

The Silver Lining



*Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain:
let all the inhabitants of the land tremble;
for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand;*

January 2005

Sermon by Bro. Greg Lehman, Wolcott, IN
Genesis 39 and St. Mark 12:1-27

So many thoughts that come. So many illustrations. So many places we could pursue application from a chapter like that (Genesis 39). I think many times, that temptation is there for me to just think about that, and to maybe go into that mode that we were in as a Sunday School teacher; to think of all those life applications for our lives, for our children. We'll see what the New Testament reading has and possibly how that will tie in.

Just this one simple thought comes to me. I think about all of the obstacles that existed in Joseph's life. They were incredible. They continued to be there. It would seem that there would be times where Joseph would just cry out. Cry out from the pit where his brothers had placed him. Cry out when he was sold into slavery (Genesis 37:24,28). Cry out when now, because of no performance of his own, he ended up in the depths of prison (Genesis 39:20). And just say to the Lord - maybe you have said this - I am just at the end of my rope. I have just had it. I don't know what else to do. What could possibly happen next?

At that time of life, I don't think that the potential of getting back out of prison was real good. So here he found himself again. But the thing that I think we can learn through Joseph's life and through many men of God is that when they were at the end of what appeared to be their rope, they never were at the end of their hope. That is really where we need to be as believers. Sometimes when we are pressed down to recognize that, the end of our rope, of our patience, of our own facilities is not the end of hope. Even if our body would be riddled with disease, sickness, illness, aids, whatever it is that comes to press us down. That seems like in reality, that the closer you get to the end of your rope, the more precious is your hope in Christ Jesus.

If we think about it, we think about Jesus' life and being a part of His death and a part of His suffering as believers. Really it comes down to this, doesn't it? If you look in a believer's life and you think about obstacles and the value that they provide for us - we don't sometimes see that and we particularly don't thank God for the valleys and the

storms while we are in them. But it is those things, those obstacles that bring us to our knees. That bring us to the end of our resources. That is a wonderful thing. To a higher level of trust with God.

It is fair to say, if we look at most of these believers' lives, that if we would pattern those lives, we say that a life without obstacles or a road without obstacles probably doesn't lead anywhere significant. On the road to the kingdom and to eternity, if we desire that heavenly crown and we are going somewhere significant, Satan is going to make sure, isn't he, that there is going to be obstacles and there is going to be trials along the way. We know regardless of what those are, we have a God that is great and powerful, understands our needs and sees our circumstances, knows the hairs on our head. Through each one of those, regardless of where we would see anyone else and their support to us, that God will be there for us.

This parable of the husbandmen (St. Mark 12:1-11), the meaning to us is clear, is it not, that God came and He has made available for us this creation. He has given us a lot of things here and He has made us stewards of it. Stewards just really of life in general, of life and breath that He has given to us.

It says here, "...A certain man planted a vineyard..." and we would take that to be God, "...and set an hedge about it, and digged a place for the wine-fat, and built a tower..." (St. Mark 12:1). He did all of that. He made all of the necessary provision. Then He "...let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country." (St. Mark 12:1). So it becomes very clear. This can be an issue in our lives and can challenge us as we think about who we are, what we have, what our gifts are and how we use those. How we would view the things that we accomplished, the things that we own, the things that we would see to be as part of our possession. That He let it out to the husbandmen. He gave it to them. He loaned it to them. It was something that they had stewardship over and not ultimately possession of.

This is where they began to struggle and is it not where we begin to struggle also in our own lives? That when we

have a problem with who really is in control and who really has ownership of those things that we are involved in. The more involved we would get in those and the more potentially we would work on them and that we would see the increase.

Sermon continued on page 43

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

Light From The Word



Writings based
on God's Word

January 2005

Letting Go of Life

"To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die:..." (Ec. 3:1-2). "There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death..." (Ec. 8:8). "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:" (He. 9:27).

Undoubtedly all of us believe that we will physically die unless Christ's second coming is soon. We had no impact on when we were born, and until fairly recent times, there was little that anyone could do to significantly delay the time of one's death. Medical science has advanced to the point where it is now possible to keep the human body "alive" far beyond what was possible a short time ago. In many cases this has been very beneficial. Many diseases and injuries can be cured that would have been fatal several decades ago. Children who are born with serious medical problems can now live nearly normal lives.

In addition to the benefits, there are serious negative effects. It is now necessary for many families to make very difficult decisions that previous generations did not need to consider.

The desire for long life seems to be a normal human trait. In the Ten Commandments we are told to "Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee" (Ex. 20:12). Hezekiah, when told to get his house in order because he was going to die, turned his face to the wall, prayed, and wept sore. He was given an additional fifteen years to live. (II Ki. 20:1-6). When Lazarus died, Jesus was filled with compassion and restored his life (Jn. 11).

One very difficult question that our grandparents did not have to consider is whether we allow someone to die or do we do all we can to preserve life. Is it wrong to allow someone to die when they could be kept alive, perhaps for long periods of time? Is it wrong to keep someone alive when it is nearly certain that they can never recover enough to enjoy life? There are even those who would ask if it is ethical to administer medication that would hasten death.

We must understand that there is a significant moral difference between allowing death to come and intentionally causing death. Allowing someone who is terminally ill to die does not prevent us from having hope for the eternal welfare of that soul. The dying process can be a meaningful spiritual experience for the dying person and their loved ones. Paul wrote "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21). When a soul is prepared for death and has found peace with God and man, to require him to continue to live when there is no hope of recovery is of questionable value.

How do we decide whether to use life support methods or whether to continue them after we have allowed them to be put in place? The decision, of course, is very weighty. None of us want to play God on either side of the issue. In addition to ethical questions, there may also be legal issues.

The legal issues undoubtedly can be handled by having individuals make decisions and provisions for carrying out those decisions while they are still mentally competent to decide. Requests such as clarifying that one does not want life support technology to be used to extend life when there is no hope of recovery can be helpful to the family members who must make difficult decisions under very stressful circumstances. These are matters which should be very carefully and prayerfully considered prior to the time when they must be implemented.

Spiritually, morally, is it acceptable to allow a loved one to die? We have numerous examples in the Bible in which God's servants, even when in good health, did not try to avoid death. History seems to tell us that John was the only one of the twelve apostles who died a natural death. We know that our "...body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which you have of God, and ye are not your own" (I Cor. 6:19). God determines if the time has come when our work here is complete.

We know that physical death is not the end of our existence. "Jesus said, ... I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die..." (Jn. 11:25-26). Many other scriptures could be cited that promise eternal life to the believer (Mt. 25:46; Jn. 6:27; I Tim. 6:19). From these and other scriptures we

know that physical death is not the end. Therefore, for a believer it is not wrong to allow this life to end.

The difficult part, however, is to know when a soul has reached the point of no return. How do we decide when to stop delaying the inevitable?

There appear to be some factors that can be considered in making this decision. Is the person ready to meet God? What is the quality of life that the person is experiencing? Is there a great deal of discomfort for the one who is nearing death? Does the individual wish to continue the struggle? What are the benefits of sustaining the life? What is the harm that can result from allowing the person to die or from keeping them alive? What is reasonable or just to the person who is ill, to his or her family or to society? Are we interfering with God's plan?

Perhaps none of the above questions individually will help us make the right decision. Certainly the answers to those questions should be sought prayerfully and with counsel from those who are in a position to help. Medical experts can help us understand the likelihood of reasonable recovery. Those sound in the faith may be able to help us deal with spiritual and personal concerns. Are we selfishly trying to keep someone alive?

It may be that the best way to honor God and respect the life of the individual is to simply provide physical, emotional and spiritual comfort to the dying soul. We must be honest with them about their condition and yet we must not discourage them.

In the final analysis we must remember it was God who gave life (Gen. 2:7). We are taken out of life by God: "...thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust" (Ps. 104:29). If we allow God's purpose in our life we "...shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work" (II Tim 2:21). What greater blessing could we have than letting go of a loved one who can say "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge; shall give me at that day:..." (II Tim. 4:7-8)?



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

Trip To India

Over thirty years ago, B.B. Bhagwat first approached the Apostolic Christian Church about assuming the oversight of the Rural Gospel and Medical Missions of India (RGMMI). In 1970, several elders made the first trip to India, and there have been periodic visits since.

Since anti-conversion laws were passed several years ago, there have been no visits to India. Early this year a new government brought about a change in the attitude toward Christians. In September, Elder Brothers Mark Bahr, Kent Heimer, John Lehman and Ed Schwartz spent nearly two weeks in India.

The city of Mumbai (Bombay) was the point of entry. Our first visit was to the American Consulate, who assured us that the recent political change has been a positive move. No evidence of persecution was apparent during our travels.

Faith comes by hearing

We had the opportunity to conduct worship services at Khardi, Nashik and Balhana. At all three locations the churches were filled with souls desiring to hear the word and greet the American visitors. Several days were spent touring the remote tribal villages where a House of Prayer consists of a building constructed with bamboo poles, teak pillars and a tile roof. The floor and walls are covered with a smooth coating of cow dung. These places of worship are constructed for a few thousand dollars. There are requests for expanded services.

A two day convocation was held with the RGMMI staff at which we presented twelve spiritual topics. Outlines were prepared in advance

and translated so staff members could follow each topic. Dr. Parke, pastor at Nashik and administrator, was the interpreter. Time for questions was allowed after each session.

The future church

The headquarters of RGMMI is in Nashik, India, a large city situated just east of the Ghats Mountains. RGMMI has two homes for boarding boys that are located at Nashik and Khardi, a rural community fifty miles northeast of Mumbai. The 40 boys in each of the homes come from various backgrounds. RGMMI provides room, board, clothing, school supplies, and tuition for attending the local schools. Boys are supervised by a housefather who oversees their needs. Evenings are spent studying, as well as memorizing scriptural passages.

Daily devotions are conducted by the housefather, and the boys attend all church services held at the campus chapel. The landscape and grounds of the campus, which displayed a very neat appearance, are maintained by the young men. During our visit to Khardi, the boys presented a program which included the recitation of several Psalms, and a skit of the Good Samaritan story. The Nashik boys presented a program illustrating the wickedness of Ahab and Jezebel as they arranged the death of Nabul. We were impressed with the boys conduct and enthusiasm.

RGMMI also sponsors 50 girls at the Manoram Sadam School in Monmad. A warm reception was given by the school s administrator, and the girls presented a program of song and verse. These girls are children of RGMMI workers, a few orphans, and girls from families that

want a structured course of study for their daughters. Applicants and their parent/guardian are interviewed by the RGMMI administrative staff.

New medical clinics

Two new medical clinics in the rural areas have been constructed. The RGMMI medical van leaves Nashik with medical personnel and drives over rough roads to these areas each week. Patients walk several miles to receive medical treatment. An evangelist, who assists with the patient registration, shares a Scripture with those waiting in line. Over 100 patients were in line when we arrived at the Karanjkhed clinic. Each person pays a token fee of 20 Rupees (\$.25) to visit the doctor and receive medications.

Silver Lining Academy

A new program at RGMMI is the vocational training school which has been named the Silver Lining Academy. Over 30 young men and women are participating in the first three courses offered at the Khardi and Nashik campuses. Welding, electrical, and computer programming are the areas being taught.

Students expressed their thanks for this opportunity of education which will enhance their possibilities of securing a job once they leave the RGMMI campus. Students also attend morning devotions and Wednesday afternoon service on the RGMMI campus. This is another opportunity for sharing the gospel.

We were thankful for the opportunity to visit India again and see the progress of RGMMI. We thank God for His traveling mercies and the many prayers brethren in the U.S. offered during our trip. May all of us continue to pray for this avenue of bringing God s word to India.



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

October 2004 Trip to Eastern Europe

In October, World Relief brethren traveled overseas to gather information on the present status and needs of our Nazarene brethren in Romania and Ukraine. Rising costs and devaluation of the dollar are requiring more funds to maintain the present aid structure. To avoid a deficit, the World Relief European Board must either receive more contributions and/or reduce aid assistance to Eastern Europe.

While on this trip, information was compiled to assess current level of need, options were explored where expenditures might be reduced or activities can be performed more efficiently, and there was a review of monitoring procedures for distribution of aid to those in need.

Ukraine

Brethren report that workers earn \$40-60 per month (net of tax), although seasonal workers can gross up to \$380 in a month. Earned income normally will not exceed a net of \$100 a month. In Ukraine 30% of the population live in poverty with low wages and chronic under-employment, government corruption and mafia operatives. Thankfully there is freedom of religion and the Church is growing.

Most brethren are self-employed workers, living off of the land with subsistence farming and bartering. Mothers are at home with large families with no government aid for children at the present time. Pensions range from \$15-30 per month for the elderly. Annual World Relief aid to Ukraine is \$50/adult and \$10/child, plus assistance for winter heat, medicine and purchasing tillers and farm equipment.

The brethren did not request an increase in this aid administered by the elders and deacons.

Romania

Brethren report that 40% of working brethren earn \$150-200 per month (net of tax), with 50% netting \$90-150 per month. Less than 10% net \$200-300 per month, with rare exceptions over \$300 a month. In Romania, 45% of the population live in poverty while double-digit inflation since 1990 erodes worker wages and retirement pensions.

Almost all able-bodied brethren are employed, excepting mothers at home caring for children with a government allowance of \$7 a month per child attending school. Three fourths of the brethren are pensioners receiving \$50-60 per month, excluding retirees of collective farms who only get \$12 a month. World Relief cash aid and heat assistance, if allocated entirely to the elderly, averages \$7 a month. Food packages supplement cash aid with priority to the elderly and larger families (2 boxes per month). Those with lesser need receive one box a month. The Romanian brethren keep a detailed record of aid recipients and frequency of aid received.

Food parcel program

Costs this year have risen 17% for the Romanian food parcel program, of which shipping accounts for one-third of the cost. Some transportation costs can be allocated to clothing, grain and other items included with each month's sea container carrying the food boxes. The Amish of Iron Curtain Ministries have also been paying for about half of the total cost. The Distribution Center in Romania receives the food box shipments and

delivers the packages monthly to the various congregations with a delivery truck. With food price increases and 25% dollar devaluation the last two years, changes to the food parcel program are being considered.

One option being considered is to purchase food items locally in Europe with packaging every other month at the Distribution Center in Romania. On alternate months food packages would be shipped from America this would reduce shipping by one-half and is another way to involve the Romanian brethren in self-help. Eventually this could facilitate consolidation of the small livestock program with the food parcel program.

The small livestock program and funds for small farm equipment and tillers are separately funded by specially designated donations from individuals and churches. However, those funds will be depleted in early 2005. Therefore future small livestock and farm equipment projects in Romania and Ukraine will need individually designated donations to continue thereafter.

Summary

Fifteen years after the fall of communism, with transitioning to a free market economy, World Relief donations are especially needed to assist brethren with basic needs in Romania and Ukraine, particularly the elderly. Lord willing, there will be a 2005 trip to Serbia, Croatia and Slovakia to review the status and needs of brethren in those countries. World Relief will endeavor to see that none of our brethren overseas are cold or hungry. By God's grace, and with continuing generosity of American brethren, we trust their needs will be met.

APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN HOME FOR THE HANDICAPPED

At our staff Christmas party we heard of God's amazing provision for a family; this Mom and Dad have opened their hearts and home to a total of 23 children in need of God's love and theirs! It was touching to hear about the day one of their children resting in his new mother's arms looked up at her and said, "I missed you so much when I didn't even know you." Doesn't that describe the overwhelming blessing it is to be welcomed into God's family, rest in our Father's arms and realize how much we missed His love before we were adopted into His family through repentance and faith in Jesus' blood.

So many reminders of God's love happen all around us daily – residents at all the homes experiencing the joy of Christmas. They hear music playing, enjoy carolers coming and going, see lights and decorations transforming our homes, touch the Christmas packages as they wrap and open gifts, feel the snow and cold on their faces, and taste and smell the Christmas treats. Resident Council from Timber Ridge tasted lots of pasta at Avanti's at the annual Christmas Dinner. Everyone from Timber Ridge touched a gift as they opened packages lovingly bought and wrapped by staff members. All the men and women from the CILA homes feasted at Fairview Farms to celebrate the season. Linden Estate residents and staff enjoyed a festive meal and gift ex-

change as did the Oakwood Estate "family". A surprise visit from Mrs. Santa Claus (Oakwood resident, LaVerna Zobrist) topped off the Oakwood party this year!

Every department with each person doing their part is vital to ensure the well-being of our residents. It was especially heartwarming this past Thanksgiving Eve during the sudden snowstorm that stopped traffic in our area to witness everyone working together to ensure the safety of residents, staff and family members trying to get home on the icy roads. We all thanked God when the last bus arrived home.

Sis. Maretta Rokey has moved to Apostolic Christian Restmor. Her new address is 935 E. Jefferson, Morton, IL 61550. We wish her God's blessings always.

FEBRUARY birthdays at Timber Ridge, 2125, Veterans Road, Morton, IL 61550: Matt Pumphrey (2/17), John Kamm (2/18), LeeAnne McKay (2/19), Ernest Perry (2/27), Joel Saltzman (2/27), Guy Masinelli (2/28).

At Oakwood Estate, 2213 Veterans Rd., Morton, IL 61550: Sean Wiggers (2/10).

At 338 E. Hazelwood, Morton, IL 61550: Scott Hodel (2/14).

GATEWAY WOODS APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN CHILDREN'S HOME

Mark Herrmann

As I write this article, I find myself "outside the box". As our family felt moved to serve at Gateway Woods, again, we found our-

selves "outside the box". When loneliness, pain, struggle, tragedy, and dysfunction occur in individuals and families we work with, we are moved "outside the box".

What is this box? Could we say it's what we think are the explainable, understandable, controllable, and comfortable events of life? When we look, however, at the life of Jesus and the apprenticeship of His disciples, we could conclude that much of their lives were lived "outside the box". As Christians, what are the expectations of our walk with Jesus; "inside" or "outside"? I find in my life that the natural tendency is to live "inside the box". However, I would suppose that most believers would testify that root growth in the areas of faith, trust, dependence, and "fruit ripening" have been brought about by our Lord working "outside the box". Let us, the beloved, be of good courage and let Jesus meet us just "outside our box". (II Corinthians 12:9)

Rejoice in God's provision of grace to mankind through Jesus Christ, our salvation and rock, this Christmas season and always.

One final thought: Gateway Woods has an urgent need to fill 2 Houseparent positions. I know there are hearts in our Apostolic Christian fellowship moved in some way by the Lord to consider serving here at Gateway Woods. Is this God's time for your family to be moved "outside the box"?

God bless you all for your gifts of love, prayers, and financial

support throughout the years.
WE ARE BLESSED!

News

Gateway Woods would like to welcome Chris B and Zach F to our campus. May God bless them during their time at Gateway Woods. We would also like to say farewell to Holly F, who has transitioned from our residential program into our foster care program. Our foster care program consists of born-again Christians in northeast Indiana who open their hearts and homes to hurting children. We currently have about 20 children in foster care in addition to the 20 currently in residential care.

We would like to thank the good people at Markle Financial for their generosity in hosting a Christmas party for our residents at Gateway Woods School back in December. It was greatly appreciated!

Our heartfelt thanks goes to all who generously gave during the Christmas season. Your out-pouring of financial support means so much to our staff, residents and our clients in the 6 service programs we provide in Indiana and Illinois. Without your prayerful and financial support, many troubled children and families would not receive the care that they so desperately need. May God bless each of you!

Finally, please be prayerful for our annual Board Retreat to be held this month. The Board of Directors covets your prayers in making wise decisions about the future of this ministry, whose mission is to "Honor and obey

God by providing help and healing to troubled children and families who may then bless others." As we celebrate the New Year, may we all redouble our efforts to be the "salt and light" of the earth. "Salt and light" are needed now more than ever! May you all be blessed in 2005.

APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN PRESCHOOL Athens, Alabama Melissa Slagel

Celebrating Jesus' birth is so special, but sharing it with children seems to make it even more special. Everyday here at the preschool we read a Bible story and to help it come to life we use a flannel board. On the day that we were reading about Mary and Joseph going to the stable, I went to put Jesus in His manger and He was missing! We could not find baby Jesus! To keep the attention and to not take up too much time, I told them that maybe we could just pretend that He was there. The disappointment in their eyes filled me with shame! Just pretend He was there? That is Christmas - Christ Himself. You cannot pretend the most important part. The children did not mind waiting at all as we searched for baby Jesus. We did find Him and I thanked the Lord for getting my attention once more through these innocent children.

God is always blessing us. Sometimes it seems as though our vision is clearer and the blessings are more obvious. In the past couple of weeks we had some flooding here at the preschool. Along with

the water came this horrible smell. Then in the midst of that, lightning struck and we had computer damage. You cannot wonder what God is doing because His ways are so much higher than ours are. So we prayed and God answered. In a very, very short time the smell just disappeared and our preschool dried out. One child said with great confidence, "An angel came in the preschool over the weekend and just took that smell away." God then answered another prayer by touching someone who was willing to donate a new computer. We received it at the perfect time. Then on top of all that, God has blessed us with two new full time students. Yes indeed, our God is an awesome God!

Thank you and God bless all of you who have supported us in the past year through donations and prayers. None of it goes unnoticed by us, and especially by God!

ALABAMA, ATHENS Louise Hall

The Sunday School children brought to life the story of Jesus' birth on December 12. They had worked so hard on memorizing and practicing for several weeks. It was touching and I think everyone could say it was well worth it.

We are thankful for Elder Bro. Merle Hartzler (Sis. Bonnie, Smithville, OH) and all of those who traveled along. God will bless you for your time and efforts. We are thankful also for company from Fairbury, IL, that traveled down during this busy month and spent a weekend with us.

Our prayers were with those in the hospital this month: Sis. Hazel Vibbert, Sis. Ruby Ross, and Bro. JR and Sis. Louise Hall's daughter, Janice. They are all home now and we are thankful for God's healing hand.

ARIZONA, PHOENIX
Ron and Ev Hoerr

"The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?"

Psalm 27:1

What a delightful evening we enjoyed December 12, when our Sunday School children presented their lovely Christmas program. Thanks to the teachers also, and may God bless each one for a blessed evening.

Welcome back to our dear Elder Bro. Jon Kokanovich on December 12 after major heart surgery, and to Bro. Ed Frautschi after a lengthy hospital stay. They still need our prayers as does Bro. Jim Beres, Bro. Howard Maurer, and little Dakota Thorpe.

What a blessed time we had the first week of December. Phoenix had the privilege of hosting the Winter World Relief Committee Meeting, the vast majority of whom were also able to visit the orphanage that is taking shape in Magdalena, Mexico. God's love and fellowship were plentiful. We are grateful to all who came, and to the whole church who helped. Our visiting ministers were: El-

der Bro. Phil Stettner (Bluffton North), Elder Bro. John Leman (Bern), Elder Bro. Kent Heimer (Taylor), Elder Bro. Dan Kilgus (Remington), Elder Bro. Wayne Banwart (Champaign), Elder Bro. Ron Messner (Washington, IL), Bro. Steve Ringger (Bluffton), Bro. Arnold Gerst (Taylor), Bro. Jerry Bauman (Rittman), Bro. Roger Sauder (Ft. Lauderdale), Bro. Charles Kellenberger (Elgin, IL), and Bro. Tom Leman (Denver). We are grateful to each of you for your service to our church, and await your individual return! Thanks to all of our visitors for your fellowship and support.

We wish to extend our sympathy to Sis. Leona Siegle in the death of her husband, Bro. Ernie.

Loved ones, let God's love show in your face, words, and actions; it is seen and made mention of.

ARIZONA, PRESCOTT
Jane Hodges

Bro. Henry Volz continues to have health problems and had been unable to worship with us for several months. He has been moved from his apartment to the extended care unit at the Veterans Hospital in Prescott. Pray that he will feel the Lord's presence and that he will be given the grace for each day.

Daniel Hodges (son of Sis. Jane Hodges) graduated from Arizona State University on December 16 with a bachelor of science in finance. He plans to continue living and working in Phoenix.

Our visiting ministers this last

month included Bros. Jerry Bauman (Sis. Martha, Rittman, OH), Arnie Gerst (Sis. Marjorie, Taylor, MO), and Jerry Isch (Sis. Linda, Philadelphia, PA). Our ministers, Bros. Jim Furrer and Dan Dubach, really appreciated their support.

ARIZONA, TUCSON
Lisa Knapp

We enjoyed a visit from Elder Bros. Wayne Banwart (Champaign, IL) and Ron Messner (Washington, IL). Both brothers served us on the pulpit. We thank them for making the trip down from Phoenix where they were attending a World Relief conference.

We once again enjoyed our annual Christmas caroling at local nursing homes and our Sunday School program. We are small in number but these events are still a blessing to us and hopefully to others as well.

Our weather is warm and sunny after a seemingly endless week of rain and clouds in early December.

We are anticipating the arrival of our winter visitors starting soon after Christmas. We pray for their safe arrival, Lord willing. We are already blessed with the safe arrival of our dear Bro. Paul Knoblock who is visiting us from Lester, IA; hopefully for quite a while. Welcome back, Bro. Paul.

CALIFORNIA, ALTADENA
Robin Moser

"Suffer little children to come

unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily, I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein."

Luke 18:16-17

Caiden and Caeleigh Brame (Sis. Catherine) were recently welcomed with a baby shower. It is always encouraging to have small children present with us in church, bringing their youthful energy. We are each exhorted to be role models, pointing children to Christ through our lives and interests.

Over Thanksgiving, we were thankful for the visit and ministry of Bro. Todd Zollinger (Sis. Michele) and family from Silverton, OR. Bro. Todd shared the Word with us on Wednesday evening. We appreciate when travelers make an effort to include us in their vacation plans and fellowship.

Sis. Mary Witzig (Bro. Bill) has visited the hospital a couple of times this month, and we rejoiced that she was able to worship with us again. We'll keep the Witzig family in our prayers as they await future steps on Sis. Mary's treatment.

We wish to extend the Altadena church's heartfelt prayers to Bro. Tom and Sis. Heidi Luginbuhl's family as they learned of the sudden passing of Tom's mother, Sis. Viola Luginbuhl (Bro. Ervin), and traveled to Rockville, CT, for her funeral. May the Lord provide comfort in the days ahead.

CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO
Peggy Jevremov

We rejoice with Breana Wagenbach (Bro. Doug and Sis. Lillian) as it has been made known to us that she has found peace and desires baptism. We are so thankful for each victory in Christ.

We wish to thank the Sunday School for the beautiful Christmas program that they presented to us on Sunday evening, December 12. Though they were small in number (only six girls), yet they sang with their hearts and recited their pieces in sincere simplicity. Once again we heard the old, old story of Christ's birth and His purpose in coming to this earth, bringing hope of salvation to all mankind, whosoever will avail himself of that free gift.

As we look back over the year, the Lord has blessed us abundantly. As 2005 begins to unfold, may we serve Him with a renewed zeal and love. May we trust our future to Him and His boundless grace and mercy.

KITCHENER, ONTARIO
CANADA

Ingrid Fortenbacher

Greetings one and all. Yes, it's that time of the year again when we get ready for the snow and the cold. Although most people I know don't like the winter ... we have to remember that we couldn't have the spring without it.

Our visiting ministers this past month were Elder Bro. Mark Bahr (Sis. Bev, Detroit, MI, 2 times) and retired Elder Bro. Ben

Maibach (Detroit, MI).

Once again we enjoyed watching the little children as they sang their songs and recited their memory verses for our annual Christmas program on December 12. It's just amazing to see how quickly they grow.

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

Prov. 22:6

We recently voted on new positions within our church: Sis. Miriam Reutter and Sis. Marisa Wirz, kitchen committee; Bro. Wayne Saddler, trustee; Bro. David Fortenbacher, usher; Bro. Tim Tomic, Sunday school teacher; and Sis. Johanna Fortenbacher, Silver Lining correspondent. We are so thankful for those willing to take on these responsibilities.

COLORADO, DENVER
Ann Gonglach

Another new year has begun!

"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

We rejoice with the angels as Austin Huber has repented, found peace and desires to be baptized. His parents are Bro. Eric and Sis. Marcel.

Once again, we had a joyous time praising the Lord together as we commemorated His birth.

Our Sunday school presented their annual Christmas program on December 5, and on December 11, everyone who could went Christmas caroling at local nursing homes.

**CONNECTICUT,
ROCKVILLE
Laura Virkler
Amber Reutter**

“The Love of God is greater far than tongue or pen can ever tell....”

Hymns of Zion #289

How can we ever begin to describe the love of God that radiates within our hearts? We are a blessed people. As the Christmas season approaches, we are reminded of the simplicity of our faith, and the tremendous strength we can glean from God and His precious Son. Our congregation will be blessed with an upcoming Christmas Program and Christmas caroling. Although there seems to be much excitement in the air, how thankful we are for the remembrance of where our strength truly lies.

Our congregation was jolted at the sudden loss of our dear Sis. Viola (Bro. Ervin) Luginbuhl. We are thankful that Sis. Viola was able to peacefully sleep from this world, yet no doubt left a deep hole in the hearts of many. Our prayers extend to her children, Sis. Mary (Bro. Keith) Kloter, Bro. Tom (Sis. Heidi) Luginbuhl, Bro. Chet (Sis. Pam) Luginbuhl, Erva Jean Luginbuhl, and all extended family. Also suffering a

loss this past month was Roy Spielman, as he lay to rest his wife, Margie. Their children, Roy, Jeff, Jim and Rodney, also mourn the loss of a mother. May we keep them in our prayers.

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.”

Ephesians 2:8

It is often a step of faith to enter into the care of a physician. Sometimes we take for granted the gift of health and strength. May we ever be mindful of those needful of God’s healing oils. Bro. Lester Heintz and Sis. Barb Schneider have both undergone surgeries. May the Lord intervene in their lives, as they move through the healing process.

May the Lord bless us each one through this month. Some of us will carry great joy, and others great heartache. For some of us it will go smoothly, and others may encounter a few bumps. However, we all share the same foundation. Let us strive to keep this precious faith, and God’s boundless love will carry us through!

Note of Thanks:

In all things may God’s will be done! He has been gracious in blessing us with brethren, family and friends who have held us up before Him in prayer and supplication concerning Cyndi’s surgery and recovery. What blessings we’ve experienced throughout! Our cup is overflowing. Our deep appreciation is towards all. We give thanks towards all. We give thanks for our precious faith and

heavenly Father who provides without measure.

Sis. Cyndi & Bro. Brian Luginbuhl and family

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
WASHINGTON
Henrietta Meyer**

By the time this is read the celebration of the birth of God’s Son will be past. May the wonder and thankfulness never leave our hearts.

We thank Renaud, Suzi, Aidan and Kieran Subra for hosting our all church Christmas potluck in their home. As our congregation grows, this becomes more of a challenge for many of us with apartments or small homes.

We bid farewell to Bro. Jonathan Wales as he has completed his internship here and is returning to K State and the Kansas City Church. We have enjoyed having him here and hope he returns for a visit, or maybe he will feel led to explore employment opportunities in this area.

Visiting ministers this month were Bro. Dennis Kaufman (Sis. Bonnie, Bloomington, IL), Bro. Shawn Metzger (Sis. Sandy, Philadelphia, PA), and Bro. Bro. Kenny Dietz (Sis. Mardell, Bradford, IL). Other visitors were also from Bradford, IL and Kansas City, MO.

Services are usually held the first, third, fourth and fifth Sundays of the month at the Tysons Corner Westpark (Best Western) Hotel, located about one-mile west of the Beltway (I-495) on Route 7. Song service begins at 10:15, worship service at 10:30;

afternoon service begins at 12:15.

If you are planning to visit Washington, D.C. for vacation or business, please call Bro. Adam and Sis. Jill Merkle (703) 929-7941 or Bro. Adam and Sis. Liz Hermann (703) 516-4345 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 as well. We would be happy to have an evening of fellowship and/or singing.

**FLORIDA
FORT LAUDERDALE
Renee Mangold**

We were thankful to have with us several visiting ministers this past month. Bro. Vic Beer (Sis. Dorothy, North Ft. Myers, FL), Elder Bro. Kevin Ryan (Sis. Cheryl, Rockville, CT), Bro. Ron Jones (Portland, OR), and Bro. Virgil Kaeb (Sis. Suellen, Sarasota, FL) were able to come and share God's Word with us. We pray that He would bless His servants for their efforts.

Our annual caroling was held December 19 followed by a lunch and a surprise birthday celebration for Sis. Katherine Fulop. Some of her children and grandchildren were able to attend and it was a loving celebration. Happy Birthday, Sis. Katherine!

Bro. Ed and Sis. Vi Gerber celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary. Their children, grandchildren and a few friends took them on a cruise of the Virgin Islands. They had a wonderful trip.

Sis. Barb Schneider had to

have unplanned bypass surgery while on her way up north for the holidays. We pray that God would put His healing hand upon her and bring her back to full health.

**FLORIDA, SARASOTA
Carol Koehl**

We are so delighted to share the news of two new baby girls in our small congregation. Joanna Ruth was born November 27 to Bro. Frank and Sis. Angela Kiefer. She joins Gideon, Olivia, John, and James. Joanna's grandparents are Walter and Elly Kiefer of Germany and Leon and Rene Derocher of Sarasota.

Bro. Jeff, Sis. Rachel, and Faith Sabo welcomed little Grace Marie into their family on December 17. Bro. Doug and Sis. Linda Sabo and Bro. Ron and Sis. Carol Koehl are Grace's grandparents.

After our monthly potluck on December 5, the Sunday School presented their annual Christmas program, bringing us the good news of the birth of Jesus Christ. Following the program, we all enjoyed dessert together. Many thanks to everyone involved, children and adults, who made this a very blessed evening.

Please continue to pray for Bobby Cochran Sr. (Sis. Paulette) who is home now recovering from a stroke.

Sis. Esther Getz (Morton, IL), widow of Bro. Ed Getz, recently passed away. They were long time residents of Sarasota, and we have many precious memories of Sis. Esther and Bro. Ed.

**GEORGIA, ATLANTA
Carol Kaufman**

What would it be like to be in heaven and hear the angels rejoicing when a sinner repents? We can only imagine what that would be like as we rejoice with John Brewer Sr. and his wife, Mary, who have turned their hearts to God and are seeking Him in repentance. We pray that God's grace will be multiplied unto their hearts and that God will grant them understanding.

December 12 was a very busy but blessed day for our congregation. Before the afternoon services, the Sunday School children presented the prophecies of Christ's birth and His birth. After afternoon services, we all went Christmas caroling to two nursing homes. (What must it be like to be there with a crippled or sick body and not have many visitors? We got just a small glimpse of what it must be like. We witnessed the joy that was brought to them by us singing just a few songs or when the small children would hand them a card and wish them a Merry Christmas. How much more joy could we bring if we would do the things all year long for others that we do at Christmas?) After caroling, we all met back at church for supper and fellowship. To close out the evening, we all said "Farewell" to Bro. Ted, Sis. Joyce and Troy Hirstein as they have now moved back to Morton, IL. We wish them God's continued blessings and His Holy Spirit to guide them in all they do.

Bro. Kevin Knapp (Blooming-

ton, IL) was our visiting minister this past month. We appreciated him speaking about the grace of God. We all know that the grace of God is an undeserved gift, but do we fully realize what it is? I didn't. Bro. Kevin explained that grace is the divine influence of God upon our heart. What more could we ask for when we pray?

We so look forward to the fellowship of the brethren. If you have plans to go south this winter, remember to include us. Give us a call to help us plan for Sunday lunch and other activities. We encourage you to set aside time Saturday evening, Sunday evening or during the week for fellowship. Visiting ministers are scheduled to come February 6 (Taylor, MO) and February 20 (Chicago, IL). Starting time Sunday morning is 10:15. We meet on the second and fourth Wednesday evenings at 7:00 pm. The church is located off I-85, south of the Atlanta airport at Exit 64 in Fairburn, GA. Once off the exit, go west four miles and the church will be on the left. For more information or to let us know of your plans, please call Bro. Linn Stoller 770-631-4554, Bro. Keith Kaufman 770-304-8335 or Bro. Tom Waldbeser 770-463-4788.

ILLINOIS, BELVIDERE

**Sheila McCoy
Doreen Moser**

"Thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at this birth."

Luke 1:4

"Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice."

Philippians 4:4

We are rejoicing with Bro. Chris Nazarczuk (Michael and Kay) in his testimony and baptism the weekend of November 20-21 at Roanoke, IL.

Emmanuel- "God with Us" was the theme Bro. Art Mueller chose for our Madison Bible study in December.

Joy to the World was one of the Christmas carols our congregation sang when we visited rest homes. This was followed by a church dinner.

○ Little Town of Bethlehem was sung by our Sunday School children when they presented the Christmas program. Listening to the students brought gladness to our hearts.

Isaiah was the prophet foretelling of God's salvation through the Messiah.

Covenant- Bro. Shannon Stahl went over God's covenant with Abraham in our church's review of the Old Testament.

Elder Bro. Ron Schambach (Elgin, IL) and Bro. Jon Zeller (Morton, IL) were our visiting ministers this month. We thank them for their services.

We rejoice in the gift of salvation with our Savior's birth and our Belvidere congregation wishes God's blessings to you in 2005.

ILLINOIS BLOOMINGTON-NORMAL Rebekah Kaufmann Kara Martin

When Christ sent out his disciples to serve in Matthew chapter 10, He said, "...freely ye have received, freely give (vs. 8b)." In this Thanksgiving and Christmas season we were again reminded how much we have received and how blessed it is to give. Our church family has been given a few opportunities to serve God in this way. Our congregation had the chance to serve those in need by distributing thanksgiving food baskets, purchasing Christmas gifts and caroling. It brought us much joy to be able to share in the joy of the season.

Our church is rejoicing with Jennifer Brosman as she has begun her repentance and walk with the Lord. Jennifer is the daughter of Debbie Brosman. We pray for God's rich mercy and grace to be upon her life and that she would grow in her new faith.

We extend our sympathy to our Bro. Dale Strassheim at the passing of his mother, Sis. Mayme Heiniger Strassheim Gerst. We also remember the family of Sis. Sandra Smith as they grieve the passing of their wife and mother. May the Lord bring comfort to the families at this time of loss.

On December 19, Reagan Joy Kaeb was born. She is the daughter of Bro. Clint and Sis. Jami Kaeb. Reagan also has a big sister, Paige, to welcome her home. Her grandparents are Bro. Dave and Sis. Brenda Kaeb and Bro. Gary and Sis. Marla Ringger (Gridley, IL). May God give Bro. Clint and

Sis. Jami strength and wisdom in the coming weeks and months as they adjust to a new baby in the family.

December 19 was also our Sunday School Christmas program. What a good reminder to each one of the true reason we celebrate this Christmas season. From the three year old children to the young adult Bible class, we were reminded that God initiated His plan of salvation by sending His son to the earth as a baby. What an amazing plan!

We were very grateful to Bro. Mark Gerber (Bluffton, IN) and his family for coming to fellowship and share the Word of God with us.

ILLINOIS, BRADFORD **Steve Endress**

We thank Bro. Glen Braker (Princeville) for offering himself in the ministry on our behalf. We also appreciated having Elder Bro. Wayne Anliker (Forrest) with us. We trust that God will be their Rewarder.

Bro. Tyler and Sis. Tonya Joos are rejoicing in the birth of their first child. Tori Mae was born November 30. Her thankful grandparents are Bro. Ralph and Sis. Jenny Joos, and Bro. Brad and Sis. Teresa Gudeman.

Lydia Jean was born November 19 to Bro. John and Sis. Sara Ehnle. She is welcomed home by Rebecca, Jonathan, Luke, Hannah, Ruth, and Samuel. Grandparents are Bro. Roy and Sis. Donna Ehnle and Bro. Earl and Sis. Margaret Feucht (Princeville, IL).

Although Christmas time often brings a joyous reunion of family and friends, we are reminded that some faced their first Christmas with a seat that was vacant. We extend our sympathy to Sis. Lois Endress at the passing of her son, Bro. Fred; and to his brothers, Bro. Gary (Sis. Ev), Keith, and Bro. Bill (Sis. Renee). May God fill the void.

ILLINOIS **CHAMPAIGN-URBANA** **Karla Kieser**

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

Matthew 1:21

Greetings from Champaign-Urbana! It is that time of year in which we take time off from work or school and spend time with our loved ones as we celebrate Christ's birth. Our hearts go out to those who are spending their first Christmas without a loved one and we pray that they feel the nearness of the Great Comforter. Our hearts also go out to our troops overseas who are unable to come home. I feel so blessed at this time as I have a co-worker who has family and friends affected by the Beslan school massacre in Chechnya and the recent Asian tsunami tragedy. We read these headlines and hear of the tragedies that occur all around this world and yet we rarely know those affected.

Our church enjoyed a full day together on the day of the Christ-

mas Program put on by our Sunday School. In Champaign, the program is in place of afternoon services. After the program we went caroling in the community and then came back to the church for a yummy chili supper and yummy treats. I remember being in Sunday School and how much performing in the Christmas program meant to me. Sunday School teachers have an awesome responsibility and I am sure that parents and grandparents are very grateful for their efforts and for the example they are.

We are glad that Sis. Michelle Stoller has decided to remain in the area! She graduated recently with her masters in Speech Pathology and took a job at Carle hospital. She is also a Sunday School teacher for the 3rd and 4th grades and we are glad God is keeping her with us!

We thank our visiting ministers from this past month. Ministering Bros. Matthew Rassi (Chicago) and Wayne Lemman (Roanoke, IL) were with us and we appreciate their time and efforts.

ILLINOIS, CHICAGO **Rachel Meyer**

Greetings for Christmas and a Happy New Year to all! By the time this is read, Lord willing, we will have entered the year 2005 with expectations for the year ahead. I am reminded of New Year's Eve 1999 as the clock crept toward midnight – I wondered what the new millennium would bring. Five years later, I realize it

is a blessing that God keeps the future from us – whether it brings happiness or sadness – so we can simply take one day at a time.

It was a blessing to have the Sunday School present the Christmas story to our congregation. It truly is the story that never grows old. We thank the children, teachers and parents who all worked hard to share the story with us. The following Sunday was our annual Christmas caroling and chili dinner. It is always a blessing to visit our elderly loved ones and brighten their day. Also, thank you to those who worked to put together the chili meal. May God bless all.

We extend our sympathy to our Sis. Lucille Koehl on the passing of her brother, Willis Hari, of Watseka, IL. May God comfort her during this time of mourning.

I realize I have quickly come to the end of our news. In thinking about what I would like to share with all of you, my mind races over the past month. Final exams are over, a trip was taken, we were able to visit family, and there seems to be so much more. In pondering all of this, my mind goes to the week of final exams. I had five tests in five days and their impact on my final grade point average was going to be significant. Around the second night that week, the pressure felt so strong. I called to mind my childhood days when my dad would take my hand and we would walk around the barns, fields or the farm in general. I remember feeling so comfortable and safe, knowing if anything went wrong Dad was

there to take care of me. And I realized I needed that now – from my Heavenly father. The Bible talks about Jesus calling God “Abba, Father.” To my understanding that is translated as “Dad” or “Daddy”. So I prayed. I prayed that God would be my Abba Father, and hold my hand as I entered each classroom and took each test. I just asked Him over and over to please hold my hand, and I knew then everything would be OK. I opened a daily devotional book a dear Sister had given me, and at the top it said something like “When God Holds our Hand.”

What an amazing God. What a dear Father. A Father who cares enough to take us by the hand and lead us through whatever lies ahead. A Father who gave us Jesus, our brother, to save us from our sins so we can “Live with Dad” someday forever.

ILLINOIS, CISSNA PARK
Susan Waldbeser
Andrea Walder

In the midst of the joys of the Christmas season we take time to reflect on the birth of our Lord and Saviour. As we think of His birth, may we also remember that true joy is offered only once we have come through the cross and His death.

All church Christmas caroling was held on December 5 and we were able to spend a blessed evening of singing and fellowship as we visited the elderly in their homes or nursing homes.

We thank those who have come and ministered the Word to us

during the past month. May God bless Bros. Paul Zimmerman (Forrest, IL), Bob Beebe (South Bend, IN), John Steiner (Oakville, IA), Jaye Rinkemberger (Goodfield, IL), Vernon Wettstein (Congerville, IL) and Dan Moser (Elgin, IL) for their labors in the Lord.

We were saddened to learn of the passing of our Sis. Clara Hofer on December 15 and our heartfelt prayers go out to her daughter, Dianne Hofer. We pray that God will comfort her in this time of sorrow and be her constant guide and companion during the days ahead. Our prayers are also with Sis. Caroline Gudeman in the death of her sister – in – law, Sis. Viola Luginbuhl, of Rockville, CT.

We want to hold Sis. Jean Knapp up in our prayers as she has recently been hospitalized. We pray that God will soon restore good health and strength to her according to His will.

Our Sis. Melinda Maul has felt led in her employment to move to Congerville, IL. We miss her in our congregation and pray that God will bless her in her new home.

We rejoice with Bro. Gerry and Sis. Geraldine Farney as they welcome a new grandson, William Carter Spohn, into their family. He is the son of W. Scott and Sheryl Spohn.

Note of Thanks:

The family of Sis. Tillie Rudin would like to thank everyone for their love and support shown unto their mother and grand-

mother during her recent illness and since her death. At a time like this one really realizes what a wonderful church family we have. May God bless each and every one of you.

Sis. Sandy Rudin

Bro. Craig and Sis. Trudy Rudin and family

ILLINOIS, CONGERVILLE Rachel Schrock

“Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad; for great is your reward in heaven...”

St. Matt. 5:12

How often we need to be reminded that our reward for our earthly toil is a heavenly one. We must keep our self control and not look around for the praise of men but look up and onward for the praise of God.

Praise God for each soul that is able to turn their lives to Him! Recently, Rachel Hoerr (Bro. Max and Sis. Suzanne) began upon the heavenly pathway. May she feel God's presence as she embarks on this heavenly journey, and may she focus on the heavenly reward that can be hers some day.

Two souls that are basking in newfound joy and are looking forward to this heavenly reward are our new Bro. Craig Steffen (Kent and Sis. Beth) and Sis. Kali Zobrist (Bro. Mike and Sis. Susie). We enjoyed hearing their testimonies recently and welcome them into the sheepfold.

Our gratitude for visiting brothers who are so willing to teach those of our sheepfold can

never be fully expressed. This past month we have enjoyed the presence of Elder Bro. Tom Hoffman (Sis. Kathy, Roanoke) and Bros. Jim Butikofer (Sis. Diana, Iowa City), Tim Zimmerman (Sis. Barbara, Lamont/Gridley), Greg Lehman (Sis. Mary Beth, Wolcott), Rick Plattner (Sis. Mary Ann, Fairbury), Ted Steffen (Sis. Sandra, Alto), and Dale Zeltwanger (Sis. Rachel, Morris).

We are also enjoying the presence of Sis. Melinda Maul among us. Sis. Melinda recently moved to the area as she has started a job transfer. May God's peace and joy be upon her as she settles in here.

ILLINOIS, ELGIN Amy Gasser Miriam Gasser

Build a little fence of trust around today;
Fill the space with loving work and therein stay.
Look not through the sheltering bars upon tomorrow;
God will help thee bear what comes of joy or sorrow.

*Mary Butts,
Streams in the Desert*

With our Shepherd walking beside us and sometimes carrying us, dreaded tomorrows can soon become yesterdays and Ebenezers of God's faithfulness. Let's take courage as we look ahead to a new year!

Our church's observance of the Christmas season began with family caroling on December 5. It was heartwarming for all ages to

blend voices in song and bring some cheer to others. Afterwards, many returned to the Fellowship Center for a chili supper. The Sunday School program was presented a week later on December 12. There was a blessing for all, between the simple verses spoken in childlike innocence and the beautiful congregational singing of "Silent Night".

Visiting Elgin in the past month were Elder Bro. Phil Stettner (Bluffton North, IN), Bros. Ken Dietz and Brad Gudeman (Bradford, IL), Bro. Dale Frank (Oakville, IA) and Bro. Paul Kilgus (Fairbury, IL). The admonitions and exhortations given by these ministering brothers were appreciated.

We are sorry that our dear Sis. Marge Wewetzer (Bro. Bill) required a second surgery on her hip. She was recently moved to a hospital rehab unit. Bro. Bob Buckheister (Sis. Lynette) also had surgery and is doing well.

Sis. Debbie Sauder (Sis. Gert) is deeply grateful to Almighty God for answered prayer during her surgery and recovery. She would like to thank each one for those prayers and for the deeds of love shown to her.

ILLINOIS, EUREKA Cindy Stoller Lisa Metzger

We are happy for the newly engaged couple, Bro. Jake Fehr (Bro. Ken and Sis. Sandy) and Sis. Janell Carr (Bro. Tim and Sis. Donna). We wish them many blessings and guidance of the Lord as their lives become one.

Our visiting ministers this month were Bros. Tim Zimmerman (Lamont – Gridley, KS), Bill Dotterer (Lamar, MO) and Curt Rassi (Tremont, IL). We extend many thanks to them for sharing the Holy Word with us.

We rejoice with Traci Hoerr (Bro. Mark and Sis. Carolyn) as she has begun her repentance. May the Lord be near and grant grace in this very important step of life.

Notes of Thanks:

I wish to express my thanks and appreciation to everyone who remembered me with cards and good wishes on my 90th birthday.

Henry Blunier

A big thank you to all who remembered me with get well cards and words of encouragement when you heard of my illness, and for more cards on my 98th birthday. Your prayers and concern are overwhelming and appreciated very much.

In His Love,

Sis. Edna Anliker

Reminder: Silver Lining collection for Eureka church is in the month of January.

ILLINOIS, FAIRBURY

Tammy Hinrichsen

Anna Schmidgall

As a congregation we enjoyed our all-church caroling, Sunday School caroling, and the Christmas program. The old, old story of Jesus' humble birth over 2000 years ago becomes new once again as we think of the most

wonderful gift ever given.

We were blessed to have Bro. Ned Stoller (Alto, MI), Bro. Ralph Garber (Morton, IL) and Bro. Brian Waibel (Champaign, IL) minister to us on Thanksgiving Day. May God bless them for their willing service.

We rejoice with Bro. Bill and Sis. Shay Stork on the birth of a precious daughter. Shayla Kay was born on December 12 and is welcomed home by a big sister, Rachel. Thankful grandparents are Bro. Chris and Sis. Kay Steffen and Bro. John and Sis. Eunice Stork.

Our prayers are with Sis. Natasha Knapp as she was recently hospitalized and is back home again.

Our prayers go out on behalf of each one in the New Year that the peace of God might be found in our hearts and the fruit of the Spirit evident in our lives.

Note of Thanks:

I wish to thank all who remembered me with prayers, cards, gifts, hospital visits, etc. during knee replacement surgery. Your love and kindness was sincerely appreciated.

Sis. Pat Hartman

ILLINOIS, FORREST

Jill Wenger

Lori Leman

“What glorious state to be a lamb of Jesus...” (Zion’s Harp #16). We were thankful to hear the testimonies and witness the baptisms of three new lambs in Christ the weekend of November 20-21. Our new sisters and

brother are Sis. Valerie Schaffer (Bro. Kevin and Sis. Martha), Sis. Crystal Stoller (Bro. Greg and Sis. Jill) and Bro. Kurt Bachtold (Bro. Marvin and Sis. Mary). May God give them strength and grace to remain faithful until the end. We thank our Elder Bros. Gerry Hertzell (Sabetha, KS) and Art Bahler (Fairbury, IL) for lending themselves in the work of the Lord that weekend.

Other visiting ministers this month were Bro. Dennis Rassi (Fairbury, IL), Bro. Art Mueller (Belvidere, IL) and Bro. Dave Marquart (Taylor, MO). May God bless them for their labors in His vineyard.

We are also thankful to welcome three new baby boys into our church family. Eli Jacob was born to Bro. Erik and Sis. Michelle Schaffer and is also welcomed home by big brothers, Thane, Ethan and Lyndon. His thankful grandparents are Bro. Carlos and Sis. Marty Bahler (Gridley, IL) and Bro. John and Sis. Sally Schaffer.

Bro. Buck and Sis. Taunia Henry are the thankful parents of Josiah Denton. His sister, Samaria, will be glad to have a playmate. His grandparents are Bro. Roger and Sis. Elaine Witzig (Eureka, IL) and Reginald and Edith Henry.

Noah John came to bless the home of Bro. Clint, Sis. Rebecca, and Sophia Dotterer. Bro. Ronnie and Sis. Loida Mueller and Bro. Marvin and Sis. Nancy Dotterer are all thankful for another grandson.

Our prayers have been with

several in our congregation who have spent time in the hospital this month. We pray that God will grant His healing strength to Sis. Dorothy Bachtold, Blake Hall (Bro. Don and Barb) and Levi and Lucas Kuntz, young twin sons of Bro. Jacob and Sis. Brooke.

Our prayers have also been with several in our congregation who have lost loved ones recently. May God comfort Bro. Craig and Sis. Trudy Rudin in the passing of his mother, Sis. Tillie Rudin (Cissna Park, IL); and Sis. Eleanor and Bro. Wayne Honegger as her brother, Willard Walter (Fairbury, IL), passed away.

ILLINOIS, GOODFIELD

**Heather Hohulin
Rita Bauman**

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

Ephesians 5:31

It is always encouraging to see the Lord's hand in drawing two souls together in faith. December 5 was the wedding day for our Sis. Gina Kloter and Bro. Andy Getz. Their parents are Bro. Kent and Sis. Janell Kloter and Bro. Eldon and Sis. Charlene Getz (Remington, IN). May God bless this marriage with His ever present hand of love.

Our Christmas program was held on December 12. Many witnessed the story of Christ's birth through verse and song by our students. We thank the teachers and parents who worked with the

children in learning parts. Also, thanks to our students for all the effort put forth to make such a blessed program. May we always remember the true reason for the season.

We have been blessed with several visiting ministers this past month. They are Bros. Dan Stoller (Sis. Deb, Remington, IN), Andy Moser (Sis. Diane, Valparaiso, IN), Clark Stoller (Sis. Cindy, Gridley, IL), Jeff Thames (Sis. Brenda, Washington, IL), James Knapp (Sis. Lisa, Congerville, IL), and Darren Plattner (Sis. Sue, Champaign, IL). May God bless them for their labors.

Experiencing surgery this past month was Sis. Brenda Hinrichsen (Bro. Chuck). Our thoughts and prayers are with her as she recuperates. May God's love strengthen her during this time.

ILLINOIS, GRIDLEY

Perry A. Klopfenstein

The passing of Viola R. (Meiss) McKinley, 84, brought a sadness to our congregation. She died on December 12, 2004. She was married to Cletus E. McKinley from 1939 to 1973, when he passed away. Surviving are her daughter, Sis. Sandy Maurer; also, two grandchildren, Bro. Whitney Maurer and Sis. Heidi Kiefer; and three great-granddaughters: Abby, Stella and Lacey Kiefer, all of Gridley; one sister, Sis. Alyce Rose Gilmore, Gridley; and a brother, Ed Meiss, Eureka. Sweetness and kindness are traits that described her person-

ality.

2004 has passed and now 2005 faces us. Time seems to pass swiftly, and daily we must look Above for guidance and strength to pursue our heavenly goal. Statistics for the past year regarding our Gridley congregation indicated four weddings, 12 births, five deaths, and nine baptisms. Eight members have moved here, and eight have moved away.

Sis. Holly Stoller was announced to be married to Bro. Will Kellenberger, Washington. Lord willing, the wedding will be on June 5. She is the daughter of Bro. Lynn and Sis. Elaine Stoller. His parents are Bro. Randy and Sis. Ruth Kellenberger, also of Washington. We wish the newly engaged couple well in this God-directed endeavor.

Parents of their first child are Bro. Philip and Sis. Becky Romersberger. His name is Payton Robert Romersberger and he was born on December 3. Grandparents are Bro. Larry and Sis. Ardean Stoller and the late Bro. Rob Romersberger, Gridley; Bro. Steve and Sis. Donna Ringger, Gridley; great-grandparents are Bro. Fred and Sis. Mary Ringger, Gridley, and Bro. Bob and Sis. Eileen Greiner, Cissna Park. This is a joyous occasion, and we wish these new parents the blessings of God as they raise this dear child in the ways of the Lord.

Bro. Brace Wieland was a visiting minister here this month. We are thankful for his efforts.

Bro. Curt Gramm is recovering from knee surgery.

Our prayers are with Sis. Tricia Hodel, who left on January 3 to do student teaching in San Antonio, Texas. May God be with her.

ILLINOIS, MORTON

**Julie Bahr
Christie Zeller**

Sis. Kary Ackerman and Bro. Doug Mangers (Denver, Colorado) were married November 21. Parents are Bro. Roger and Sis. Margie Ackerman and Bro. Dennis and Sis. Sharon Mangers (Champaign, IL). We wish them God's blessings.

Our Family Worship was held on December 1 by our Bro. Fred Funk. His topic was "Where is Your Faith?" "Standing on the Promises" should be our song of faith daily.

Our annual Christmas caroling was held December 4. What a wonderful blessing for so many of our loved ones, those who participated and those who were sung to.

Our Christmas program was held December 12. Once more the story of Christ's birth was shared through verse and song. May we never forget the true meaning of the Christmas season.

Sis. Esther Getz passed away. She had been in our Apostolic Christian Home in Eureka. Elder Bro. Tom Hoffman (Roanoke, IL) conducted her service.

Bro. Andy Lehman (Sis. Irene) of Sabetha, Kansas, passed away. He is the father to our Sis. Lynn (Bro. Steve) Roeschley.

Sis. Marie Schick passed away December 14. She is the stepmother to our Bro. Randy (Sis.

Jane) Schick and our Sis. Marlene (Bro. Richard) Seidel. May our Heavenly Father reach down and comfort these dear families.

Our visiting ministers were Elder Bro. Mike Leman (Sis. Deb, Denver, CO), Bro. Loren Schrenk (Sis. Betsy, St. Louis, MO), Bro. Brian Waibel (Sis. Wendy, Champaign, IL), Elder Bro. Wayne Banwart (Sis. Charlen, Champaign, IL), Bro. Glen Funk (Sis. Sally, Wichita, KS), Bro. Darren Plattner (Sis. Sue, Champaign, IL), Bro. Greg Rassi (Sis. Carla, Chicago, IL), and Bro. Ted Hirstein (Sis. Joyce, Atlanta, GA). May God bless these dear brothers for their endless labors of love.

ILLINOIS, PEORIA

Lou and Marjean Lonteen

"But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

Jude vs. 20-21

*Director of Social
Services at Skyline*

Position Available!

An individual who loves working with the elderly and their families is the first requirement. Social services, customer service and/or nursing background are helpful. This is a full-time position with full benefits. The planned starting date is early January 2005. If you are inter-

ested in helping provide the best environment for our older brothers and sisters in faith, then join our staff where "Caring Together is Right at Home". Phone: 309-691-8091 or 877-691-8091 and ask for Roger Herman, Administrator.

We were blessed by guest ministers recently: Bro. Craig Martin (Princeville), Bro. Brad Gudeman (Bradford), Bro. Ken Wuethrich (Indianapolis, IN) and Bro. Jeff Neihouser (Francesville, IN). Bro. Erik Givens (Princeville) spoke at Family Night on December 1.

The Sunday School Christmas program was held on December 12. The all-church Christmas Caroling was held on the same afternoon following church. The students' singing and messages were inspired with blessings. Caroling is always uplifting as we think of Jesus' birth and gift of salvation.

Our congregation was saddened by the death of our dear Bro. Paul Meister on December 11. Many prayers continue to be offered up on behalf of his dear family, especially Sis. Rhoda. Their family includes: Bro. Paul (Spark) (Sis. Rhonda), John (Elizabeth), Bro. Dan (Sis. Susan), Sis. Judy (Bro. Mark) Sceggel, Sis. Beth (Bro. Greg) Herman, Sis. Diane (Bro. Mike) Honegger, Sis. Joan (Bro. Tim) Reinhard, Sis. Rachel (Bro. David) Sauder, Sis. Ruth (Bro. Fedi) Davidovics, Nancy Meister, and Karin Meister. Special sympathy to Bro. Paul's brothers: Bro. Ed (Sis. Bernie) Meister, and Bro. Walter

(Jean) Meister. Bro. Paul's life was an inspiration as he encouraged all to live for Jesus!

Those on the prayer list include: Sis. Katy Hoerr, Sis. Marie Hoerr, Sis. Mary See, Sis. Judy Martin, Bro. Ben Stickling, Bro. Ivan Thomas and Bro. Bob Joos.

Our congregation expresses sincere sympathy to: Sis. Erma (Bro. Wayne) Wieland in the death of Erma's brother, Bro. Edward Feller, of Normal; and to Sis. Eunice (Bro. Leon) Kaisner in the death of Eunice's mother, Sis. Martha Bahler, of Fairbury.

Note of Thanks:

Sis. Mick Koehl family, and Bro. Chris Feucht family express sincere thanks for all your cards, visits, and kind deeds during their loved ones illnesses. God bless you all.

"Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."

Jude vs. 24-25

ILLINOIS, PRINCEVILLE
Phyllis Knobloch
Crystal Streitmatter

"So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." (Psalms 90:12). As one year closes, and another begins, may we take inventory of our lives to see where we stand with our God.

Elder Bro. Bruce Hohulin (Goodfield, IL) and Bro. Greg Lehman (Wolcott, IN) were with us on November 20-21 for the provings and baptisms of Sisters Ricky Stahl and Amanda Herrmann (Bro. Doug and Sis. Angie). Truly there is no higher standing than to be a child of God.

Hospital patients have been Bro. Dave Ehnle (Sis. Beulah) and Sis. Martha Jane Siebenthal. We are glad they are again able to assemble with us.

Ayden Benjamin was welcomed November 19 into the family of Bro. Ben and Sis. Ann Herrmann and their boys, Andrew and Austin. Grandparents are Bro. Howard and Sis. Mary Ann Herrmann and Jack and Lois Klendworth (Minonk, IL). May God's grace be with them in raising their children.

Our sympathy and prayers are with Sis. Frances and Bro. Ed Knobloch in the death of her father, Bro. Eli Gerber (West Bend, IA). Several of his grandchildren and great-grandchildren are in our congregation as well, and our thoughts go to them.

"The days of our years are threescore and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away."

Psalms 90:10

ILLINOIS, ROANOKE
Joan Leman
Doris Fischer

In the past month we've had the blessed privilege of hearing

seven testimonies of faith and seeing those converts baptized. On one weekend Scott and Erin Leman, Annie Hodel (Bro. Steve and Sis. Joyce) and Chris Nazarczuk (Kay and Michael, Belvidere) were baptized, and just a few weeks later we witnessed the baptisms of Blake and Kristin Gerber and Ryan Luginbuhl (Bro. Rob and Sis. Gina).

We're thankful to have had many visiting ministers: Elder Bros. Mike Leman (Denver), Chuck Hemmer (Peoria), Mark Streitmatter (Bloomington), and Bros. Art Mueller (Belvidere), Jeff Grimm (Goodfield), Brian Huber (Francesville). We're grateful for each one and their willingness to serve.

We rejoice with the angels over the news of a sinner coming in repentance! Joel Wuthrich (Bill Wuthrich and Sis. Val) recently made his beginning in faith. May he feel God's grace abundantly during this time of growth.

We also rejoice with Bro. Cory and Sis. Gini Gerber at the arrival of their second son, Jesse William. Jesse's older brother is Wyatt, and his grandparents are Bro. Dave and Sis. Carol Knapp and Jack and Deb Gerber.

Funeral services and burial were held on November 23 for Bro. Marvin Fischer, who had lived in Grabill, IN, in recent years. Our sympathy is extended to his wife, Sis. Pat; his sons, David, Allen (Marian), Bro. Paul (Sis. Leanne), Carl (Debbie) and Lee; his daughters, Susan (Reggie) Paxton and Phyllis

(Keith) Brown; his brothers Bro. Les (Sis. Sara), Bro. Gerald (Sis. Marge), and Bro. Richard (Sis. Dorothy); and his sisters, Velda (Dick) Fisher, Lila (Wayne) Decker, Ann (Dean) Freesmeyer, and Sis. Laverne (Bro. Al) Butikofer.

We continue to hold up Sis. Joan Leman and her family in prayer, as she's been hospitalized for an extended period. God willing, we hope for her swift recovery and chance to assemble with us again.

ILLINOIS, TREMONT

**Heather Rassi
LaVonne Wagenbach**

As the year comes to an end, it is a wonderful opportunity to reflect on the past blessings. We can all say God has been good. Some of us have had sadness in the year 2004, but it is wonderful to feel the love of the brothers, sisters and friends in the time of need. What a wonderful faith we have!

Bro. Dan and Sis. Julie Koch received a special blessing as two of their children were taken into the fold. We welcome Sis. Rebecca Koch and Bro. Jason Koch, Bro. Kevin Koch (Bro. Terry and Sis. Christine) and Bro. Doug Rocke (Sis. Kathy). May God continue to be with them each day.

Bros. Elmer Kaeb (Sis. Darlene) and Peter Aberle (Sis. Debbie) both had surgery this month. Also spending time in the hospital were Sis. Lee Pflederer (Bro. Jim) and Grace Rassi (Bro. John and Sis. Heather). May God continue to strengthen and heal them.

We were blessed with visiting ministers including Elder Bro. Jon Schmidgall (Oakville, IA) and Bros. John Steiner (Oakville, IA), Vernon Wettstein (Congerville, IL), Dennis Rassi (Fairbury, IL) and Dewayne Dill (Minneapolis, MN). May God continue to bless them with His spirit as they labor in our behalf.

We sympathize with the Beutel family on the passing of Sis. Mary (Beutel) Eisenmann (Latty, OH). Her family in Tremont includes Bros. Alvin (Sis. Carol), Dave (Sis. Eunice), Fred (Sis. Jeannette), Sis. Nancy Koch (Bro. Cleo) and Sis. Ruth Koch (Bro. Vernon), and many nieces and nephews.

Note of Thanks:

All of our family wish to express our heartfelt thanks for the outpouring of love and prayers offered during the hospitalization and death of our dear Amy. May God bless you for your many kind deeds.

*Bro. Alvin and Sis. Carol
Beutel*

ILLINOIS, WASHINGTON

**Barb Banwart
Nancy Knepp**

"Paul said, 'I have kept the faith,' but he lost his head! They cut that off, but it didn't touch his faith. He rejoiced in three things — this great Apostle to the Gentiles; he had 'fought a good fight,' he had 'finished his course,' he had 'kept the faith.' What did all the rest amount to? St. Paul won the race; he gained the prize, and

he has not only the admiration of earth today, but the admiration of Heaven. Why do we not act as if it paid to lose all to win Christ? Why are we not loyal to truth as he was? Ah, we haven't his arithmetic. He counted differently from us; we count the things gain that he counted loss. We must have his faith, and keep it if we would wear the same crown."

Streams in the Desert

The faith to marry: The engagement of Bro. Will Kellenberger and Sis. Holly Stoller was announced on December 19. Will is the son of Bro. Randy and Sis. Ruth Kellenberger and Holly is the daughter of Bro. Lynn and Sis. Elaine Stoller (Gridley, IL).

The faith to undergo surgery: Sis. Pat Knapp had carpal tunnel surgery on her other hand in December.

The faith to let go: Our sympathy goes out to Sis. Mildred Endress in the passing of her sister, Sis. Ruth Feucht, into the arms of Jesus.

The faith to preach the Word: Bro. Jim Meiss (Sis. Candy, Phoenix, AZ), and Bro. Darren Plattner (Sis. Sue, Champaign, IL) proclaimed the Word on Christmas Day. Bro. Brian Huber (Sis. Jacki, Francesville, IN) joined Bro. Jim on the following Sunday in faithful service to the Lord.

The faith to face another year: No matter what the future holds, we step out in faith, knowing that God holds the future.

INDIANA, BLUFFTON**Amber Steffen****Elizabeth Frauhiger**

The end of the year is a wonderful time to look back and see how much God has led us in the last year. Jesus has brought us through so very much and it is exciting to wonder where we will head in the future! There are many who have felt God leading them, and would love to express their thanks to the church for their prayerful support. The family of Bro. Richard Reinhard would like to express their thanks for the many prayers of the church, as would Bro. Jeff Bertsch. Kingdom Academy also wanted to pass along many thanks for the financial and emotional support through the benefit they hosted last month. It has been a real blessing for everyone involved.

The grandfather of Bro. Mick, Ben, and Alicia Gerber, John Cowens, passed away recently, and our sincerest prayers go with the family in this time of loss. The knowledge that he no longer suffers in this world, and the knowledge of eternal hope in Jesus Christ, is a huge blessing.

This month also brought two visiting ministers to Bluffton, for which we are very thankful: Bro. Everett Hari (Sis. Beverly, Bloomington, IL) and Elder Bro. Phil Stettner (Sis. Maureen, Bluffton North). We appreciate each and every one who takes the time to visit our congregation.

We have been greatly blessed with three additions to families in our congregation this month. Lit-

tle Isabelle Marie was born to Ryan and Brandy Aschliman on November 30. Welcoming his new baby sister is Hunter. Isabelle's grandparents are Bro. Ralph and Sis. Rosie Aschliman, and Sis. Carla Girod. December 14 welcomed Brody Eugene Tonner into the world. His thankful parents are Bro. Brent and Sis. Rachele. His grandparents are Bro. Gary and Sis. Diann Tonner and Bro. Sam and Sis. Mary Jo Gerber. Brody is also welcomed by five brothers and sisters, Brittany, Brendon, Kaitlin, Maddison, and Riley. Finally, on December 5, Bro. Kent and Sis. Jodi Reinhard gave birth to Darren Allen. He is fondly welcomed by his three older sisters, Desiah, Deena and Deidra. His loving grandparents are Bro. Ken and Sis. Ann Reinhard and Bro. Steve and Sis. Irene Frauhiger.

We are thankful that God has been evident in a new couple's life as well. Sis. Jessica Reinhard (Bro. Doyle and Sis. Jan) announced her engagement to Bro. Todd Fiechter (Bro. Rick and Sis. Beth). Our prayers are with this new couple as they await their wedding day and establish a relationship founded in Christ.

We were also blessed with two weddings this month. Bro. Kole Meyer (Bro. Greg and Sis. Bev) and Sis. Amy Neuenschwander (Bro. Dee and Sis. Laura) were married on November 21. Our prayers go with them in their new beginning together as they strive to serve the Lord.

Bro. Mick Gerber (Scott Gerber and Melinda (dec.)) was

married to Sis. Brooke Neuenschwander (Bro. Tom and Sis. Sue) on December 5. We also pray for this dear couple as they begin their life journey together.

Finally, we rejoice with a couple who came to know the Lord many years ago. Bro. Bob and Sis. Jane Isch gave their testimonies and were baptized on December 15. We thank the Lord that they have decided to become a permanent part of the Apostolic Christian Church and are willing to serve in any way they can.

Our prayer for you is that this Christmas season you will find many ways to thank God for the wonderful blessings He gives each of us!

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

II Timothy 1:7

**INDIANA
BLUFFTON NORTH
Tiffani Schladenhauffen
Darren Drayer**

Bluffton North, "to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." (II Peter 1:1). We were blessed this month by the ministry of Bro. Allen Stoller (Sis. Susan, Bluffton). The Spirit used him to remind us that Jesus can take us from where we do not want to be to where we need to be.

We rejoice with three souls who have recently been born-again: Chandler Gerber (Bro. Todd and Sis. Michelle), Jay Nicholas (Bro. Mark and Sis.

Marsha) and Mallary King (Chuck and Tammy) all realized they needed Jesus to take them to where they need to be.

Bro. Steve and Sis. Irene Frauhiger rejoiced at the birth of their grandson, Darin Alan, on December 15. He is the son of Bro. Kent and Sis. Jodi Reinhard (Bluffton).

Bro. Fred and Sis. Rhonda also welcomed a grandchild this month. Their granddaughter, Sydney Dawn, was born on November 22 to Jon and Laura Rupel.

We are pleased to announce the engagement of Sis. Jenna Francesi (Bro. Len and Sis. Mary) to Bro. Andy Stoller (Bro. Allen and Sis. Susan, Bluffton).

We sympathize with Bro. Vernon Kaehr (Sis. Mary Ann) over the death of his brother, Marvin Kaehr.

Sis. Mary Gerber and Sis. Marguerite Kipfer both spent time in the hospital. Please pray for them; they are special sisters.

INDIANA, FRANCESVILLE

Jessica Murray

Greetings loved ones. We had our Communion service in November with Elder Bro. John Laukhuf (Sis. Marcia, Latty, OH) here to assist. What a wonderful way to start the Thanksgiving holiday and on into Christmas. We should always remember the Savior and what His blood and body stands for.

Precious baby Cameron Jacob was born on December 3 to parents Brian and Glenda Allinder of Lafayette. Cameron is a joy to

grandparents Bro. Glen and Sis. Mary Ann Gutwein (Francesville) and Mr. and Mrs. Carl Allinder of Indianapolis.

Kevin and Heather Cox, along with big brother Seth, welcomed Linsey Dawn into the world on December 9. She is a blessing for grandparents Bro. Harv and Sis. Ellen Gutwein, along with great grandparents Bro. Harvey and Sis. Joan Gutwein. May you continue to raise up your children in the sight of the Lord, and we look forward to seeing you often.

Nicholas Leman, son of Bro. Larry and Sis. Pam, has joined the Marine Corp and is now in basic training in California. We pray that he remembers to keep the Lord in his heart and that the Lord will work through him from the teachings he had while in Sunday School and at home. Our love and prayers are with his family that he may be kept safe and come back home.

Christian Johns, nephew to Bro. Earl and Sis. Stephanie Johns, has finished his battle with cancer and the Lord has welcomed him and his new body home where we will see him again on that glorious day. We send sympathy to the family along with our love and prayers that you may seek comfort in the Lord.

Lewis Albrecht passed away on December 1. He was the son of Sis. Louise (Bro. Orie) Heinold and the father of five children. May our prayers be felt by the family as they grieve the loss of a loved one. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things

which God hath prepared for them that love him." (I Cor. 2:9).

We pray for the young and old who have spent time this past month in the hospital or still recovering from life's many ills. May you find strength in the Lord as you heal and may our love and prayers be heard as they are spoken in true love for them and faith in the Savior.

We would like to extend our thanks to the visiting ministers this past month, and may they be blessed richly for the loving, caring, and sharing that they do. Bro. Chris Wuethrich (Sis. Carla, LaCrosse, IN), Bro. Neal Widmer (Sis. Kris, West Lafayette, IN), and Elder Bro. Dan Kilgus (Sis. Jenna, Remington, IN).

INDIANA, INDIANAPOLIS

Debbie Anliker Gail Bradford

The weather outside may be "frightful" but our Christian fellowship is delightful!

We gathered to hear the Sunday School classes praise God with singing and speech. Their presentations expressed gratitude for God's gift of Jesus. They shared what this precious gift means to them. Afterward they distributed toys and clothing to adopted families before returning to church for a chili supper.

The Baumgartner family (Bro. Greg and Sis. Missy, and Zachary, Leah and Barbara) welcomed baby sister, Bethany Joy, born December 13. She was slightly ahead of her Christmas Day due date!

We appreciated the faithful

reading and teaching from God's Word by visiting ministers, Elder Bro. Wayne Banwart (Sis. Charlen, Champaign, IL), Bro. Brian Huber (Sis. Jackie, Francesville, IN), Bro. Jaye Rinkenberger (Sis. Peggy, Goodfield, IL) and Bro. John Bradle (Sis. Jill, Roanoke, IL).

We are pleased that after their wedding in April, 2005, Sis. Tiffany Schwab and Bro. J.R. Sauder will make their home in Indianapolis.

We are thankful that Bro. Makoto Inoue and a colleague escaped injury recently when they were in a serious automobile accident in Arizona.

Makoto's experience reminds us that, although we cannot escape our eventual earthly death, nor can we predict when it will occur, we can escape eternal death by acknowledging Jesus Christ as our Saviour. In the New Year, let us renew our desire to love the Lord with all our heart, mind and body, and to love our neighbor as ourselves.

INDIANA, LACROSSE Eric & Bobbi Ann Heinold

On December 12, our Sunday School children reminded us of the Christmas story through songs and recitation. It is always a blessing to hear of Jesus' birth from our youth. We appreciate the efforts that were made by each student for their part in the program.

Our visiting ministers for the past month were Elder Bro. Bill Schlatter (Sis. Emily, Junction, OH), Bro. Jim Butikofer (Sis. Di-

ana, Iowa City, IA), Bro. Darren Plattner (Sis. Sue, Champaign, IL), Bro. Dan Stoller (Sis. Deb, Remington, IN), Bro. Ned Stoller (Sis. Heidi, Alto, MI) and Bro. Ron Palitto (Akron, OH). May God reward each of these brothers for their efforts in ministering the Word of God to us.

We pray that all have felt God's nearness and protection during this holiday season, and may each one have a greater appreciation for the miracle of Jesus' birth.

INDIANA, LEO Ethelyn Schlatter Laura Fischer

We felt the spirit of unity as we partook of Holy Communion on November 20. Elder Bro. David Graf (Akron, OH) helped Elder Bro. Lynn serve the blessed sacrament of bread and wine. We were happy to have Sis. Barb with us also and that they stayed for Sunday service.

Bro. Walter Herrmann and Sis. Betty Lou (Princeville, IL) visited on Thanksgiving Day.

On November 28 we were again blessed with visiting ministers, Bro. John Jackson (Sis. Peggy) and Bro. William Waibel (Sis. Carol) of Bay City, MI; and Bro. Ed Sauder (Sis. Bonnie, Roanoke, IL).

We also appreciated Angie and Jeremy Zimmerman's visit as they told about the people they are working with and their goals for the future.

The Sunday school presented the Christmas program the afternoon of December 12. The theme was "No Room in the Inn", an in-

itation to reject worldliness and let the Saviour in. "Behold I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." (Rev. 3:20)

Our sympathy is extended to Sis. Judy Gehring at the loss of her mother, Sis. Mayme Gerst (Burlington, IA); to Sis. Joan Stieglitz, her family, and Sis. Ethelyn Schlatter on the passing of their aunt, Sis. Evelyn Wysong (Sabetha, KS). We also sympathize with Sis. Laura Stieglitz (Bro. Shane) in the passing of her grandfather, Bro. Siegle (Oakville, IA).

We went caroling on December 16, visiting The Cedars nursing and apartment complex, and elderly, sick and bereaved in their homes. It was a joy to see their gratefulness. May it be to the Glory of God.

Spiritual Reflection

The life giving word is a lamp to our feet,
Showing the path to that safe retreat.

Holy men of God, whose lights still shine,
Speak through the ages to this perilous time.

Our theme shall be to trust in the Lord,

Until in the Harbor we're safely moored.

When gathering clouds obscure the sky

Through storm and gloom, oh Lord, draw nigh.

—Bro. Henry Kipfer

Praying your New Year will be blessed by the Giver of all perfect

gifts.

INDIANA, MILFORD
Paula Haab
Cap Beer

We rejoice that Sis. Edna Lehman and also Martin Stookey have received treatments and are back worshipping with us.

Elder Bro. Steve Gutwein (Francesville, IN) was a guest minister who told us how important a name is, how God knows all our names, and we should rejoice that our names are written in heaven.

Elder Bro. Alfred Bahler (Wolcott, IN) assisted our Elder Bro. Bill Schlatter in lovingly reading the Memorandum and encouraging us to keep the faith.

Elder Bro. Aaron Steffen (Alto, MI) assembled with us one Wednesday evening and encouraged us to consult with the Lord before making any decisions.

Our congregation and our Sunday School went caroling December 5 and spent a time of fellowship afterward. This is a double blessing for the carolers and also those to whom we visit.

We are thankful that our Bro. Ryan Steiner was not seriously injured when he had an automobile accident. Ryan is a real asset to our congregation.

INDIANA, REMINGTON
Beth Virkler

December 5 was the date chosen for Bro. Andy Getz (Bro. Eldon and Sis. Charlene) and Sis. Gina Kloter (Bro. Kent and Sis. Janell) to exchange wedding vows

in Goodfield, IL. We warmly welcome Sis. Gina to our congregation. They are residing at 102B Carolina Street, Wolcott, IN 47995. Phone (219) 279-2995.

Bro. Ken Weerts (Sis. Myrna, Cissna Park, IL) exhorted us on December 12, the Sunday of our Christmas program. We appreciate the out-of-town grandpas who come to visit their children while also lending themselves in the ministry.

Bro. Elmer Bahler (Sis. Marilyn) spent time recuperating from his second hip surgery this year.

In this Christmas season of celebration, we can also rejoice with thanksgiving that the day of grace is still with us and the Holy Spirit keeps calling souls into the brotherhood of Christ. Our new converts this month are: Loren and Jenny Honegger (originally from Illinois) and Luke Bahler (Bro. Tim and Sis. Lynnette).

Bro. Herb Schieler, age 91, passed away on December 18. He leaves behind his sons, John (Goshen, IN), Larry (Kathi, Lafayette, IN); and daughters, Joyce Rowland (Michael, Indianapolis, IN) and Sis. Jayne Price (Remington, IN). Grandchildren, Sis. Amanda Price and Zach Price (Karena, Wolcott, IN), grew up in our congregation and also mourn their grandfather, along with Bro. Herb's sisters, Sis. Carolyn Virkler (Croghan, NY) and Sis. Ada Jones (Nashville, IN). His wife, Sis. Mary Jo, preceded him in death in May, 2000. "Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted."

INDIANA, SOUTH BEND
Melisa Gerst
Stacey Feller

Our small congregation is always thankful for our visiting ministers and pray God's blessings on those who have labored on our behalf. This past month Bro. Jim Butikofer and his wife, Sis. Diana (Iowa City, IA), and Bro. Wayne Lemman and his wife, Sis. Julie (Roanoke, IL), shared God's Word with us.

Bro. Scott and Sis. Gigi Schafer are once again new grandparents as Noah welcomed home a new baby brother, Adrian Schafer.

Our dear Sis. Ernestine Meister has gone through a hip surgery and therapy. We are thankful for a good outcome and pray God's healing hand will continue to guide her recovery.

The Christmas season is upon us; may we always remember " 'tis not the manger, but the cross, that sets the spirit free." (Hymns of Zion, 36).

INDIANA, VALPARAISO
Ed Lester

Greetings, loved ones, in the name of our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Once again the Christmas season is upon us. We enjoyed the Sunday School children bringing to us the Christmas story found in Luke and seen through the eyes of Simeon and Anna. My Bible has the heading "The Adoration of the Babe". May we adore Him also, as a babe, and then obey the Christ of God who died on the

cross that we might live with Him who has lived in us.

Caroling was held on a Wednesday evening, and after, since we had a rather light schedule, boxes were packed and wrapped for the soldiers in Iraq. All enjoyed refreshments.

Our annual Christmas dinner was held on December 10. We always enjoy this lovely catered dinner followed by fellowship and singing of carols.

Visiting ministers this month were Elder Bro. Wendell Gudeman (Sis. Marcella) and his son, Bro. Randy Gudeman (Sis. Becky), both from Francesville. We give them our heartfelt thanks for helping us out at a time when our own ministers were unable to be here. God bless you both.

**INDIANA,
WEST LAFAYETTE**
Diana Houston
Nettie Haab

"...what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

Micah 6:8

Bro. Brian Huber (Sis. Jacki, Francesville, IN) was with us on a Thursday evening and spoke on what the Lord wants from us. He used the above verse as a basis that tells us plainly what we need to do to please our God. Other visiting ministers this month were Elder Bros. Curt Frank (Sis. Lyla, LaCrosse, IN), and Steve Gutwein (Sis. Linda, Frances-

ville, IN).

Little Adrian Michael was born December 4 to Bro. Luke and Sis. Andria Schafer. Big brother Noah and grandparents, Bro. Ed and Sis. Annette Bahler and Bro. Scott and Sis. Gigi Schafer of South Bend, IN, are all happy with this blessing from above.

Three of our converts, Rusty Gann, Kaitlin Bahler (Bro. Ed and Sis. Annette), and Blake Widmer (Bro. Neal and Sis. Kris), have been announced for peace. We are looking forward to their testimonies and baptisms January 29-30. We are also thanking God for another convert. Kayla Eberhardt (Bro. Fred and Sis. Kathy, Burlington, IA) who is a freshman at Purdue has heard God's call and answered Him.

Sis. Andria Sprunger and Bro. Luke Schafer have been chosen to teach our Sunday School children. We support them in prayer as they undertake this important duty.

Our Sunday School children told us about the birth of Christ in readings and songs as did the Purdue Young Group. It is wonderful to see the enthusiasm of our young children all the way up to young adults praising God and telling the same story. Are we still praising God and telling His story? Enthusiastically?

INDIANA, WOLCOTT
Heidi Bahler
Lisa Furrer

"There are friendships that we treasure..."

Many thanks to the Francesville

congregation for the warm welcome extended the last Sunday in November.

Psalm 50:14, "Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High..." Thanks to neighboring Remington for inviting us to Thanksgiving Day worship with them.

Our thoughts and prayers were with our Elder Bro. Alfred Bahler (Sis. Frances) as he underwent shoulder surgery. Surgery was successful and for the next several weeks he will be in a sling.

"And thou shalt have great joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth."

St Luke 1:14

Through many activities, the Sunday school program, songs, and caroling around the town of Wolcott with horses, we have reflected on the gift of the Baby Jesus' birth. May we ever be mindful of His lowly birth and His ultimate gift—the gift of eternal life if we but choose to follow Him. May we all feel the love and nearness of our Almighty God in the new year.

IOWA, BURLINGTON
Brenda Schulz
Laurie Schulz

Greetings from Burlington! We are thankful for our visiting ministers: Elder Bro. Jon Schmidgall, Bro. John Steiner and Bro. Dale Frank (Oakville, IA). We enjoyed having them with us; may God bless them for their efforts.

Kyle Knapp (Bro. Brian and

Sis. Lorna) was announced as having peace from God. We are very glad and thankful for him. We pray he will continue to feel God's nearness.

Our dear Sis. Mayme Gerst passed away. She will be missed by us all. Our sympathy goes to her children, Sis. Judy Gehring (Leo, IN), Dwight (Jan) Strassheim (Oakville, IA), Bro. Dale (Sis. Carol) Strassheim (Bloomington, IL), Bro. Arnie (Sis. Marge) Gerst (Taylor, MO), Bro. Conrad (Sis. Roletta) Gerst (Oakville, IA), Sis. Lois (Bro. Garry) Bucher (Valparaiso, IN) and Sis. Edra (Bro. Bob) Kuntz (Oakville, IA), and her many grandchildren.

IOWA, ELGIN
Gloria Frieden
Heidi Butikofer

As we are beginning another new year, my thoughts turn to the word "time". Time to the young may seem an eternity from one birthday till the next, but, we who are older see time passing swiftly. God grants each of us a space of time here on earth and He desires and trusts us to use it wisely. The time that is past cannot be lived over, and tomorrow quickly becomes yesterday. In I Corinthians 7:29 we read that "the time is short" but from the Zion's Harp #203 we sing "This so short a time, though ample, for eternity sublime." No one is going to be able to stand before God on judgment day and honestly say "I wasn't given enough time to repent." None of us know how many days of 2005 we will be given, so may

we heed the words found in Hebrews 3:7-8, "Today if ye will hear my voice, harden not your hearts..."

Les Schneider and Ramona Fels were married on November 27 and we would like to wish them God's nearness and blessings.

We appreciated having Bro. Wayne Grimm (Sis. Rose, West Bend) with us during the busy holiday season and a special thanks to Bro. Wayne for serving us from God's Word. May God be his rich Rewarder.

IOWA, GARDEN GROVE
Willa Clark

As we start a new year, it is as if God has handed us a new notebook to write the story of our lives—and it is up to us what that story will be.

Elder Bro. Mike Leman (Denver, CO), Bro. Steve Baner (Gridley, IL), Bro. Ron Joos and our Elder Bro. Doug Shock (Bloomfield-Pulaski) have visited and served us a wondrous portion from God's Word this month. We have also enjoyed their families and others who came with them to worship with us. How glorious that we have loved ones who travel to worship with us!

Young brothers and sisters from several Kansas churches and from Bloomfield swelled our numbers and lent their voices when our church shared Christmas carols with widows and elderly in Garden Grove. We appreciate their fellowship and help in our annual Christmas caroling evening.

Our prayer is that each day of

the new year will find you one step closer to our loving Father.

IOWA, IOWA CITY
Diana Butikofer

We enjoyed the Christmas program the Sunday School students presented to us. The theme was "Jesus is King" and detailed His role as King of the past, present and future.

IOWA, LESTER
Dawn Knobloch
Dawn Metzger

We always appreciate our brothers who bring the Word across the pulpit for our spiritual benefit. Elder Bros. Doug Schock (Bloomfield – Pulaski, IA) and Jon Schmidgall (Oakville, IA) and Bro. Roy Koehl (Morris, MN) were in our congregation for Thanksgiving Day services. Bro. Brad Gudeman (Bradford, IL) was here on November 28 and Bro. Shawn Metzger (Philadelphia, PA) made the effort to be with us on December 5.

Our sympathy is extended to the family of Sis. Evelyn Wysong (Sabetha, KS) who passed into eternity. She was the mother of Sis. Nancy (Bro. Robert) Gerber and mother – in – law to Sis. Janet Wysong.

Many of our loved ones have been hospitalized this past month. They were: Sis. Donna Gerber (Bro. John), David Warner (Bro. Stan and Sis. Sue), Bro. Al Knobloch (Sis. Lucy), Bro. Bill Wulf (Sis. Leona), Zachary Gherian (Bro. Micah and Sis. Marcy) and Sis. Emma Meyer. We

also wish to remember Brian Leuthold (Bro. Charles and Sis. Vicki) in our prayers as he will be taking some radiation treatments.

Wendi Bajema has completed her college education. She is the daughter of Bro. Rod and Sis. Twyla. We wish her happiness as she practices all she has learned.

November 27 was the wedding day for Janice Leuthold and Lance Bullerman. Bro. Charles and Sis. Vicki are the bride's parents. We wish this couple God's blessings in their married life.

Five new babies have arrived this past month. Bro. Brad and Sis. Trinda, Reagen, Madeline, Micah, Ethan and Emma are happy to have a new little brother, Darren Lee Meyer. He was born on November 20. His grandparents are Bro. Bob and Sis. Linda Kuenzi (Silverton, OR), Bro. Raymond and Sis. Twyla Meyer, and Sis. Emma Meyer is great - grandma.

Ethan James was born to Bro. Steve and Sis. Liz Warner on November 22. His two brothers are Nathan and Ryan and his grandparents are Elder Bro. Dennis and Sis. Esther Warner and Bro. Pat and Sis. Julie Zaugg (West Bend, IA).

Emma Michelle was born on December 6 to Bro. Dustin and Sis. Michelle Knobloch. Isaac is now a big brother. Grandparents are Ron and Sis. Sandy Feucht, Bro. Melvin and Sis. Wilma Knobloch, and great - grandmothers are Sis. Estelle Leuthold and Ruby Feucht.

Bro. Kevin and Sis. Cari Knapp

are delighted to have a little girl, Tara Sue. She was born on December 10 and has a brother, Nathan. Her grandparents are Bro. Charles and Sis. Vicki Leuthold, Bro. Dennis and Sis. Gay Knapp (Congerville, IL), and great - grandparents are Bro. Art and Sis. Emily Leuthold.

On December 12, Taryn Marcus was born to Brant and Samantha Besonen. He has a sister, Chayla. His grandparents are Bro. Gary and Sis. Sue Snyder (West Bend, IA) and great - grandma is Sis. Martha (Gus) Feucht.

The children and young adults have spent time practicing for the Christmas program to be presented December 19. We are thankful for the teachers and parents who help with this enjoyable event. May God be merciful to each of us in the coming New Year.

Reminder: January is the month for our Silver Lining collection.

IOWA, OAKVILLE
Sharla Wiegand
Rosalie Wiegand

"Ah Lord God! Behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee."

Jeremiah 32:17

Bro. Robby and Sis. Kris Lanz are thankful for God's provision and His blessing of adding little Madelyn Joyce to their family circle. Maddy Jo was born on No-

vember 21 and joins her older siblings, Kaylyn, Logan, Keegan and Denalyn. Her thankful grandparents are Bro. Robert and the late Sis. Emma Jean Lanz and Loretta and the late Dennis Lolling.

Farewell, mortality; Jesus is mine!
 Welcome, eternity; Jesus is mine!
 Welcome, O loved and blest,
 Welcome, sweet scenes of rest,
 Welcome, my Saviour's breast;
 Jesus is mine!

Hymns of Zion #281

Our Bro. Ernie Siegle can now sing "Jesus is mine!" on Heaven's bright shore as he slipped into eternity on December 10. He leaves behind his dear wife, Sis. Leona, and a son, Bro. Bob (Sis. Leann) Siegle. We extend our sincere sympathy to them and Bro. Ernie's grandchildren, Sis. Laura (Bro. Shane) Stieglitz (Leo, IN), Bro. Jason Siegle and Amber Siegle.

"The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth among the wise."

Proverbs 15:31

We welcomed Bro. Paul Eisenmann (Burlington, IA) into our midst one Wednesday night as he shared God's Word with us.

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

Hymns of Zion #150

**IOWA
BLOOMFIELD/PULASKI**

Barbara Schock

A lot has happened here in the last month. We have been blessed with visiting ministers. Bro. Joe Dotterer (Sis. Rose, Smithville, OH) was here on November 20-21. We thank him for letting himself be used in the work of the Lord. Also the following weekend, November 27-28, Bros. Wayne Wiegand (Sis. Rosemary) and Nate Wieland (Sis. Suzanne), both from Goodfield, IL, were here. They brought along several other couples who we were able to get to know.

On December 12, Bro. Dale Frank (Sis. Tina, Oakville, IA) was here for the day. We thank him for coming and sharing the Word with us. May God bless him and all the ministers of the Lord.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Sis. Shirley Wuthrich (Bro. Joel) and Georgia Wells (Joe Dean) as they had surgery in the past month. Both are doing well and are up and about.

On December 1, our congregation grew by one. Bro. Eugene and Sis. Lana Joos, Lincoln, Megan and Natalie welcomed Kayla Danae into their hearts and home. Happy grandparents are Bro. Ron and Sis. Christy Joos and Mr. and Mrs. Garrett.

On December 1, we once again enjoyed having many visitors, as the Tremont Single Group came out to go caroling. We really enjoy having visitors and have been blessed with many this past year.

Another year is just outside the door. It doesn't seem like it is al-

ready 2005. It seems like yesterday when we were building the church, but we have been in it since the end of February. Time flies. If only we could grab onto it and slow it down. May God bless you all in this New Year.

IOWA, WEST BEND

Betty Wirtz

Lori Skoglund

Another dear older brother has been called to his eternal home this past month. Funeral services were held for Bro. Eli Gerber on December 5. He is survived by his wife of 66 years, Pearl; six daughters, Donna (Milton) Bond, Pine Island, MN; Marian (Aaron) Anliker, Harlan, IA; Judith (Ronald) Girres, West Bend; Sis. Frances (Bro. Ed) Knobloch, Dunlap, IL; Linda (Steven) Blair, Cherokee, IA; and Bonnie (Randy) Berg, Sioux City, IA; a brother, Bro. Noah (Sis. Emma) Gerber; and two sisters, Sis. Marie (Bro. Fahey) Gress and Sis. Madeline Banwart. He also leaves behind 23 grandchildren and 50 great-grandchildren. We extend our heartfelt sympathy to this family.

We have had several visiting ministers this month. Bro. Dan Moser (Sis. Anne, Elgin, IL) was here on Thanksgiving Day. Bro. Dean Messner (Sis. Wanda, Winthrop, MN) was here the following weekend and Elder Bro. Mark Streitmatter (Sis. Sara, Bloomington, IL), Bro. Dale Moore (Sis. Cheryl, Elgin, IA) and Bro. Joe Gerst (Sis. Connie, Iowa City, IA) were here recently. We thank them for being willing to be used for the Lord's work.

We have had three little babies added to our church family this month. First time parents, Bro. Barry and Sis. Molly Fehr are so thankful for their adopted son, Calvin Dalton, born November 23. He is a welcome addition to the family circles of his grandparents, Bro. Dan and Sis. Eunice Fehr and first time grandparents, Bro. Mark and Sis. Lori Skoglund.

Lucas Aaron was born on November 29 to Bro. Darren and Sis. Nora Fehr. Ashton, Travis, Lincoln and Rachel are happy for a new little brother. Grandparents are Bro. Dennis and Sis. Judy Fehr and Bro. James and Sis. Barb Kuenzi (Silverton, OR).

Bro. Jaylin and Sis. Anne Dahlhauser traveled many miles to bring their 7 month old newly adopted son, Samuel Sebastian, home from Guatemala. His little sister, Gracelin, will enjoy having a new little brother. Samuel is fortunate to have two sets of grandparents close by: Bro. John and Sis. Paula Schmidt and Bro. Ken and Sis. Ellen Dahlhauser. What joy these babies bring as they come into our hearts and homes.

Deanna Fehr (Bro. Byron and Sis. Anita) was in the hospital for surgery. We pray she will have a good recovery.

Still upward be your onward
course:

For this I pray today;
Still upward as the years go by,
And seasons pass away.

Still upward in this coming year,
Your path is all untried;
Still upward may you journey on,

Close by your Saviour's side.

Still upward although sorrow
come,
And trials crush your heart;
Still upward may they draw your
soul,
With Christ to walk apart.

Still upward till the day shall
break,
And shadows all have flown;
Still upward till in Heaven you
wake,
And stand before the throne.
—Charles H. Spurgeon

JAPAN, SHIODA Eiko Nozawa

We had our business meeting on November 28. Our trustees are Bros. Willis Ehnle, Toru Saigusa and Akihiro Ito. Our Sunday School teachers are Bro. Toru Saigusa (Sis. Reiko Furuya will fill his place, when he is not available). Treasurer: Sis. Junko Saigusa. May God bless them.

We had a Japanese nut tree in the church yard, whose nuts were so good. It was a beautiful looking tree with 4 big branches stretching straight so tall on top of a fat, short trunk. It provided nice shade in summer, and produced many nuts every year...too many. It dropped many leaves and nuts on the grass. Early this year, one of the limbs was already cut off. And at this business meeting, we made a decision to have the tree cut down. It was sad to see this tree go, but we may enjoy greener and healthier grass where once the tree spread its branches.

On December 19 we had a pot-luck dinner to celebrate Jesus' birthday together at church.

Then, we went to a hot springs hospital to share the Christmas message and the joy of Christmas. We sang four carols at the hallway of each floor. On the 2nd floor, nurses brought some patients on wheel chairs. Ehnle san talked about the real meaning of Christmas to the audience after carols were sung.

Leaving many memories in each one's heart, 2004 is going to give the baton to 2005 soon. In our busy life, let's stop for a while and be with Jesus alone. Because Jesus came to be with us in this world and in the life eternal.

"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all."

II Corinthians 13:14

JAPAN, TOKYO Jana Klaus

Greetings from cold, but sunny Tokyo. We just enjoyed a lovely Sunday of celebrating Christmas. The afternoon program was richly blessed with around 25 Sunday School students, mainly Sis. Marie Inoue's English class students, saying their parts so well in both Japanese and English. They told us again of the story that never grows old, which gives you an extra special blessing when you ponder in your heart, as Mary did long ago, all the wonderfully peculiar events that happened in and around our Savior Jesus Christ's miraculous, but humble birth. Many from the congregation participate in the program, and the men's group

singing seemed especially beautiful this year. I think partly due to the fact that elderly Mr. Hashimoto was again able to join in and sang from his heart, as he has just recently fully recuperated from his long hospital stay and rehabilitation. We enjoyed our usual big supper together in the evening to end the day.

Elder Bro. Akito Inoue read in English and then translated and expounded in Japanese upon the Memorandum the last Sunday in November. I believe all were blessed in some way who heard it.

We had many guests recently which always brings us joy. Bro. Boyd Metzger (Chicago, IL) came on business. Sis. Vicky Ramseyer (Detroit, MI) came with Sis. Eiko Nozawa from the country church whom she occasionally visits here. Bros. Akihiro Itoh (Tremont, IL) and Makoto Inoue (Washington, IL) came back to see family and friends. We especially appreciated Bro. Akihiro's talk on his recent experience of a medical trip to Mexico. And, Sis. Kay Kellenberger's two brothers, Bro. Dan and Chad Kellenberger, came to spend time with her, their brother Gary and family and see Japan for the first time. It was a blessing to worship and fellowship with each one.

Good news in Sis. Shizuko Urushino's household is that her son, Kenichi and his wife, Miho, have a new baby daughter. Her name is Ami and she joins her 3 year old brother, Kazuki. May they feel the Lord's rich blessing.

Also, I am so sorry that I neglected to report the good news in

Sis. Yoshiko Sakuta's family that her daughter, Keiko, was married to Masataka Iyadomi last May. We pray for the Lord to draw this couple close to each other and ultimately to Him.

KANSAS, BERN
Sally Strahm
Sheri Edelman

As we begin a new year, may we continue to strive for that heavenly goal. By the grace of God we cannot fail.

Elder Bro. Don Braker (Sis. Eileen, Kansas City, MO) was with us on Thanksgiving Day. We thank him for his labors of love.

We pray for those who spend time in the hospital each month. Sis. Diane Kaeb (Bro. Jim) was a surgical patient. We wish her a healthy and speedy recovery.

Our annual Christmas caroling was held the evening of December 4. An evening of singing and fellowship was enjoyed by all.

Sis. Michelle Bahr (Bro. Phil and Sis. Dawn, Detroit, MI) has attended Kansas State University for the past few years and assembled with the Bern congregation at times. We extend a farewell to her as she returns back to Detroit.

KANSAS, FORT SCOTT
Ethel Smith

Our greetings to all in this wondrous season, when we reverence the Gift from God which provides peace and joy beyond measure, if we only believe. To God be the glory, great things He has done. As one of the brothers

related, that with Christ you have endless hope and without Christ you have hopeless end.

We are thankful that Bro. Raymond Banwart is out of the hospital and recuperating at home. He recently lost his wife who was his caregiver; however, with the family support he is able to stay in his home. We ask for your continued prayers for both him and Bro. Harold Kraft as they contend with the frailties of the body.

Our visiting ministers this month were Bro. Galen Rokey (Sis. Nancy) on December 5, and on December 15, our Elder Bro. John Lehman (Sis. Connie), who visited with our converts, had the Wednesday evening services. We appreciate the loving servitude and support. God bless them both for their service to Him and us.

A Thought: God's grace is His acceptance of us and true Faith is our acceptance of Him. Do we truly put our faith and trust in Him for all our needs? As the year draws to a close, we, at Ft Scott, wish to extend our thanks and appreciation for all of you who have traveled so many miles to visit and serve our church. May God richly bless you all.

Wishing you all a blessed New Year and a desire to walk a closer walk with our Lord Jesus Christ in this coming year.

KANSAS, KIOWA
Jennifer Stewart

We enjoyed our annual Christmas caroling this past month. Many young brothers and sisters came to help bring the beautiful carols to the rest home, hospital,

and several members of our congregation. We enjoyed pizza and delicious cookies afterward and holiday fellowship. Thanks to the Sunday school and the young group for a wonderful afternoon.

The Sunday school shared their Christmas program with us. They had been working hard learning their songs and pieces to recite. They told about the miraculous birth of our Saviour. The congregation enjoyed hearing the young voices in song and the pieces they performed.

Sis. Chelsie Bahr had her wisdom teeth pulled this month. She is doing well. Bro. Richard Guthrie had some testing done for his cancer. He is doing great and the tests results were great. Bro. Larry Frieden has begun treatments for a new spot of lymphoma that was discovered. He had been in remission for 20 months. Our continued prayers and support are with Bro. Larry and his family.

As we enter 2005, may we all seek guidance for His will to be done. May your new year be healthy and happy.

KANSAS
LAMONT-GRIDLEY
Eileen Bahr

Ministering Bro. Roger Aberle (Sis. LaVonne, Sabetha, KS) spent the day with us on Thanksgiving, November 28.

Some fifty years ago working as a high school secretary, I remember the visual aids director scheduling biology, etc. films from U of I and telling how the percentage of remembering and

understanding a subject was so much higher to see it than to read it. Bro. Tim Sauder gave us a visual presentation of Gateway Woods. Seeing and hearing the students express their thoughts brought it so much more real and a closer understanding of this mission. Read it, see it, and the third step is do it ... we may not be able to be on campus but we can support and appreciate this work of the Lord, especially through prayer. Does your prayer list seem to get longer more and more as mine seems to?

KANSAS, SABETHA
Jeanelle Plattner
Dawn Strahm

Our visiting ministers this past month included: Bro. Don Sinn (Silverton, OR), Bro. Wayne Grimm (West Bend, IA), Bro. Dale Zeltwanger (Morris, MN), Bro. Ed Strahm (Bern, KS), and Bro. Jim Kaeb (Bern, KS). We appreciate their willingness to share God's precious Word with us.

We extend our sympathy to Sis. Irene Lehman as well as Bro. Fred and Sis. Charlotte Aberle in the recent passing of Bro. Andy Lehman. May they feel God's nearness as they look heavenward to that happy home. We also remember Bro. Ben and Sis. Janice Wysong in thought and prayer as they laid their mother, Sis. Evelyn Wysong, to rest just a few short days later. What a blessing to know that these two dear souls can rest in peace as we look forward to that great reunion day.

The blessed Christmas season always brings special times to our church family. We gathered together for an evening of caroling followed by a wonderful potluck supper. Despite the inclement weather, we could bring joy in song to those that can no longer go in and out as they once did. Our hearts were warmed as we listened to our Sunday School Christmas program and were reminded that it's not the manger, but the cross, that sets the spirit free. May these young souls always remember the words they told us in verse and song.

Note of Thanks:

The family of Andy Lehman would like to thank all those who helped after the passing of our loved one. A special thanks to the dedicated staff of the Apostolic Christian Home for the loving care he received as a resident there. Also, to the many friends in the AC Retirement Village and others who expressed their sympathies and for the many contributions given as a memorial.

Thank you for the many prayers expressed on our behalf during this time of sadness. May God bless each of you for your kindness.

The family of Andy Lehman
Irene Lehman
Fred & Charlotte Aberle
Steve & Lynn Roeschley

KANSAS, WICHITA
Emma Miller

For the past year, Sis. Esther Knoblock divided her time between her studies in Wichita and

her work in Emporia. Her Monday through Thursday schedule in Wichita enabled her to take part in our Wednesday evening services as well as to continue her medical technical training. She will be missed not only by the adults, but by the children and teenagers with whom she interacted.

One of our Wichita traditions is to substitute caroling for Wednesday night services in December. This past Wednesday night my home was blessed by thirty carolers who made the drive to El Dorado to carol for me. What a blessing! Another blessing we are anticipating is the Sunday School Christmas program the evening of December 19.

Bro. Milton Bowers and his family are dealing with his latest problem — a fast growing malignant growth on one eye and eyelid. Decisions like this are difficult in the best of circumstances. Right now, Bro. Milton's age and past medical history are negative factors. The positive is that he trusts his Heavenly Father's will to be done.

KENTUCKY, LEXINGTON
Barb Huber
Betty Baltic

Greetings to all this blessed holiday season. We are so thankful for the most precious gift of all, our Lord Jesus Christ.

We appreciated having Bro. Walt Herrmann (Sis. Betty, Princeville, IL) here the weekend of November 28. Our other visiting ministers were Bro. Chris Huber (Sis. Sharon, Francesville,

IN) and Elder Bro. Bruce Hohulin (Goodfield, IL). May God richly bless all who travel to assemble with us.

With the help of some of our visitors, a small group went caroling to a few shut-ins. It is such a joy to bring a little Christmas cheer to the elderly.

We extend a warm welcome to visit us in Lexington. Contact Bro. Lester Huber (859-745-2541), Bro. Jan Neukomm (859-273-8574), or Bro. Doug Germann (859-224-8710).

MICHIGAN, ALTO

**Rose Watson
Terri Huber**

The past two weeks have been filled with a special kind of activity. We appreciate opportunities to do good for others, and at Christmastime these abound: food baskets, adopt – a – family, thoughtful gifts for teachers and neighbors, and caroling for elderly and shut-ins. In particular, the carolers were glad to bring some joy to young Austin Koehl (Bro. Rob and Sis. Kim) who has been in the hospital with a painful and, as yet, undetermined condition. We have missed his smiling face in Sunday School and it was good to see him. We are all praying for his condition to improve and for God to grant his physicians wisdom and bathe his family in love and peace.

Others who were hospitalized or had outpatient surgery include Sis. Kate Wheeler and Sis. Rose Watson (Bro. Terry).

We wish God's blessings on Aaron Kaeb, as he has moved to

Bay City to begin a new job in Saginaw, MI. We are sure Bro. Curt and Sis. Luanne (and all the grandparents) are glad he is close enough to visit often.

The Sunday School students and young group blessed us with a program about Christ's birth, performing beautiful songs and reciting meaningful verses. Thanks to the teachers and superintendent who work so hard with them to make this event happen. There were a few chuckles as the youngest ones experienced some stage fright, but their simple words and innocence add so much to the program.

And finally, a big "welcome back!" to the college students who are returning to the arms of their families for break. It sure has been great to see you all and have you among us again! We also enjoyed our college-student visitors from Indiana on December 18-19. How the singing swelled to the rafters (and beyond ... to God's very ear) on Sunday morning!

MICHIGAN, BAY CITY

**Sarah Knochel
Janelle Ramseyer**

We are thankful for the visiting ministers that we receive in our congregation. Bro. Steve Stieglitz (Sis. Jane, Leo, IN) was in Bay City for Thanksgiving. We appreciate their visits to Bay City to visit Sis. Jane's family. We were also blessed to have Elder Bro. Aaron Steffen (Sis. Loretta, Alto, MI) with us on a recent Wednesday evening. May the Lord richly bless these brothers for their acts of kindness to our

congregation.

We sympathize with Sis. Lena Wieland's family as she entered into her eternal rest on November 26. May the Holy Comforter be with her children, Bro. Dale (Sis. Carol) Wieland, Lynn (Mark) Kuch, Neil Weiland and Kerry (Lavon) Rellinger. She is also survived by four grandchildren: Mark II and Timothy Kuch, Christina (Bob) Graham and Jennifer Rellinger; her sister, Sis. Della Erismann; and many nieces and nephews who attend the Bay City congregation.

We have had many brothers, sisters, and dear friends who have experienced sickness, surgery, and other afflictions in this past month. We continue to pray for those who still suffer and are thankful that the Lord has provided His healing powers on the rest. They are Sis. Marcie Cowan (Stacy), Bro. Fred Ruegsegger (Sis. Marilyn), Carlie Schlatter (Bro. Alan and Vicki), Sis. Helen Wieland, Sis. Millie Wieland, and Bro. Gary and Sis. Shirley Wright. We pray for Sis. Marcie as she is at the University of Michigan – Ann Arbor hospital. May God strengthen her body and bring comfort to her and her husband over the loss of their unborn child.

May God richly bless Tom and Sharon Hine on the birth of their fourth child, Zipporah Anita. She is welcomed home by her big brothers and sister, Forrest, Daphne, and Kaleb. Her grandparents are Tom and Anita Hine and great-grandmother, Sis. Margaret Ruegsegger.

Bro. Joe and Sis. Dorothy Ramseyer's daughter, Janel, was married on November 27 to Martin Eckert. Janel and her husband reside in the Fort Wayne, IN, area. May the Lord provide for them as they begin their lives together.

Friday, December 17, was the evening our Sunday School went Christmas caroling. It is such a blessing that we are able to go and sing for those who are a part of the family of God, to lift them up in thought at this time of year. Sunday, December 19, was our annual Sunday School Christmas program. How encouraging it is to see the love of Jesus on all ages of the children, from Preschool to Senior Bible Class. May each child in the Sunday school feel the love of Christ in their hearts this Christmas season!

As 2005 is nearing, may we look forward to another year of service to our Heavenly Father! We pray that each one may feel God's grace and goodness as they go about their daily lives.

MICHIGAN, DETROIT
Krista Wieland

We would like to remember Bro. Jim Barton and Sis. Ann Tachar, who have both spent time in the hospital this month. Also needing medical care were Cody Baran (Craig and Sis. Pat) with a broken arm and Navy Schrock (Bro. Troy and Sis. Jennifer) with a broken arm. Graham Bedolla, 18 month old son of Bro. Jesse and Sis. Bonnie, underwent his second brain surgery and remains in the hospital for several more days

for recovery. We are thankful his surgery went well and our prayers continue for a successful outcome.

We are so thankful for Jason Allen, son of Bro. Pat and Sis. Jeanie, who has made known his desire to give his life to Christ in repentance. Our prayers also continue for him and his continued recovery from an accident.

Kristen Rauhe, daughter of Bro. Warren and Sis. Kay, has made known her engagement to Tom Siver. May God bless their future life together.

Once again, we had the blessed opportunity to get together and go caroling and deliver Christmas baskets to various people from church and in the community. May we ever remember during this busy time of year the true meaning of Christmas, and what the birth and ultimate death and resurrection of Christ did for each of us.

MINNESOTA
MINNEAPOLIS
LaRae Dill

We are enjoying the fellowship of Sis. Mindy Wulf (Morris, MN). She is working as a nurse at Abbott Northwestern Hospital, and we see her on occasion as her work schedule permits.

Visiting ministers to our congregation this month were: Bro. Kent Getz (Elgin, IA), Bro. Alan Schambach (Remington, IN) – both here for Thanksgiving services; Bro. Clint Schmidt and Elder Bro. Leroy Messner (Winthrop, MN) – both present for our Christmas program.

Yet in Thy dark streets shineth
the everlasting light;
The hopes and fears of all the
years,
are met in Thee tonight.

These words from the Christmas hymn, "O Little Town of Bethlehem" speak to all of the extent to which Jesus Christ is able to meet the needs of all people at all times. This and other hymns were sung during our annual Christmas caroling evening on December 18. We're glad Sisters Millie Schmidgall, Esther Linneman, and Katie Blunier could host the carolers.

We had opportunity to pray for Sandy Bentz, Sis. Ethel Bednarski, and Sis. Connie Bergstrom as they were hospital patients this month.

MINNESOTA, MORRIS
Katie Koehl
Heidi Nohl

We were blessed to have visiting Elder Bro. Curt Frank (La-Crosse, IN) and ministering Bros. Darrell Stoller (Bern, KS), Todd Stoller (Latty, OH) and Dewayne Dill (Minneapolis, MN). May God bless them for their willing service.

November 20-21 we were blessed to witness the proving and baptism of our friend, Blane Koehl (Bro. Karl and Sis. Marilyn). We wish him God's nearness as he begins a closer walk with God.

We had the Memorandum read to us the evening of November 20. We were thankful to have Elder

Bro. Curt Frank here to help Bro. Art. It was a blessing to us all.

Weston Allen was born to Bro. Gary and Sis. Heidi Nohl. Welcoming him are his grandparents, Bro. Todd and Sis. Pam Stoller (Latty, OH) and Bro. DeWayne and Sis. Janice Nohl. Eric and Jenae Wilson were also blessed with a new little boy, Sean Kenneth. Looking forward to his arrival was big sister, Taylor, and grandparents, Sis. Diane Kellenberger and Orrin and Karen Wilson. Emmitt Kurtis was born to Bro. Kurt and Sis. Savannah Wulf. Grandparents are Bro. Tim and Sis. Gwen Gramm and Bro. Denny and Sis. Judy Wulf. We wish them all God's richest blessings as they raise their children.

Hospitalized this month was Bro. Mitch Koehl (Sis. Janelle) and Bro. Steve Schaefer (Sis. Pam). We are thankful they are once again doing well.

November 26 was the wedding day of Byron Wulf and Amy Hacker. We rejoice with them and their parents, Bro. Doug and Sis. Joyce Wulf and Charlie and Deb Hacker, and wish them God's richest blessings.

We rejoice as another soul has answered the call of repentance. Alyssa Knobloch has felt the need to seek God's direction in her life. Her parents are Mark and Sis. Brenda Knobloch.

December 18 was the wedding day of Amber Jones and Tom Rath (Bro. Shane and Sis. Ruth). We wish them God's nearness as they begin their lives together.

Note of Thanks:

I would like to thank each and every one who visited, sent cards, flowers, brought food and for the prayers on my behalf during my recent hospitalization and recovery at home. May God bless you!

Sis. Sophie Nohl

MINNESOTA, WINTHROP

**Ginny Stoll
Rachel Steiner**

We are thankful Elder Bro. Peter Petrovic (Sis. Marian, San Diego, CA) and Bro. Duane Rocke (Sis. Bonnie, Minneapolis, MN) were able to come and assist our Elder Bro. LeRoy Messner in reading the Memorandum. Are we heeding God's Word? Let us listen carefully to the watchmen on the wall.

We rejoice with Adrian and Beckie Ebling in the birth of their son, Malakai Allen, on November 19. Many prayers were said on behalf of this precious baby boy, as he had to spend several weeks in the hospital. His siblings, Iszak, Gabryel, Abbigayle and Phoebe, are very excited to have him home and healthy!

During this season of thanks may each of us look into our hearts and give thanks to our Heavenly Father for all He has done for each and every one of us.

The Sunday School has had several opportunities for precious fellowship. They would like to thank the West Bend church for allowing them to come and help make soap. The Sunday School also hosted the widows and widowers and sang carols to them – what an example the older gener-

ation is to the young children. We need to be thankful for our rich heritage!

This past month it was a blessing to share the beautiful Christmas carols with the senior citizens and those in the local nursing homes. As we listened to the Sunday School children tell the Christmas story in song and verse, we were reminded once again of the miracle of God's love! We thank the children and their teachers for their efforts put into the program.

We extend sympathy to Bro. Roy Howk in the death of his brother, Russell Howk.

Our hospital and surgical patients this month were Lauryn Messner (Bro. Paul and Sis. Jan) and Sis. Jan Messner (Bro. Paul). We pray for God's continued healing.

Note of Thanks:

The family of Bro. Harold Messner wishes to express gratitude and deep appreciation for all the prayers, kind deeds and expressions of sympathy during the loss of their loved one.

Sis. Geraldine Messner and family

MISSOURI, KANSAS CITY **Garry and Marty Rokey**

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

John 1:1

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the

only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”

John 1:14

With these and other wonderful verses from the Bible, our Sunday School children once again told the marvelous story of the birth of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, as their presentation of the annual Christmas program. After the program and the afternoon service on December 12, our congregation sang carols at several of the local retirement homes. Afterwards, we reassembled at church where we enjoyed a chili and soup supper and fellowship with one another.

“Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord; that walketh in his ways.”

Psalms 128:1

Our prayers are with our dear friend, Bruce Banwart, as he has begun his walk with the Lord and turned his back on sin and darkness. We rejoice along with the angels with the news of his repentance.

MISSOURI, LAMAR

**Becky Marti
Wendy Braker**

We were thankful to add two dear souls to the body of Christ on December 19. We welcome Sis. Nicole Marti (Bro. Kevin and Sis. Kathy) and Sis. Katie Frieden (Bro. Rex and Sis. Vera) into our precious brotherhood. May they continue to walk this path of life in true humility and obedience to God's Word. We were thankful to

have Elder Bro. Jon Schmidgall (Oakville, IA) assist our Elder Bro. Lawrence Luthi in this work for the Lord. We pray God will bless these dear brothers and their families for their labors.

Spending time in the hospital this past month was Bro. Raymond Braker (Sis. Luetta). We are thankful he is back home.

MISSOURI, TAYLOR Susan Haerr

We are excited to announce the birth of two new babies in our congregation. Isaac Lane Pflum was born to Bro. Keith and Sis. Tami on November 28. His siblings are Seth and Mallory. Maternal grandparents are retired Elder Bro. Roy Grimm and Sis. Dona, and great – grandmother, Sis. Edna Feller of Fairbury, IL. Paternal grandparents are Bro. Lyle and Sis. Marian Pflum, and great – grandmother, Sis. Bernice Frank of Oakville, IA.

Alexandria (Lexi) Rae Miller was born to Adam and Nikki Miller on December 9. Maternal grandparents are Bro. Norman and Sis. Sally Haerr. We are thankful for the safe arrival of both little babies and offer our congratulations and prayers to the parents as they raise these little ones to glorify the Lord.

Along with the miracle of birth, we have also experienced the miracle of two souls winning the victory and entering eternal rest. Our sympathy is with the family of Sis. Mayme Gerst of Burlington, IA. Sis. Mayme was the grandmother of Bro. Brad (Sis. Ellen) Gehring and the step-

mother of Bro. Arnie (Sis. Marge) Gerst.

In addition, Sis. Evelyn Wysong finally got her heart's desire as she also went to be with Jesus. Sis. Evelyn was the mother of Sis. Sally (Norman) Haerr and grandmother and great – grandmother of many in our congregation. We will miss her, but can't help but be thankful that she has finally won that victory.

Thank you to Bro. Wayne Laubscher and his wife, Sis. Gloria, for taking the time to be with us on a Wednesday night to share a Bible Study on Forgiveness. It was an incredible blessing to us and we pray that God will, in turn, bless this special couple for their time here.

The theme of this article seems to be miracles, and it continues. We praise God that He spared the lives of two in our church family. Bro. Scott Hoerr (Sis. Anna) and Bob Jenkins were involved in a serious accident earlier this month and are recovering well. Bro. Scott suffered a separated shoulder and Bob suffered a broken sternum and several bumps and bruises.

In addition, there have been a number of surgical patients in the last month, including Sis. Marge Sutter (Bro. Gerald), Gene Riney (Irene) and Vernon Huber (Sis. Judy).

God bless each of you in the new year. Please come visit us in Taylor!

**NEW YORK
CROGHAN-NAUMBURG
Hope Graves**

As always during this busy holiday season we have found many ways to express our joy in Jesus' birth. We started out on December 3 with caroling at the Hallmark nursing home and then the following Friday evening at the Lewis County General Hospital. We pray that the residents received as much of a blessing from listening as we did from singing.

Several of us women gathered together on Monday morning, December 13, to pack cheer baskets filled with goodies. We know that the example of gift giving and sharing of our abundance was demonstrated by the wise men when they found the King they were searching for in Bethlehem.

"And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh."

Matthew 2:11

On Sunday, December 19, we had our Sunday School Christmas program following church. It was a blessing to see the children get up and share with us what they learned in Sunday School. During the program we were all reminded to use the gifts that the Lord has given to each of us and to remember that the greatest of all gifts was not wrapped in paper, but in swaddling clothes. The

children and adults enjoyed having cookies and chocolate milk afterwards! We spent the evening caroling, first in Lowville at the East Road Adult Home, and then in Croghan at Steepleview Courts. Snacks were enjoyed by all afterwards. Our thanks go out to each who put forth an added effort to make this such a special time of fellowship and of sharing God's love with the community and children.

Our prayers go out to Sis. Carolyn Virkler in the loss of her brother, Bro. Herbert Schieler, from Francesville, IN. May the family receive comfort in his passing.

We are thankful to have Sis. Bernice Hirschey again assembling with us after several weeks of illness. May the Lord continue to strengthen her daily.

**OHIO, AKRON
Joyce Gasser**

Our Sunday School classes had a very good program depicting the significance of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave His life, to make available the way for us to live eternally with Him.

Bro. Richard and Sis. Evelyn Baumgartner will be having a Golden Wedding Anniversary January 22, as they were married in 1955. Our congratulations to them.

Sis. Bonnie Bako has a new granddaughter, Nina Sorella, born on November 22. The baby's parents are Melinda and Michael Dermody.

Bro. Randy and Sis. Carolyn Miller have a new grandson,

Jackson David, born on December 8. The baby's parents are John and Erin Miller, who also have Emily and Anna.

We extend our sympathy to Bro. John and Sis. Joyce Schamback and family in the death on December 17 of Sis. Joyce's father, Bro. Melvin Beery (Sis. Elizabeth, Rittman).

Recent visiting ministers were Bro. Ted Luginbuhl (Sis. Stephanie) and Bro. Gary Maibach (Sis. Mary Ann), all of Smithville.

For the past year, we had six births, six new members, two marriages, and two deaths.

**OHIO, COLUMBUS
Nancy Banks**

Greetings of love and wishes for a very blessed New Year are being sent your way from the Columbus congregation.

Bringing us the Living Word this month were Bros. Sam Schlatter (Junction, OH), Bill Brake (Sardis, OH) and Vic Bauman (Rittman, OH). It was a joy to have a nice group from Rittman with us for our annual Christmas caroling. We hope they will come back to visit us real soon.

Little Elijah Leonhard is real excited to welcome home his two new sisters, Elizabeth Lee and Lydia Irene. Thankful for the twins' safe arrival are parents, Larry and Emily Leonhard, and grandparents, Bro. Larry and Sis. Nancy Banks and Harold and LeAnn Leonhard.

Isn't it a blessing to know that our Heavenly Father will always be by our side, no matter what the

trial or tribulation may be? Our family has experienced one of those years of one trial after another, yet our precious Father has been ever faithful and carried us through, from one struggle to another. What a comfort for every believer to know that He is ever present and will never leave our side. Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

OHIO, JUNCTION

Cindy Schlatter

Sis. Inez Rose and Bro. Doug Reinhard (Sis. Elizabeth) both had surgery recently. We thank our Heavenly Father for watching over them and allowing a speedy recovery.

We enjoyed having Elder Bro. Mark Masters (Mansfield, OH) minister to us on a recent Sunday. It is such a rich blessing of our fellowship to come to church and be both encouraged and admonished as we daily strive to live an overcoming life. We trust the Lord will richly bless our ministers for their labors on our behalf.

OHIO, LATTY

Bonny Wenninger

Amanda Steffen

Sis. Mary Eisenman passed away on November 27. We are thankful that she could go to be with her Lord, but remember her family in their loss. Our heartfelt prayers are with Sis. Joyce and Bro. Bill (Sis. Carol) Eisenman and their family.

This month we were blessed to have Bro. Earl Beery (Sis. Susie, Rittman, OH) visit us. We thank

him for ministering God's Word to us.

Anna Caroline was born on November 18 to Derek and Kim Miller. Grandparents are Denny and Janet Miller of Grover Hill, OH, and Bro. Ray and Sis. Carol Stoller. On November 21, a little girl was born to Natalie Stoller. Grandparents of Adrienne Faith are Bro. Dwight and Sis. Lori Stoller. We wish these parents much joy in raising their daughters.

On December 5, the engagement of Bro. Blane Stoller and Sis. Mindy Graf was made known. Parents are Bro. Craig and Sis. Ruth Stoller and Bro. Bob and Sis. Joan Graf. We wish them God's blessings as they look forward to being united in marriage.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Bro. Glenn Stoller and his wife, Sis. Edie, as he is recovering from surgery. We pray that God will continue to strengthen and be near them.

OHIO, MANSFIELD

Esther Baumann

On the evening of December 12, we delighted in hearing the voices of our Sunday School children praising the Lord in their annual Christmas program. We pray for each one of these tender young souls.

We thank visiting ministers, Elder Bro. Aaron Steffen (Sis. Loretta, Alto, MI) and Bro. Sam Schlatter (Sis. Linda, Junction, OH), for their service to God.

Hospitalized patients in need of our prayers are Sis. Lucille Groh and Sis. Kathryn Beer.

Our sympathy is extended to the family of Delbert Beer who died on December 7. He is survived by his mother, Sis. Kathryn Beer; brothers, Bro. Rex Beer (Sis. Marilyn) and Bro. Al Beer (Sis. Janet); sister-in-law, Sis. Pat Beer; and brother-in-law, Bro. Dale Gabor.

On December 5, little Clint Lucas was born very prematurely to Maria Tucker (Dan and Sis. Barb). Six days later, God took little Clint to heaven. Please pray for the family.

Our annual business meeting was held in December. Bro. Mick Hill's (Sis. Delores) term as trustee expired; he was replaced by Bro. Dan Sauder (Sis. Pam). Sis. Sharon Sabo (Bro. Greg) is replacing Sis. Barb Tucker (Dan) on the Kitchen Committee. Sis. Lucy Baumann (Bro. David) leaves our Local World Relief Committee and Sis. Lilly Baumann (Bro. Mike) joins Sis. Robin Beer (Bro. Marvin) who was re-elected. Bro. Curt Walter (Sis. Elizabeth) is our new usher replacing Bro. Chad Griffey (Sis. Tami). We thank all for their service this past year.

Note of Thanks:

"We greatly appreciate and thank our children, grandchildren and all who helped to make our 50th wedding anniversary so special. Thank you for the beautiful cards, gifts and well wishes. May God richly reward each one for your love and kindness."

Bro. Rex and Sis. Marilyn Beer

So on I go not knowing,

I would not if I might,
I'd rather walk in the dark with
God
Than go alone in the light;
I'd rather walk by faith with Him
Than go alone by sight.
Gospel Hymns 181, vs. 4

As the new year unfolds, let us
commit our will to God and trust
Him to lead us.

OHIO, RITTMAN

Anne Widmer

"Now thank we all our God
with hearts and hands and
voices!" (Zion's Harp #236).
Along with a special service, a day
set aside to spend time with fam-
ily and loved ones, thanking God
for all that He has done for us is
the greatest reason to be thankful
for the Thanksgiving holiday.
While giving thanks every day of
the year, we are blessed with time
to spend with those we love to give
extra thanks to our great God.

This month, our congregation
was very thankful for the four
new souls that were brought into
the fold. Eric Maibach (Bro. Al-
pha and Sis. Denise), Lisa
Hartzler (Elder Bro. Merle and
Sis. Bonnie), Chad Beery (Bro.
Walt and Sis. Lynda) and David
Gasser (Bro. Virgil and Sis. Lois)
gave their testimonies and were
baptized November 20-21. We
welcome them with loving arms
into our Christian family and
pray that God will daily give them
the grace to endure and be strong
in His name. Our visiting Elder
brethren that wonderful week-
end were Elder Bros. Ken
Indermuhle (Sardis, OH), Aaron

Steffen (Alto, MI), Andy Stoller
(Smithville, OH) and Mark Mas-
ters (Mansfield, OH).

Other visiting ministers this
month were Bros. Bill Brake
(Sardis, OH) and Ben Walder
(Congerville, IL). We are thank-
ful to both of these brothers for
visiting our congregation and
sharing the Word of God with us.

This past month, Sis. Aldine
Ramsier (Bro. Nelson) was hospi-
talized. We are thankful that she
is on the road to recovery and
pray that God will touch her daily
with His healing hand.

Our sympathy and prayers go
out to Sis. Violet Baltic's family as
they suffer the loss of their dear
sister and aunt. Bro. Mitch and
Sis. Violet, and Walt, we know
that you and the rest of the family
will sorely miss her.

Also to Bro. Henry and Sis.
Bertha Kiser for the passing of
Esther Harmon, her sister.

There is a time for everything
under the sun and as there is a
time for death, there is also a time
for birth. This month we are
pleased to announce the birth of
Jewel Olivia. Jewel is the first-
born of Brian and Jennifer
Persinger. She is the grand-
daughter of Jim and Pam
Persinger and James and Sis.
Joyce Thompson. Her great -
grandparents are Bro. Arthur
and Sis. Janet Maibach. God be
with little Jewel as she begins her
life here on earth.

OHIO, SARDIS

Jami Hartzler
Terry Zollinger

Awake, Thou soul's first inspira-
tion;
Let watchmen stand before the
temple door!
With constant zeal and firm devo-
tion,
Against enemy they do implore.
Their pealing calls through the
world resound;
Salvation, Lord, in Thee alone is
found.

Zion's Harp #111

We were blessed on
Thanksgiving weekend to have
visiting ministering Bro. Mat-
thew Rassi (Sis. Bridget, Chicago,
IL) among us to share the Word.
May he and his family be blessed
for making the effort to be with
us.

Our prayers are with Sis. Lisa
Indermuhle (Bro. Eric) and Ja-
son Brake (Bro. Bill and Sis. Mir-
iam) for the Lord's healing power
for their afflictions.

Amanda Alrutz (Bro. Allen
and Sis. Janet Indermuhle) and
John Westlow (John and Brenda,
Tiffin, OH) have announced their
engagement. Their wedding date
is tentatively on September 10,
2005. May they look to the Lord
for guidance as they plan their
marriage.

"Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace, good will to-
ward men."

Luke 2:14

What a joy to see children
praising God in song and verse to
celebrate Jesus' birth. The an-

nual Christmas program was a blessing to all on December 12. May we continue to pray for our children to some day accept the precious gift of salvation in repentance.

When Caydi Figel's (Bro. Andy and Sis. Cyndi) birth announcement was made known, Grandfather Ben Blough (Sarasota, FL) was omitted. I apologize for the omission.

OHIO, SMITHVILLE
Alyssa Miller
Rachel Maibach

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

As this is written, the Christmas season is in full swing. The busyness and the hustle and bustle of making it to all the family gatherings, sending cards, buying gifts, caroling and other activities make it hard to stop and realize the precious Gift of Life we have been given. And not only the priceless gift of Christ, but are we truly thankful for all our family, friends, and brethren? God has blessed us so richly with gifts of love that can never be measured by any dollar value. Hopefully, we can each can make an extra effort to stop and be thankful during this Christmas season.

We are especially thankful for God's healing hand this month. Sis. Becky Zollinger (Bro. Ken) has safely recovered from sur-

gery. Also, Sis. Kim Luginbuhl (Bro. Marvin and Sis. Rose) had experienced severe back pain this past month. We are thankful that surgery has helped and she is fully recovered. It has been a joy to see both of you back in church. We also continue to pray for our Sis. Mildred Hartzler as she has been in the hospital and now is in the nursing home.

Visiting brothers this month were Bro. Larry Wenniger (Latty, OH) and Bro. Ron Steiner (Rittman, OH). We are thankful you could be with us and lend of yourselves. May He be your reward!

We neglected to report last month that Bro. Steve and Sis. Connie Bauman have a new little granddaughter. Bro. Andy and Sis. Krista Wieland are first-time parents of Ashlyn Berniece. We were thankful to hear of her safe arrival!

OREGON, PORTLAND
Brianna Strahm

Safe in the arms of Jesus,
 Safe on His gentle breast,
 There by His love o'er-shaded,
 Sweetly my soul shall rest.
 Hark 'tis the voice of angels,
 Borne in a song to me,
 Over the fields of glory,
 Over the jasper sea...

Hymns of Zion #218, vs. 1

Although our hearts were saddened this month to bid our dear Sis. Ann (Reuter) Rumbold a final farewell, we rejoice with her as she has won the victory over death and the grave. She was preceded in death by her husband,

Bro. Paul, who went to claim his reward in 1995. Sis. Ann was born in 1916 in Cissna Park, Illinois. In 1946, she and her husband relocated to the Portland area. Sis. Ann had recently moved to an assisted living facility where she was when she passed from this life at the age of 88 on November 21. We will greatly miss her godly example and cheerful attitude. Her walk of life and her Christ-like disposition will leave an imprint on each of our hearts. Our thoughts and prayers go out to her family during this time of sorrow. We especially remember her three children, Jerry (Sharon), Sis. Judie (Bro. Ed) Knecht, and David (Debbie). May the Lord grant each of you comfort as only He can.

Our Bro. Ron Jones (Sis. Liz) has been called of the Lord to serve in the ministry here in our small congregation. He certainly has the support and prayers of the congregation as he takes on this new responsibility. We wish the Jones family much grace and pray the Lord will richly bless and provide for them in the days ahead.

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

St. Luke 2:11

Once again we enjoyed the privilege of hearing our dear Sunday school children tell us of Christ's birth. Our Christmas program took place on December 12 and we greatly appreciate the

efforts put forth by the teachers and the children in preparing for this occasion. It is our prayer that the seed that has been planted in the hearts of these dear children would one day yield fruit pleasing unto the Lord.

We were thankful to have two visiting ministers with us this month. They were Elder Bro. Art Metz (Sis. Betty) and Bro. Ed Knecht (Sis. Judie), both of Silverton. May the Lord richly bless them for their labors on our behalf.

Note of Thanks:

Our heartfelt thanks and may God bless all who remembered us with gifts of love, food, flowers, and most of all your support and prayers.

Our humble love,
The Ann Rumbold Family

OREGON, SILVERTON
Kelsey Walder

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 Savior in.

Hymns of Zion #36, vs. 3

This was the concluding hymn our Sunday school sang at their Christmas program on December 12. It was wonderful to again be reminded through verse and song of our Savior's humble birth in Bethlehem and then to be pointed

to His death on the cross in remembrance of why He was sent. We wish to extend a special thanks to each child for their efforts and to their teachers and parents for their encouragement and labors.

In the hospital this month was our friend, Sheree Hari (Howard). We pray that God provide for her and her husband's needs as they face this time of illness in her life.

We wish to extend our loving sympathy to Bro. Ed and Sis. Judie Knecht and family in the loss of Sis. Judy's mother, Sis. Ann Rumbold, from our Portland congregation. We are thankful that she was able to lay down her cross and reach her heavenly goal. Sis. Ann was preceded in death by her husband, Bro. Paul Rumbold. We are remembering the family in our prayers and pray that God will provide for their needs at this time of sorrow and loss in their lives.

We were thankful this month to have visiting with us Elder Bro. Wayne Fehr (Sis. Kathy) and ministering Bro. Ron Jones (Sis. Liz), from our Portland congregation. May God bless them for their labors on our behalf.

PENNSYLVANIA
PHILADELPHIA
Nathan and

MaryElizabeth Gasser

We gathered again this month to hear the reading of the Memorandum, and are grateful to Elder Bro. John Laukhuf (Latty, OH) for being with us and serving in this most important work. We ap-

preciate the dedication and service of our Elder brothers, and may we each strive to learn from their instruction, and continue to pray for God to lead them as they lead His children.

Another blessed privilege this month was enjoying our Sunday School Christmas program. It was especially gratifying that this year, four little children participated in their very first program. And while they mostly giggled and squirmed and hid behind older children's legs, we knew this was the beginning of their Sunday School career, that with God's grace will some day lead them to their own walk with Him.

Our dear friend, Laura Baer (Ed and Connie), is serving in the Army and we pray for her safety and ask God to be with her during her service. Anyone wishing to write to her can find her address below.

Laura J. Baer
A. Co. 305th MI. DN.
Fort Huachuca, AZ 85613

TENNESSEE, NASHVILLE
Mike and Monica Fritz

We are so thankful for the Living Word and the faithful ministering brothers who have brought it to us this past month: Bros. Kenny Eisenmann (Sis. Sharon, Cissna Park, IL), and Ron Koehl (Sis. Carol, Sarasota, FL). We have also appreciated the fellowship of brethren visiting from Sarasota, FL; Cissna Park and Tremont, IL; Bern, KS; and Junction, OH.

If you are traveling in or

through the Nashville area, please plan to worship with us. The following churches are scheduled for services in the near future: Atlanta, GA (1/23), Gridley, IL (1/30), Rockville, CT (2/6), Wolcott, IN (2/13), Bay City, MI (2/20), and Bloomington-Normal, IL (2/27). If you are planning to worship with us, please call ahead to confirm our schedule. We also usually meet on Wednesday evenings for a song service and would welcome any midweek visitors. Contacts are Bro. Don and Sis. Faye Sauder, (615) 373-8928; Bro. Mike and Sis. Monica Fritz, (615) 952-9933; and Sis. Gwen Leuthold, (615) 662-2946.

**TEXAS
DALLAS/FORT WORTH**

Carrie Beyer

This month, our church would like to thank our Elder Bro. Bob Walder, and his wife, Sis. Gloria, for making the trip from Congerville to share in Holy Communion with us. This being our first Communion as a congregation, it was a special time in which we could reflect on the ultimate sacrifice ever given – Jesus Christ's life.

We'd also like to thank Bro. Herbie Knochel (Sis. Laurie, Phoenix) for his recent service here as part of our minister rotation. The weekend was a wonderful blessing for us! We're looking forward to hosting ministers from Sabetha and Oakville in February.

As 2005 unfolds, our church is excited to see what God may have

in store for us. May we live each day in total surrender to Jesus Christ, no matter to whose needs He might call us to minister, or where He may ask us to go!

In closing, we'd like to invite anyone living near or traveling through the area to worship with us. We currently meet in Grapevine, TX, at the Holiday Inn Express just northwest of the D/FW airport, near the intersection of Highways 114 and 121. To reach the hotel while traveling either direction on Highway 121, exit on Main Street; the hotel is on the south side of the highway. For worship times or other information, please contact Bro. Ken and Sis. Sharon Lawson (817.431.0832), Bro. Kyle and Sis. Carrie Beyer (817.750.1028), or Timothy Stoller (817.759.1549).

**TEXAS, SAN MARCOS
Amy Ringger**

Recently I entered a small antique shop in our hometown with one of my younger children. The clerk greeted me pleasantly as I began looking at furniture. A few seconds later I heard someone say, "Can I ask you what that 'scarf' on your head means?"

Her question didn't immediately register in my mind as being directed toward me, but after a second or two I turned and realized that her question referred to my headcovering.

I asked to make sure, "Do you mean my headcovering?"

"Yes," the young woman affirmed, "I have seen them worn before, and I figure it must be something to do with religion, but

I've never had anyone explain it to me."

After briefly explaining the meaning of the headcovering, I mentioned that the practice comes from the Bible. She said, "I've got a Bible right here, can you show me where?"

We opened to I Corinthians 11 and read a few verses together. Since she had another customer enter the shop, I suggested that she might read the whole chapter herself. She said, "Thanks for taking the time to show me that—I've always wondered where it comes from and never knew, even though I was raised in a Christian home."

As I pondered the incident later, I wondered whether I expressed myself clearly enough. I couldn't recall exactly everything about the conversation and wish we could have talked further, but was glad that she appeared to be open to learning from the Bible.

As noted in I Peter 3:15, may God help us to "...sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:"

Our local Sunday School presented a Christmas program after church services on Sunday, December 12. The students sang several hymns, said some verses and read the Christmas story from the Bible.

We enjoyed a visit from our Elder Bro. Bob and Sis. Gloria Walder who were traveling through Texas and some of us spent a mid-week evening to-

gether with them. Brothers who preached the Word recently have been Ron Palitto (Sis. Lynell, Akron), Larry Wenniger (Sis. Joyce, Latty), Jerry Wagenbach (Sis. Bonnie, Oakville), and Elder Bro. Kent Heimer (Sis. Jan, Taylor). Thanks for your visits! The following churches are on the minister rotation for February: (6) Lester, (13) Fairbury, (20) Kansas City, (27) Junction.

We extend a hearty welcome to anyone who may be in the area to worship with us. Please call ahead to help us plan for serving lunch and other activities. If you are available for fellowship on Saturday evening, Sunday evening, or during the week, we'd be happy to plan something then as well. See the ministers' book for local contact information.

Our congregation continues to meet for services 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. Take Exit #206; the hotel is on the southbound frontage road.

TEXAS, ZAPATA

Mary Plattner

The holiday season usually brings visitors to South Texas as many families come to see their loved ones here. We appreciate all the visitors that we have been having. Our congregation grows each week as more of our winter family arrives.

Bro. Greg Rassi (Sis. Carla, Chicago, IL) was here and spent an evening with us in Zapata prior to having services in Pharr, Texas. We thank him for giving of his services in South Texas. We realize it is a long distance from the Midwest.

We will begin to have mid-week services for the winter months. Services will begin at 7 p.m. on Wednesday evening. On Sunday evening we will begin our Song Services at church at 6:30 p.m.

VERMONT, NORWICH

Areli Reutter

"And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for him in the inn."

Luke 2:7

Greetings beloved brothers in the Lord! We rejoice to have heard the Christmas message on December 12. We are thankful for those who came and shared God's Word with us this past month: Elder Bro. Kevin Ryan and ministering Bro. Duane Reutter, both from Rockville, CT. We also were privileged to have a number of other visiting brothers from Rockville. May the Lord bless all those who continue to support God's work in VT, whether in big ways or small ways.

If your travels bring you to this area, we encourage you to include us in your plans. We begin our services promptly at 10:15 AM on the second Sunday of every month. For more information or directions, please contact Morey Weiss at (802) 295-5981 or Bro. Kirby Reutter at (802) 295-1869. It is also important to note that the address listed in the new "minister's book" is incorrect. The correct address is: 344 Main Street; Norwich, Vermont 05055.

Long lay the world in sin and error pining,
till He appeared and the soul felt
its worth.

(O Holy Night, vs. 1)



Sermon continued from page 2

We know that when the Apostle Paul talked about the divisions in the church in Corinth, how some of them were saying they were of one and some were of another. He really made it clear to them that they were all one in Christ Jesus (I Corinthians 3:4-7). They couldn't take credit because one planted and one watered and all of those different parts of what took place.

But even for ourselves, as we apply our energies and our efforts to something and we see it head towards fruition and because God has allowed us to be one who worked on it or who worked in it and we could see it progressing, is it possible that we begin to take credit or ownership or possession of the things that result? It appears that that is what happened with these men.

"And at the season he sent to the husbandmen a servant, that he might receive from the husbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard." (St. Mark 12:2). I don't know how that is for you. But if we find that we have something that is a work in progress, and it is not complete yet so it really is not useful, and if someone requested it of us, it gets harder and harder to give up, the farther along it is in that work in progress. But when it has reached the point where after all this labor and strain that we put into it, that someone comes and would try to take it away from us or request it from us, at that point it becomes much more difficult to let go of.

So it would appear that as they had worked together here, that he sent that he might receive from the husbandmen the fruit of the vineyard. He sent his servant. We know again here that God is talking about sending His messengers to the children of Israel. He is talking specifically here to those who were of His chosen seed of Abraham and that He had come to them to offer them this gift of salvation and make aware to them what the gift is that He really desired for them. So He sent many of those prophets. We can go through the minor and major prophets. We can go through what happened in the life of Moses and Joshua and Caleb and all those leaders of Israel and find that there were a lot of opportunities.

Even as Bro. Dale read this morning,

II Kings there, that we are just in that stage of reading out of that portion of the Bible story book that we read before we go to bed at home. We just talked about Jotham this week. He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, but he made that one mistake that Dale talked about here this morning. But one of the children made the comment, "they were all bad." We start into another king and it is like "they were all bad." You look at their lives and you look at the rejection. Men who had opportunity for power and influence to bring their nation to God. So many were distracted, I believe by these fruits, by these possessions, by these accomplishments. They began to take ownership of their power instead of recognizing the responsibility God had given them to be stewards over the children of Israel, His chosen seed. Those who He had delivered.

We start at Joseph's beginning here. Joseph's family migrating into Egypt and growing into a great nation. God delivered them out of all that and made provision to take them to the promised land. Through all that deliverance then, each king as he came into power, had responsibility. Had stewardship over the vineyard, if you want to look at it that way, that basically God had created, that God had claimed as His own. He just wanted them to be faithful. He just wanted them to show reverence to Him, and obedience to Him and to His commands and His laws. Then ultimately to the provision that He was going to make to them through His Son. So He sent these servants to talk about that and to prophesy it through Isaiah and through Jeremiah and through all of those minor prophets. And it was not accepted.

So when we find this here, I think about these men who came, these servants who came at the request of their Lord. It just hit me as I was reading this and I think about why it is that it is so hard for us sometimes to be a messenger for Jesus Christ. Why is it that it is even so much harder with those whom we care about the most and who we love the most? That we would come to them. Here God was sending these servants to His own chosen people. Not to the Moabites and the Ammonites and the heathen. But to His own chosen people. To those who should know better and to

those who should be obedient and who were not being. He would send these servants.

When He sends us into those same environments, sometimes we know what we should talk about. We let small talk or other things distract us and we don't get to the point. Why do we do that? Why are we sometimes afraid to talk about what is really important and share the message? I started reading down through this and I thought, he sent his first servant and his first servant probably went willfully, thinking that he was going to come back laden with the fruits of the efforts of the vineyard and probably went into it with a pretty optimistic attitude. But how do you think they felt by the time they got down the line a little ways here? I am sure that the message got back.

The first one, "And they caught him, and beat him, and sent him away empty." (St. Mark 12:3). He no doubt, went back to the master. But he also went back into the environment where the other servants were, didn't he?

So then he sent another. "...and at him they cast stones, and wounded him in the head..." they got more serious, "...and sent him away shamefully handled." (St. Mark 12:4).

When you think about this, sometimes when we think about how we are responded to or even how they responded to these servants, as we progress down through this, we start to recognize that it ties into this comment that Joseph made here. I appreciate how much vision that young man had. A lot of men of God had that vision. When you could say that, when we commit a sin against another individual and the way that we would treat or mistreat them or what we would be involved in any act of sin with them, he says here that, "...how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Genesis 39:9). He didn't say, and sin against Potiphar. He said, sin against God.

We shared that thought before but David had such a depth in his thoughts for that too. That when he had sinned with Bathsheba in a similar temptation but where he fell into sin, same circumstances as this as far as the temptation that Satan used, the specific thing that

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Sermon continued from page 43

he was going after in a young man's life. David fell into that sin. When he was confronted with that sin, he did not say, I sinned against Bathsheba. I have sinned against Uriah. I have sinned against the children of Israel. He said, I have sinned against God. He recognized that that was where the sin was. (II Samuel 12:13)

These men here apparently did not see the connection (St. Mark 12:3). Because they were willing to beat the servant, not recognizing that the sin was not against the servant. It was against the master. When we think about ourselves as stewards and as servants, when we would say that we were beat, sent away empty, is that the way we feel sometimes if we would go to share the gospel and when we leave we say, "that was worthless? I didn't get anywhere with that." So we went away empty. We just didn't feel like we made a contribution. We were beat. Have you ever been in a situation where maybe you spent two or three hours with an individual and when you came home - this may be on a spiritual issue or may just have been on another issue just trying to resolve conflict - and you just are emotionally drained. It is fatiguing. You are beat and went away empty.

Even though it may be they were requesting a fair thing, they were requesting the fruit of the vineyard that the master deserved because he had let it out to the husbandmen. Then another one came. "...and at him they cast stones, and wounded him in the head, and sent him away shamefully handled." (St. Mark 12:4). It seems like now it is progressing. It takes it to a different level. It is one thing if we go and we visit with someone and when we leave we just say, that didn't do any good. Or if we go away and we say, you know, they ridiculed me. They made shameful mockery. Maybe we feel that of ourselves.

If we look at the men, who some of these were, who it was role-modeling; Isaiah and Jeremiah and some of those men, they just kept going back, didn't they? You listen to some of the woes that come out of the heart of Jeremiah as he expresses those in his book. Just at the bottom! When they threw him in the slime pit. (Jeremiah 38:6). How

could it get much lower than that? He had been handled that shamefully and been treated that way. But yet inside them was a drive of obedience and of commitment to the master that overcame any treatment that they had received.

Facing that, think about it. I don't know how many of these men were peers to each other. Actually saw each other, lived exactly in the same time period and saw the treatment. But no doubt, they knew the history. Yet they were called of God. If we go all the way through to the apostles, we find in their lives this compelling desire that could not be suppressed. That above all else, their commitment was to proclaim the gospel. Even though it would end them up in prison. Could end them up being beaten. And they knew it!

There were times where they were beaten. We read that story. He is talking in history here. But if we would look forward into the future of the apostles of Jesus Christ and their establishment of the first generation church, we know that there were times that they were drug out, beaten and left for dead (Acts 14:19,20). They got up and brushed themselves off and went back into that same environment sometimes to do it again. Sometimes they left and sometimes they went back. I never have completely figured out what made the deciding factor. No doubt it was again, their in-tune-ness to what the Lord required out of them.

Even Jesus Christ Himself at times left places where He could have done good. He could have done good. He could have done miracles. But He left. The reason was because of the attitude of the hearts there. That His efforts would not be received.

But as this went on, I just have to think of each one of these men as they came. Then he sent another. "...and him they killed, and many others; beating some, and killing some." (St. Mark 12:5). Think about being in the pool, if you want to say that, of servants working under the master. Who, someday the master may have come to them and said, "I would like for you to go out to such and such a vineyard and collect the fruit." They could look at him and say, "Why would you want me to go there? Let me explain to you what they have done to the last ones that have been

there. They beat one. They have thrown stones at another. They wounded him in the head. They sent him away shamefully. Some of them they have killed. Some they have beaten. There is a pattern here. There is a pattern." Yet God set a perfect example for us. That He is not asking us as believers to go into any environment, to share in any way shape or form that that He was not willing to do Himself.

At last he said, "Having yet therefore one son, his wellbeloved, he sent him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son." (St. Mark 12:6). Isn't it incredible when we think about it! That God took His only begotten Son, the perfect lamb, and He sent Him to us as men, who have only been given stewardship of our lives. But He found there men who had taken possession of their lives, just like we do today. They saw this as a spiritual threat, didn't they? They were men who had set up the interpretation of the laws to their advantage. Here came this Son who offered them something far beyond, a far better plan of salvation than what they had. It was God's Son!

Surely if we really think about our Creator sending us His Son, isn't that a logical thing to say, surely they will reverence my Son? Yet, through generations, it hasn't really changed, has it? It is not natural. It is not a natural thing. It is not in the heart of men to naturally reverence His Son.

"But those husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours." (St. Mark 12:7). Now if you want to talk about the servants who went and who saw the results of servants who had gone before them, what was the track record? What was happening to them? Isn't it an interesting thing, and in our own lives, I think so many times we can look at the Pharisees' lives and look at how they took possession and ownership of the things they had. How they misused their spiritual authority and how they did all those things. We can somewhat separate ourselves from it. But as God talks about them, He does really continue to reveal their hearts. That reveals our hearts also. That any of us would think that by force, by any sense of force that we could overcome, or become a part of the kingdom. There is only one entrance into the kingdom.

It is not through force or through power or through destruction. It is only through obedience and submission and through Jesus Christ. He is the way, the truth and the life.

Satan himself became puffed up in his own pride and tried to take over the kingdom of heaven by force. As we read the Word of God, it is really clear to us what is reserved for him. What is reserved for the angels that rallied around his attack. And what is reserved for the men who go through life deceived by that. For the men who take ownership of their lives instead of stewardship. For the men who reject the messengers that God has sent today. Not because of the messenger himself. But reject the message. The message of salvation.

It should be to us that we would take courage and not be overwhelmed by the fact that there are going to be times, if we have the responsibility - and all of us are ministers of the Word and all of us have those that we love that have not come to the knowledge of the truth. All of us have opportunity to share that. As we go into those interactions and find times to share that, there will be times that we come away beat. There will be times that we come away empty. There will be times that we come away wounded in the head. There will be times that we feel shamefully handled. Yet, our responsibility is to go and to be servants of the Lord, even as these men were. But to those that take that and reject it we need to remember this. If we are a servant and if we are sharing the message through our lives, through our lifestyle, through our words, that the rejection and the treatment that we would receive is ultimately not against us. It is against the Lord Himself.

So it is that He says to them, "And have ye not read this scripture; The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner:" (St. Mark 12:10). That Savior that men chose not to accept, if we think about what that meant to become the head of the corner, we know that that is the rock. That is the stone that is set in their style of building.

Today we would set up a benchmark. Through laser transits and a lot of electronics, we would go back to that benchmark and we would measure everything off of that benchmark. But in this time and day, they set that cor-

ner stone and they always went back to that.

If they referenced another point, and we can have that same problem today - if we measure off of something and then we measure off of that something and keep measuring, pretty soon we compound our errors. We get off of the main target of levelness or plumbness or whatever it may be. For us in our lives, we need to never forget that, to recognize that. This cornerstone, Jesus Christ our Lord, it is the bond that brings us together. It is the measure which each one of us in our lives go back to, isn't it?

We don't go back and reference our holiness. We don't go back and reference any part of our spirituality off of one another. Because that is an untrue reference. We go back to the cornerstone, the chief cornerstone, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Who was the only one who ever walked on the face of earth who has shown to us the perfect example. We go back there to measure our lives and to look at that.

This Savior who men rejected, may it be that we would never find ourselves among that number of those that rejected the cornerstone, the benchmark for our lives. The One with which we can go to measure, to understand our relationship with God and our standing therein.

He brings in one other point here quick. They sent men then to catch Him, to catch Jesus in His words (St. Mark 12:13). Kind of another thought, switching thoughts, about tribute money. The Pharisees and the Herodians came to catch Him in His words. They asked him basically about paying taxes. "...Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not? Shall we give, or shall we not give? But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said unto them, Why tempt ye me? bring me a penny, that I may see it. And they brought it. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? And they said unto him, Caesar's. ...Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." (St. Mark 12:14-17). That wasn't a new expectation out of God.

Didn't Joseph have that under control, if you really look at it? He rendered to his master, to Potiphar, those things that were his and the blessings that he

could bring and that there would be a prosperous environment in his home, he rendered those things back to him. But the things that were God's, he continued to render unto God. So that wasn't a new concept.

For us today, He is really bringing in that whole concept that there are chains of authority, are there not, in our lives. And God has set up governments. If we would go into the scripture further, it would look at that (Romans 13). Our responsibility is to obey that government. I often think about it. I hear sometimes, and we are in that state right now. In the state of Indiana we are currently in the position that we don't know where our property taxes are going to be, do we? It is pretty easy, when those come due, that we would murmur or complain. Or that we would say that this is unfair, that is unfair. Sometimes we look at how those resources are used and we think maybe it gives us opportunity to complain. But before we do that, maybe we should step back and say, is there another country that you would choose to move to, to live? Live under that government, live under that tax structure and live under that infrastructure.

Today we travel where we want to. We share information at the speed of light, almost. We have tremendous benefits. Some of that has come because we have responsibilities. We have those that are in leadership over us. That established those things. They established those infrastructures and they tax us to do that, don't they? So we have opportunity, as believers, to render unto them both the finances and the obedience that are due to them in the responsibility where God has set them up in authority over us.

It appears here that both of those thought concepts, at least speak to me, that we come to recognize who we are. What role do we play in responsibility to God? That we are only stewards in His vineyard. All that we have He has set up for us. He has let it out to us. Then we have men here on earth who also have authority and dominion over us. We need to take responsibility to render unto them the things that are due unto them.



ALTERNATE HOUSEPARENTS NEEDED

Gateway Woods has appreciated the Lord's blessing of being fully staffed with Houseparents. At this time, however, we are experiencing a staff opening. Bro. Clint and Sis. Bethany Plattner are planning to leave Gateway Woods in the near future. This offers an opportunity for a couple, directed of the Lord, to come to work in a full-time on going ministry at Gateway Woods. This position offers competitive wages and benefits and a close relationship with brothers and sisters whose hearts and lives are dedicated to a common mission with an eternal reward. If you feel the call to explore these possibilities, please call one of the brothers listed below.

Ed Graf
Residential Program Director
PO Box 151
Leo, IN 46765
1-888-443-4283
ed.graf@gatewaywoods.org

Lynn Stieglitz
Counseling Elder
15417 Doty Rd.
New Haven, IN 46774
260-657-1033

If anyone is serving in our Armed Forces that would appreciate receiving a printed sermon, please send their name and address or email address to:

Printed Sermons
6082 N. 2800 East Rd.
Forrest, IL 61741
or phone (815) 657-8798



ASSISTANT HOUSEPARENT NEEDED

Gateway Woods has appreciated the Lord's blessing of being fully staffed with Assistant Houseparents for some time now. Sis. Julie Zimmerman (Congerville, IL) will be leaving Gateway Woods in 2005 so we will have an opening for a single sister, lead of the Lord, to work in a full-time ministry with troubled children. The Assistant Houseparent position offers competitive wages and benefits and a close relationship with brothers and sisters whose hearts and lives are dedicated to a mission with an eternal reward. If you feel the call to explore the possibilities, please call one of the brothers listed above in the "Alternate Houseparents Needed" ad.

U.S.A. BOARD WORK PROJECTS

For area work projects, please contact the following Disaster Work Project Committee Representative:

- Kansas:** Paul Kaeb
Phone: 785-284-3261
Cell: 785-547-5269
E-mail: paulkaeb@ksiconveyors.com
- Iowa:** Martin Zaugg
Phone/Fax: 515-379-1693
Cell: 515-320-2404
- Illinois:** Marvin Sauder
Phone: 309-925-4171
Fax: 309-925-2409
Cell: 309-241-8171
E-mail: mmksblf@dpc.net
- Indiana:** Gerry Waibel
Phone/Fax: 219-279-2582
E-mail: glwaibel@hotmail.com
- Ohio:** Ken Zollinger
Phone: 330-925-6370
Fax: 330-927-6370
Cell: 330-466-2247

CARIBBEAN BOARD PROJECTS - 2005

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 309-263-4036 or E-mail kjs@a5.com.

HAITI					
ORG.	DATE	AREA	COORDINATOR	PROJECT	CAPACITY
SEED	Feb. 17-25, '05	Les Cayes	Bob Beebe	Agriculture Aid	9
Palm Grove	Feb. 18-26, '05	Puit Sales	Tom Hitz	Grade School	11
SEED	Mar. 10-18, '04	Les Cayes	Bob Beebe	Agriculture Aid	11
MEBSH	Mar. 17-25, '05	Les Cayes	Rich Bertschi	Grade School	9
AWA-FRW	May 5-13, '05	Les Cayes	Rick Wuethrich	Vocational School	4
AWA-T	May 5-13, '05	Les Cayes	Troy Stuber	Water Aid	5
AWA-B	May 5-13, '05	Les Cayes	Bill Rager	Vocational School	2
JAMAICA					
CCCD	March 19-26, 2005	Kingston	Gridley BC - Roger Stoller	Deaf School	50
CCCD	May 20-28, 2005	Deaf Village	Warren Kloter	Work Place	40
CCCD	July 2-9, 2005	Deaf Village	Dean Ramsier	Work Place	40

COORDINATOR	PHONE	FAX	E-MAIL
Jon Zeller	309-266-9009		
Ron Palitto	330-336-5373		
Bob Beebe	574-291-2158	574-299-8173	rbeebe@surfpure.com
Tom Hitz	734-454-9229	734-454-9259	thitzhome@juno.com
Phil Isabel	219-261-3541	219-261-2885	
Dean Pashak	989-662-7685	989-662-7685	dwpashak@charter.net
Bill Rager	419-263-2989		
Kevin Sauder	309-263-4036	309-263-4036	kjs@a5.com
Rich Bertschi	309-467-6110		lemangm@mtco.com
Ted Habegger	260-694-6765		th@parlorcity.com
Mike Reinhard	248-477-2287	248-427-0396	mlreinhard@msn.com
Troy Stuber	309-925-2603		tstuber@highstream.net
Rick Wuethrich	219-567-9488	219-567-2542	topnotch@home.ffni.com
Greg (Beth) Herman	309-243-5610		gbherman@juno.com
Warren Kloter	309-208-2785		wkloter@myexcel.com
Roger Stoller	309-747-3228	309-747-2566	rstoller@dtnspeed.net
Dean Ramsier	330-334-2561		ramsier@neo.rr.com

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

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

Presently we are not taking Hymns of Zion due to our large inventory and not enough requests for hymnals. Please get your books to us or the Goodfield World Relief Center.

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

Jerry and Arlene Banwart
307 First St
Congerville, IL 61729
(309) 448-2416

FLORIDA DISASTER PROJECT

The work project began on January 3, 2005, at Wauchula, FL. The Disaster Work Project Committee made a survey trip in late October. After visiting six to eight areas of need, Wauchula was selected. The current plan is to build three new homes, and to repair as many as the number of volunteers will allow us to complete. All the basic building skills and the desire to help those in need, are needed. If you have the desire to help, you can escape the cold winter of the north and share in His love and compassion, on the project, in a warmer climate. Please phone Bro. Jerome Witzig and reserve a time to serve. His phone number is (309) 744-2347.

**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, anxiety, 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

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 260/824-5587
E-mail: bibledist@parlorcity.com

Mexico Work Teams 2005

Location	Date	Project	Coordinator	Phone	E-mail
Magdalena	February 12-19, 2005	Construction	Jerry Rauch	260-824-2387	healthyourselves@adamswells.com
Magdalena	February 19-26, 2005	Construction	Scott Hills	860-429-3790	lulabelle3@juno.com
Magdalena	February 26-March 5, '05	Construction	Dennis Zimmerman	815-657-8810	
Juarez	March 5-12, 2005	Construction	Bryan Meyer	260-565-3738	bkmeyer@insightbb.com
Agua Prieta	March 12-19, 2005	Construction	Bob Meyer	260-824-3236	bobmeyer@adamswells.com
Magdalena	March 12-19, 2005	Construction	Arlan Miller	309-747-2683	seek_truth@yahoo.com
Rio Bravo	March 12-19, 2005	Construction	Jim Barth	309-367-2098	barthlings6@juno.com
Magdalena	March 19-26, 2005	Construction	Bruce Aschliman	260-824-5160	aschlimanb@yahoo.com
Agua Prieta	March 19-26, 2005	Construction	Denis Fry	260-824-3055	fry.d@mchsi.com
Rio Bravo	March 19-26, 2005	Construction	Nic Rassi	217-367-1427	rassi@uiuc.edu
Magdalena	March 26-April 2, 2005	Construction	Pete Aberle	309-925-5969	dpabfrms@hotmail.com
Rio Bravo	March 26-April 2, 2005	Construction	Marv Hodel	309-263-0050	dove@dpc.net
Copper Canyon	March 17-24, 2005	Medical/Dental	Cheryl Herrmann	309-385-1082	cherylh@mtco.com
Magdalena	June 11-18, 2005	Construction	Andy Bauman	309-965-2174	arbauman@juno.com
Magdalena	June 18-25, 2005	Construction	Joe Sprunger	317-770-7351	joes@sullivan-corp.com
Magdalena	June 25-July 2, 2005	Construction	Tim Lehman	765-474-1168	TLehman@ICONTrans.com
Rio Bravo	June 18-25, 2005	Construction	Dean Fiechter	260-565-3439	dafiechter@parlorcity.com
Magdalena	July 23-30, 2005	Construction	Brian Ricketts	815-657-8308	brickett24@hotmail.com
Rio Bravo	July 9-16, 2005	Construction	Dean Fiechter	260-565-3439	dafiechter@parlorcity.com
Juarez	September 14-21, 2005	Medical/Dental	Cheryl Herrmann	309-385-1082	cherylh@mtco.com

If anyone is interested in teaching health/first aid/medical/fire/EMT/dental skills in Magdalena, Imuris, or Ixtlan, contact Sis. Cheryl Herrmann.





REMEMBERING

Our Spiritual Heritage

The following is part of a continuing series of beliefs and practices of the church with the Scriptural basis shown. These are included in a booklet entitled *Reference Guide to Scriptural Themes* distributed by Apostolic Christian Publications, Eureka, IL.
By: Bro. Perry Klopfenstein

ADMINISTRATION AND PROCEDURE

Giving of Greetings	Acts 15:23 Romans 16:3-23 I Corinthians 16:19-20 II Corinthians 13:13 Philippians 4:21-22 Titus 3:15 I Peter 5:13
Holy Kiss	Romans 16:16 I Corinthians 16:20 II Corinthians 13:12 I Thessalonians 5:26 I Peter 5:14
Christian Fellowship	Acts 2:42 I Corinthians 1:9 Hebrews 10:25 I John 1:3, 1:7
Men Serve As Church Officials	I Timothy 2:11,12; 3:1-2, 12 Titus 1:6

WORSHIP

Non-Trained Ministry	1 Corinthians 2:1,2,4,5,7
Non-Salaried Ministry	I Peter 5:2
Kneel During Prayer	Psalms 95:6 Daniel 6:10 Acts 9:40, 20:36, 21:5
Head Covering For Women	I Corinthians 11:5,10,13
Head Uncovered For Men	I Corinthians 11:7
Women Silent In Church	I Corinthians 14:34-35 I Timothy 2:11,12

... continued next issue

The Light Of Hope

From Across The Ocean

希望の光

“Bind Up The Broken-Hearted”

Elder Bro. Willis Ehnle, Shioda, Japan

What do you think about binding up the broken-hearted? It is mentioned in 61:1, “He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted,” and the Lord Jesus Christ quoted that verse as referring to Himself, in Luke 4:18. In Luke it is rendered, “Heal the broken-hearted.” Perhaps you and I can help bind up the broken-hearted but it is certain that it takes Christ to heal the broken-hearted.

The term “broken-hearted” brings thoughts of someone suffering deep and overwhelming grief, or someone who feels there is no hope for the future, because of some tragedy in his or her life. We are instructed in Romans 12:15, “Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.”

Most of us find it easier to rejoice with others, rather than weep with them. We have a tendency to leave others alone when they are broken-hearted. We feel awkward and don't know what to say. It is easier to just wait for the grieving pro-

cess to complete its cycle and then continue the relationship pretty much as if nothing heart-breaking had happened.

Some rare individuals, brothers and sisters in Christ, especially those who have suffered a broken-heart themselves, make it a point to reach out to anyone who is heart-broken, or anyone who is sad. I would like to do more of that myself, in this new year of 2005.

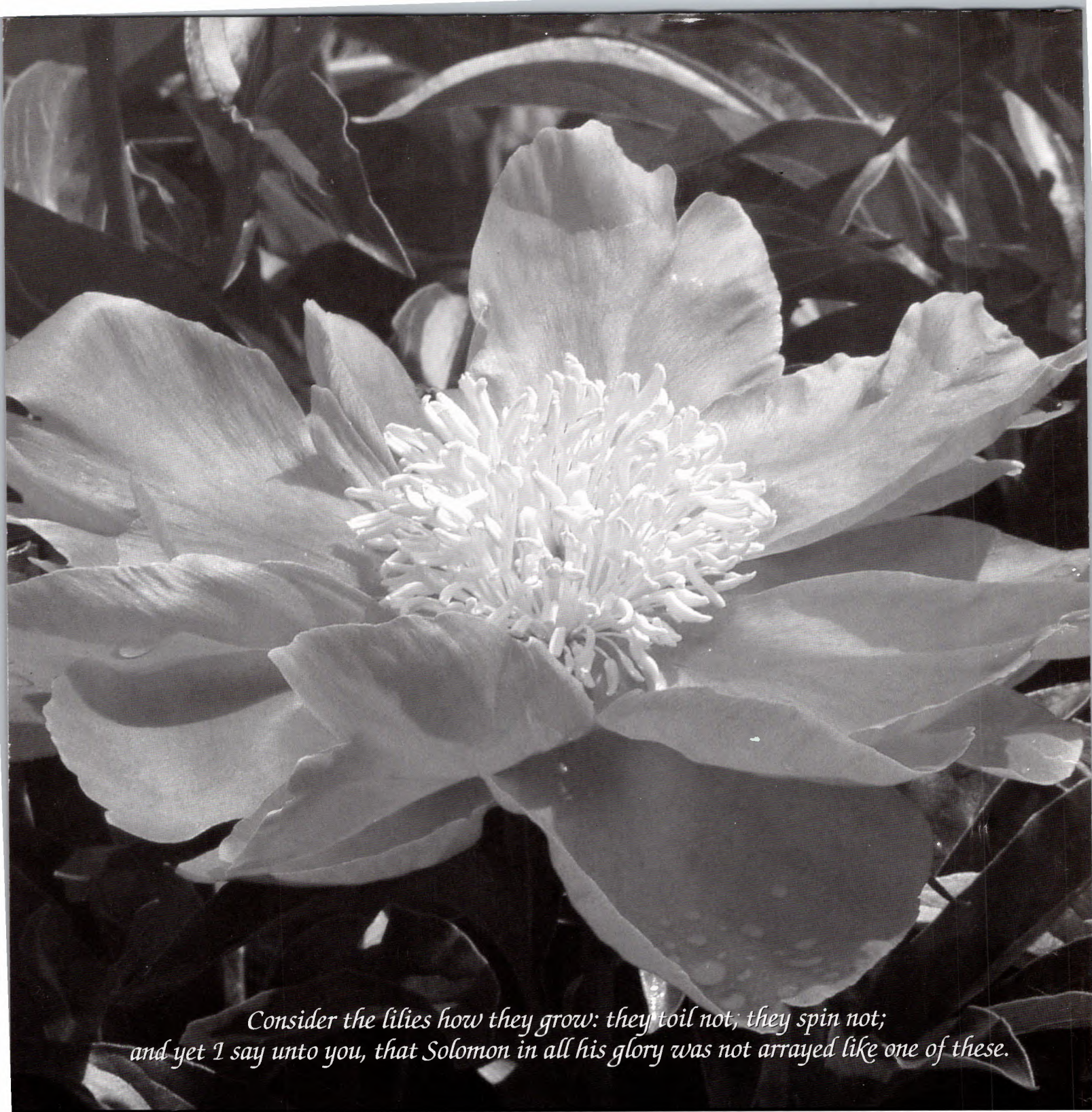
Both converted and unconverted people can be broken-hearted. In our search for the broken-hearted we should not limit ourselves to a certain group, it might be anybody, even ourselves. If we are broken-hearted, trying to help someone else may bring a certain amount of healing to our own heart.

There is the question, “How can we try to bind up the broken-hearted?” Sometimes, just to be with them, in silence, is a big help. To pray with them, is a big help. To read a few verses of scripture is appropriate. To

say, “I love you, and I'm trying to understand what you are going through,” is usually appropriate. We can help bind up the wound so it won't hurt quite so much, but Christ must do the healing. He died for us so that we can have hope, in spite of everything.

There are so many things to be broken-hearted about that there is a danger that we all may become broken-hearted and downcast. This must not happen. In the new year, let's all of us make an earnest effort to reach out to others and try to help bind up the broken-hearted. A few words might help a lot, to those who have financial problems, are unemployed, have serious illness, who have just lost a loved one, who have failed academically in school, who are sick about their own failings of any kind, or who have suffered a loss because of a fire or storm. Let's bind up the broken-hearted.

希望の光



*Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not;
and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.*

THE SILVER LINING
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