry heart.

Hymns of Zion #204

Bro. Jonathan and Sis. Jill Sutter, along with their children, Jesse, Kaitlyn, and Joel, have relocated to the Peoria, IL, area. The Fort Lauderdale congregation and the regular winter visitors will miss seeing them. We wish them God's richest blessings.

Sis. Elena Zurz has been in and out of the hospital and has been unable to assemble with us. We pray God will grant her His healing touch.

Bro. Dave Steffen (Sis. Emmy,

Gridley, IL) had unexpected open-heart surgery while visiting here in Fort Lauderdale. Thankfully, he is recuperating and has had the blessing of his children visiting him during his convalescence. We look forward to seeing him in church soon.

Bro. Carroll Gerber (Sis. Louise, Bluffton, IN) visited us and shared God's Word with us. May they enjoy the blessings that only our Lord can give.

The annual Christmas program was held December 9 in the Fellowship Hall. Although we are a small congregation, the blessings were manifold as our future church again recounted the story of the Christ Child and His plan of salvation. Our children are a blessing from God.

FLORIDA NORTH FORT MYERS

Dorothy Beer

We were privileged to have retired Elder Bro. Dave and Sis. Ethel Wiegand spend the month of November with us. Our thanks to him for his words of wisdom and encouragement to our church.

Curt and Sis. Jane Huette are the thankful grandparents of a grandson born in October. It is the first child of their daughter, Lisa, and Phil Ekema of Alabama. Also, Bro. Bill and Sis. Mary Masters were blessed with a new granddaughter. The parents are Dan and LeAnn Luban. The Masters are part-time residents of Florida and willing workers in our church.

We're thankful to have Bro. Mel Steffen (Sis. Leona) back in church after spending several days in the hospital with a blood clot in his leg.

Our thanks to Elder Bro. Doug Sabo (Sarasota, FL) for ministering to us on December 16.

Christmas will be over and the New Year will be here when this is read. We pray for God's grace and blessings on our friends, families, churches and land.

"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sins, and will heal their land."

II Chronicles 7:14

FLORIDA, SARASOTA Carol Koehl

We were richly blessed in December when Sarasota hosted a group of young singles from the Midwest. Our sincere appreciation goes to Bro. Rick Plattner (Peoria, IL), who spoke at this gathering, and to Elder Bro. Steve Gutwein (Francesville, IN), who also brought us the Word on Sunday.

Our dear converts, Laszlo and Katalin Fodor, will be sharing their testimonies and baptisms in the near future.

Along with joy, there has been sorrow. Bro. Erv Martin (Sarasota, FL, and Princeville, IL) was recently taken Home. He and Sis. Lorane have been part of our Sarasota family for many years. Our love and sympathy is also extended to Bro. Howard Zobrist (Goodfield, IL) in the loss of his helpmate, Sis. Phyllis. We have the faith to believe that both Bro. Erv and Sis. Phyllis are now safely in the arms of Jesus their Saviour.

GEORGIA, ATLANTA John Brewer

This past month was very busy for Christmas activities. On December 2, the church went Christmas caroling to two local senior citizen homes along with a chili supper afterwards. What made the day more enjoyable is that we were blessed with visitors from the Forrest, IL, congregation to lend their voices to this endeavor. On December 19, we were once more reminded of the Christmas story with the annual Christmas program. Through song, Bible reading and poems we were once again reminded of the reason we celebrate the birth of our Saviour.

We are thankful for the visiting ministers in the past month that taken the effort to fellowship and to be used by God to bring forth the Word on Sunday. Bro. Gary Brown (Sis. Jane, Forrest, IL) and Bro. John Stoller (Sis. Patricia, Leo IN) came down this month to be with us.

As always we look forward to brethren and friends that come visit and worship with us. We start song service at 10:15. Our church is in Fairburn, Georgia off I-85 southwest of Atlanta. We are 15 miles south of the airport on exit 64 (Jonesboro Rd.) 4 miles due west after you get off the exit. Please contact Bro. Tom Waldbeser 770-463-4788, Bro. Keith Kaufman 770-304-8335, Bro. Linn Stoller 770-631-4554 or Bro. John Brewer 770-304-8706 if you need further information.

ILLINOIS, BELVIDERE Sheila McCoy Doreen Moser

We were blessed to have the Pulaski, IA, Bible Class to visit on the weekend of December 1-2. On Saturday evening, they joined with Elgin to volunteer at a soup kitchen.

Gifts A Child May Bring
The wise may bring their learning,
the rich may bring their wealth,
And some may bring their greatness,
and some bring strength and health.
We, too, would bring our treasures
to offer to the King;
We have no wealth or learning;
what shall we children bring?

We'll bring Him hearts that love Him;
we'll bring Him thankful praise,
And young souls meekly striving
to walk in holy ways.
And these shall be the treasures
we offer to the King,
And these are gifts that even
the poorest child may bring.

We'll bring the little duties
we have to do each day;
We'll try our best to please Him,
at home, at school, at play.
And better are these treasures
to offer to our King;
Than richest gifts without them
yet these a child may bring.

We were blessed to have our Sunday School children bring us the Christmas story. After the program, our congregation went caroling at nursing homes, followed by a delicious chili dinner at church.

This month our college group in Madison went Christmas caroling at a nursing home.

Jacob Jepson (Bro. Jim and Sis. Carlene) was a hospital patient. He was diagnosed with diabetes. Our thoughts and prayers are with him and his parents.

Our new Sunday School teacher for the Bible Class is Bro. Chad Kaeb (Sis. Kristie). We certainly appreciate his love for our youth and hope he will feel God's blessing in his new duties.

**ILLINOIS
BLOOMINGTON-NORMAL
Shawn Masters
Ann Kellenberger**

Believing God has drawn them together, we were happy to hear the engagement announcement of Sis. Jessie Kruse (Bro. Doug and Sis. Gerry, Morton, IL) and Bro. Tim Mueller (Bro. Jim and Sis. Jan, Roanoke, IL). May they look to the Lord for direction and wisdom as they plan their future together as one.

Two families were blessed with precious little daughters this month. Bro. Pete and Sis. Lisa Monagle welcomed Hannah Elise into their home and hearts on November 21. Big sister Leah was glad to have a sister. Grandparents are Bro. Ted and Sis. Mary Staker (Morton, IL) and Gary and Sis. Kay Monagle (Washington, IL). Bro. Dennis and Sis. Pam Zimmerman were also blessed with a daughter, Naomi Faith, on December 4. Bro. Jacob, Bro. Alex, Hannah, Lydia, Grace, and Leah were all thrilled to have a new baby sister. Grandparents are Bro. Glen and Sis. Mildred Zimmerman (Forrest, IL) and

Dick and Betty Lawrence (Fairbury, IL). May these couples feel God's nearness as they raise their children.

Many gathered on December 5 for our family night given this month by Bro. Dennis Kaufmann. The topic was "Feeling the joy of the season". May each of us pause often during this busy time of year to thank our loving Lord for this blessed season and for Jesus, His most precious gift to us.

**ILLINOIS, BRADFORD
Chad and LauraLee Plattner**

Our hearts were saddened recently by the parting of our dear Bro. Elwin Rumbold, but we find comfort in that our hope does not lie in this life only. Our sympathy and prayers are with Sis. Loretta, his wife of 44 years, and their family. Their children are Marjie Loudenburg (Steve) of Bradford, IL; David (Joni) and Jeff, all of Wyoming, IL; Julie Teubel (Brice) of Dunlap, IL; Sis. Connie Christ (Bro. Kurt), Bro. Mike (Sis. Sheila), Bro. Mark (Sis. Stephanie), and Bro. Gregg (Sis. Heather), all of Princeville, IL. Also surviving are 24 grandchildren and four sisters, Sis. Marie Knobloch (Bro. Ezra), and Sis. Joyce Metzger (Bro. Glenn), all of Lester, IA; Sis. Jeanette Graham (Bro. Richard) and Sis. Marlene Plattner (Bro. Jim), all of Princeville, IL.

It was a joy for us to hear the testimonies and witness the baptisms of three dear souls: Sis. Joanna Stoller (Bro. Nate and Sis. Sheryl) and Bro. Richard and Sis. Paula Gillespie. May God bless them as they live out their cove-

nant of faithfulness to Him.

We appreciate the visiting ministers that have given of themselves to minister unto us during these times. They included Elder Bros. Kevin Ryan (Rockville, CT), Joe Stoller (Princeville, IL), Ray Sinn (Latty, OH), Jesse Beer (Milford, IN), and Roy Grimm (Taylor, MO) and Bro. Brandon Emch (Kansas City, MO).

We are thankful for the birth of Isaac Christian Stahl, born to Bro. Wendell and Sis. Linda. His two older brothers, Joel and Gabriel, are excited. Grandparents are Dean Stahl (Kewanee, IL), Sis. Charlotte Stahl, and Bro. Nathan and Sis. Esther Martin (Princeville, IL).

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

For many years, Henrietta Waldbuser was a dear friend to many of us in the Champaign-Urbana church. She and her husband, Ben, had moved here from Cissna Park. She continued to live here after Ben's death until 1988 when she moved out of state to be near her children. On December 14, Henrietta died in Forsyth, MO, where she had lived for the past few years. She was 89 years of age. Although we hadn't seen her for many years, those who knew her will have fond memories of her abundant energy, her joyful countenance, and her great hospitality. Our condolences go out to her family in Missouri and throughout the central Illinois area.

"Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence and like-

wise also the wife unto the husband."

I Corinthians 7:3

Bro. David and Sis. Ethel (Waibel) Wiegand recently observed their 40th wedding anniversary. They are the parents of Bros. John and Ben, Becca and Bob. Those who know them appreciate their example of a loving marriage built upon a Christian foundation and their selfless giving to help our Champaign-Urbana church flourish. We wish them many more happy, healthy, and blessed years together!

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

Psalms 127:3

Bro. John and Sis. Lisa Walder are doing their part to help our church grow. On November 29, Sarah Jane Walder was born and became the little sister of Laura, Kyler, Rachel and Kevin. Local grandparents are Bro. Melvin and Sis. Irma Walder. We wish the family many blessings, along with extra measures of energy and patience as needed.

Throughout the past month we enjoyed having several visitors with us as families came for Thanksgiving and the Christmas program in addition to the typical visits. We especially thank those grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins who came to enlarge the audience for the Sunday School children presenting "The Perfect Gift", our Christmas program. Whether the child was in the youngest group reciting a few lines and singing with their whole

heart or a high school student reading scriptural passages, the contributions of each person fit together to bring a very nice program to the church. Our Sunday School teachers deserve a special thanks for their efforts. At the closing of the program, the point was made that a gift is something which is offered and we really don't deserve it. A gift has no real value to us if it isn't received and used. God's gift to us was His Son, Jesus, and we must each decide what our attitude will be toward that gift and what we will do with it. Following our program, there was caroling at three area care centers and then a chili supper at the church.

Visiting ministers over the past month were Bros. Gary Endress (Bradford, IL), Curt Rassi (Tremont, IL) and Greg Rassi (Chicago, IL). Bro. Craig Martin (Princeville, IL) was also with us to do an evening Bible Study on having a heart like Jesus. Our appreciation is extended to these brothers for taking the time to come be with us and minister God's Word.

ILLINOIS, CHICAGO

Jill Rager

The theme for our Christmas program this year on December 8 was in the form of a question: "Christmas: Did You Ever Wonder Why?" Each participant really seemed to put forth their best effort in the program to answer the question of the theme.

The message of the program was brought to life as the next Sunday two dear souls answered the question posed the weekend

before by confessing their need of the cleansing blood of the Christmas Saviour to save them from sin and eternal punishment. We rejoice with Tibor and Maggie Bozzay as this year they celebrate the birth of our Saviour in a more meaningful way than any before.

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

St. John 3:16

The Sunday following the program (December 9) our congregation enjoyed our traditional afternoon of caroling with a chili supper to follow.

Amidst the many activities of the holiday season, we want to acknowledge with gratitude the service of two visiting ministers: Bro. Arnie Gerst (Taylor, MO) and Bro. Walt Rager (Toledo, OH).

One of the more important "to-dos" of Christmas is remembering those in need, whether it be physical or spiritual. Thus, we want to remember our Sis. Pauline Schrenk who is recovering from a broken ankle and pray that God's healing mercies would be upon her.

As we embark upon a new year, it can sometimes be rather frightening to trudge forward, especially in times of uncertainty regarding world events, but I am reminded of one of my favorite verses:

"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."

II Timothy 1:7

May we approach the year ahead with confidence in God's faithfulness.

ILLINOIS, CISSNA PARK
Cheryl Eisenmann
Denise Walder

"He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation."

John 5:24

The weekend of December 1-2 was the time for the testimonies and baptisms of Gretchen Steffen (Bro. Rod and Sis. Beth), Kathy Maul (Mike) and their daughter, Shonda. We welcome these dear souls into our church family. Ministers who shared the weekend with us were Elder Bros. Alfred Bahler (Wolcott, IN), Wayne Anliker (Forrest, IL), Aaron Steffen (Alto, MI) and Dale Eisenmann (Chicago, IL) and ministering Bros. Wes Moser (Lester, IA), Larry Bahr (Fort Scott, KS) and Bob Meyer (Bluffton North, IN). May God bless them for their willingness to come and serve us.

We are thankful for other visiting ministers that have come. We pray God will bless Bros. Dennis Rassi (Fairbury, IL), Kevin Knapp (Bloomington, IL) and Glen Braker (Princeville, IL).

We rejoice with Sis. Rachel Conrad and Bro. Blake Graham (Princeville, IL) as their engagement was announced December 2. Parents of the couple are Bro. John and Sis. Jane Conrad and Bro. Dick and Sis. Jeanette Graham (Princeville, IL). We also are

happy for Sis. Amber Walder (Bro. Dennis and Sis. Sharon) and Bro. Curt Wiegand (Bro. Rick and Sis. Sue) of Congerville, IL, as their engagement was announced on December 16. We pray God will bless each couple and guide them as they plan their future together.

"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted."

Matthew 5:4

We extend sympathy to Sis. Louise Manz and her family on the death of her daughter, Diane Verkler (Randall). Also, we pray God will comfort Ron and Sis. Shirley Krumwiede on the death of his father, Adolph Krumwiede.

Bro. Les and Sis. Christine Kaeb and family have felt led of God to relocate. They are making their home in Francesville, IN. We hope their home and lives are blessed with the Lord's presence and we will miss them.

Hospital patients for this month are Sis. Sylvia Knapp for tests and Sis. Nancy Hauptli for a broken arm. We pray God will heal and provide for each one as they have need.

ILLINOIS, CONGERVILLE
Glenna Rinkenberger

Of dust the Lord did man create;
 "To dust return!" — that is his fate.

He lies, he sleeps, decays, awakes
 When day arrives and night forsakes.

Zion's Harp #248

Several of our brethren have lost loved ones. Sis. Juanita (Bro. Ben) Walder lost her grandfather,

Bro. Paul (Sis. Elva) Gerst of Oakville, IA. Sis. Suzanne (Bro. Max) Hoerr lost her grandmother, Sis. Dorothy Lehman, of Wolcott, IN. Sis. Phyllis (Bro. Howard) Zobrist of Goodfield also passed away. She is the mother of Bro. Clarence (Sis. Luann) Zobrist and a sister to Bro. Ed (Sis. Mary), Bro. Duane (Sis. Lois) and Bro. Lyle Steffen. Our sympathy is extended to these families. We pray that the Lord would fill the void during this time of sorrow.

Even as death is part of the life cycle, babies continue to be born. David and Kristin McClure are first-time parents to Kaelynn Renne. She was born November 14. Her happy grandparents are Bro. Bob and Sis. Sharon McClure.

Sarah Hoerr (Bro. Max and Sis. Suzanne) was united in marriage to Tim Beyer on November 17. We wish them many blessings as they begin their life together.

Our visiting ministers were Bros. Gene Lehman (Wolcott, IN), Tim Zimmerman (Lamont-Gridley, KS), and Don Gudeman (LaCrosse, IN). We always appreciate our visitors and hearing the Truth preached.

These loved ones have spent time in the hospital: Sis. Millie (Bro. Carl) Schieber, Kelsey Leman (Bro. Ed and Sis. Gail), Bro. Ernie (Sis. Norma) Stahl, and Julie Roth (Bro. Mark and Sis. Tammy). They are all back among us, for which we are thankful. Sis. Kathe Hasty continues to recover at home.

ILLINOIS, ELGIN**Amy Gasser****Kay Kellenberger**

The Elgin congregation hosted the World Relief meeting on December 1. A slide show was presented the night before which showed various work projects. We are truly fortunate to be able to help out in areas of need. Many visiting ministers attended the meeting and remained here for Sunday. They are as follows: Elder Bros. Roy Grimm (Taylor, MO), Marvin Leman (Bradford, IL), Ron Messner (Washington, IL) and Doug Schock (Pulaski, IA), and Bros. Jerry Bauman (Rittman, OH), Paul Kilgus and Duane Kilgus (Fairbury, IL), Roger Sauder (Ft. Lauderdale, FL), and Alan Schambach (Remington, IN). We appreciated all who made the effort to attend; each of our guests brought a blessing.

We are truly thankful for the addition of two new ministers to the pulpit in Elgin. They are Bro. Dan (Sis. Anne) Moser and Bro. David (Sis. Linda) Steffen. We wish them much grace and strength as they bring forth the Word, rightly dividing the Word of Truth.

Our Family Christmas Caroling was held on December 9, followed by a chili supper at the Fellowship Center.

On December 16, our Sunday School children presented the annual Christmas program.

Standing at the portal
Of the opening year,
Words of comfort meet us,
Hushing every fear;
Spoken through the silence
By our Father's voice,

Tender, strong and faithful,
Making us rejoice.

For the year before us,
O what rich supplies!
For the poor and needy
Living streams shall rise;
For the sad and sinful
Shall His grace abound;
For the faint and feeble
Perfect strength be found.

He will never fail us,
He will not forsake;
His eternal cov'nant
He will never break.
Resting on His promise,
What have we to fear?
God is all sufficient
For the coming year.

Chorus: Onward then, and fear
not,
Children of the day;
For His Word shall never,
Never pass away.

*Worship and Service
Hymnal #522*

ILLINOIS, EUREKA
Janet Zimmerman

In the last month three families have been blessed with a new baby. Levi Matthew was born on November 26 to Bro. Matt and Sis. Sara Zimmerman. He is welcomed home by Kyle, Noah and Lena. His grandparents are Bro. Leland Zimmerman and Bro. Bill and Sis. Karen Ringger (Bradford, IL).

Bro. John and Sis. Gloria Cottrell are thankful parents of a baby girl, Maria Jean, born on December 1. She has two older brothers, Samuel and Eli. Her grandparents are Bro. Earl and Sis. Elsie Zimmerman and Sis. Judy Cottrell and Bill Cottrell.

Wyatt Scott was born Decem-

ber 5 to Rob and Diane Gregoire. He is welcomed home by Whitley and Wade. His grandparents are Bro. Lewis and Sis. Clara Lou Blunier. May God bless each of these families and grant them wisdom from above as they love and nurture their children in the fear of the Lord.

Sunday evening, December 16, we had our Christmas program. We enjoyed hearing all the beautiful Christmas songs and verses.

We welcome Sis. Renee Steffen to our congregation from Alto, MI. Our love and prayers are with her in this move.

We had two marriages this last month. Sunday, November 25, Sis. Angie Schmidgall and Bro. Alan Huber were united in Holy Matrimony. Their parents are Bro. Paul and Sis. Kris Schmidgall and Bro. Gary Huber and Karen Huber.

A good number from our congregation traveled to Lester, IA, the weekend of December 8-9 to witness the wedding of Bro. Dennis Schumacher and Sis. Jill Aeschleman. Their parents are Bro. Bob and Sis. Charlene Schumacher and Bro. Gene and Sis. Dolores Metzger (Lester, IA). May God be with these couples as they walk hand in hand throughout life's pathway.

Our sympathy is extended to Bro. Nelson Martin (Sis. Mary Ellen), Bro. Lewis Martin (Sis. Arletta) and Bro. Lester Martin (Sis. Ruth) on the death of their brother-in-law, Bro. Elwin Rumbold of Bradford (Sis. Loretta). He died December 1.

Sis. Phyllis Zobrist (Bro. Howard) passed away December 12. We extend our love and sympathy

thy to her sister, Sis. Ida Mae Rocke (Bro. Eldon).

We also want to extend our sympathy to Sis. Janet Stoller (Bro. Jim) and Sis. Elaine Witzig (Bro. Roger) and to all the grandchildren on the death of their mother and grandmother, Sis. Mildred Schlipf (the late Bro. Loren). She died December 18. She also leaves three brothers, Bro. Norman Rocke (Sis. Doris), Bro. Richard Rocke (Sis. Marge) and Bro. Eldon Rocke (Sis. Ida Mae). It is our prayer for each of our loved ones who are sorrowing at this time that they may be encouraged by God's Word and find comfort therein.

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

St. John 14:1-3

We rejoice with Bro. Leland Zimmerman and Sis. Barb Ringger, as their engagement has recently been announced.

Once again we are thankful for visiting ministers who have come and been willing to share God's Word with us. We were blessed to have with us Elder Bro. Bob Walder (Sis. Gloria, Congerville), Bros. Ed Knecht (Sis. Judie, Silverton, OR), Craig Martin (Sis. Terri, Princeville), Don Manz (Sis. Connie, Junction, OH), Brandon Emch (Kansas City, MO), Mike Rinkenberger (Sis. Pat, Conger-

ville), Dale Frank (Sis. Christine, Oakville, IA) and Ed Fritz (Sis. Sally, Washington).

Our prayers are with our loved ones who have spent time in the hospital recently or who are confined to their home: Sis. Ann Lemman (Bro. Sid), Sis. Vi Lemman (Bro. Vernon), Bro. Lewis Martin (Sis. Arletta) and Sis. Barb Meiss (Ed). We are thankful for Tim Bradle (Bro. Roger and Sis. Ila) who was able to go home after a lengthy hospital stay from a serious accident.

As we begin the New Year, we really don't know what the Lord has in store for each of us, whether it be good or ill. It is comforting to know that if we trust in Him, He will see us through whatever may come. May God grant us grace.

Note of Thanks:

We don't hardly know how to express our thanks and deep appreciation to all who have held us up during this time of Tim's accident and hospital stay. The many phone calls, visits, cards, gifts, food and especially your prayers to a merciful Father above have all been very overwhelming. Thank you also for remembering Tim on his birthday. May God richly bless and reward you each one. Thank you from the depths of our heart. *Bro. Roger and Sis. Ila Bradle and Tim*

ILLINOIS, FAIRBURY

Joann Zehr

Tammy Hinrichsen

This Thanksgiving we were encouraged to be thankful for "everyday items" such as our families, church, and love we find within each of these.

From the moment when you first find out that you are to be blessed with a child, your most fervent prayers are that this little soul will seek the Lord in repentance some day. On Saturday, December 8 our congregation heard the testimonies of Heidi Kieser (Bro. Carl and Sis. Becky) and Joseph Hinrichsen (Bro. Keith and Sis. Tammy). On Sunday we were witnesses to the burial of their old lives and arising a new creature in our Lord. It was a joy to greet these two as our new brother and sister in Christ. One cannot express in words just how thankful we are for children who hear God's loving call and answer! Let us all keep praying so that many more will hear and come.

Many visiting ministers came to be with our church on the weekend of December 8 and 9. Elder Bros. Wayne Banwart (Champaign, IL) and Wayne Anliker (Forrest, IL) were here to help with the testimonies. Bro. Jeff Grimm (Goodfield, IL) offered a prayer of thanksgiving for the evening. Other visiting ministers were Bros. Dewayne Dill (Minneapolis, MN), Mark Streitmatter (Bloomington, IL), Trent Meiss (Eureka, IL), Alan Schambach (Remington, IN), and Ralph Garber (Morton, IL). We thank them for their willingness to speak God's Word to our congregation.

Our prayers are with those who have been in the hospital this past month: Sis. Betty Sohn and Dale Mowery (Sis. Elaine). May the Lord touch them with His healing hand.

Our dear Sis. Leona Broquard passed from this life into eternity

on December 12. She was 90 years old and much loved by many nieces and nephews. We extend our sympathy to each member of her family and friends and pray they are comforted in this time of loss.

God's blessings to all our beloved brethren and friends in the coming New Year!

ILLINOIS, FORREST

**Jean Knapp
Linda Anliker**

Live today as though it were your last.

As the year 2001 comes to an end and we look back to the world events of the past year, we wonder what may occur in the new year. However, if we live each day as if it were our last, with the Lord directing our lives, our final day shall arrive with joy in our hearts whether we walk the valley of the shadow of death one by one or should the Lord return.

Our Sunday School children relayed to us the blessed story of our Savior's birth in presenting the Christmas program on December 19. May it find pleasure in Heaven above as these young and tender hearts eagerly say their verses and sing their songs.

We thank visiting ministering Bro. Brian Waibel (Champaign, IL) for sharing God's Word with us.

Another baby boy, Nathan Daniel, has joined the family of Bro. Brent and Sis. Sheila Ifft, Joseph, Darren and Stephen. His grandparents are Bro. Larry and Sis. Shirley Ifft and Bro. Greg and Sis. Jill Stoller.

Bro. Brian and Sis. Marie Ricketts, Emily, Laura, Philip and

Matthew welcome into their home Megan Rose. Her grandparents are Bro. Nick and Sis. Jean Ricketts and Bro. Kenny and Sis. Janice Steffen. May these families ever seek the Lord's guidance and grace in teaching their children of God's love and directives.

We extend our sympathy to Bro. Wayne and Sis. Gloria Drayer and family with the death of his sister, Diane Virkler, of Cissna Park, IL. May the Lord provide comfort.

Spending time in the hospital were Sis. Viola (Bro. Chris) Metz, Sis. Carolyn (Bro. Allen) Zimmerman, Bro. Mel (Sis. Leona) Steffen, Sis. Hazel Karcher, Sis. Eldora Walter and Andrea Edelman (Bro. Kraig and Sis. Carrie). May God provide healing and restoration.

Note of Thanks:

A special thank you to my family and church family for the many cards and well wishes for my 80th birthday. God bless you all.

Bro. Mel Steffen

ILLINOIS, GOODFIELD

Heather Hohulin

Our hearts go out to the family of Sis. Phyllis Zobrist: her husband, Bro. Howard, and their family, Sis. Judy Knapp, Bro. Clarence and Sis. Luann Zobrist, Bro. Dave and Sis. Ann Zobrist, Bro. Barry and Sis. Joyce Kloter, Phillip and Kris Zobrist, and Bro. Mike and Sis. Jenise Wiegand, and all the grandchildren and great - grandchildren. We pray they can feel the hand of the Comforter, lifting them up in peace. Sis. Phyllis was a light to all and a loving, kind per-

son. She will be missed by her family as well as her brothers and sisters in Christ.

We also pray for the family of Bro. Ivan Nohl, who was called Home: his wife, Sis. Pearl, his children, Steve and Valerie, Dean and Tammy, Earl and Phyllis, his grandchildren and great - grandchildren. We pray that God will also be with them in their grief. Bro. Ivan will be missed in our church family.

We witnessed the joining of two dear hearts. Bro. Tim and Sis. Gwen Drayer were united in marriage. We pray for them as they start a new life together. May God bless their union. Their parents are Bro. Kent and Sis. Janell Kloter and Bro. Jerry and Sis. Lois Drayer (Bluffton North, IN).

We are blessed with two more healthy babies. Bro. Chad, Sis. Staci and Tessa Leman welcomed home a girl, Darby Lee. Bro. Brandon, Sis. Julie and Ashlyn Descarpentrie welcomed home a boy, Devon Russel. May God bless their families.

We are thankful for our visiting ministers this past month. They were Elder Bro. Phil Stettner (Sis. Maureen), Bro. Ted Hirstein (Sis. Joyce), Bro. Jim Rinkenberger (Sis. Jeanne), Bro. John Stoller (Sis. Patricia), Bro. Darren Plattner (Sis. Sue) and Bro. Don Manz (Sis. Connie).

ILLINOIS, GRIDLEY

Perry A. Klopfenstein

The passing of Sis. Mildred Schlipf, 75, on December 18 surely reveals the brevity and uncertainty of life. Two years ago, she and her late husband, Bro. Loren,

seemed in good health, and were vigorous in their normal duties.

Then, Bro. Loren, 76, died suddenly in the night on February 6, 2000. As a widow, she lived alone less than two years before she was stricken with illness and died.

A lesson from this is that we who believe and remain on earth, should be ready (spiritually) when the death angel summons. Moreover, all who are in unbelief should repent of their sins, and make themselves ready for eternity.

It is fair to say that the death of this dear couple is a shock to our Gridley congregation. They loved God and upheld the faith of our fathers. Their generation is receding and it's now up to the ascending generation(s) to practice and keep this precious faith.

Sis. Mildred is survived by a son, Bro. Dale (Gridley church), and three daughters, Sis. Janet Stoller and Sis. Elaine Witzig (Eureka church) and Sis. Karen Baker (Washington church); three brothers, Bros. Richard, Norman and Eldon Rocke, Eureka; and one sister, Sis. Arlene Huette, Tremont. She is also survived by 16 grandchildren and 8 great-grandchildren.

Her quiet demeanor will be missed in the assembly of the saints.

On the weekend of December 1-2, we heard the testimonies and witnessed the baptisms of Bro. David Prevo and Sisters Natalie Stoller and Bethany Witzig. Elder Bro. Ted Witzig (Morton, IL) was here to help in these labors.

Elder Bro. Tom Hoffman (Roanoke, IL) was here a week later as four more souls were taken into the fold: Bros. Jamin

Ringger and Jeremy Schlipf, and Sisters Trish Hodel and Melissa Taylor. They gave, by God's grace, touching testimonies.

Visiting ministers were Bros. Ron Bollier (Indianapolis, IN), Brandon Emch (Kansas City, MO), Wayne Leman (Roanoke, IL) and Curt Rassi (Tremont, IL). We surely appreciate their efforts.

On Sunday, December 16, our Sunday School students held their annual Christmas program. There are 154 students in Sunday School and 26 teachers. Bro. Roger Wiegand is the Superintendent.

I just read this morning that we are to be "clothed with humility". This is very instructive to each of us as we begin the New Year.

ILLINOIS, MORTON

**Phyllis Farney
Cheryl Wuthrich**

On Thanksgiving Day the engagement of Sis. Jessie Kruse and Bro. Tim Mueller (Bloomington, IL) was announced. Sis. Jessie is the daughter of Bro. Doug and Sis. Gerry. Bro. Tim's parents are Bro. Jim and Sis. Jan (Roanoke, IL). We pray for the Lord's continued blessings and guidance during their engagement period.

December brought many traditional events that the Morton congregation looks forward to every Christmas season. On December 9, the entire church was invited to participate in Christmas caroling. All ages enjoyed the evening, from babes in arms to great-grandparents. On December 16, the Sunday School brought the Christmas message in song and verse. It was the old, old story brought to our remembrance. The Sunday School

also collected toys, purchased items, wrapped and delivered them in an effort to remind all of us that it is more blessed to give than to receive.

We wish to thank Bro. Mike Rieker (Peoria, IL) for bringing us a message on the prophecies of Christmas for our monthly Family Worship Service. It is good to learn and be reminded that God's promises are true and that He is faithful.

ILLINOIS, PEORIA

Peter and Mabel Weber

Some day you are going to meet Jesus at the right hand of God. He will look in the Book and say to God: "No, I know him/her not!" Some believe, some don't (Acts 28:24) and nobody can be forced to repent, it is a free-will choice. God can change the heart, but you will have to begin the journey. We are thankful Ben Sceggel, Angie Knobloch and Rosie Waibel could give their testimonies of faith and peace on November 17 and receive baptism the next day. At their young ages they realized what we do today, will determine where we will be in the future and that we should strive to worry about nothing and pray about everything. Elder Bro. Everett Hari (Bloomington, IL) visited us for this occasion and we thank him for his assistance and meditation; also Bros. Jim Plattner and Erik Givens (Princeville, IL) for their ministry.

We thank Bro. Ron Joos (Pulaski, IA) for his Thanksgiving service: May our thanksgiving extend, beyond lip service, to our walk of life and show mankind we

honor God and that He is first in our lives. Life is a walk of thanksgiving and a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service (Romans 12:1).

Bro. Kent Kloter (Goodfield, IL) presented the tripart seminar "Growing Men God's Way" on 11/6, 13 and 20 at the Fellowship Hall under the auspices of Gateway Woods Family Services: "Life is too short to be wasted, don't be a lapel Christian, our purpose is to worship Him, don't climb the corporate ladder which leans against the wrong wall, ask for the power to change, if nothing happens, nothing happens, let's be chained to His chariot, habits are good if they are godly, stand together shoulder to shoulder and walk a holy life, when lust meets the bait...sin takes place, arm yourself with the mind of Christ, memorize and meditate on the Word" ... are just a few excerpts of a very well researched and presented program, supported by a workbook for review and restudy. We thank Bro. Kent for his professionalism and enthusiasm and trust his efforts have, and will, make a difference in many lives. For additional comments or questions, he can be reached at (309) 965-9008.

Our part is prayers and intercessions for our family, ministers, kings, etc. and the farther out we push our prayer life, the better, as God can multiply the mite. Most in this world want a lot more than "lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty" (I Tim. 2:2), but may our objective be to "look for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:10). (Bro. Rick

Plattner 12/2).

"Are you REALLY ready for Christmas?" was the challenge of Bro. Clark Stoller (Gridley, IL) at our family night service on December 5. Are we doing what the Bible demands? Joseph, Mary, shepherds ... ordinary people becoming extraordinary to God for their obedience without hesitation. The shepherds told others, went back to work and did not forget. God expects a lot and deserve a lot. What's on your Christmas list? Take it to the Lord in prayer, make a list of what people need, let's not be distracted, listen to God's inspiration. Are we giving the best? or the worst? Does my calendar show a liberal distribution of talents, works, goods? Shepherds were there for the first coming; this generation should be there for the second coming! We have a lot to get ready for! Thanks, Bro. Clark, for your inspired and timely message.

Grateful for the unusually pleasant, mild fall weather, and what a blessing when also the inside is beautiful and our hearts are right with God, with an attitude to draw close to each other. Why did the Israelites rebel against God: "There is no hope: but we will walk after our own devices." (Jer. 18:12). God sent Jeremiah to talk to the people, using the potter, who molds the clay to his liking, as an example. We are the clay, with no say what will become of it and need to be in total submission to God, the Potter. Are any impurities in our vessel, which must be separated? The Potter gives us the opportunity to become a different vessel and be born again. Eph. 2:1, "You hath he quickened, who

were dead in trespasses and sins." Israel/we were in Satan's clutches. "For by grace are ye saved through faith" (8). We become a new vessel, the workmanship of God, Who can change our lives. If we resist, it is our problem. Are you ready to be used as the vessel the Potter is molding, and carry His spirit? (Elder Bro. Chuck Hemmer 12/9).

The engagement of Bro. Blake Graham (Bro. Dick and Sis. Jeanette, Princeville, IL) to Sis. Rachel Conrad (Bro. John and Sis. Jayne, Cissna Park, IL) was announced on December 2. We congratulate them and look forward to having them assemble with us.

Congratulations to great-grandparents, Bro. Bob and Sis. Ethel Waibel, grandparents, Bro. Ken and Sis. Pam Ober, and parents, Stuart and Angela Laughlin, for Lily (#3), who was born November 21, not a designer baby, but a God-given likeness of her dad and mom.

The Christmas story never gets old as it speaks of spiritual things. Mary had to go to a stable because there was no room for Jesus. Today we feel sorry for people who have no room for Him, but tonight we bring you glad tidings of joy that we can have a home with Him in Heaven. Today Jesus sits at the right hand of God and we need to have faith that there is a Saviour interceding for each of us and ponder in our hearts this occasion, and the crucifixion, to prepare ourselves for the time we meet our Saviour. Let's enjoy the season and the reason we celebrate it (Elder Bro. Chuck Hemmer, Luke 2, Skylines 12/13).

We express our deepest sympa-

thy to the families of Bros. Walter Joos (79), Erv Martin (74) and Sis. Lena Grimm (101), who went to be with the Lord this month; also to Rudy Hoerr for the loss of his wife, Annie.

May the Lord extend His healing mercies to our hospital patients: Bro. George Koehl, Sisters Marie Hohulin (earlier), Ruth Huthmann, Dorothy Meier and Edith Traub.

Where are they now?

Bro. Aaron and Sis. Kara Klopfenstein live at Fisher, IN, and assemble in Indianapolis. Bro. Aaron is a financial planner with Ron Blue, a Christian-based financial firm, and Sis. Kara works as OB/GYN nurse.

Note of Thanks:

I want to say "thank you" for all the cards, gifts, visits and food brought to us during my surgery and recuperation. We appreciated it so much. May God bless you.

Sis. Marie A. Hohulin

Sis. Kyra Klopfenstein has composed a poem for Sis. Bonnie Bach in memory of her father, Bro. Reuben Bach, who passed away recently:

*The hand I as a child held now
lies in quiet rest,
The face is calm and still whose
smile each day my life has
blessed,
The mouth whose words were kind
and dear is sealed from earthly
voice,
Yet in my spirit, through the
pain, I see him now rejoice!*

*Those hands are clasped in Je-
sus' hands, the face with rapture
shines,*

*His voice is raised in lauds of
praise where joy will ne'er re-
pine.*

*Such joy dear Dad, at last, has
found, such peace on Jesus'
breast.*

*I feel the joy within me sound, to
know — what wonder — his
rest!*

*Oh, Jesus, Jesus, precious
Lord, what love in Thee I
see!*

*Please take my hands, my heart,
my tears, and come to comfort
me.*

*Dear Lord, I praise Thee in
this hour, when sorrow wells in-
side,*

*For through these tears, within
Thy arms, my hurting soul
can hide.*

*I know with joy that I shall see
my Dad again one day,
And 'till then I will wait, oh
Lord, and trust Thy perfect
way.*

Happy New Year!

ILLINOIS, PRINCEVILLE
Phyllis Knobloch
Crystal Streitmatter

"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff

they comfort me."

Psalm 23:1,4

Our hearts go out to several in our congregation who have recently lost loved ones. Bro. Walter Joos was suddenly called Home on November 19. Our sympathy is extended to his wife, Sis. Janet; son, Bro. Rolland (Sis. Linda) Joos and family; daughter, Sis. Linda Joos; and stepchildren in Princeville are Bro. Mike (Sis. Julie) Martin and Sis. Debbie (Bro. Erik) Givens.

Bro. Ervin Martin passed away on November 29. He had been living at Apostolic Christian Sky-lines in Peoria. We extend our prayers to his wife, Sis. Lorane, and sons, Kevin and Sandra, Gary and Denise and Kenneth and Cindy, as well as his brothers and sisters, Bro. Nathan (Sis. Esther) Martin, Bro. Ellsworth (Sis. Donna) Martin, Gerald (Louise) Martin, Sis. Arlys and Sis. Arlene Martin.

The passing of Bro. Elwin Rumbold (Bradford, IL) has also saddened our hearts. Those in our congregation feeling the loss of their father and grandfather are Sis. Connie (Bro. Kurt) Christ, Bro. Mark (Sis. Stephanie) Rumbold, Bro. Michael (Sis. Sheila) Rumbold, and David (Joni) Rumbold and families. Those feeling the loss of their brother are Sis. Jeanette (Bro. Richard) Graham and Sis. Marlene (Bro. Jim) Plattner. The funeral was held at Princeville church in that a large attendance was anticipated. Elder Bros. Joe Stoller, Ray Sinn (Latty, OH), Roy Grimm (Taylor, MO), Jesse Beer (Milford, IN) and Marvin Leman (Bradford, IL) all shared the fu-

neral service. We were reminded that death can be a beautiful experience if we are prepared to meet the Lord. We are thankful for the hope of Heaven to comfort and console!

Yet another soul has been called out of this life. Katherine Baer passed away at Apostolic Christian Skylines on December 11. Our sympathy and prayers are with Don (Carol) Baer and Sis. Diane (Bro. Bill) Streitmatter and their families.

On Sunday, December 2, we welcomed Bro. Ben Martin as our new brother in Christ. His parents are Bro. Sam and Sis. Mary. We are thankful that God is still calling souls and for the miraculous work of conversion! Elder Bro. Charles Sauder (Tremont, IL) and Bro. Gary Endress (Bradford, IL) were in our midst for this joyous occasion.

Other visiting ministers throughout the month were Elder Bro. Aaron Steffen (Alto, MI), Bro. Robert Meyer (Bluffton North, IN), Bro. Doyle Frauhiger (Bluffton North, IN), Bro. Fred Witzig (Indianapolis, IN), Bro. John Grimm (Columbus, OH), and Bro. Howard Plattner (Alto, MI). We have been blessed by their visits to our congregation.

The engagement of Bro. Blake Graham (Bro. Richard and Sis. Jeanette) was made known on December 2 to Sis. Rachel Conrad of Cissna Park, IL. Her parents are Bro. John and Sis. Jayne. May God's blessings be upon their engagement and marriage!

Our annual Sunday School Christmas program was held Sunday evening, December 16. The children and young people re-

layed the sweet story of old of Christ's lowly birth.

ILLINOIS, ROANOKE

Linda Hodel

Jenell Hodel

"Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Ephesians 5:20

We appreciate living in a land that recognizes the need for thankfulness and sets a special day aside for this purpose. We want to thank Bro. Kent Heimer (Taylor, MO) for sharing God's Word with us on Thanksgiving Day. We also thank Bro. Marvin Dotterer (Forrest, IL) for being with us on the Sunday following Thanksgiving. May God richly bless these brothers for their labors of love.

We rejoice with Bro. Dave and Sis. Stacy Leman in the birth of their daughter, Whitney Ann. Welcoming her home are her siblings, Grant and Madison. Thankful grandparents are Sis. Helen Leman (late Bro. Bill) and Bro. Terry and Sis. Bev Miller (Gridley, IL). Derek, Nicholas and Jacob Farney welcome twin siblings, Madison Michelle and Jared Wayne. They are the children of Wayne and Michelle Farney. Sis. Doris Farney (late Bro. Ira) is their grandmother.

We welcome Bro. Ben and Sis. Janet Leman and their children, Benji and Livy, and Bro. Matt and Sis. Melissa Kaufman who are now worshipping with us in Roanoke. We are glad to have them as part of our congregation.

We pray for continued healing for our Bro. Dick Bowald (Sis. Mardell) who has been discharged from the hospital and is currently in Restmor Nursing Home in Morton. We so look forward to having him worship with us again. Our prayers and love are also with Bro. Joe Aeschleman as he has spent time in the hospital and is facing uncertainties in the future.

It was a blessing to participate in our All Church Christmas Caroling and Chili supper held on December 9. We are thankful to those who organized this event and appreciated the opportunity to blend our voices to praise God and fellowship with one another. On December 16, we were encouraged and uplifted to hear our Sunday School tell the story that never grows old - of Jesus' birth here on earth. It was a joy to hear each group sing - from the enthusiasm and innocence of the 3 year-olds to the beauty and harmony of the Bible Class. May they always keep these precious truths near to their hearts.

By the time this is published, Christmas will be past and the year 2002 will be upon us. May each of you feel God's love and blessings throughout the new year and may the love and peace of Christmas remain with you.

ILLINOIS, TREMONT

Heather Rassi

LaVonne Wagenbach

God sent His only Son to show His great love for us. We have good reason to rejoice, not only at Christmas, but every day of the year.

Bro. Matt Sauder and Sis. Jenni Grimm were married November

18 at Goodfield, IL. May God bless their new life together. We welcome Sis. Jenni to our congregation, and hope she will soon feel at home in Tremont.

We were thankful for visiting ministering Bro. Dennis Rassi (Fairbury, IL). We really appreciate the efforts of Bro. Dennis, Sis. Diane, and their family.

Two families were blessed with little girls this month. Bro. John and Sis. Heather Rassi were blessed with little Grace Anne. Big brother Jacob helped welcome his sister home. Grandparents are Bro. Curt and Sis. Kathy Rassi and Bro. Todd and Sis. Beth Stuber. Also blessed with a little girl were Bro. Adam and Sis. Katie Reinbeck. Heidi Ann was welcomed by big sisters Rachel and Rebecca. Grandparents are Paul and Christie Strobe and Bro. Larry and Sis. Barb Reinbeck.

Our prayers are with hospital patient Bro. Glenn Stuber (Sis. Dorothy). It is good to see that he is feeling better and assembling with us.

We rejoice with Sis. Amber Stuber and Bro. Doug Nohl (Morris, MN) as their engagement was made known. Their parents are Bro. Larry and Sis. Bonnie Nohl and Bro. Todd and Sis. Beth Stuber. We wish them God's richest blessing and continued guidance.

Note of Thanks:

I would like to express my appreciation for all your prayers, gifts of love, visits, and many cards with encouraging words during my hospitalization. I pray God will bless each of you.

Bro. Ken Huette

ILLINOIS, WASHINGTON

Marcia Koch

Dianne Wyss

The struggle is over, the victory won. Sis. Karen Baker's mother, Sis. Mildred Schlipf (Gridley, IL), was called Home to her reward. Our love and sympathy is extended to all of her family. What consolation when a soul has made preparation for this time.

Our congregation enjoyed our annual Christmas caroling. This year we sang for many shut-ins and less fortunate. The blessing was ours as we experienced true appreciation and gratitude. We were again blessed with hearing the Christmas story told through our Sunday School children at our Christmas program. The story truly never grows old. If you haven't been to Washington lately, you would be amazed at the size of our Sunday School. We are still considered a young church—compared to many of our Apostolic Christian Churches—and it is a blessing to witness such growth. May all feel our Heavenly Father's nearness and joy in 2002.

INDIANA, BLUFFTON

Tonia Isch

Elizabeth Aschliman

“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.”

I John 3:1

We welcome our new brothers in Christ into the family of God.

Mick Gerber (Scott and the late Sis. Melinda), Joe Leman (Bro. Jeff and Sis. Val), Justin Steffen (Bro. Duane and Sis. Karen) and Grayson Reinhard (Bro. Doyle and Sis. Jan) were baptized on November 18. We rejoice with them and their families.

We are saddened by the sudden death of Tim Meade, Bro. Mike Meade's (Sis. Mary Dean) brother. Our hearts go out to them as we enter this holiday season.

Spending time in the hospital this month were Sis. Rose Frauhiger (Bro. Tom) and Jeanne Gerber (Arlen). We will keep these dear ones in our prayers as they recuperate.

We would like to thank our visiting ministers for sharing the Word of God with us this month. They are Bro. Carroll Gerber (Sis. Louise, Bluffton North, IN), Elder Bro. Marvin Leman (Sis. Jane, Bradford, IL), Bro. Dennis Kaufmann (Sis. Bonnie, Bloomington, IL) and Bro. Jerry Isch (Sis. Linda, Philadelphia, PA). What an encouragement they are to us.

Matt and Cammy Sutter have a sweet little girl born August 29. Grandparents are Bro. Bob and Sis. Jan Sutter and Bro. Ramon and Sis. Lorene Steffen. We congratulate them and apologize for overlooking this.

Rachelle Reimschisel (Bro. Todd and Sis. Lori) and Jeff Lindblom (Cliff and Rose) are engaged to wed. Also announcing their engagement are Sis. Brenda Girod (Sis. Carla) and Bro. Kent Rockwell (Kevin and Beth King). We wish both couples much happiness.

Bro. Zachary Geisel (Bro. Stan

and Sis. Cindy) and Sis. Miriam Isch (Bro. Barry and Sis. Imogene) were joined as one on December 9. John McAfee (Bro. Jeff and Sis. Linda) and Lisa Bowers (Charley and Carol) were wed on December 15. We rejoice with these new couples as they become one.

We enjoyed our Christmas program on December 16 as the Sunday School students praised our Saviour's birth. We wish everyone a blessed Christmas and New Year as our Lord continues to provide for us all.

**INDIANA
BLUFFTON NORTH
Ann Meyer
Rhonda Maller**

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

Matthew 5:6

Elder Bro. Ron Messner (Sis. Pam, Washington, IL) asked us if we just have the beatitudes and the fruits of the Spirit memorized or if we are really living them in our everyday walk of life. We thank Bro. Ron for being willing to be used of God in preaching and for challenging us all in our Christian walk.

We are also praising God for two new converts. Vince Francesi (Bro. Len and Sis. Mary) and Debbie Kolkman, mother of Bro. Matt Markley (Sis. Lisa), have come to the Lord in repentance, claiming Him as their personal Saviour and King. We rejoice with them and their families.

Bro. Tim Drayer (Bro. Jerry and Sis. Lois) was united in marriage to Sis. Gwen Kloter (Bro.

Kent and Sis. Janelle) of the Goodfield, IL, congregation. Bro. Zachary Geisel (Bro. Stan and Sis. Cindy) was married to Sis. Miriam Isch (Bro. Barry and Sis. Imogene) of the Bluffton congregation. We welcome Sis. Gwen and Sis. Miriam and pray the Lord will bless these two couples as they build godly homes. Bro. Kent Rockwell is looking forward to his own wedding day. He was announced to Sis. Brenda Girod (Bluffton, IN). She is the daughter of Sis. Carla Girod. Bro. Kent's parents are Ted Rockwell and Beth King (Kevin).

Our thoughts and prayers are with Bro. Stan Isch and Sis. Dorothy Fischer as they have faced the uncertainty of surgery. We pray a complete recovery for both of them, Lord willing.

We uplift in prayer each of the brothers and sisters who were voted into church positions. Whether it's a church office or a Sunday School position, we know it's an added responsibility that requires time and wisdom. We are thankful that God is faithful to provide.

By the time we read this, Christmas will be past. We know that God will bless each of you who sent a gift to Christian Care or a toy to the Sunday School toy drive, helped the Young Group provide for needy families, participated in sending gifts to children whose parents are in prison, or simply blessed us by singing to us at the Christmas program. Thanks to each one who shared the love our Saviour to someone in need. May each of us continue to share Christmas all year long.

**INDIANA, FRANCESVILLE
Jessica Murray**

“Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.”

Psalm 46:10

We are happy for our dear friends who have announced their engagement. Lance Gutwein (Bro. Harv and Sis. Ellen) and Erika Koebecke (Dennis and Phyllis Koebecke) plan to be wed on June 8. May God guide them and continue to grow in their hearts.

We are thankful for God's healing as our dear Sis. Tianne Overmyer and Sis. Juanita Norman recovered from surgery this past month. We ask God to strengthen them daily.

A special thanks to our dear Brothers who visited and shared the Word with us. They were Bro. Steve Ringger (Bluffton North, IN), Bro. James Kaeb (Bern, KS), Bro. Jim Rinkenberger (Bluffton, IN), and Bro. Jaye Rinkenberger (Goodfield, IL). What a blessing it was to hear God's Word from them.

We had the opportunity to hear the dear Sunday School children as they told of Christmas in song and word. As our hearts grew in our love for our Lord and Saviour, it brought to my mind this poem:

What is Christmas?

Christmas is more than a day at
the end of the year,
More than a season of joy and
good cheer,
Christmas is really God's pattern
for living
To be followed all year by unself-

ish giving;
 For in giving to others and being
 kind
 Man finds true joy and peace of
 mind;
 And peace on earth will come to
 stay
 When we live Christmas every
 day.

—*Helen Steiner Rice*

**INDIANA
 INDIANAPOLIS
 Gail Bradford
 Sue Levy**

Two engagements were announced to our congregation: Tricia Lawson to Joel Zeller, and Sis. Keyna Langhofer (South Bend, IN) to Bro. Joshua Martinez. We rejoice with these young people and wish them God's guidance as they plan their lives together.

We appreciate the visiting ministers this month: Bro. Jeff Grimm (Sis. Ruth, Goodfield, IL), Bro. Jaye Rinkenberger (Sis. Peggy, Goodfield, IL), and Elder Bro. Wayne Banwart (Champaign, IL).

We are praying that God's healing mercies touch several dear ones. When asked about the "prognosis", one of them showed their faith by responding, "Let's just see what the Lord has in mind." What a comfort to know that whatever befalls, the Lord is in control, and He will stay by our side.

Our children and teenagers presented songs and Bible verses to celebrate Jesus' birth during the Sunday School Christmas program. A spirit of joyfulness and gratitude followed them to various homes where they distributed gifts to those in need.

In this season of rebirth and renewal, let us remember why we are here on this earth—to praise God—and whom we must thank for our many blessings—Him from whom all blessings flow!

**INDIANA, LACROSSE
 Eric and Bobbi Ann Heinold**

Haste and seek your soul's salvation;
 Heed the Word of God today!
 Haste to flee His condemnation;
 Seek the straight and narrow way.

Evil are the worldly pleasures,
 Leading to eternal fire;
 Seek the everlasting treasure,
 E'er the day of grace expire.

Zion's Harp #52

Two dear souls have turned their back on the pleasures of this world and are seeking their soul's salvation. We rejoice with Ross Feller (Bro. Joe and Sis. Jackie) and Alyssa Schneider (Bro. Dale and Sis. Andrea). Our prayers are with them and their families as they make many new changes in their life.

Thanksgiving Day services helped us to remember all of the blessings that we have in our life and to thank the Lord daily for each of them. We had two visiting ministers who were with us to help share the Word of God on Thanksgiving Day. A special thanks to Elder Bro. Bill Schlatter (Sis. Emily, Junction, OH) and Bro. Jim Butikofer (Sis. Diana, Iowa City, IA).

Bro. Neil Stoller (Bro. Steve and Sis. Anna Marie) graduated from the University of Illinois this month. We pray that he will feel

God's guidance and direction as he looks for a job.

The Sunday School students shared with us the Christmas story of the Babe born in a manger so many years ago. It is so uplifting to see so many young people sharing the gospel and praising the Lord. It is also encouraging, once again, to be reminded of the true meaning of Christmas and not get so wrapped up in the hustle and bustle of the season.

**INDIANA, LEO
 Ethelyn Schlatter**

Bro. Ron Bollier and family and Bro. Greg Stieglitz and family, both from Indianapolis, IN, spent Sunday, November 25 with us. We were blessed by their messages. The thought both morning and afternoon was on having faith. Only fear can limit the power of God. We claim the promises of God through faith. We need the implicit trust and faith Jesus had in His Father.

On November 27, Paul and Sue Goldman, who have been attending our services, welcomed a baby girl, Aerin Amelia, into their home. She has a sister and brother, Lauren and Ian.

This brings the number of babies that arrived in 2001 to eight: five girls and three boys. We had one wedding and no funerals in the church.

Christmas caroling was December 14. We visited many elderly in their homes and two nursing homes. We divided up into five groups as usual. Then we returned to church for chili and snacks.

"O come little children, O come

one and all; To Bethlehem haste..." The Sunday School presented their Christmas program on December 16. They led us from the prophetic Word of Isaiah to the hill side where "It came upon the midnight clear, That glorious song of old...Peace on the earth, good will to men, from heaven's all gracious King." A sextet of brothers sang "The Light of the world is Jesus". The very youngest children sang "The wonderful name of Jesus, Emmanuel, God with us, Wonderful name". The program was followed by a dinner.

Our sympathy is extended to Steve and Chris Sukup at the passing of his grandmother, Anna Sukup (Paulding, OH).

As we begin another year, I would like to leave these thoughts with you:

Memories are the key not to the past, but to the future. (Corrie ten Boom)

Anticipating is even more fun than recollecting. (Malcolm S. Forbes)

When all else is lost, the future still remains. (Bovee)

I sometimes believe we're heading very fast for Armageddon right now. (Ronald Reagan)

"And he said unto me, these sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done. Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book." (Revelation 22:6-7)

INDIANA, MILFORD

Pam Beer

Stacey Feller

We gathered on Thanksgiving

Day for services and were blessed to have ministering Bro. Tom Troxel (LaCrosse, IN) and his family with us. Truly we have much to be thankful for, and as we head into a new year, may we be refreshed daily by verses such as Psalm 116:7 "Return unto thy rest, O my soul: for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee."

Following Thanksgiving, on November 24 and 25 we had a special weekend hearing the testimony and witnessing the baptism of Bro. Clint Steffen (Bro. Dick and Sis. Gwen). We thank Elder Bro. Ray Sinn (Latty, OH) and our retired ministering Bro. Walt Steffen for sharing in the responsibilities of the weekend. May God pour out His love and grace on our new brother.

Our prayers have been with Sis. Marci Reinhard (Bro. Shawn) as she is recovering after having some health concerns as well as with Bro. Marc Beer (Sis. Jodi) who had surgery this month.

On December 18 Bro. Stan and Sis. Linda Wuthrich became grandparents to little Joshua Alan, born to Brian and Mindy Wuthrich. Joshua joins big brother Bryce at home. We rejoice with this family in the blessing of new life.

In mid-December we enjoyed an evening of Christmas caroling. May the special joy and spirit of Christmas stay with us as we go through the winter months that we sometimes seem to just trudge through.

So remember while December brings the only Christmas Day,

In the year let there be Christ-

mas in the things you do and say;
Wouldn't life be so much lighter,
wouldn't dreams be coming true,
If we kept the Christmas spirit
all the whole year through?
—Unknown

INDIANA, REMINGTON

Beth Virkler

Rochelle Ward

"For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."

St. John 3:17

We rejoice with Andy Getz (Bro. Eldon and Sis. Charlene) as he has decided to leave his burdens at the cross and follow Jesus. Our prayers are with him as he makes his journey toward a heavenly goal.

Congratulations go out to Bro. Paul Virkler (Sis. Miranda) as he has obtained his degree from Purdue University. May the Lord be with him as he begins his career.

Sis. Jenny Gutwein (Bro. Luke) has also reached a milestone in her life as she has completed her nursing certification. We pray that God will continue to guide her in each step that lies ahead.

We are thankful for God's faithfulness and protection. Bro. Stan Virkler (Sis. Beth), his son Tim, Bro. Phil Isabell (Sis. Diane), and convert Alan Craig (Erica) returned safely from a work trip in Haiti. May God bless each one of them for their labors in His name.

We enjoyed the annual Sunday School Christmas program on De-

ember 16. A special thank-you to all the children, parents, and Sunday School teachers for their hard work. It was such a blessing to again hear the joyful message of Christ's birth coming from the mouths of our future church!

As 2001 has drawn to a close and we begin a new year, may our desire be for a renewal of faith and a closer walk with the Lord, that our focus may be on things above and that our eyes be set on the One who gave us hope.

**INDIANA
SOUTH BEND
Lavilla Langhofer
DeAnn Schlatter**

It was a joy to sing Christmas carols for several nursing homes and shut-ins. The true spirit of the season was brought close to our hearts as we sang to them.

Sis. Shirley Lehman was hospitalized for surgery. We hope she feels our prayers in her continued illness.

It is a joy for our church to report the engagement of a dear couple. Sis. Keyna Langhofer (Bro. Marty and Sis. Lavilla) and Bro. Joshua Martinez (Indianapolis) have felt the leading of God to be married. Lord willing, the wedding will be on May 26th.

**INDIANA
WEST LAFAYETTE
Geoff and Angie Ginzel**

Christmas is a time to remember Jesus' birth, spend time with family, and to experience the incredible thrill of young children reciting pieces and singing in the Christmas program. On Decem-

ber 16, the West Lafayette Church held its first annual Christmas program. In addition to the children, there were songs sung by a women's group and the church choir. The night before was the Sunday School party. The younger children practiced their pieces and the older children worked together to provide a Christmas meal and clothing for a needy family in the community, celebrating the true meaning of Christmas.

We rejoice with Allen and Connie Furrer as they begin their walk with Christ. May God bless them and continue to work in their lives and in the lives of their family.

The church continues to grow. Based on the number of babies present and arriving in the near future, it was determined the baby room had to be expanded. The walls are finished and the first coat of paint has been applied.

We would like to thank the following ministering brothers and their wives for visiting us and allowing God to use them to bring forth His message: Bro. Lynn and Sis. Leonda Stieglitz (Leo, IN), Bro. Allen and Sis. Susan Stoller (Bluffton, IN) and Bro. Byron and Sis. Carol Stoller (Gridley, IL).

If you are in the area, please join us at 10:00 a.m. for services. For local correspondence, contact our local ministering Bro. Neil Widmer (765) 497-4709. Our counseling Elders are Bros. Curt Frank and Wendell Gudeman.

**INDIANA, WOLCOTT
Mary Beth Lehman
Erica Wagenbach**

"And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you

good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

Luke 2:10-11

As the Christmas season arrived, the Sunday School children looked forward to their annual Christmas parties, which were followed by Christmas caroling on December 15. The following week brought the Christmas program where the Sunday School students brought forth the story of Christ's birth in verse and song. May God bless each one who took part in the program.

We are thankful Sis. Lisa Furrer (Bro. Troy) is back home again after her recent surgery and couple days in the hospital. May she continue to feel God's healing touch.

We express our sympathy to the family of Sis. Dorothy Lehman who passed away December 13. We pray God will be near her children, Bro. Gene Lehman, Wanda Johnson (Kentland, IN), Sis. Diane Hopkins, and Chuck Lehman (Kentland, IN).

We thank Bro. Neal Widmer (West Lafayette, IN) for bringing forth God's Word to us on Christmas day.

**IOWA, BURLINGTON
Karla Gerst
Brenda Schulz**

This month we have had four visiting ministers. They were Bro. Dan Stoller (Rockville, CT), Bro. Bill Gerst (Alto, MI), Elder Bro. Jon Schmidgall and Bro. Ed Lanz (both of Oakville, IA). We are thankful for them all.

We extend our sympathy to Sis. Elizabeth Schumacher (Bro. Mike) as her mother, Sis. Bertha Lauber (Elgin, IL), has passed away.

IOWA, ELGIN
Gloria Frieden
Heidi Butikofer

How pure the snow as it falls from the heavens. But, alas, how quickly it becomes soiled on the earth below. Is it not the same with us, His creation? We enter this world pure and sinless, but so soon our perfection fades away.

We were richly blessed as our Sunday School students presented the Christmas story through scripture, verse, and song. May we always remember that "...it's not the manger but the cross, that sets the spirit free."

Nathan Schupbach (Bro. John and Sis. Janet) and Melissa McNally (Terry and Kaylene) have made their engagement known. May God be with them and guide them as they make plans for their wedding and marriage.

May God be with us now, as we journey through the unknown of another new year. May He grant us grace to be overcomers when temptations come upon us, and with each trial and struggle, may we trust His perfect wisdom and timing. As He continues to shower us with blessings, may we give Him our thanks and praise.

IOWA, IOWA CITY
Diana Butikofer

We pray that all had a safe and blessed Christmas season. It's always a joy to reunite with family

and friends for the holidays.

The new year is a good time to reevaluate or set new goals. A personal goal is to spend more time in God's Word and in prayer with Him. It's easy for me to get distracted with a baby around, but that's not a valid excuse. I hope we can all rededicate our lives to God.

We were blessed to have Bros. Vernon Wettstein (Congerville, IL) and Dale Moore (Elgin, IA) with us to help out our home brethren. We truly appreciate every visitor we have.

Our sympathy and prayers go to Bro. Joe and Sis. Connie Gerst and their family following the death of his father, Bro. Paul Gerst (Sis. Elva, Oakville, IA). We trust the Holy Spirit will continue to be their Comforter.

The Christmas season is always a wonderful time to reflect on our faith and the example of Mary in giving birth to our Saviour. We sing many carols about Jesus and His birth, but let us not forget His death on Calvary as well.

IOWA, LESTER
Dawn Knobloch
Dawn Metzger

We are rejoicing that Brian and Angie Metzger have heeded the call for repentance. Our prayer is that God's grace and guidance will be with them as they make this most important step in their lives.

Mourning the loss of loved ones this past month was Sis. Elaine Kellenberger and her family. Her mother, Sis. Lena Grimm (West Bend, IA), was called Home on November 23. A week later her brother-in-law, Bro. Ervin Martin (Princeville, IL), passed away. Our sympathy and prayers are ex-

tended to Sis. Elaine and her family at this time. We also want to remember Bro. Glen and Sis. Joyce Metzger and Bro. Ezra and Sis. Marie Knobloch in the passing of their brother, Bro. Elwin Rumbold (Bradford, IL). May God comfort and bless them and their families.

Visiting ministers who shared the Word with us this past month were Bros. Wayne Wiegand (Goodfield, IL), Everett Gerber (Rockville, IL) and Pat Zaugg (West Bend, IA).

On December 9, Bro. Dennis Schumacher and Sis. Jill Aeschleman were united in marriage. Our prayers and best wishes are with them as they begin their married life together. We will miss Sis. Jill but trust that she will be welcomed into the Eureka, IL, congregation. Parents of this couple are Bro. Gene and Sis. Dolores Metzger and Bro. Bob and Sis. Charlene Schumacher. Stuart Moser (Jim) and Karin Reiffenberger were married on December 1. We congratulate and wish them God's blessings in their married life.

Mark Leuthold and Lee Howard have announced their engagement. May the Lord lead and guide them as they plan their lives together. Mark's parents are Bro. Bob and Sis. Cindy Leuthold.

Sis. Donna Mogler (Bro. Dwight) was hospitalized this past month and we're thankful she is feeling well again. May God's healing hand be with Bro. Larry Knobloch (Sis. Sheryl) and Sis. Donna Gerber (Bro. John) as they recover from surgery.

The evening of December 16 was an enjoyable one as we assem-

bled together to watch our dear Sunday School children tell us the story of Jesus' birth. We trust God will bless the seed that has been planted in those young and tender hearts. We thank all the Sunday School teachers and children for the efforts put forth for the program and throughout the year.

IOWA, OAKVILLE
Melody Steiner
Debra Wagenbach

Bro. Troy and Sis. Joni Massner welcome the newest addition to their growing family. Holly Renee joins her siblings, Trevor, Erika, Tucker, and Trenton, to complete their family circle. Bro. Virgil and Sis. Barbara Massner and Bro. Ed and Sis. Joan Lanz are thankful for the safe arrival of a new grandchild.

We rejoice with Bro. Brent Frank and Sis. Bethany Schulz as they became one in the Lord this past month. May God bless them as they establish their home as a welcome place for His Holy Spirit to dwell. Also rejoicing are their parents, Bro. Dale and Sis. Tina Frank and Bro. Roger and Sis. June Schulz.

We have laid to rest three dear souls this past month. Our dear Bro. Paul Gerst laid down his earthly cross for a heavenly crown. We know that his dear family misses him greatly, and we pray for his dear and faithful wife, Sis. Elva, as well as their sons, Bro. Bill (Sis. Judy, Alto, MI), Bro. Joe (Sis. Connie, Iowa City, IA), Bro. Walt (Sis. Nola), and Bro. Charles (Sis. Charlene). May God continue to comfort them in the lonely days ahead. We offer our prayers and sympathy also to Bro. Myron

Schulz (Sis. Dorothy) in the recent loss of his brother, Donnie Schulz. Also, our dear Sis. Ann Eberhard who resided at the Restmoor home in Morton passed away. She is survived by her sister, Sis. Leona Siegle (Bro. Ernie). May God be near each of these families and give them peace and assurance in the days ahead.

Our annual Christmas program was held in December. We were once again uplifted as the precious little children and young adults recited their memory verses and sang hymns. May God nourish the souls of our youth, that the tiny seeds so humbly planted into their hearts may one day spring forth and blossom into the fruits of repentance.

Bro. Beirne Messner (Morris, MN) and Bro. Garry Bucher (Valparaiso, IN) recently brought forth the Word of Life to our congregation. May God bless them for their efforts in His service.

IOWA, PULASKI
Katrina Knobloch

At our annual Christmas program, our Sunday School students shared the message of love and peace that was brought to us many years ago when Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

We are thankful that Kristin Wuthrich (Bro. Ken and Lora) is seeking this peace through repentance.

Sis. Evelyn Metzger (Roy) and Sis. Esther Rinkenberger (Bro. Cleo) have both submitted to foot surgery. We are thankful they are both assembling with us again.

Note of Thanks:

We would like to thank all the brothers, sisters, and friends who so willingly helped us, prayed for us, or sent us gifts and words of encouragement over the past months. You have all been a blessing to us. May God bless you all.

Bro. Doug and Sis. Clara Schock

IOWA, WEST BEND
Lori Skoglund
Berniece Banwart

On November 25, Bro. Dean Messner (Sis. Wanda, Winthrop, MN) shared God's Word with us. May God bless him and all our ministers who faithfully, by the Spirit, bring forth the Word of Truth.

It was necessary for Sis. Elma Mogler and Linden (Ione) Venhuizen to undergo surgery recently, but we are thankful they are recovering at home.

The oldest member in our congregation, 101-year-old Sis. Lena Grimm, passed away on November 23. Her husband, Bro. Eli, preceded her in death in 1988. Surviving are her 13 children: Sis. Elaine Kellenberger (Lester, IA), Bro. Clifford (Sis. Rosene, West Bend), Sis. Edith (Ernest) Kellenberger (Algona, IA), Sis. Eleanor Steffen (Morton, IL), Sis. Lorane (Bro. Ervin) Martin (Peoria, IL), Arlo (Marilyn) Grimm, Delano (Mary Ann) Grimm (Algona, IA), Edward (Donna) Grimm, Dean (Nadine) Grimm and Eli Jr. (Margaret) Grimm (West Bend), Sis. Carole (Bro. Larry) Fehr (Whittemore), Sis. Lavonne (Bro. Verle) Kieser (Buda, IL) and Sis. Diane (Bro. Marvin) Knobloch (Chillicothe, IL); 67 grandchildren, 129

great-grandchildren and 33 great-great-grandchildren. Her children and their families must take great comfort in knowing that Sis. Lena had faithfully served her Lord for 82 years. Just two days after Sis. Lena's funeral, a son-in-law, Bro. Ervin (Sis. Lorane) Martin, passed away in Peoria, IL. We extend our sympathy to this large family in the loss of two loved ones.

"Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord; that walketh in his ways. For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be and it shall be well with thee. Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants around about thy table. Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord."

Psalms 128:1-4

Bro. Noah and Sis. Emma Gerber, Bro. Elmer and Sis. Matilda Fehr, and Bro. Fahey and Sis. Marie Gress have been blessed with 60 years of marriage. We have observed their humility and faithfulness to each other and to their Lord. They served in many ways: in the ministry, Sunday School, or in other church duties. We pray that God will reward them for their good examples and labors of love. They are thankful and ask that God will bless all who remembered them with cards and gifts on these occasions.

A Motto for the New Year
With steadfast heart and true
go forward on your way;
God give you strength to do
the duties of each day.

So daily may this thought
your heart with courage fill,
"I can, because I ought,
and by God's help, I will."

—author unknown

JAPAN, SHIODA Akihiro Ito

Greetings from Japan. I am so glad to write for the Silver Lining this month for the Shioda Church, because I was in the US most of the months in this year. Our church is small, so each brother and sister has some work to help each other. I skipped my work for several months, and I am happy to do one of them now.

We visited the Ichinomiya Hot Springs Hospital to give Christmas cards and presents and to sing Christmas carols. There were about a hundred patients and we tried to tell them the true meaning of Christmas. Most of Japanese will not understand why we need to celebrate Christmas. This time is not just a holiday but the birthday of our Jesus Christ.

Meantime, we made the invitation pamphlet for Christmas service and dinner next Sunday and distributed it to about 8,000 houses, inserted in the newspapers. We pray that many people will visit our church next Sunday and share the celebration of Christmas with us, and have a chance to visit church.

Sis. Ayako Inoue decided to move to Fukushima Prefecture for a part of medical training. This place is far away from our church and it will become more difficult to visit church than now. We pray for her that God will protect her during this period and give her much grace and love, and that she will

come back as soon as possible after she finishes the medical training.

Kan Umemura came back from the US and will be baptized on December 30 at Tokyo Church if God's will be with us. We will be so happy to get a new brother and pray for him that God will give peace to his heart and the wonderful Holy Spirit, which will be the best partner to him for the fight against the evil.

We pray for Bro. Willis and Sis. Lois Ehnle that they will have a safe trip to the US on the 24th and spend a nice Christmas and New Year with their family.

JAPAN, TOKYO Jana Klaus

Greetings from Tokyo! It is hard to believe that when everyone reads this it will be a new year, should the Lord tarry His returning to take Home those who "had room" for Him. That was the theme of the Elementary class' message in our Christmas program this past Sunday — "Do you have room for Jesus?" Sis. Onoda so diligently translated our English hymn, "Have you any room for Jesus?" into Japanese and the whole congregation could sing this together at the end of our program. The kindergarten class did so wonderful on their parts, spelling out the word CHRISTMAS with a short English piece and then a longer explanation in Japanese. Many others from the congregation also did presentations and the whole program was truly blessed by the Lord. Attendance was high and we do hope and pray each of us, believer or seeker, were convicted or encouraged to make

room for Jesus now while there is still yet time. We had our usual large supper together afterwards with a fine variety of Japanese and American food.

We are so thankful that our two college students, Bro. Makoto Inoue and Kan Umemura, have returned safely back to Japan for the holidays. It is with great anticipation and thankfulness that we look forward to Kan's testimony and baptism December 29 and 30. Kan's American Elder, Bro. Everett Hari, and his wife, Sis. Bev (Bloomington, IL), are planning to make the trip over here to join us in the blessed event, as well as Bro. Chris Lao (Chicago, IL). We will report more on this next month, Lord willing.

God's peace and nearness to all in the New Year, 2002.

KANSAS, BERN
Lori Baumgartner
Sally Strahm

"I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Philippians 3:14

As another year closes and a new one begins, may we continue to walk by our precious Saviour's side. Knowing not what lies ahead, we pray that God's will is done in the coming year.

We're always grateful and thankful to have visiting ministers among us. We thank ministering Bro. Tom Leman (Sis. Marlene, Denver, CO) for lending himself as a servant on Thanksgiving Day and Elder Bro. Don Braker (Sis. Eileen, Kansas City, MO) on December 2. Their

labors of love are appreciated.

May our prayers be with Bro. Don Menold (Sis. Pat) as he has been a surgical patient. I have to apologize as we left Sis. Gerty Esslinger's (Bro. Dennis) name out of the Silver Lining a couple months ago. She was hospitalized and is doing well now. Our prayers continue to be with our Sis. Anna Ulmer who has spent some time in the hospital and is now residing in the Apostolic Christian nursing home. May God's guiding and healing hand be over her.

Sis. Liz Brey (Roger) graduated from Kansas State University with a Bachelors of Science Degree. We pray God will be with her in her new endeavors.

Our Sunday School students have helped tie comforters for World Relief. It gave us a warm feeling and touched our hearts as we watched them work diligently on the comforter when they knew they were doing it to help out the less fortunate.

Our annual church Christmas caroling was held December 8. It was a blessed evening for those who caroled, and we hope it was likewise for the ones who listened.

At the time of this writing we are looking forward to hearing the story of Baby Jesus through song and verse from our Sunday School students. It's so precious to be able to hear the story through the innocent voices of our children.

May God be with each one in the coming year.

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

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

Hymns of Zion #150

KANSAS, FORT SCOTT
Ruth Bahr

Bro. Bill Dotterer (Sis. Sharon, Lamar, MO) brought our Thanksgiving message Wednesday evening, November 2. Others that served us this month were Bro. Frederick Knapp (Sis. Marjorie, Congerville, IL) and Bro. Rex Frieden (Sis. Vera, Lamar, MO). We thank them. We also thank Elder Bros. Dennis Warner (Lester, IA) and Don Braker (Kansas City, MO) for sharing the Memorandum with us.

Our congregation was saddened when Bro. Harvey Smith (Sis. Ethel) passed from this life. We sympathize with his widow, children, and grandchildren. Elder Bro. John Lehman (Bern, KS), retired Elder Bro. Joe Braker (Morton, IL), and Bro. Larry Bahr (Fort Scott, KS) officiated at the funeral.

Our Sunday School children presented an inspiring Christmas program December 19.

KANSAS, KIOWA
Laura Wagenbach
Jennifer Stewart

"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; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; A

time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;"

Eccles. 3

A victory was won this month here in Kiowa! After 102 years on this earth, our dear Sis. Sophie Kircher was laid to rest. Sophie has touched many lives, not only in our church, but throughout the whole community. She saw many changes in her lifetime and has finally gone Home.

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah. There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early. The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah."

Psalms 46

Our community was saddened by the untimely death of Rex Diel, son of Sis. Tillie and Marvin Diel. Our sympathy and prayers go to his wife and sons and family.

On December 16, our Sunday School shared the story of Christ's birth with the congregation. We continued on with the celebration by singing the songs of Christmas

around the community. They finished with pizza and ice cream sundaes.

We ask for prayers for those that are making changes in their life.

**KANSAS
LAMONT-GRIDLEY
Sarah Somerhalder**

Children are a blessing from God. We rejoice with Bro. Victor and Sis. Hope Edelman on the birth of their son, Sage Loren, on November 27. He is welcomed home by his big brother, Layke. Thankful grandparents are Bro. Albert and Sis. Mara Jean Edelman and Mary and Ed Lawton (Lebo, KS) and paternal great-grandmother, Sis. Liseten Strahm (Sabetha, KS).

Our sincere thanks to Elder Bro. Ed Schwartz (Sis. Jeni, Bluffton, IN) for being with us the weekend of December 1. Saturday evening he spoke to us on "Overcoming Hurt Feelings" and brought God's Word to us on Sunday. May the Lord richly reward him for his labors of love.

There is great rejoicing in our small flock, as two dear souls have started repenting. We wish God's grace and blessings to Marie and Aaron Luthi, daughter and son of Elder Bro. Jay and Sis. Jane Luthi, as they begin this most important step in life.

On December 9, our church enjoyed hearing the Sunday School tell of the old story of our dear Lord's birth. That afternoon, the Sunday School students, teachers and parents enjoyed caroling to several older brothers and sisters in their homes and at the Madison Rest Home. Following caroling,

the whole church was invited to a chili and soup supper at Bro. Ron and Sis. Jane Isch's.

The next Sunday evening, our congregation enjoyed a meal at the Gridley Community Building and singing Christmas carols afterward.

**KANSAS, SABETHA
Mary Kay Wenger**

The engagement of Rachel Krogmann (Frank and Sis. Julie) and Jason Gibson (Howard and Ginger, Tribune, KS), both students at Fort Hays State University, has been announced. An April 13 wedding is planned in Hays.

We were blessed on Thanksgiving with a visiting minister, Bro. Howard Plattner (Alto, MI). His message included a teaching on another word for "prayer" is "action". An outline of our prayers should include adoration, confession, thanksgiving, intercession and our needs at the end of our prayers.

As is our tradition with the passing of Thanksgiving, we have discontinued our Sunday evening singings and have Wednesday evening services alternating with the Bern church.

Subsequent to Thanksgiving, we were privileged to have several visiting ministers. They were Elder Bro. Marvin Leman (Bradford, IL), Elder Bro. Mark Bahr (Detroit, MI), Bro. Tom Leman (Denver, CO) and Bro. James Kaeb (Bern, KS). We ask God to bless them for his work in His service.

Bro. Travis Strahm (Bro. Carl and Sis. Sharon) graduated from

Kansas State University this month. We wish him God's blessings in his future endeavors.

There was a large attendance for the Sunday School's Christmas program and refreshments on Sunday evening, December 16. It is always wonderful to conclude the program with the entire congregation singing "Silent Night" and the Sunday School children standing across the front of the church. We thank the parents and teachers for all the work that was put forth to make it a special evening.

What will you do with Jesus?

Neutral you cannot be.

Some day your heart will be asking,

What will He do with me?

—Anonymous

KANSAS, WICHITA

Emma Miller

The first Tuesday in December, a group from the Wichita congregation joined others from the various Kansas churches at the MCC work center in nearby Newton where they spent the day helping to prepare items for relief to those in need. Reports from those who attended indicate that this was a time of fellowship as well as work.

We are happy to welcome Derek and Emily Funk back to Kansas. Derek has finished his assignment in Europe and will be stationed at Ft. Riley. He and Emily have taken up residence at 3305 Kennsington Court #4, Manhattan, KS 66503.

This morning I read about intercessory prayer in my devotional, Joy and Strength. The scripture reference was from I

Samuel 12:23, "Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you:". Also included were the familiar lines of Alfred Lord Tennyson, an English poet from the 19th century who wrote, "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of." I spoke to Bro. Max Reimschisel and we agreed to ask you to intercede for the Wichita congregation. We are an aging congregation and we certainly need the prayers of all of you that our congregation can be strengthened in numbers as well as in spiritual matters. We solicit your prayers that our needs can be met and God can be praised in the New Year.

MEXICO, IXTLAN Rosario Gonzalez

"Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."

Genesis 2:24

We rejoiced and were very happy to hear of the engagement of our Sis. Areli Sibaja, daughter of Sis. Lourdes and Felix Sibaja, to Bro. Kirby Reutter, son of Bro. Duane and Sis. Kay Reutter from the Rockville, CT, congregation. We can see the love of God shown to us through His Son, Jesus Christ, and His Holy Spirit. He is the one who unites us as He has united this brother and sister in the same hope. They have different nationalities, but spiritually, they have the same goal - our Lord Jesus Christ.

Meet Sis. Rosario Gonzalez:

I began to come to church approximately five years ago when I was invited to VBS. I decided to go even though I had never heard a story from the Bible before. After that I only attended the young group get-togethers on Saturday evenings. I enjoyed the fellowship and activities, but wasn't very interested in spiritual things. I watched the clock for when the Bible study would end so that I could go to the plaza with my friends, among whom were my sisters, Claudia and Gloria, who are now my sisters in Christ as well. We went everywhere together. I also liked to go to the fiestas (dedicated to idolatry) and to the dances, even though I went without permission from my parents. By now I knew that this was not right because I knew what was pleasing to God and that I was also disobeying my parents.

Time passed and I began thinking about what would become of my life if I continued to do these things. Every day that passed I began thinking more about the things of God and attended the church more. I repented then and turned my life over to God and asked Him for forgiveness of my sins. This was on a Sunday when the brother was saying that we must repent, because when we are in the presence of God we would be trying to justify ourselves, but He would only receive those who do the will of the Father in Heaven. To those who do not know Him, He would say, "I never knew you." This included me and that was when I made Him Lord of my life.

I was baptized on July 9, 2000, and am very thankful to God for

sending His Son, Jesus Christ, to die for the sins of all of us so that "whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)

"Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

Romans 6:4

MICHIGAN, ALTO

Kristen Plattner

Sandy Schutte

Another year has passed us by, a year none of us are soon to forget. From swearing in a president who was elected by the closest electoral count in history, to the worst attack on Americans on American soil ever. Our children are now being defined as the 9-11 generation. I have watched this country grasp patriotism and have had to wonder if they grasped on to that because they don't know how to find a deeper sense of peace, which is only found in Jesus Christ. People have become so self-sufficient that they no longer look to God for direction. American flags are flying everywhere, and signs read "God Bless America". The churches were full the week of the attacks, but the numbers soon dwindled back to the faithful. Bro. Howard put to us this thought that maybe the world still stands because of the prayers of the righteous, and maybe the Lord has delayed his return because of those prayers.

"For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers."

I Peter 3:12

So let us have a renewed effect to pray for all those souls that have not made a commitment to the Lord, so that none shall be lost. We have seen evil this year on our own back door, and it is devastating and destructive. It is also deceptive, and that's what makes it scary. That is why we always need to be on guard, and that is why prayer is so important: because only by the grace of God will we overcome evil's deadly ways.

Thanks to Elder Bro. Lynn Stieglitz (Leo, IN) for assisting Elder Bro. Aaron Steffen with Bro. Terry Watson's baptism. We also thank Bro. Tom Schrenk (Athens, AL) for sharing the Word with us Thanksgiving weekend.

Our deepest sympathy is extended to Bro. Bill and Sis. Judy Gerst on the passing of his father, Bro. Paul Gerst (Oakville, IA). Our prayers go out to their whole family.

Hospital patients this month were Harry Erickson, Bro. Curt Kaeb, Sis. Rhonda Raireigh, Sis. Bertha Wingeier, and Carrie Crawburg. May God grant them all a speedy recovery.

Caroling was organized by Sunday School superintendent, Bro. Nathan Steffen, and his wife, Susan. Many shut-ins were sung to. It was encouraging to see the smiles in response.

December 16 brought the annual Christmas program. It is always a joy to see and hear the good news from our young children.

MICHIGAN, BAY CITY

Rhonda Knochel

Peggy Jackson

It is always with great joy and anticipation that we welcome new babies into our lives and hearts. Joshua Daniel was born to Bro. Dan and Sis. Jane Kaiser and was welcomed home by big brother, Andrew. Pleased grandparents are Bro. Hartzell and Sis. Mary Kaisner (Detroit, MI) and Bro. Lloyd and Sis. Lorraine Kaiser (Morton, IL). It is our fervent prayer that Joshua will continue to grow and be healthy physically and that he will also grow up strong in the knowledge of the Lord.

We were also thrilled to hear of the birth of Grace Lynn to Curtis and Tray (Pashak) Mawry. Pleased grandparents are Bro. Dean and Sis. Connie Pashak. We pray that Grace will grow in the nurture and admonition of the Lord and that "grace" will be threaded throughout her life.

We had several spend time in the hospital this month. They are: Bro. Gary Meylan (Sis. Marilyn), Sis. Marie Wieland, and Clinton Meier (Sis. Lula). We pray that each one will feel the healing presence of the Lord and that their bodies will be restored to full strength.

Note of Thanks:

I would like to thank everyone for all cards, phone calls, and well wishes I received on my 80th birthday. My heart was touched by each and every one of them. I pray God will bless all of you.

Dave Schlatter

May the Lord bless you in the

month ahead as we welcome the new year.

Reminder: February is collection month for Bay City.

MICHIGAN, DETROIT

**Sarah Beard
Holly Barton**

The children once again told us the story of the birth of Christ through song and poem. It was a blessing to hear the young voices lifted to God in praise. We pray that their tender hearts will some day seek Him as the wise men did.

Then entered in, those wise men three,
Full reverently upon their knee,
And offered there in his presence,
Their gold, and myrrh, and frankincense.

Hymns of Zion #43

We thank Bro. Jim Ramseyer (Bay City, MI) for coming and ministering to our residents at Woodhaven this month and Bro. Dewayne Dill (Minneapolis, MN) for lending himself to us on Wednesday evening services.

It is a blessing to hear that Amber Bahr (Elder Bro. Mark and Sis. Bev) has found peace with God and man. We look forward to hearing her testimony and witnessing her baptism in the near future.

MINNESOTA MINNEAPOLIS Diane Stewart

We were privileged to hear the Christmas story as told by our Sunday School. Our Sunday School superintendent, Bro. John Wiegand, reminded us that Christ was born some 2000 years ago and

it's good to be reminded of His birth. As each year we get one more year away from His birth, we also get one more year closer to His coming again!

Elder Bro. Leroy and Sis. JoAnn Messner (Winthrop, MN) faithfully spent another Sunday with us. God bless them.

Now, going into 2002, we wish each of you God's richest blessings.

MINNESOTA, MORRIS Dianne Kellenberger Cheryl Messner

Lisa Schmidgall and Bryan Tolifson exchanged marriage vows on November 30. Our prayer is that they will seek God's guidance and blessings. Parents are Bro. Neil and Sis. Linda Schmidgall and Russell and Shirley Tolifson.

Those who required hospitalization were Bros. Paul Fehr, Sr., Dave Nohl and Ryan Kellenberger. We're grateful for the Lord's healing touch.

Janae Kellenberger and Eric Wilson have announced their engagement. We wish them God's love and blessings as they plan their future together. A February 2 wedding is planned. Parents are Sis. Dianne Kellenberger, Orrin and Karen Wilson and Mark Kellenberger from LeCiestor, NC.

Another precious daughter was born to Bro. Dwayne and Sis. Kay Feuchtenberger. Cara Lee K. arrived on December 13 and joins siblings, Tristan, Shanda, Natalie and Tracy. We pray that Heavenly wisdom will be granted to these dear parents. Grandparents are Bro. Edward and Sis. Lois Koehl and Bro. Gerald and Sis. Karen

Feuchtenberger.

Through faith and the direction of the Holy Spirit, Bro. Doug Nohl and Sis. Amber Stuber (Tremont, IL) became engaged on December 16. Our prayers are with them as they prepare for their marriage. Parents are Bro. Todd and Sis. Beth Stuber and Bro. Larry and Sis. Bonnie Nohl.

We enjoyed and appreciated our Sunday School children as they gave their Christmas program. There was much joy on the young and innocent faces as they eagerly told of Christ's birth.

MINNESOTA, WINTHROP Carol Ann Messner Marilyn Messner

"Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof: and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit."

Eccles. 7:8

This year, especially, Christmas had an extra special meaning to the world because of its turmoil. In every thing give thanks is how we Christians should feel in these times that try men's souls.

The Sunday School program was given to our congregation. How wonderful we can listen to our children praise Jesus without fear in the United States. Just as the children often sing "this little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine!", we pray we will all be a light to others who enter our lives in words, deeds and actions.

Hospital patients this month were Bro. Harold Messner (Sis. Geraldine), Bro. Leo Messner (Sis. Georgia) and Idabell Witt (Don). We pray for a healthy recovery for

all.

Seeds of goodness we are sowing
In the hearts of man today.
Bless it, Lord, that it may prosper,
And bear fruit for harvest day.
Hasten gladly to the labor.
Consecrate to God your heart.
Say this day unto your Saviour,
Lord, I'll gladly do my part.

Note of Thanks:

Bro. Leo Messner would like to thank everyone for their prayers, gifts, cards and visits to the hospital and his home.

MISSOURI, KANSAS CITY
Garry and Marty Rokey

With all the lights, glitter, hustle and bustle of the season, it seems we often put "on the back burner", so to speak, the basis for this season. Even when we remember and celebrate the birth of Christ, as must not stop at Bethlehem but continue on to the cross and beyond. These thoughts are so aptly stated in the Christmas carol, "The Babe of Bethlehem":

The blessed story of the Christ,
The babe of Bethlehem,
Is worthy of our song and praise,
And stirs the hearts of men.
The fullness of God's love divine,
surround the Christ so mild
Alas, how many only know
the Saviour as a child.
Our saving hope is all in vain,
If here our love should cease.
For in the man of Galilee,
we find the gift of peace.
'Tis not the babe but Christ the
man
who walked in Galilee;
'Tis not the manger, but the

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

Hymns of Zion #36

May God bless our visiting ministers this past month: Elder Bro. Mark Bahr (Sis. Bev, Detroit, MI) and Elder Bro. Art Bahler (Sis. Suzanne, Fairbury, IL). Many thanks to these brothers for their labors on the pulpit and for shepherding our flocks. Let us be ever thankful and show our appreciation for their many efforts.

On December 9 we enjoyed listening to our Sunday School Christmas program at the beginning of afternoon service. Then our congregation sang Christmas carols at local nursing homes and returned to our church dining room for a chili supper and fellowship. Hopefully, our singing was a blessing to the residents of these homes. It certainly was a blessing to us to be able to go from home to home and sing of the joy of Christ's birth.

Our sympathies are extended to our convert, Heather Persinger, and her family on the loss of her grandfather, Bill Karr. We are also saddened to learn of the loss of Sis. Beth Kellenberger's (Bro. Brent) grandmother, Sis. Phyllis Zobrist (Bro. Howard), of the Goodfield, IL, congregation.

MISSOURI, ST. LOUIS
Betsy Schrenk

Visiting ministers this past month were Bro. Don Gudeman (Sis. Mary, LaCrosse, IN) and Elder Bros. Gerry Hertzell (Sis. Ellen, Sabetha, KS) and Lawrence Luthi (Sis. Sandra, Lamar, MO). We are humbled and encouraged by the willingness of the brothers to come and minister to our little congregation.

We are already well into another year, and wonder how the time can fly so quickly.

Another year is dawning,
Dear Master, let it be,
In working or in waiting,
Another year with Thee.
Another year of service,
Of witness for Thy love;
Another year of training
For holier work above.
Another year is dawning,
Dear Master, let it be,
On earth, or else in heaven
Another year for Thee.

Hymns of Zion #150

This song is a beautiful prayer that reminds us to redeem our time.

MISSOURI, TAYLOR
Peg Haerr

Our Sunday School brought forth the message of the Christ Child's birth on December 16. We were all questioned as to who would take the baton of faith and run with it. May we each be willing to do what the Lord asks of us.

Elder Bros. John Lehman (Bern, KS), Andrew Stoller (Smithville, OH) and Doug Schock (Pulaski, IA) brought God's Word

to us this past month. We also thank Elder Bro. Charles Sauder (Tremont, IL) for his services.

We're thankful Bro. Rusty Adrian (Sis. Amy) is feeling better. May we each remember to lift up in prayer those facing physical ailments.

**NEW YORK
CROGHAN-NAUMBURG
Hope Graves**

Our support was with Elder Bro. Duane Farney as he traveled to the regional conference in November at Akron, OH. We thank the brethren there for the efforts put forth, and may the work that was carried out be according to the Lord's will.

We thank the Lord for providing Elder Bros. Kevin Ryan (Rockville, CT) and Andy Stoller (Smithville, OH) along with their wives to be in our midst on the weekend of December 2. May God bless them for their many labors of love on our behalf.

Thou, Shepherd, hast each one
entreated
To work and do with diligence
Thy will;
Ne'er shall Thy love in us be
waning,
And as it bound the saints, so
bind us still.
It gives us hope where we in fear
would groan,
Leads us to trust in Thy good
help alone.

The cross shall be our prepara-
tion,
Our hearts as holy temples to or-
dain,
Lest in eternal condemnation
Our soul shall suffer torment,

grief and pain,
Sound therefore loud and clear
Thy Shepherd's call;
Into our hearts its echo e'er shall
fall.

Zion's Harp #192 vs. 3,4

We enjoyed a blessing from Christmas caroling to Halmark Nursing Home on December 14 and Lewis County General Hospital and Extended Care Facility on December 15.

The Sunday School children are preparing for their Christmas program on December 23, and we plan on caroling that evening to Bro. Ted and Gertie Herzig and Urban and Sis. Julia Karcher. May the hearts of the children be open to the teachings of the true meaning of Christmas.

We got together on the afternoon of December 17 to put together cheer baskets. May we all remember to reach out to those in need during the holiday season and all through the year.

"He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

St. Luke 1:32-33

**OHIO, AKRON
Joyce Gasser**

Bro. Tom Bako (Eugene and Sis. Diana Bako) returned to Hungary. He had been in Hungary and came home this summer for a few months. His ability as a language translator for Hungarian visitors was greatly appreciated.

Our Sunday School children

presented an interesting program telling the real meaning of Christmas. We thank the teachers and parents in helping to make this an inspirational Christmas event.

We were blessed to have visiting Elder Bros. Duane Farney (Croghan-Naumburg, NY), Bill Schlatter (Junction, OH), and Ben Wiegand (Philadelphia, PA), and ministering Bros. Nelson Beer (Milford, IN) and Todd Stoller (Latty, OH). We appreciated their services to our congregation.

We also appreciate our brothers who have the expertise and willingness to take care of our tape recording needs at church. Two of these brothers, Bro. Dan Graf and Bro. Mark Graf, are going to be rotating out of this duty, and the incoming brothers to replace them are Bro. Gregory Henico and Bro. Mark Steidl.

We rejoice that the following five souls have expressed a desire to repent and follow Jesus: John Waicak, Margaret (Graf) Gallagher, Marvin Indermuhle, and Coleen and Patricia Demrovsky (daughters of Andy and Vera Demrovsky). We wish them well in their conversion experience.

There were three deaths in our congregation this past year, and we were blessed with four new members and four births.

**OHIO, COLUMBUS
Anita Steiner**

On December 2 we had our Sunday School Christmas program. We enjoyed hearing our children tell the story of the birth of Jesus. It was a joy to see and

hear their enthusiasm.

On December 9 we had our Christmas caroling. There were many visitors from Latty, OH, who assisted us with caroling. Following caroling, we returned to the church for a potluck. We would like to thank Elder Bro. Ray Sinn (Latty, OH) for ministering God's Word unto us.

Our visiting ministers this month included Elder Bro. Mark Masters (Mansfield, OH) and Bro. Mark Ramsier (Sardis, OH). May God bless them for their efforts.

OHIO, JUNCTION Cindy Schlatter

The weekend of December 1 and 2 we listened to the testimony and witnessed the baptism of our new Sis. Gina Schlatter (Bro. Ray and Sis. Corrine). It was a very blessed weekend, and we surely appreciated the many that came and shared it with us, including Elder Bro. Jesse Beer (Milford, IN), and Bros. Neil Ramseyer (Bay City, MI), Larry Wenninger, and Todd Stoller (both of Latty, OH). We trust this will be a weekend that our Sis. Gina will always look back on with fond memories, knowing how God provided and continues to provide daily when we lean on Him.

Our Bro. Mark Manz (Sis. Cathy) recently spent time in the hospital. We are thankful that all went well and that Bro. Mark is assembling with us again.

We want to extend our sympathy to Sis. Louise Manz (Cissna Park, IL) and her family that attends our congregation in the loss of her daughter, Diane. We trust God will continue to be with you all and grant you comfort.

OHIO, LATTY Heidi Hackenjoes Kathy Sinn

Visiting on our pulpit this past month were Bros. Dale Wulf (Lester, IA), Dan Stoller (Remington, IN), and Earl Beery (Rittman, OH). We are thankful these brothers are willing to bring forth the Word.

What a blessing to be forgiven of God and man. Our friends, Aaron Stoller (Bro. Jim and Sis. Tam) and Mindy Graf (Bro. Bob and Sis. Jan), were announced for peace. We look forward to the time of hearing their testimonies and witnessing their baptisms.

Spending time in the hospital this past month were Sis. Lorine Hackenjoes (Bro. Myron) and Daniel Rager (Bro. Curt and Sis. Denise). May the Lord grant healing to each one.

Bro. Ken and Sis. Marge Laukhuf celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary. God is to be praised for this marriage union of many years.

Note of Thanks:

We wish to thank everyone who remembered us on our 60th wedding anniversary. It was greatly appreciated.

In Christian Love,
Bro. Ken and Sis. Marge
Laukhuf

OHIO, MANSFIELD John and Marci Pfeiffer

We are delighted to announce two new sisters and one new brother of the Lord. Sis. Deanna Masters (Elder Bro. Mark and Sis. Jeannine), Sis. Tonya Domka

(Bro. Fred and Sis. Connie), and Bro. Matt Domka (Bro. Dan and Sis. Mary Ann) gave their testimonies and were baptized on November 24 and 25. We appreciated Elder Bro. Merle Hartzler (Rittman, OH), Elder Bro. Bill Schlatter (Junction, OH), Bro. Art Ingold (Rittman, OH), and Bro. Vic Bauman (Smithville, OH) for their labors that week-end. Other visiting ministers this past month were Bro. Ted Steffen (Alto, MI) and Bro. Ron Steiner (Rittman, OH). Thank you, brothers, for your visit and willingness to serve Him.

Our congregation recently appointed brethren to fill various church positions. Bro. Mike Baumann, Jr. (Sis. Lilly) is our new Sunday School Superintendent with Bro. Dan Sauder (Sis. Pam) as our new assistant Sunday School Superintendent. Bro. Wilbur Gerber (Sis. Millie) was chosen to be the secretary of the Trustees. Our newest Trustee is Bro. Chuck Beer (Sis. Tammy). Sis. Robin Beer (Bro. Marvin) was elected to the World Relief Committee. Sis. Barb Tucker (Dan) was selected to the Kitchen Committee. The following have completed their terms: Bro. Marvin Beer (Sis. Robin) as Sunday School Superintendent, Bro. Mike Baumann, Jr. (Sis. Lilly) as assistant Sunday School Superintendent, Bro. Ed Dawson (Sis. Judy) as Trustee secretary, Bro. Chip Hill (Sis. Sieda) as Trustee, Sis. Betty Dotterer (Bro. Gaylord) on the World Relief Committee, and Sis. Bev Keever (Bro. Clair) on the Kitchen Committee. May God bless each one.

Our sympathy is extended to

Roma Them (John). Her mother, Grace Snyder, passed away. May the Lord be with her and provide comfort.

Sis. Helen Bricker (Bro. Richard) has been hospitalized again. We commit her unto God in prayer.

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

Hymns of Zion #38

On December 9, we had our Sunday School Christmas program. It was a blessing to hear our children sing and tell of Christ the Lord. We are thankful for all of our Sunday School teachers.

Note of Thanks:

Thank you to everyone for their cards, visits, gifts of love, and prayers. Your support during the illness and death of our loved one is greatly appreciated. May God bless you for your kindness.

The Richard Sauder Family

OHIO, RITTMAN
Cheryl Hartzler
Beth Beery

Lately, I have been thinking about the word "time". God created time for the organization of this universe and for His creation to have organization in their lives. God is timeless. His timetable is organized so His will is accomplished. The Creation magazine points out that "God is outside of time" and further states that II

Peter 3:8, "...one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day," isn't referring to time, but speaking of God's patience. Longsuffering is the topic of this chapter. Zion's Harp #244 states, "Waiting is to be our earthly schooling." May our lives have the patience and longsuffering that our God manifested.

Recently, I was reminded of "the touch of the Master's hand." The Master does touch our lives in many ways, especially when He speaks peace to our souls. Tyson and Tobin Hartzler (Bro. Thomas and Sis. Diane) are seeking that peace in repentance.

We feel the "touch of the Master's hand" when God's servants share with us His Word and inspired message. We thank Bro. Nelson Beer (Milford, IN) for sharing that Word. We also thank our Elder Bro. Merle Hartzler, and his co-laborers, Bros. Ronnie Steiner, Arthur Ingold, Earl Beery and Jerry Bauman, for their ministering to us as inspired by the Holy Spirit. May we always be a support to them and their wives.

Two couples felt the "touch of the Master's hand" and their engagements were announced. Bro. Matthew Rufener (Bro. Isaac and Sis. Verna) and Sis. Amber Miller of Smithville (Bro. Max and Sis. Diane); and Bro. Jonathan Bauman of Smithville (Bro. Steven and Sis. Connie) and Sis. Karen Stoller (Bro. Joseph and Sis. Mirian) will soon be united in Holy Matrimony. May they have much wisdom and understanding in planning their wedding and their married life.

Bro. Vernon Landis (Sis. Elizabeth) and Bro. Everett Stoller (Sis. Marge) felt the "touch of the Master's hand" in their surgeries, hospitalization and recovery.

May all walk in the narrow way and feel the "touch of the Master" as He speaks to us through His Word, in song, in sermons, by another person, or by the Holy Spirit in that small, gentle voice.

OHIO, SARDIS
Alice Ramsier

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

St. John 1:1

Sharing God's Word with us this past month was visiting minister Bro. Matthew Rassi (Chicago, IL). May Bro. Matthew and Sis. Bridget feel God's blessings and leading in this new service for the Lord in their lives.

Sing them over again to me,
Wonderful words of life,
Let me more of their beauty see,
Wonderful words of life,
Words of life and beauty,
Teach me faith and duty:
Beautiful words, wonderful
words,
Wonderful words of life.

—*Philip P. Bliss*

During the month of December several from our congregation were privileged to share the words of life by singing Christmas carols to area nursing homes and others in our neighborhoods. This was a blessing to all involved.

On December 16 we had our annual Sunday School Christmas

program. Our youth shared wonderful words of life and song to us as they told of the Christmas story.

May we all hide God's Word in our hearts this new year.

OHIO, SMITHVILLE

**Edith Miller
Ruth Gasser**

"It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness."

Lamentations 3:22,23

At the beginning of a new year, we have many reasons to praise our God for His mercies in the past. Although the world in which we live is in turmoil, our Lord offers compassion and grace for all who will seek Him.

Two young couples have felt the Lord's leading to become husband and wife. The engagement of Bro. Matthew Rufener (Bro. Isaac and Sis. Verna, Rittman, OH) and Sis. Amber Miller (Bro. Max and Sis. Diane) was made known to us on November 25. They plan a February wedding. Bro. Jonathan Bauman (Bro. Steve and Sis. Connie) and Sis. Karen Stoller (Bro. Joe and Sis. Marian, Rittman, OH) have faith to become one in the Lord in a February wedding. We rejoice with them and certainly wish a full measure of God's Spirit to direct both couples in this very important step.

Bro. Kenneth Zollinger (Sis. Becky) has undergone surgery, and we are thankful to see him in church again. Sis. Clara Hartzler was hospitalized for a medical

problem, and we pray that she feels God's grace to bear the infirmities of the body. May the Lord give strength to those who bear physical pain and burdens, often unknown to us.

Bro. Glenn Riggenbach (Sis. Louise) feels it is the time for him to retire from the pulpit ministry. We want to thank him and his family for the sacrifices, and labors of love to the church, and wish him God's continued grace for his needs.

OHIO, TOLEDO

**Rebecca Beard
Edie Fetter**

"In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."

1 Thess. 5:18

Although thanksgiving ought to be a daily attitude for Christians, we are glad to set aside a day of the year specifically for this purpose. We appreciated the service of Bro. Mark Ramsier (Sardis, OH) to our congregation for this service.

Sis. Josephine Rehklau was recently hospitalized. We are glad that she is able to move about again, and hope that she will continue to gain strength.

OREGON, PORTLAND

Louisa Gallup

Our congregation recently assembled with the Silverton brethren again to listen to the annual reading of the Memorandum. We do appreciate the timely warnings and messages put forth by our Elder brethren. It was, as always, a

blessing to attend. Our thanks go to our Elder Bro. Art Metz (Sis. Betty) and Elder Bro. Robert Walder (Sis. Gloria, Congerville, IL). May the Lord bless them for their willingness to serve.

It was time again for the Sunday School Christmas program and it was presented very nicely by the children. After church services that day, the Sunday School children and others went to bring gifts and food to a local needy family in Portland. A collection for this had been taken up earlier. We sang Christmas songs with this family and spent some time there, which was very enjoyable. The family was very appreciative. Hopefully it showed our own children, who have plenty, that it is as much of a blessing to give as it is to receive.

This past month, the following ministering brethren and their families have blessed us with their support and presence: Bros. Harvey Kuenzi (Sis. Jennifer), Todd Zollinger (Sis. Michele), and Ed Knecht (Sis. Judie), all from Silverton, OR. May the Lord bless them for their efforts on our behalf.

OREGON, SILVERTON

**K'ren Kuenzi
Kelsey Kuenzi**

"And she brought forth her first born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger."

St. Luke 2:7

On December 2 our Sunday School brought to us the Christmas story. Once again we were reminded of the birth of our Lord

through song and verse. We are thankful our Sunday School teachers, parents, and children put forth the effort to help prepare our hearts and minds for the true meaning of Christmas.

We rejoice with Bro. Jim and Sis. Barb Kuenzi on the birth of three new grandchildren. Bro. Kurt and Sis. Koreen Metzger welcomed Hayden James on December 5, joining Lydianne, Adrienne, and Jacob. Brian and Arlene Carskadon (Wilsonville, OR) welcomed Sydney Nicole on November 6 and Kirk and Myra Edelman (Fairbury, IL) welcomed Kendra Lee on October 3.

We are grateful the Lord has worked in faithful hearts as Bro. Adam Kuenzi (Bro. Terry and Sis. Ann) and Sis. Lori Dietrich (Bro. Jim and Sis. Joan) have announced their engagement. We look forward to having this young couple united on January 27.

We are also anticipating another wedding next spring, when Bro. Ben and Sis. Carolyn Bolliger welcome a new daughter-in-law. Their son Andy Bolliger will wed Carol Metzger on May 11.

Our hearts rejoice as another soul, James Schnieder (Bro. Jim and Sis. Sandra, Forrest, IL), has found peace with God. We are looking forward to Cathy Stadel and James Schnieder's testimony the weekend of February 3. It will be a great reminder to all of the precious blood Christ shed to make salvation possible.

We started out the month of Jesus' birth with some great reminders as Elder Bro. Bob Walder (Congerville, IL) and Elder Bro. Art Metz read to us the Memorandum. We are grateful for the effort put into keeping our brethren

united across the land.

We extend our heartfelt sympathy to Bro. Elmer and Sis. Verna Bolliger's daughter, Sharron Cox (Coos Bay, OR), and her family in the loss of her husband Terry Cox.

As we take up the duty of writing the Silver Lining, the congregation would like to thank Sis. RosaLee Kuenzi for her years of service as Silverton's correspondent.

PENNSYLVANIA PHILADELPHIA

Nathan and MaryElizabeth Gasser

We were delighted once again to hear our precious Sunday School children tell the story of our dear Lord Jesus Christ's birth. We heard about Joseph and Mary, the great faith they had despite their fears and doubts, the devotion that brought great wise men and humble shepherds to His side, the majesty accorded Him by angels sent from God Himself, and finally the ultimate sacrifice He gave in dying for our sins on the cross. We are so grateful to our Sunday School teachers for their loving work in teaching these important lessons to our children.

We were thankful to receive many visitors this month, including ministering Bro. Keith Beyer (Detroit, MI) and his family, and were appreciative to have him share the Word with us.

TENNESSEE, NASHVILLE Mike and Monica Fritz

We rejoice that our son, Jordan Fritz, has a testimony that he has found peace with God and man

and is prepared for baptism. We now look forward to the provings and baptisms of our daughter, Mahlia, and son, Jordan, in February.

We are so thankful to our visiting ministers in this past month for their encouragement to trust in God, to follow His leading and to have faith that He can use us for His purposes. The Lord has blessed us through the ministry of Bros. Curt Rassi (Sis. Kathy, Tremont, IL), Roger Aberle (Sis. LaVonne, Sabetha, KS), and Dan Beer (Sis. Deb, Milford, IN). We have also appreciated the fellowship of brethren and friends visiting us from Eureka and Tremont, IL; Milford, IN; Sabetha, KS; Bay City, MI; Kansas City, MO; and Philadelphia, PA.

If you are traveling in or through the Nashville area, please plan to worship with us. We have a visiting minister scheduled every Sunday. The following churches are scheduled for services in the near future: Junction, OH (1/20), Bloomington, IL (1/27), Smithville, OH (2/3), Kansas City, MO (2/10), Cissna Park, IL (2/17), Alto, MI (2/24). We also usually meet on Wednesday evenings for a song service. If you are planning to worship with us, please call ahead to confirm our schedule. Contacts are Sis. Gwen Leuthold (615) 662-2946; Bro. Mike and Sis. Monica Fritz (615) 952-9933; and Bro. Don and Sis. Faye Sauder (615) 373-8928.

TEXAS, SAN MARCOS Dale and Amy Ringger

It's a new year, a new beginning and yet each day can be a new beginning. "It is of the Lord's

mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning." (Lamentations 3:22-23a). Every morning and every day we can seek Him. "Yet they seek me daily and delight to know my ways." (Isaiah 58:2a)

We have had the visits of the following ministers: Bros. Walt Herrmann (Sis. Betty, Princeville, IL), Will Schieler (Sis. Sue, Milford, IN), Gary Anliker (Sis. Edie, Elgin, IL), Steve Martin (Sis. Vicki, Eureka, IL) and Ben Wysong (Sis. Jan, Sabetha, KS). Additionally, we were blessed with visitors from Francesville, IN, and Oakville, IA.

Our schedule of ministers for February is the following: February 3 - Bluffton, IN; February 10 - Morton, IL; February 17 - Bern, KS; and February 24 - Tremont, IL.

We continue to meet for ser-

vices at the Quality Inn in San Marcos, TX. San Marcos is located on IH-35, approximately 20 minutes south of Austin or about 50 minutes north of downtown San Antonio. Exit at #206 and find the hotel on the southwest side access road.

We extend a welcome for anyone who may be in the area to worship with us. Also, let us know if you would be available for fellowship on Saturday or Sunday evening or during the week. For your benefit, please call ahead to confirm our schedule. Contacts are Bro. Bill Zeltwanger (979) 249-5102; Brian and Terri Kaisner (512) 266-0178; Dale Kaisner (512) 255-7583; Bro. David and Sis. Shella Brummitt (512) 360-3379; Sis. Dorothy Martin (210) 658-1968; and Bro. Dale and Sis. Amy Ringger (512) 933-1380.

TEXAS, ZAPATA Joyce Nohl

As we embark on the new year, let us take the time to reflect on all the blessings God has provided in the past year. We know not what lies ahead for us, but it is comforting to know that God is in control. May we face the new year with renewed faith and strength.

We welcome Bro. Tom and Sis. Joan Schrenk (Athens, AL) as winter residents. May God bless Bro. Tom for his willingness to serve us while he is with us.

We pray for God's healing hand upon Sis. Helen Bricker who has been hospitalized recently.

Our sympathy goes to Bro. Myron and Sis. Dorothy Schulz in the passing of his brother, Donald.

We wish each one a blessed New Year as we submit to His counsel each day anew.



Sermon continued from page 2

exactly as we want, as we might outline in our thoughts or in our prayer and say, "This is the situation, and this is my trial and my affliction. This is what I need in order to overcome or to be freed of it." How often we find He provides for us in ways far beyond measure—in ways far beyond that which we can really even begin to think of ourselves, and begin to understand, just as it was for this woman where she came from and there was that desire upon her heart.

You notice one of the attributes of this woman as she came, speaks to us about how we need to come. For anyone that had very much pride in their heart, when Jesus responded to her the way He responded to her, any of us that have very much pride, we probably would have turned and walked away upset, wouldn't we? We can be honest with ourselves. We would have turned and walked away. To have somebody to say to let the children first be filled, let it be to others first, not to you. "...for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs." Mark 7:27. To be called an animal, how would we feel? Yet, in humility, in deep humility, she says, "Yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs." Mark 7:28. She was content, wasn't she, with a little crumb—with a little crumb and the analogy of it? She was content with a crumb.

So then we think, this afternoon, maybe we will gather at our various places as a large meal is set before us. How would we feel in that sense, if when the plate came around, each of us got a little crumb? I think, "Well, it's not really going to happen." But how would we feel? What would our thoughts be? Where do these things come from?

One of the things that strikes me about the account here in Chronicles as we read, David talked and as they were preparing here, he laid aside all these things for the temple for Solomon. As we know that David had desired to build the temple and God said, "No, but it would be to your son and that Solomon would build a temple." So David, during his reign, laid up in store all these things and he set them aside, that it could be then that Solomon could go ahead and proceed with the building of the temple.

Notice how it says as it speaks in the first part of what we read, of many of the things that were laid aside, and it speaks of them. David says in verse three, "Moreover, because I have set my affection to the house of my God, I have of mine own proper good, of gold and silver..." I Chronicles 29:3, and those things which he considered to be his own. Yet, believe then in the second part of what we read there, it puts it in perspective for us. He very clearly says and exhorts—and David no doubt wanting to remind the people too, that it wasn't just a reminder to himself, but it was a reminder to the people—that the things that they possessed, and those things that they had laid aside, the gold, the silver, the precious stones, the wood and the other things that were listed, the brass, all those things that were laid aside.

He says, "O LORD our God, all this store that we have prepared to build thee an house for thine holy name cometh of thine hand, and is all thine own." I Chronicles 29:16. It isn't really a matter, is it, of us having these things as our own and possessing them and thinking of them in a sense of how much we have and how well we're doing. But David recognized and perhaps this

is one of the reasons that the Word tells us he is a man after God's own heart. Where he recognized, that although he had all these things, and that he had been given probably beyond what any of us can really fathom, it says he recognized as much as they had laid aside, and all these things that they had. Yet, it was all God's. It always was God's. It always will be God's.

Just as today we come together, it is all God's, isn't it? Everything that we have. We can go home and look at our bank accounts, we can look at our homes, our cars, our clothes, whatever we have. It is all God's. Hopefully each day as we arise, we can have the thankfulness that we want to express to God today. Also that knowledge that we are but stewards and that the things that we are given aren't those things that we have too tight of a grasp on. But that we should be willing to give. We should be willing to give to our God and we should be willing to give to those that have need. We should be willing to keep in mind and to bear within our hearts, to know that it isn't of the earthly things where we would have our treasure.

The Lord tells us there, I believe it is in Matthew's gospel, where it says, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Matthew 6:21. Is our treasure on these things? Don't say that in the sense that as we come together and we can look back, of course, at history in our nation, and know that there was, there is and part of the reason of Thanksgiving is to be thankful for these things. So it isn't a matter that any of the material things that we have, that we treat disrespectfully and don't take care of, but that we can know that they are God's.

David goes through here and

speaks before the congregation and exalts God which is really the reason we are here, isn't it, today? That our thankfulness could be to God and that we can praise Him for what He has done. It says "Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; ..." I Chronicles 29:11. We serve God who created all things. We are given the privilege, aren't we, to serve Him? As we can serve Him, we can know that there is none like Him, there is only one true God. There is only one that is worthy of our praise. There is only one that has placed us here. There is only one that has power to take us from this life, and to grant that our soul could enter into heaven or to cast it into hell.

You notice as it speaks there, David as he is speaking to the people, it says there in verse nine, "Then the people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly, because with perfect heart they offered willingly to the LORD: and David the king also rejoiced with great joy." I Chronicles 29:9. What do you think of when you think of thankfulness?

We can't be grudgingly thankful, can we, at least not in the true sense of the word? There has to be a willingness to give. There is a joy, isn't there?

There is a deep joy in having a willing heart, willing to give Him all, willing to take what He gives us, willing to know that He will provide, and willing to know that He might take away from us what He has given. But in all these things, that we can think upon what He says here, that there is rejoicing when it is done willingly.

We often use the example of our children. If we ask them to do something and they do it with a willing

heart, there is joy in our heart, isn't there? If they do it and it is grudgingly, there isn't that joy. We as God's children, no doubt, I don't want to oversimplify, but perhaps look down in much the same manner on us and asks that we have that willing heart.

It goes on and he says "Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name." I Chronicles 29:12-13. Then, how does he say it? It has that same humility as that Syrophenician woman had. He says "But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee." Chronicles 29:14. All things! All things!

Think of the words that Job spoke, when those came and told him, one after another, of all the things that had been taken from him. How did he say it? "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither." Job 1:21. Nothing! Nothing will we take with us. From time to time we see and go to a funeral or visitation here upon this earth. There are those things that are laid in the casket. I often wonder, the material things that are laid therein, really what's the thought? What is it? Is that something that was so important that there is truly that desire to take it with us? Is it a display to the public, to those that go, that these things were that which were most important to him or her? What is the purpose of that? We need to consider, don't we, loved ones, because we can't take anything with us. Nor do we want to

take anything with us. If our heart is set upon heaven and we have repented of our sins, been converted and are walking upon that straight and narrow path, and our heart is in heaven, we will have no need of anything at all of this earth, will we?

David goes on to speak here. He says, "I know also, my God, that thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness. As for me, in the uprightness of mine heart I have willingly offered all these things: and now have I seen with joy thy people, which are present here, to offer willingly unto thee." I Chronicles 29:17. It reminds us further and God in His infinite wisdom always, when we read in the Word, covers it so completely. It is possible for us, isn't it, to show or to reflect a thankfulness that is in our heart, that others might see that there is a thankfulness. Yet, perhaps, and hopefully not amongst any of us, but it is possible that deep within would not be that true thankfulness. But David speaks here, he says, "... in the uprightness of mine heart I have willingly offered..." I Chronicles 29:17. God looks into the heart and we are not going to deceive Him.

So if there is ever a kernel in our heart of unwillingness, or a kernel of anything wherein our desire is really still to hold on to those things, may it be in this day that God would grant to us that we can put that aside. Truly to know that all, I often think when we read in the Word, where it says all or none, or descriptive words like that where there is not any room for anything one side or another of that — but it's either all or it is nothing. Kind of like eternity, isn't it? Either in heaven or it is in hell. There isn't anything in between.

Sermon continued on next page...

Sermon continued from page 45

We are either going to rejoice eternally in heaven with our Father and with the angels and singing praises to our God or we will burn forever in eternity in hell fire. There isn't anything in between.

We come and we read the Word here and it doesn't allow for us, does it? It doesn't allow for us to have part of our heart upon God and part of our heart upon serving Him. Even if it is ninety percent or ninety-five percent, maybe there is just an item or two here upon this earth that our affection is upon. The Word doesn't permit it, does it?

I think of the rich young ruler that came to Jesus and asked what he needed to do. Jesus went through and told him. He said all these things have I kept from my youth. He said one thing. "One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven:" Mark 10:21. That was the one thing, wasn't it? For some of us it might be the same way, it might be money, it might be ...you can fill in the blank because it's probably different for all of us. A lot of different things. There isn't any room for those things because there is only room that our whole heart and our whole life would be upon God.

I'm going to turn back to the New Testament because it goes, I believe, so well with today, where it speaks here of the Syrophenician

woman and then the healing of the one who was deaf and couldn't speak. Hopefully we can all, as we think of the Thanksgiving time and of the Thanksgiving season, as we have spoken—frankly, much of the Old Testament there pertained to the things that we could take and hold in our hands. The things that they were willing to give. They were God's to begin with, but they were willing to give.

In the New Testament here it speaks of those that had need of healing. Hopefully we all recognize as we dwell here upon this earth, especially for those that are yet outside, that are not yet God's children, you can recognize that there is that need of being healed. There is, as the Word speaks to us, that sickness of sin. A sickness of sin that we're all born into. We can look back at what Adam and Eve did in the Garden of Eden and know that as we read then further in the Word that we are all born into sin. The Word tells us, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;" Romans 3:23. But He has given this way.

We believe we can learn so much from those who came to Him in the New Testament and during that time in the Gospels as we read of Jesus being upon this earth. How many came and sought to be healed! They recognized the source of where it was, who they needed to go to, to be healed. If we are yet

walking in sin, may it be that today you can recognize where you need to go, to come to Jesus to repent of those sins and to lay everything at His feet. We might say that with the woman here in the first

part of what we read, she pretty well laid everything at His feet, didn't she? There wasn't any measure, as we spoke earlier, of pride left to take, but she humbled herself.

Then it spoke of one here, and it says, "And they bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech him to put his hand upon him." Mark 7:32. He asked that he could be healed. What was the conclusion of it? It says, "And he took him aside from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue; And looking up to heaven, he sighed ...Be opened. And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain." Mark 7:33-35.

"And he charged them that they should tell no man: but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it; And were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak." Mark 7:36-37. He makes the sinners whole. May we each be made whole.



CARIBBEAN BOARD PROJECTS - 2002

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, Fax 1-734-454-9259 or E-mail thitzhome@juno.com. For Jamaica, direct your inquiry to Bro. Kevin Sauder, Ph./Fax 309-925-2409 or E-mail ksss@dpc.net.

HAITI						
ORG.	DATE	AREA	COORDINATOR	PROJECT	CAPACITY	PERCENT FILLED
MEBSH	Jan. 4-11, '02	Les Cayes	Craig Emch	Grade School	9	40%
AWA-FRW	Jan. 17-25, '02	Les Cayes	Duane Schieler	Voc. School	4	100%
AWA-T	Jan. 17-25, '02	Les Cayes	Derek Sauder	Water Aid	5	100%
AWA-B	Jan. 17-25, '02	Les Cayes	Bill Rager	Voc. School	2	100%
SEED	Jan. 24 - Feb. 1, '02	Les Cayes	Art Mueller	Agriculture Aid	9	0%
MEBSH	Jan. 31 - Feb. 8, '02	Les Cayes	Dean Pashak	Grade School	9	100%
Palm Grove	Feb. 15-23, '02	Les Cayes	Tom Hitz	Grade School	11	100%
SEED	Mar. 7-15, '02	Les Cayes	Robert Beebe	Agriculture Aid	11	0%
MEBSH	Mar. 14-22, '02	Les Cayes	Jim Walter	Grade School	9	100%
Palm Grove	TBD	Puit Sales	Tom Hitz	Grade School	11	0%
MEBSH	May 16-24, '02	Les Cayes	Phil Isabel	Grade School	9	0%
AWA-FRW	May 9-17, '02	Les Cayes	Duane Schieler	Voc. School	4	100%
AWA-T	May 9-17, '02	Les Cayes	Derek Sauder	Water Aid	5	100%
AWA-B	May 9-17, '02	Les Cayes	Bill Rager	Voc. School	2	100%
JAMAICA						
CCCD	Jan 2-11, '02	Montego Bay	Mark Criss	Deaf School	50/60	90%
CCCD	(**) Mar 8-16, '02	Kingston	Terry Miller	Deaf School	40	40%
CCCD	(**) Mar 8-16, '02	Deaf Village	Nate Wiegand	Work Place	40	70%
CCCD	(*) Mar 23-3, '02	Deaf Village	(4) Wolcott Bible Class	Deaf School	40	(*) 50%
CCCD	May 17-25, '02	Deaf Village	Kevin Sauder - TBA	Work Place	40	20%
CCCD	Apr 1-8, '02	Kingston	(1) Roanoke Bible Class	Deaf School	50/60	95%
CCCD	May 31-June 8, '02	Deaf Village	(2) Taylor/Princeville BC	Work Place	50/60	100%
CCCD	July 6-13, '02	Knockpatrick	(3) Mansfield Bible Class	Deaf School	40	80%

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
(*) = Changes or additions since last issue
()** = Spring Break Timeframe

COORDINATOR	PHONE	FAX	E-MAIL
Bob Beebe	219-291-2158	219-299-8173	robertebb@lightdog.com
(1) Kevin Fisher	309-923-7684		
(2) Kent Heimer	573-393-2440	573-769-5516	janheimer@hotmail.com
Tom Hitz	734-454-9229	734-454-9259	thitzhome@juno.com
Phil Isabel	219-261-3541	219-261-2885	
Mark Criss	309-693-2532		redemed1@aol.com
Craig Emch	330-939-4591	330-939-4591	
Terry Miller	309-923-9154 or 941-485-4302	309-923-9154	tbmiller@mymailstation.com
Dean Pashak	517-662-7685	517-662-7099	
Bill Rager	419-263-2989		
Derek Sauder	309-925-7502		
Kevin Sauder	309-925-2409	309-925-2409	ksss@dpc.net
Duane Schieler	765-567-2922	765-567-2922	
Jim Walter	815-692-3158	815-692-2851	
(3) Pete Webel	419-756-2587	815-692-2851	
Nate Wiegand	309-744-5252		NATEWIEG@hotmail.com
(4) Jon Schwab	219-261-2935		jschwab@ind-pallet-corp.com

- NOTICE -

Repair and Distribution of
Worn Bibles,
Bible Story Books,
Hymns of Zion,
Tabernacle or Gospel Hymn
Books

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

Please get your books to us or
the Goodfield World Relief Cen-
ter.

Books are mainly distributed to
India, Philippines, and Africa.

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

Apostolic Christian Counseling Services

73 East Queenwood Rd,
Morton, IL 61550
309-263-5536 (local#)
309-263-6841 (fax)

877-370-9988 (toll free)

*Counseling for depression, anxi-
ety, relationship problems, etc...*

- Information about mental health issues and relationship problems
- Referrals to qualified mental health professionals in your area
- Telephone consultations with a counselor
- Staffed by professional counselors and registered nurses
- All calls are strictly confidential

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

Call To Subscribe

Please call the Gateway Woods' Office at 888/443-4283 to receive The Gate Post, a free newsletter about Gateway Woods published three times yearly.



Gateway Woods Auction August 17, 2002

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: bibledist@parlorcity.com

World Relief Child Sponsorship Program

In 1998 the World Relief Child Sponsorship Program was established by the National World Relief Committee to give the members and friends of the Apostolic Christian Churches an opportunity to be directly involved in the lives of children that are born in economically distressed areas of the world.

At this time the program offers students for sponsorship in Haiti, Jamaica and Mexico. The Lord has blessed this work and we now have approximately 550 students and 63 schools sponsored through this program. The small monthly donation enables the student to receive a Christian education and learn a basic academic curriculum. The donation helps with the student's school tuition, school uniforms, supplies, and more, depending on the country.

An important part of the sponsor's contribution is to pray for the student on a regular basis. The students, in turn, are encouraged to pray for their sponsors. Blessings are received by both the students and the sponsors.

We are thankful our God has blessed this work. If you would like information on sponsoring a child, please see the Child Sponsorship Brochure made available in your church. Or you may write, Child Sponsorship Board, PO Box 36, Morton, IL 61550 to request a brochure.

Mexico Work Teams 2002

Granjas Community Center & School (Juarez, MX)

Date	Coordinator	Home Phone	Work Phone	Project
Jan 26 - Feb 2	Bob Meyer, Jr.	260-824-3236	219-565-3274	Pour foundations, floor, underground plumbing and drains.
Feb 2 - Feb 9	Robert Baum	602-918-1871	602-943-6106	Lay block, pour second floor of classroom area.
Feb 9 - Feb 16	Robert Baum	602-918-1871	602-943-6106	Lay block, plumb and rough in electric.
Feb 16 - Feb 23	Bob Meyer, Jr.	260-824-3236	260-585-3274	Set steel trusses, install insulation, steel roofing and trim.
Feb 23 - Mar 2				Canopies, doors, electrical, heating, plumbing, AC
Mar 2 - Mar 9				Interior finish, painting, electrical, heating, plumbing, AC
Mar 9 - Mar 16	Kurt Ifer	260-824-2829		Front gates, interior finish, misc trim details, cleaning
Mar 16-Mar 23	Mike Fiechter	260-565-3402	260-565-3412	Finish details
Mar 23-Mar 30	Jay Grube	260-597-7330	260-820-0335	Finish details

If you are interested in helping with this project and there is no coordinator listed, please call Bro. Bob Meyer, Jr.

Mexico Work Teams 2002

Location	Date	Project	Coordinator	Phone & (e-mail)
Agua Prieta	March 9-16, '02	Construction	Wayne Lehman	260-773-4373 socks@bnin.net
Juarez	March 9-16, '02	Construction	Kurt Ifer	260-824-2829
Imunis	March 9-16, '02	Construction	Jerry Tooley	480-460-4531 jtooley@mcdavisco.com
Agua Prieta	March 16-23, '02	Construction	Wayne Lehman	260-773-4373 socks@bnin.net
Juarez	March 16-23, '02	Construction	Mike Fiechter	260-597-7330 mfiechter@parlorcity.com
Imunis	March 23-30, '02	Construction	Jerry Tooley	480-460-4531 jtooley@mcdavisco.com
Juarez	March 23-30, '02	Construction	Jay Grube	260-565-2402
Rio Bravo	March 30-April 6, '02	Construction	Ron Kellenberger	309-383-2325 kberger@mtco.com
Juarez	April 3-10, '02	Medical	Cheryl Hermann	309-385-1082 cherylh@mtco.com
Juarez	June 5-12, '02	Construction	Milford Bible Clss	260-831-4684
Rio Bravo	June 22-29, '02	Construction	Joe Maller	260-565-3211 jmaller@adamswells.com
Juarez or Copper Canyon	October 23-31, '02	Medical	Cheryl Hermann	309-385-1082 cherylh@mtco.com

If anyone would desire to go to Imuris at a time not listed on the schedule, please contact Bro. Jerry Tooley

Heft Cassette Tapes

Selling these lovely tapes has proved to be such a blessing to us, and we hope to all who have purchased them as well. We enjoyed "meeting" all of you who ordered them by phone, mail, or in person.

Though we still have a nice supply on hand for sale, we will not be reordering any more tapes. These cassettes make wonderful gifts for all occasions.

The early proceeds from the sale of these tapes were donated to the Vienna church renovation project, then for relief work in our churches in Romania after "the wall" came down, and now the moneys are being used for the Hallein, Austria church addition and remodeling effort.

Through the years, \$32,000.00 from the sales of 4600 tapes has been sent to Bro. Josef Farkasch, the producer of these lovely cassettes. The 3 cassettes contain the first 48 hymns from our old "Heft Long Book", most of which are instrumental in nature. Bro. Farkasch is now the elder of the Hallein church and it appears these demands will prevent him from producing the 4th cassette. However, we will make them available should he complete this project.

Cassettes now available as long as the supplies last may be obtained from:

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

or

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

Cassettes I, II, and III cost \$8.00 each plus \$.75 shipping for each tape



This concludes a three—part series entitled “Applying God’s Word,” a historical analysis of the origins and development of our church.

Unified Beliefs

The intent of the founders and subsequent leaders of our faith has been to study the Word, interpret it in a unified way, and thence guide the church in a common application of what the Bible teaches. Because God is not divided, it follows that diversified applications (or no application) do not square with unity and the “be perfectly joined together” precepts of the New Testament.

The enemy of our soul has tried, over the centuries, to instigate confusion. As the Word is interpreted and thence applied (in a practical sense), he tries to put a wedge between the interpretation and the application. He asserts that the application is “adding” to the Word.

The tradition that the application reflects is seen by some as invalid, and perhaps as optional. From this, variances have wanted to manifest themselves.

Following the Word

Visible, outward expressions of holiness can often be mistakenly perceived by some as of lesser importance. The idea of exercising restraint and portraying sexual distinction in clothing is sometimes dismissed as unimportant. Likewise, resisting world-copying patterns of unholiness in the form of female hairstyles, cosmetics, jewelry and other trendy ways are not seen as being a specific part of the sanctified life.

In this erroneous outlook, church definitions and thence their practice, are seen as “only” traditions. There is a failure to see them as being born out of a desire to fulfill the Word in a practical way. Again, Satan is sly in trying to separate interpretation (definition) from the application (tradition).

It is instructive to note that Bible words often have a diminished meaning if they remain undefined. For instance, words like “chaste” (I Peter 3:2), “Shamefaced” (I Timothy 2:9), and phrases like “come out from among them, and be ye separate” (II Cor. 6:17) and “be not conformed to this world” (Romans 12:2) remain largely abstract if they are not given definition.

The Word does not give an explicit, specific explanation to these words/phrases. Yet, the church does define them in an attempt to follow and adhere to the Word. The definition and subsequent applications should not be seen as something separated from the Word and Spirit. The fulfillment of the Word (via tradition) is the practical link to the Word. Interpretation and application are closely linked. Satan would have us mistakenly believe that the practical application of doctrine is largely irrelevant.

Regarding the entire interpretation/application concept, it is well to realize that applicational specifics involve coming up with a style/pattern that portrays, for example, words such as “humble”, “chaste”, and “shamefaced”, etc. As an outward style is implemented in a practical sense and reflects these words (in every day life), they should be seen more as applications than traditions.

The Bible does not say how to be chaste, but it does say to be chaste. The Bible doesn’t say how to come out from the world, but it does say to come out. The Bible doesn’t say how to not be conformed to the world, but it does say to not be conformed to the world!

By defining the Bible’s words/phrases, the church is assisting the believer in fulfilling (i.e., applying) the Word’s teachings. The specific definitions do not constitute “adding” to the Word. The church should be applauded for seeking to help its members follow the Lord.

Conclusion

Over the years similarity of practice in following the Word has bred a deep and common love among the brethren. We have, by God’s grace, followed Christ and the Apostles by seriously applying their teachings to everyday life.

As time unfolds, Satan is mindful that time and apostasy are allies. The forces of ungodliness can wear down devout intentions. Satan has sought, incrementally or overtly, to dismantle the church’s strong applicational tendencies. He has tried to belittle the practical “following” aspects of our faith.

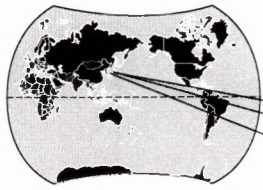
The applications, even in small things, have been painted by some to be of lesser importance and not necessarily “essential” for salvation. In this, God’s Word sets a pattern of holiness, and man exalts himself to the point where he determines if it is essential or not. Only God knows what is essential, or not. A pick and choose mentality becomes disruptive to unity in the church.

When Brother Froehlich and his colleagues reestablished a new church based on the Word, all things were considered important — large and small. A humble obedience to the Word ensued, and a wonderful Bible-based church structure and applicational pattern resulted.

In an age of high educational levels, ease, luxury and relativism we will be challenged to keep our humility and fervor in a common quest to “keep the faith”. If we can, it will be a glory to God.

by: Bro. Perry A. Klopfenstein

Note: “Applying God’s Word” is in booklet form and can be ordered by writing to: Remembering, P.O. Box 404, Pontiac, IL 61764.



The Light Of Hope

From Across The Ocean

希望の光



“Loneliness”

Elder Bro. Willis Ehnle, Shioda, Japan

Have you noticed that many people are lonely? Those of us who grew up in a large family, who are married and have children, usually are not lonely. However, we must be careful or we will have a problem with human relations.

People suffering from loneliness need friends to relate to them, to comfort them. I Corinthians 1:3-4 reads, “Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.”

There are many kinds of trouble and loneliness is one of them. It is less of a problem in our Brotherhood because we have a closely knit group who care for each other, but it is still something to think about for the new year, 2002. Besides, we are to be the salt of the earth, not just the salt of our

Brotherhood. Matthew 5:13, “Ye are the salt of the earth.”

People who are lonely may have some peculiarity about them which makes others shy away from them. Peculiarity or not, they are precious human beings who need our love and respect. Those with mental illness or with even a slight emotional illness are very vulnerable to loneliness. They feel they are different and don't fit in. If their conduct is wrong or sinful, we do not respect that, but we do respect them as precious human beings for whom Christ died.

There may be no complete solution to loneliness but we can try. “We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak.” (Romans 15:1). Just to stand by their side in a comforting way is a help. A compliment or a word of praise, is good medicine. To take them with us to a park to enjoy nature is very good. If the lonely person is confined, we need to visit with them. Not that I always do,

but I should, and you should too. Loneliness is devastating. A person who is lonely feels that he or she has no support, no one who understands. Let's do our best to understand.

Now we face a new year, with all of its opportunities. What can we do in the new year that would bring glory to God? We can stay away from worldly things and live a pure and holy life, reading the Bible and praying every day. However, that is for our own good. In this new year, let's empathize with those who are lonely. They are out there somewhere, some in our church circle and many outside our church circle. May God guide us, in this new year, to show those suffering from loneliness, that we care, and that we love them. It is a serious illness that can be alleviated, if not cured.

Addendum to my article, “What Our Church Teaches and Why”: Our church teaches the greeting with a holy kiss (I Thess. 5:26)

希望の光



So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing where to I sent it.

THE SILVER LINING
1389 County Road 1600 N, Roanoke, IL 61561



*****CAR-RT LOT**R-001

567 15

24

LK

Mrs. Charles Walder

533 N 3RD ST

CISSNA PARK IL 60924-9782