

The Silver Lining

*Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow?
or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail,
Out of whose womb came the ice? and the hoary
frost of heaven, who hath gendered it?*

Job 38:22,29

January 2006

Sermon by Bro. Ted Steffen, Alto, MI

Isaiah 60 and Romans 14:13,15,19-21 and Romans 15:1-21

The beginning of this chapter is certainly beautiful for us, as a people who were not God's chosen people and yet have been brought to the light; Jesus Christ. We have been given an opportunity that was for God's chosen because He loves us. He said, "...thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." Isaiah 60:1. And in verse three he says, "And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." Isaiah 60:3. Those are beautiful words because the Lord is pointing us to His Son, Jesus Christ. He is the light of the world.

Then in verse nineteen, speaking of that same light, he said, "The sun..." - and this points to heaven, brothers and sisters. This points to a time off in the future that we look forward to and should long for - "...shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory." Isaiah 60:19. You see, God Himself will be our light in the glories of heaven. There will be no sun, no moon to give light. It is the glory of the Lord. We can't even comprehend that.

I think the children of Israel maybe had a glimpse of it when they saw that glory cloud come down and cover the temple (Exodus 33:10). And that radiance that Moses, when he came down from the mountain after he spent time with the Lord and his face just glowed! He had to put a veil over his face so that people could look upon Him. (Exodus 34:29-33) So great is His glory, I don't think we can even comprehend it. But we shall look forward to it. For it shall be a great time of rejoicing for the true believer. May we look forward to it. And may that, just the hope of that, spur us on to set aside those things that distract us from our walk with Christ.

This afternoon, we are going to talk about selflessness. It is a character trait that Jesus Christ had and perfected. He showed us, of anyone that we can ever read about or know about, He showed us the perfect picture of selflessness. Although I am not sure we clearly see it. Because we see Jesus Christ as He was here on earth, as a man. Yes, God in the flesh but we can't possibly perceive His glory because we have never seen it. So we really never get a full picture of what Christ did for us. Because He left that glory to come here and die for you and me. And we can't even perceive what He left. It is so great, we can't understand it.

When we look at the sun or attempt to look at the sun, we perceive its brightness. Yet when Jesus shown Himself to the Apostle Paul, it was brighter than the sun. We can't comprehend it, can we? His glory is beyond our imagination. So is His selflessness. Because we can't understand where He came from.

So as we read this, let's remember, the One who gives us the perfect example of how we should live had selflessness down to a perfection. He knew what it was to be selfless. To give of Himself with no expectation of anything in return. It has to do with somewhat our focus. What is important to us. We all esteem ourselves somewhat highly as human nature dictates. But part of selflessness is suppressing that. Esteeming others more important, higher than ourselves.

There is a scripture, I don't even remember where it is, but often it is 'me'. It speaks of what we have, the gifts we have, how did we have them? Were they not given to us? (I Corinthians 4:7) What do we have that we earned? We have nothing. We have what He gave us. What He blessed us with. So when we go through life, and we have been gifted with something and we see it, if we recognize it and we see it,

never to esteem someone else lower because they don't have it. We didn't earn it! We don't deserve it! So it is, as we consider this scripture, it's that mindset that we need to have one for another of that esteem for our brother higher than our self.

Sermon continued on page 45

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

Light From The Word



Writings based on God's Word

January 2006

Tearful Sowing

"Tearful sowing brings glad harvest where our Master's will is done, when for Him, the Lord of Harvest, through His Spirit fruits are grown." ("Sowing and Harvest", Zion's Harp pg. 30).

Our nation has been blessed for generations with an abundance of food. Most of us cannot remember many, or perhaps any, times when we did not have enough to eat. We may not have had our favorite food, and maybe it was even something we did not like, but we usually had enough.

With the abundance of food, it has not been difficult for our nation to take of our abundance and set aside ample grain to use as seed for the next year's harvest. Throughout the history of mankind this has not always been the case.

In many parts of the world and at many times in history, food has been very scarce. Setting aside some of the precious grain to use as seed for next year's harvest has required significant sacrifice. It takes faith to reduce an already scarce food supply by putting the seed into the ground and await harvest time. The "investment" of seed brings a glad harvest when we patiently wait for the crop to mature.

We may ask ourselves what that has to do with our spiritual life. There are many times when God's people have been required to make an "investment" of faith to achieve a good end when it would have been much easier to do something different.

Noah was required to build an ark at a time and place that must have seemed very strange. God was ready to destroy all mankind because of the wickedness of man was great in the earth. "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord" (Gen. 6:8). Noah was willing to invest significant time to a task that likely brought ridicule from his neighbors. However, because he was willing to sow seeds of faith, he and his family harvested rescue from the flood.

Abraham was put through a very difficult trial to show God that he placed his full faith in God. Although details are not recorded in the scripture, it is not dif-

ficult to imagine that Abraham spent much of the night in tearful prayer, asking God to help him fulfill what He had asked. The trial undoubtedly got even more difficult when Isaac said "Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb..." (Gen. 22:7-8). The harvest that Abraham reaped was God's promises "That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars in heaven" (Gen. 22:17).

Throughout the ages many of God's prophets were subject to severe tests of faith. They were put through many trials. Hebrews chapter 11 tells us of the difficulties that many of the old pillars of faith endured "...having obtained a good report through faith" (Heb. 11:40).

Jesus expressed sincere and deep compassion in many situations where there was human suffering. He lamented for Jerusalem (Mt. 23:37), had compassion for the blind (Mt. 20:34), was moved for the multitude who were "as sheep having no shepherd" (Mt. 9:36), and wept for Lazarus' sisters (Jn. 11:35). The harvest of Jesus' weeping and compassion culminated with His sacrifice on the cross for the sins of all mankind.

We are called upon in our time to trust God enough that we can sow tearfully in order to have a glad harvest. Our tearful sowing often begins with repentance and conversion (Lk. 13:3 and Mt. 18:3). When the sin load becomes too great and we finally are able to put Satan's excuses behind us, a tearful confession of our need for a Savior is the beginning of a journey that leads to a glad harvest. When we repent and allow God to convert us, we can, as King Saul experienced, have "...another heart..." (I Sam. 10:9). If we are faithful, we can keep our renewed heart.

Repentance, however, is not usually the end of the tearful sowing for a child of God. As we serve God and grow in faith, there are many difficulties that may confront us. When Jesus was on earth, He did not promise us an easy path to eternity. Jesus said, "If any man will follow after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross,

and follow me" (Mt. 16:24).

There are many trials that Satan will bring to the children of God. This should not surprise us because he has a long history of causing distress. He will tempt us to disobey, as he did to Eve. He will remove good seed that has been sown (Mt. 13:19) and sow tares with the good seed (Mt. 13:38-39). No trial is beyond Satan's goal. He will try to ruin our health (Lk. 9:42) and he will lie to us to bring deception into our minds (Jn. 8:44). If he was not afraid to tempt Christ (Mt. 4:1), he will not be afraid to tempt us. If he cannot make us sin, he will try to discourage us by making us think we have failed. This tactic nearly worked on Job but "In all this did not Job sin with his lips" (Job 2:10).

How do these tears bring glad harvest? Each victory that we win will make us stronger. Each trial we overcome will help us be better prepared to meet the next one. As we face difficulties and our faith may be weakened, we need to look for "sprouts" of faith to help us along. Large plants come from small cells of life. The mustard seed "Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree..." (Mt. 13:32). It started life as one microscopic cell and developed into a very large plant. Often our faith is tried to the point where it may seem to be as small as the cell of life in the mustard seed. With tearful sowing and gentle nurturing, our faith can grow strong enough that by the grace of God we can overcome all that Satan may bring before us.

There are undoubtedly numerous times when God's children face many tests and are called upon to make sacrifices for their faith. The sowing may be tearful but the harvest is glad. Jesus said what we give up "...for the kingdom of God's sake ...shall...receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting" (Mt. 18:29-30).

Surely there is no sowing that will bring a greater harvest.



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

Visit To Eastern Europe

In September 2005, the Lord opened the way for two members of the Mission Committee, Bros. Phil Stettner and Peter Petrovic, along with their wives, to visit the Nazarean believers in Eastern Europe and assess the needs.

The purpose for this trip was to visit a number of completed projects and churches and to evaluate additional areas for future support. It was also an opportunity to strengthen our relationship and enhance our ongoing communication with these precious believers.

The schedule permitted spending some time in each of four countries: Serbia, Croatia, Hungary and Slovakia. The believers in each of these countries have similar, yet unique needs. Over the years, our brethren in America have assisted the Nazarean believers financially to either build a number of new churches or remodel many existing ones.

Church building projects

Several new church buildings have been completed in Serbia over the last ten years, including a number of additions and minor remodeling of churches. One church added an indoor bathroom and kitchen while another larger congregation added a kitchen and dining room on the second floor. Some of the congregations are small (20-30 members), and others have over 100 souls attending weekly worship services.

A small church in Brshadin, Croatia requested a kitchen addition and new pews for their assembly to replace the old benches which have no back rests. The congregation in Baja, Hungary is in the midst of constructing a large new church.

The believers there are hoping to have dedication of their new edifice in May of 2006. They have extended a warm invitation for brethren from America to attend.

The believers in Bernalakovo, Slovakia have a desire to purchase a home and convert it into a church. They also would like to build a modest nursing home for the elderly.

Upon arrival of the visiting brethren in each country, there is usually a meeting with the members of the Relief Committee and Elders to review financial reports and requests for future projects. For example, requests for this year include new windows, pews, or kitchen additions for several churches. Others need new heating systems, roof and/or flooring. Some congregations requested funds for replastering and repainting.

Self-help program

Another method by which the Apostolic Christian Church Mission Committee has provided assistance to the less fortunate is via the Self Help Program. This program was established many years ago and has helped many families start up a new business or expand their current ones with small loans. The individual or family requesting a loan is first prequalified and then loaned a few thousand dollars. As soon as feasible, the loan is paid back into the Self-Help Program fund so that another family can be assisted.

Because our Brotherhood had a willing heart to help, hundreds of small businesses are successfully operating in Eastern Europe. Another purpose of this program is to enable young families to remain in their country and support the churches there. With the Hungarian churches being the exception, there

are many elderly members with only a few young families and children in the other three countries.

An important objective of the trip was to review progress of some of the individual self-help projects. A small hog farm operated by a family in Mitrovica, Serbia was visited. Other successful businesses observed were automotive repair shops, farms, chicken farms, and cattle raising operations.

Grateful spirit

In the case of every church and self-help project visited, there was without exception, an overwhelming expression of gratitude first to the Lord, and then to our brotherhood for the ongoing assistance. Through their smiles and tears, these loved ones express their thanks over and over again: "Without your help, this church addition would not be possible," or "Our elderly and poor would have a difficult time surviving the winter without your assistance with the fuel costs."

Truly, because of the love of God and the generosity of our brotherhood, the Apostolic Christian Mission Committee and European Board will continue, with the Lord's help and guidance, to provide for the needs of the dear believers in Eastern Europe.

May the Lord continue to give the wisdom and discernment to continue with this work. Anyone wishing to make contributions may do so by sending funds through their local church Mission Fund or directly to:

Apostolic Christian
Mission Committee
Phil Stettner, Treasurer
1780 N 450 E
Bluffton IN 46714



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

Eastern Europe

On November 18, 2005, Chairman Phil Stettner, Secretary Gene Lehman, Treasurer Rod Stoller, Bro. Pete Petrovic, and Bro. Dennis Fulop met in Holmes County, Ohio for an annual European Committee Meeting, plus a meeting with our loyal partners in the food parcel shipments to Romania.

CAM and ICM

Christian Aid Ministries is well known to our brotherhood, as they work in many places where disasters occur. For years they have furnished food and expedited the shipping of monthly World Relief food parcels to Romania. The committee also met with Iron Curtain Ministries who pays one half the cost.

Euroboard meeting

Bros. Phil and Pete had just returned from a trip encompassing Slovakia to the Balkan areas (see Mission Committee article). In general, conditions are not improving, but rather getting a little worse. It is hard for these people to make their meager incomes stretch to meet growing expenses. Our aid continues to be a vital need.

A request for the purchase of buildings for a church was discussed, which eventually was denied due to the size of the group and the cost of the project. It was decided to purchase two vans for elder/minister transportation at a cost of \$31,200, to be shared 50/50 with the Mission Committee. There are plans to provide Bibles and Zion's Harps in their language.

Serbia/Montenegro

The group visited many of the churches in this area south of Hungary, bringing once more a message

of great need. Bro. Pete speaks Serbian, so there is no language barrier. There was a lot of flooding this year, although not too many Nazareans suffered greatly. Nonetheless after discussion various sums of relief money to assist in ongoing needs was approved. The warehouse facility in Vladimirescu, Romania, is near their border, and they are being encouraged to go there often and pick up clothing and other things they can use. This center has been created for all of Eastern Europe, and it is hoped all nationalities will make use of it.

Many programs are in place, and the general feeling is, that in spite of poor economic conditions, the work is progressing to God's honor. The loyal and faithful support of our American brethren is appreciated. Firewood for winter is just one of the items furnished to help them cope with their many difficulties.

Many believers are old and infirm, pensions are very low across Eastern Europe without exception, and life is indeed hard for our brethren of like mind and faith no matter where they live. They trust the same God, follow the same faith, and struggle to hold fast to the truth just as we do. Please include them in your prayers, gifts and alms.

Croatia

Only a few believers remain in Croatia, where the oldest elder just died. One new church has been built there and others restored. Currently the committee is investigating how to go about doing repairs on a small building in an outlying village. There is a network of brothers in various lands to consult for advice and counsel on matters like this. It was decided to buy a used car for a minister who serves several church-

es each Sunday. His car is worn out and needs to be replaced.

Romania

It was reported that things are going well, and in compliance with Romanian law. The committee has hired a brother to be at the property as manager on a full-time basis, which should help a lot.

Our small livestock projects have been a success, and the plan is to continue them next year. These are all financed by restricted donations, and do not come from regular World Relief funds. Anyone wishing to donate to the Antioch effort may do so through their local World Relief Representative, simply marking the check "Antioch." It will get to the right place, be assured of that.

According to prior agreement, the committee is skipping four shipments of food packages from Bluffton this year, making the parcels up in Romania with local foodstuffs. To date this is successful. In the large cities virtually everything is available if one has money, but in the villages things are very scarce. This is an opportunity to continue to help our brethren.

Hungary

A new church under construction at Baja, Hungary, was the subject of much discussion. We are monitoring this situation, and giving advice and assistance as much as we can while recognizing that cultural differences exist.

Ukraine

A report of our aid is received at the end of the year. \$25,000 is sent three times a year for humanitarian aid. Conditions in this country are difficult and need for assistance is great.

APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN COUNSELING SERVICES

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

Proverbs 11:14

Announcement of the Mental Health Forum: Over the years, the ACCS Clinical Staff has provided support, guidance, and mentoring to members and friends of the church in order to help them stay spiritually grounded while studying and/or working in the mental health field. Over time an increasing number of people have expressed interest in and/or have received training in mental health-related fields. In an effort to assist the brethren and to promote spiritual safety, ACCS has developed a new online resource called the Mental Health Forum. The Forum was developed specifically for those working in or considering entering the fields of counseling, social work, school/guidance counseling, psychiatric nursing, and psychology. The Forum will provide the following:

Fellowship and networking for members and friends from the Apostolic Christian church who are students and/or professionals in mental health-related fields. For example, the Forum will allow brethren from across the country who are involved in mental health-related fields to become acquainted, share ideas and experiences, and encourage each other.

Spiritual support and accountability to maintain a Biblical foundation while in school and/or

working in the mental health field. For example, students can ask questions about how to understand the information s/he has heard in class from within the Christian worldview.

Guidance on schooling and career decisions. For example, questions about choosing a major, developing a good support network, and determining whether or not one should go into a mental health field will be discussed.

Mentoring, guidance, and monitoring of the forum will be provided by the professional counselors at Apostolic Christian Counseling Services and our Counseling Elders.

To participate in the Mental Health Forum you must be a member or friend of the Apostolic Christian Church and be in at least one of the following categories:

Students currently pursuing an education in the mental health field.

Individuals who are seriously considering getting training in the mental health field.

Individuals who are currently working (or have previously worked) in a mental health-related field.

The Forum can be accessed by going to the ACCS website at www.accounseling.org. Click on the “Special Services” link on the navigation bar and then click on “Mental Health Forum.” Once on this page, those interested in joining the Forum can click on the “Register” link and follow the instructions given. We hope and pray that this Forum can be used to the honor and glory of God.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact us by phone at 877-370-9988 or e-mail us at info@accounseling.org.

APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN HOME FOR THE HANDICAPPED

What a mess! That’s what I think when I look at my desk. That’s what others think and say when they see my desk. There is a place for everything, but not everything is in its place. As a matter of fact, everything has never been in its place. I have learned to function without everything in its place.

Is that what others think and say when they see the lives and bodies of our precious residents? Not everything is in its proper place, not everything functions as others think it should.

Working here gives us the opportunity to see that God’s ways are higher than our ways and that His plan is a perfect plan even when we cannot figure it out or don’t understand it.

Even while clearing my desk, I ask myself, are there any barriers, obstacles, irregularities or annoyances that we can clear up or remove from the life of the residents to make their life full and more abundant? How can we caringly serve them with excellence?

We must look to God to set our lives in order and to clean out the things that do not belong.

“Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.” (Psalm 119:133)

“Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit

within me.” (Psalm 51:10)

JANUARY birthdays at Timber Ridge, 2125 Veterans Rd., Morton, IL 61550: Nicole Delicath (1/6), Stephen Penn (1/8), Jacqueline Willett (1/19), Bruce Steffen (1/19), Franz Fischer (1/26), John Eddy (1/27), Thomas Sides (1/31).

At Linden Estate, 1000 Linden St., Morton, IL 61550: Mary Schramm (1/13), Karen Blunier (1/14).

At 431 W. David St., Apt. H, Morton, IL 61550: Rhonda Gerst (1/12).

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

One of the names for Jesus is Immanuel, which means “God with us.” Every time the Gospels are read they should serve as a reminder that God was with us in the form of Jesus, but the recent Christmas season always seems to bring fresh meaning to the fact that God chose to become like us. There may be nothing more “human” than the travail of birth and the crying of a newborn child. This is one experience that all mankind has in common and it is somehow comforting to know that Jesus experienced it as well. It is hard to imagine that the God that the entire universe depends on once depended on a young mother and father to meet His needs. The miracle of the incarnation can bring comfort to our hearts and wonder to our minds and lead us on an endless pursuit of the knowledge of God.

News:

We are entering a significant anniversary year as Gateway Woods - Apostolic Christian Children's Home celebrates 30 years of service during 2006. Milestones cause us to reflect on the past with thanksgiving and look toward the future with hope. And in the present we praise Him for all He is doing in our lives and those we serve. II Corinthians 6 reminds us that we are not alone; that the Lord will sustain us through difficult times, and that we don't serve ourselves. “As workers together with Him – for families”, is a theme for us during this year of praising, abiding and trusting.

As we mark this year of progress we will be: Remembering His Provision, Walking His Way, Pursuing His Promises. Some of the events planned for this anniversary include our Representatives Meeting March 11, our 30th Annual Sale on August 19 and a reunion for former residents, staff and Board Members in early October. November 7 will mark the arrival of our first resident in 1976.

As a testimony of hope for the future, construction of another campus group home is planned this year. This 4th house will expand the residential program, our original service, by 30%. Our trust in the Lord is coupled with our confidence that our faithful brothers and sisters will again partner with us, fund, build, supply, and staff this home so we can fulfill His calling to serve more children and families.

**APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN
PRESCHOOL
Athens, AL
Melissa Slagel**

Baby Jesus was our theme for the month of December. It was special to set aside so much time to teach and talk about Him. It tugged at my heart and yet inspired me to see the look of awe and wonder in the children's eyes. Especially in those that had never heard about angels or a little baby who slept in a manger who would become a king one day. I tried to put it on their level so that they could really understand, but I still wondered how it could make any sense to them. Then God spoke to my heart and I realized that children have such a simple faith. They don't need a big explanation for why God chose Mary or why the king was born in a barn, they just take it for how it is and believe it. Oh, the lessons you can learn from a child!

**ALABAMA, ATHENS
Louise Hall**

We are thankful to Bro. Arthur Ingold (Sis. Bonnie, Rittman, OH) who traveled down here to bring God's truth to us. Thank you to our other visitors this month as well from Cissna Park and Washington, IL, and Mansfield, OH.

Being a small congregation you might think there would be less people in need or less heartache. But it isn't that way. Where there are people, there is pain. If we look beyond that though, where there are people there is God, and where there is God, there is comfort and love. We are thankful this month for several opportunities that we

had as a congregation to offer comfort and love to the hurting. It is amazing how when you go thinking of the other person and how you can help them how much you are helped in return.

The Sunday school spent a lot of time this month working on their Christmas play. It all came together and they did a wonderful job bringing the story to life for us. Thank you to all of the students and their teachers for all of the time, practice, and patience. It was worth it.

Jerome and Alene Goode have requested prayer for their great-great granddaughter, Katlyn Hill. She is 4 years old and was recently diagnosed with cancer. She is in Birmingham Children's Hospital, room number 449.

The address there is:
1600 7th St.
Birmingham, AL 35233

ARIZONA, PHOENIX
Ron and Ev Hoerr

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another."

John 13:34

What a delightful time of year, Thanksgiving into Christmas. A beautiful Sunday School Christmas program, caroling, and our Elder brothers here while a deacon was chosen to assist our dear Elder Bro. Jon Kokanovich. We sincerely love and appreciate our ministering brothers. Their love and encouragement goes a long

way.

Our ministering brothers were Elder Bro. John Lehman (Bern, KS), Elder Bro. Ed Schwartz (Bluffton), Bro. Jay Knapp (Tucson), Bro. Dan Dubach (Prescott), and Bro. Ken Lawson (Dallas).

Hospital patients were Bro. Dick Beery, and Sis. Heather Hinrichsen. We thank Thee Lord for Thy care and healing.

Tucker Justin was born to Justin and Keri Roth on November 19. Sage enjoys a new playmate. Bill and Jennifer Hamilton are joyful parents of Taryn Elise, born on November 29. Delaney enjoys having a sister.

Sis. Ruth Vaughn (Koehl) received life's greatest reward December 17 when our Heavenly Father took her home. Sis. Ruth had been hospitalized for a while. We will miss her!

"Ring the bells of Heaven there is joy today, for a soul returning from the wild...!" We are thankful that Anneliese Hoerr has found grace to make a beginning in repentance.

We enjoy God's love in our Phoenix Church. Love is best when it is given away.

ARIZONA, TUCSON
Lisa Knapp

We are anticipating our annual holiday events this weekend with our Christmas caroling at local nursing homes Friday evening and our Christmas program Sunday evening.

Our temperatures are in the upper 60's and the overnight lows in the 40's. We did have a brief spell of "winter" weather with

some cloudy days in the high 50's and overnight lows around freezing. This helps to get us in the holiday mood a little better than 70 degree days do. Our sunshine is back, however, and the kids are coming home from school with their jackets stuffed in their backpacks! Just as well, I suppose, because Christmas isn't about snow and roaring fires, is it? We pray you all had a blessed holiday season and look forward to seeing some of you as you head out west to borrow some of our sunshine. There's plenty to go around!

CALIFORNIA, ALTADENA
Robin Moser

"But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart."

Luke 2:19

I often marvel at Mary's obedient faith when told she was to carry Jesus in her womb and He would save His people from their sins. She was only told part of the story and had no idea of how God would bring this all to pass. "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face." (I Corinthians 13:12). May we also have faith that we can be obedient when we don't understand the path God lays out before us.

We are grateful for visiting ministers willing to share the Word of Life with us this month. Visitors included Elder Bro. Ted Witzig (Sis. Cindy, Morton, IL) Bro. Nelson Beer (Sis. Shelby, Milford, IN), Bro. Frank Sauder (Sis. Kathy, Roanoke, IL), Bro. John Jackson (Sis. Peggy, Bay

City, MI) and Bro. Steve Stieglitz (Sis. Jane, Leo, IN).

Bro. Ted and Bro. John also assisted Elder Bro. Tom Klotzle with the baptisms of four dear souls over Thanksgiving weekend. It is rejuvenating for a church to hear testimonies of other believers, and to have the Spirit stirred up within the congregation. Our dear Lydian Luthi, Alyson Luthi, Jazmyn Jackson, and Bob Jackson all shared of the different ways the Lord reached their hearts and changed them.

CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO
Peggy Jevremov

On Sunday evening, December 11, our small Sunday School presented to us their Christmas program, the story that never grows old. We pray that the seed that has been planted in each of their hearts will one day bring forth abundant fruit to the Saviour.

Sis. Juliana Topolchanyi recently fell and broke her hip, requiring surgery. She is once more in the nursing home. We pray for the Lord's healing hand upon her and that her pain will quickly fade. Also our prayers are with Bro. Rory Strahm who has been experiencing another infection.

We pray the Lord will be with Bro. Nandor Albert as he returns to his home in Hungary. He has been assembling with us for the past 18 months. We will surely miss him.

We want to warmly welcome Sis. Janice Lehman to our congregation. She is on a new work assignment in our area.

As we begin a new year, may it cause us to reflect back upon all

that the Lord has given us and to look forward to the promise of that heavenly home that is awaiting us if we are found true and faithful.

May we through the grace of our dear Lord and Saviour be found worthy to enter therein.

COLORADO, DENVER

Ann Gonglach

A songwriter once wrote:

In shady, green pastures, so rich
and so sweet;
God leads His dear children along;
Where the water's cool flow bathes
the weary one's feet
God leads His dear children along.

Sometimes on the mountain where
the sun shines so bright,
God leads His dear children along,
Sometimes in the valley, in darkest
of night,
God leads His dear children along.

Whatever the new year may bring, may we trust the One who leads us.

Last month, we celebrated the birth of Jesus at our annual Sunday school Christmas program. We also enjoyed caroling together at local nursing homes.

We're always thankful for visiting ministers. Bro. Jeff Streitmatter (Sis. Lynne, Sarasota, FL) took time to minister to us while vacationing with his family in Colorado.

CONNECTICUT
ROCKVILLE
Laura Virkler
Amber Reutter

"The love of God is greater far than tongue or pen can ever

tell..."

Hymns of Zion #289

There is no doubt that we can each attest to the tremendous love that our Lord has bestowed upon us each throughout this past year. What a comfort it is to know of assurance that the Lord will be there to provide for us each one as we step into a new year.

We are thankful to hear that Carol Hoffman (Bro. Arlo and Sis. Lynn) has begun in repentance. We wish her the grace of God as she walks a converted life.

Our congregation has been blessed with many children, and is so thankful that the Lord has provided more blessings to several of our families. Olivia Joy was born to Bro. Michael and Sis. Joy Zahner. Her older brother is Austin. Her grandparents are Bro. Richard and Sis. Betsy Hany and Bro. Warren and Sis. Bonnie Zahner. Jillian Marie was born to Bro. Steve and Sis. Shannon LaPlante. Her siblings include Marissa, Tiffany and Kyle and her grandparents are Sherry and Carlo Bocchino and Bro. Leo and Sis. Sherri LaPlante. Bro. Duane and Sis. Kay Reutter and Feliz and Sis. Lourdes Sibaja are blessed with another grandchild, Isaac Dayton. His parents are Bro. Kirby and Sis. Areli Reutter from our Norwich, Vermont, congregation. May the Lord bless these families, and continue to provide health and strength.

There have been several among us who have encountered surgery throughout the past month. Bro. Jason and Sis. Sue Kloter's son, Abel, underwent corrective sur-

gery. Although his recovery will extend for a period of time, we are so thankful that the Lord has provided for him abundantly thus far. Bro. Richard Hany (Sis. Betsy) also underwent extensive surgery. May the Lord continue to heal and provide for him. Lastly, Sis Virgene (Bro. Peter) Hany was also placed under the hands of the surgeons. May we keep these dear souls in our prayers.

We pray for our dear Sis. Barb (Bro. Dave) Hangartner as she mourns the loss of her eldest brother, Warner (Ruth) Fluckinger. Many of us can relate to this deep sense of loss. May we keep all that have had such experiences in our prayers, even as time moves on, and the seasons begin to pass.

Our congregation had the blessed opportunity to listen to the Memorandum being read to us. It was so encouraging to be reminded of the principles of faith and warnings of encroaching dangers to our Brotherhood. We certainly felt the Holy Spirit as He moved among us, strengthening and exhorting us. May the Lord richly bless Elder Bro. Charles (Sis. Miriam) Sauder from Tremont, IL, for lending himself to be used on our behalf.

This past Sunday we were encouraged by the opportunity to hear the Sunday School sing songs of the birth of Christ at our annual Christmas Program. It was so inspiring to witness the wide range of ages, all singing from the depths of their hearts, of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. May the Lord use experiences such as these to plant the seeds of salvation within our chil-

dren. It was a blessing to all. We are always so thankful for the number of our friends that make the effort to attend with us, not only at such a gathering, but throughout the year.

May the Lord be with us each one as we continue onward on our spiritual journey. We don't know where the Lord will take us throughout the next year, but what a comfort that God remains with us.

"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort..."

II Cor. 1:3

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
WASHINGTON
Henrietta Meyer**

Our congregation had an extra blessing to be thankful for on Thanksgiving. Elise Mary Hermann arrived Thanksgiving evening. Her parents are Bro. Adam and Sis. Liz Hermann. Thankful grandparents are Dennis and Sis. Ginger Hermann (Morton, IL) and Mark and Becky Meister (Wilmington, DE).

Our visiting ministers this month were Elder Bro. Tom Hoffman (Sis. Kathy, Roanoke, IL), Elder Bro. Ben Wiegand, (Philadelphia, PA), and Bro. Matthew Rassi (Sis. Bridget, Chicago, IL). Other visitors this month were from Fairbury and Tremont, IL; and Sardis, OH. We hope our visitors will come visit us again.

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. Liz Hermann (703) 212-7339 or Sis. Henrietta Meyer (703) 904-8301 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
FT. LAUDERDALE
Renee Mangold**

We were thankful to have several visiting ministers this past month. Visiting were Bro. Jon Zeller (Sis. Christine, Morton, IL), Bro. Ron Heiniger (Sis. Kayleen, Bloomington, IL), Bro. Clint Schmidt (Winthrop, MN), and Bro. Dave Obergfel (Sis. Kathleen, Peoria, IL). We pray for God's blessing on His servants and their families.

During Thanksgiving we are reminded of all the things that we are thankful for and the many blessings that God gives us in our lives. This holiday is a time to pause and reflect on God's goodness.

"Sing unto the Lord with thanksgiving; sing praise upon the harp unto our God."

Psalms 147:7

A blessing was had by everyone

recently when we sang carols at a nearby nursing home and then enjoyed a potluck at our fellowship hall.

We are enjoying a little fuller church these days as our winter residents are beginning to return. We are looking forward to resuming our time of fellowship with them.

FLORIDA, SARASOTA
Robin Wiegand

We were blessed with visits by Elder Bro. Mark Bahr (Detroit, MI), Bros. Chris Huber (Francesville, IN) and Victor Bauman (Smithville, OH) and our own Elder Bro. Dale Eisenmann (Chicago, IL), all of whom helped to lead us on our heavenly pathway.

Our Christmas program was a delight for all and was well done. We also enjoyed two evenings of caroling and were richly rewarded when neighbors came out to listen in.

We are pleased to announce that we will resume our Sunday School Auction this year. It will be held on Saturday, February 11. With our Sarasota church filling up with winter visitors, we look forward to many participating in this special event.

GEORGIA, ATLANTA
Kevin Kipfer
Benjamin Stoller

We hope your New Year is going well. We are thankful for the ministers that gave of themselves this month. They were Bro. Dale Frank (Sis. Christine, Oakville, IA), and Bro. Jim Vierling (Sis.

Linda Eureka, IL).

On Sunday, December 11, we were reminded of God's gift of the Christ child through a Sunday School program. Afterwards, we went caroling at a couple of local nursing homes. We concluded our evening with fun and fellowship at the Stoller's. Thanks, Bro. Linn and Sis. Brenda, for a terrific evening. Although there has been much joy in this Christmas season, it was not as joyful to see Will Olar go home for Christmas break. We wish him safe travels and hope to see him soon. For all of you in the frigid North, just be mindful of the opportunity to enjoy the sunny South.

ILLINOIS, BELVIDERE
Sheila McCoy
Doreen Moser

A silent night so long ago
Brought peace on earth to all below -
This peace again is wished for you
With joy-filled days the whole year through.

With joy in our hearts, we listened to our Sunday School children present the Christmas story in verse and song. Then our congregation went to two nursing homes to sing carols. This was followed by a chili dinner at church. What a special time this is for our Belvidere church!

Bro. Paul Kilgus (Fairbury, IL) was a visiting minister this month. Bro. Sam Bachtold presented a topical Bible study on "Apathy." We thank these Brothers for being messengers for God.

Our prayers are with Sis.

Marlene Mueller (Bro. Art) as she has been a surgical patient.

ILLINOIS
BLOOMINGTON-NORMAL
Ann Nussbaum
Jen Heiniger

Our church family has had opportunities to show God's love in this holiday season by distributing Thanksgiving food baskets, purchasing Christmas gifts for those in need, and caroling. We truly have been blessed in sharing the joy of Christ's birth.

We extend our sympathies and prayers to Bro. Ray and Sis. Marcia Bauer at the passing of Bro. Ray's mother, Sis. Mary A. Bauer, of Cissna Park on December 1. She was also the grandmother of Sis. Jill (Bro. Andy) Lehman.

We welcome Sis. Mary Knapp, mother of Sis. Barb Knapp, who has moved to Normal from Cissna Park, and Bro. Ben and Sis. Taunya Sceggel, who have recently begun worshiping with us.

We thankfully welcome home Sis. Kendra Knapp from a two-month mission trip to Ytebon, Ethiopia, where she served as a Project Mercy volunteer with Bro. Gary and Sis. Peg Ifft.

We were privileged to host a Junior High/Senior High Weekend November 19-20. We thank Bro. Clark Stoller (Gridley, IL) and Bro. Fred. Witzig (Indianapolis, IN) for delivering inspirational messages to the young people. We also extend thanks to Bro. Fred Funk (Morton, IL) and Bro. Dan Koch (Tremont, IL) who helped address questions from the students. Bro. Fred Funk also came

back on Sunday (November 20) and ministered to us.

In this new year, we pray we may keep the spirit of thanksgiving and the joy of Christ alive in our hearts and evident in our walk of faith.

ILLINOIS, BRADFORD
Steve Endress

We enjoyed having several visiting ministers with us this month. Bros. Brad Eisenmann (Chicago, IL), Jim Butikofer (Iowa City, IA), and Nathan Wieland (Goodfield, IL) ministered unto us.

We rejoice and are thankful that Daniel Klumpp (Bro. David and Sis. Barb) has turned to the Lord in repentance. He has certainly expressed his desire to serve the Lord with his whole heart and we are thankful that God continues to add to His church such as should be saved. We trust that Daniel will feel the grace and mercy of God throughout his life.

Bro. Tyler and Sis. Tonya Joos are rejoicing at the arrival of a son, Lane Tyler. Lane was born December 9 and is welcomed home by older sister, Tori. Grandparents are Bro. Ralph and Sis. Jenny Joos and Bro. Brad and Sis. Teresa Gudeman. As God has entrusted unto them a young soul, we pray that they will seek wisdom and guidance throughout his life.

Throughout this coming year, may we have thankfulness for whatever the Lord brings our way. May we not grow weary of bearing our cross.

“Take, my brethren, the proph-

ets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.”

James 5:10-11

ILLINOIS
CHAMPAIGN-URBANA
Karla Kieser

Happy New Year! The month of December is always special in that we celebrate Jesus' birth and spend time with our beloved families. In a time when so many people rush around to find that “perfect gift”, it is humbling to know that we have already been given that perfect gift of Jesus Christ. We are a very blessed people and may we always glorify Him and show forth His wonderful works.

On December 11, we enjoyed the Christmas program put on by our Sunday school. It is always such a joy to watch the younger kids perform with the older kids — one advantage of having a small Sunday school. The children and the teachers did a wonderful job! Our Christmas program takes the place of the afternoon service. After the program the kids and the church went into the community to sing Christmas carols and then gathered at the church for a delicious supper afterwards. This tradition is one that is very precious to our small church!

We are very appreciative of our ministering brothers from this past month and of their willing-

ness to serve on the pulpit. They are Bro. James Knapp (Sis. Lisa, Congerville, IL), Bro. Brad Gudeman (Sis. Teresa, Bradford, IL), Bro. Chris Huber (Sis. Sharon, Francesville, IN) and Bro. Brian Huber (Sis. Jacki, Francesville, IN).

I regret that I left out news from last month. Elder Bro. Mike Leman and his wife, Sis. Deb, from Denver, CO, were with us the weekend of November 5 to help our Elder Bro. Wayne with the testimony and baptism of two converts. We welcome a new brother in Will Moser and a new sister in Erin Metzger! Bro. Will is the son of Jim Moser and Ginger Moser and Sis. Erin is the daughter of Sis. Jeanne Metzger. Bro. Will recently graduated from the University of Illinois and found a job in the Peoria area and Sis. Erin is a student. Our prayers are for His leading as they begin this wonderful life as a Christian.

ILLINOIS, CHICAGO
Rachel Meyer

Greetings from Chicago. We are enjoying a “White Christmas” here this year. No matter in what situation you find yourself this Christmas and New Year, may God bless you richly.

We enjoyed the Christmas presentation by our dear Sunday School children and young adults. The beautiful singing and narration brought a perspective of peace and hope to a world that seems to be missing both. A sincere thank you is extended to the Sunday School teachers, the students as well as the parents who encour-

aged their children. The next day we held our annual Christmas caroling and, of course, a chili meal! Extra thanks to those who worked so hard on the meal while the rest were caroling.

We were delighted to hear of the engagement of Sis. Hope Nenadov (Bro. Paul and Sis. Marilyn, Eureka, IL) to Bro. Scott Schambach (Elgin, IL). Scott's parents are Bro. Tom and Sis. Connie Schambach. We all wish them happiness and God's nearness.

We extend our sympathy to Sis. Lucille Koehl on the loss of a brother and a sister-in-law. Gone to their reward are Bro. Art Hari of Cissna Park, IL, and Sis. Ruth Vaughn of Phoenix, AZ. May God be near our dear sister.

We thank Bro. Arnie Gerst (Taylor, MO) for sharing the Word with us.

Last week I was in a store looking at Christmas cards with some other patrons. One of them was a man who turned to me, held up two sets of cards and asked, "Which of these looks less like Christmas?" I knew I had heard him correctly, but I was bewildered. Then I was curious. I asked him about not wanting the cards to look like Christmas. He replied, "My friends are not religious at all and I need to send them a Christmas card." My first thought was, "Why?" Why send a Christmas card to someone to whom it wouldn't mean a thing?

Later, I could not stop thinking about the encounter. I cannot imagine celebrating Christmas based solely on the secular portrayal. After all the presents are

opened and the New Year begins, there will be no lasting joy or peace unless Jesus Christ is living in one's heart. Upon reflection, I am thankful for the encounter with the Christmas cards. It has caused me to remember that the baby Jesus transcends all of the fuss and "hustle and bustle" of the season.

ILLINOIS, CISSNA PARK
Pam Walder
Andrea Walder

Call and cry, ye watchmen, boldly;
Call aloud and spare them not!
Jesus wants a faithful witness;
Teachers not confessing Jesus
Have stern judgment as their lot.
Call and cry, ye watchmen, boldly,
Call aloud and spare them not.

Speak the gospel of salvation
Boldly in the wilderness!
In the Saviour's blood there's healing.

Grace and pardon He's revealing
To the sinner in distress.
Speak the gospel of salvation
Boldly in the wilderness!
Zion's Harp #112

Our prayers are with Bro. Bruce and Sis. Bonita Frank as he has been given the responsibility of ministering the Word of God. May God always be near to them and bless them and their family in the labor that lies ahead. We thank Elder Bros. Ervin Knecht (Eureka, IL) and Curt Frank (La-Crosse, IN) who were with us to assist in this work.

Our other visiting ministers were Bros. Glen Braker (Princeville, IL), Walter Steffen (Milford, IN), Don Sinn (Silverton, OR) and Jim Kaeb (Bern, KS).

We thank them for bringing forth the Word of Life to us.

Our congregation was deeply saddened by the death of Andrew Kaeb, son of Bro. Hartzell and Sis. Denise Kaeb. Andrew was taken suddenly from this life on December 15, and we want to lift up in prayer his parents, as well as his siblings, Aaron, Adam and Anna, and grandparents, Sis. Aldean Kaufmann and Bro. Elmer and Sis. Mary Lou Kaeb. We also bid farewell to our Sis. Mary Bauer, and want to extend our sympathy to her children, Elaine Young and Bro. Ray and Sis. Marcia Bauer (Bloomington, IL). Our Bro. Art Hari passed away this month and we want to remember his wife, Sis. Lou Ella, as well as their children, Donna and Wendell Verkler, Diann and Kevin Boyce, Dana and Ken Kuntz, and daughter - in - law, Annette Hari. Our prayers are with Bro. Brent and Sis. Erica Blume (Wolcott, IN) in the loss of their infant daughter, Ashley Claire. Ashley was the granddaughter of Bro. Arlyn and Sis. LaNae Rudin. Our friend, Harvey Hartman, passed away and we extend sympathy to his family. We also wish to remember Sis. Gerry Farney in the death of her stepbrother, Gerald Zimmerman. May our Comforter be with each of these dear families who are grieving and uplift them in this time of sorrow.

Those in our congregation who have been hospitalized recently are Bro. Clarence Maul, Matthew Laubscher (Bro. Walt and Sis. Sylvia) and Grace Farney. May they feel the Lord's nearness.

Bro. Fred and Sis. Joann Maul

are rejoicing over the birth of their new granddaughter, Ashley Violet Fehr. Ashley was born on November 24 and is the daughter of Bro. Lee and Sis. Alicia Fehr (West Bend, IA). Joel David was welcomed into the heart and home of Jared and Julie Yergler and big brother, James, on November 28. Joel's grandparents are Urban and Sis. Judy Edelman and Kevin and Becky Yergler.

Sis. Mary Knapp has moved to Bloomington, IL, and we wish her God's blessings in her new home.

Our all-church Christmas caroling was held on Sunday, December 4, and we enjoyed singing at several area nursing homes and to some of the elderly in our congregation.

ILLINOIS, CONGERVILLE

Rachel Schrock

In a recent sermon we were encouraged to "keep the faith. Yes, keep it simply." We are thankful for the reminders such as this that we receive from the Holy Spirit through the ministering brethren as well as during our personal devotional time. Our gratitude for the brothers who are willing to simply preach the message of salvation is especially extended to our visiting minister this past month, Bro. Roger Aberle (Sis. LaVonne, Sabetha, KS).

The simple faith of our children shone through as they sang and spoke of the story of Jesus' birth during the annual Sunday School Christmas program. As the years go by, we are assured that they will never forget Christ's teachings, and we pray that they will also put

them to practice.

We rejoice with Amber Wettstein (Bro. Dennis and Sis. Emily) as she recently did put these teachings into practice in her life. As she begins her repentance, we encourage her to look to the Word for guidance and strength.

Two couples that have been practicing the simple walk of faith have found God leading them to join their lives together. Sis. Julie Zobrist (Bro. Clarence and Sis. LuAnn) is now engaged to Bro. Mark Rufener (Bro. Ron and Sis. Kay, Mansfield, OH). They are planning a February 12 wedding. Bro. Mikel Steffen (Bro. Mark and Sis. Joan, Goodfield) is planning to marry Sis. Stephanie Kuntz (Bro. Rollyn and Sis. Brenda, Forrest, IL) on January 22.

As these two couples begin their engagements, another couple's wedding day arrived. Bro. Jared Schieber (Bro. Mike and Sis. Mary) and Sis. Angie Schmidgall (Bro. Randy and Sis. Cindy, Goodfield) were united in Holy Matrimony on December 4, 2005. We wish them God's blessings as they apply simple faith in the establishment of their homes.

ILLINOIS, ELGIN

Amy Gasser Miriam Gasser

We enjoyed having many families and visitors assemble with us during the recent Thanksgiving and Christmas seasons. Among them were Elder Bros. Charles Sauder (Tremont, IL) and Doug Schock (Bloomfield-Pulaski, IA) and ministering Bros. Ron Bollier (Indianapolis, IN), Dale Frank

(Oakville, IA), Ed Fritz (Washington, IL), Dan Koch (Tremont, IL), and Alan Schambach (Remington, IN). Their willingness to humbly bring forth the gospel message was appreciated.

Two highlights of Christmas-time, family caroling and the Sunday School program, took place December 4 and 18. It warmed our hearts to again sing the beautiful, traditional carols and to hear the students relay the true meaning of this blessed season.

On December 12, Bro. Mark and Sis. Aubrey Triplett became first-time parents of a son, Maine Rykker. The happy grandparents are Rick and Sis. Cindy Schmidgall and Sis. Shirley Triplett of Peoria, IL.

Many hearts have been drawn together in love, and we wish God's blessings on each couple. December 11, Bro. Chad Heiniger (Bro. Don and Sis. Peg) and Sis. Heather Stoller (Bro. Todd and Sis. Pam) were married in Latty, OH. On the same day, the engagement of Bro. Scott Schambach and Sis. Hope Nenadov (Chicago, IL) was announced. The couple's parents are Bro. Paul and Sis. Marilyn Nenadov (Eureka, IL) and Bro. Tom and Sis. Connie Schambach. A March 12 wedding is planned. Ben Martin (Bro. Dave and Sis. Jean) and Brienne Kellenberger (Bro. Tim and Sis. Marcia) also became engaged and are planning a July wedding.

Life's ebb and flow affects us all, sometimes with joy and other times with sorrow. Sis. Barbara Schock was laid to rest on December 3 and leaves many nieces and

nephews. Sis. Edie (Bro. Gary) Anliker recently lost her brother-in-law, and Sis. Dorothy Schifferer lost her brother on December 6. May the Lord console each grieving heart.

We have missed Bro. Georg (and Sis. Hilde) Schumacher and Karen Weseman, who have had some difficulties in recovering from their surgeries. Our prayers for healing are with them.

ILLINOIS, EUREKA

**Lisa Metzger
Cindy Stoller**

Bro. Chris and Sis. Jill Wynkoop are happy to welcome their new little Collin Robert to join his big brother, Noah, at home. Grandparents are Bro. Myron and Sis. Elaine Blunier and Harold Wynkoop and Vickie McQuellon. We wish this couple God's grace and blessings as they raise their children in the nurture and admonition of Him.

Our congregation is sweetly sad as we have had the passing of four dear veteran soldiers of the Lord's army. Our sympathy is with Sis. Donna Kupferschmid (Bro. Ed) in the passing of her mother, Sis. Edna Blunier. We also pray for Bro. Vernon Leman in his final farewell to his dear wife, Sis. Viola Leman. We were saddened again in the rather sudden passing of Bro. Sam Blunier. His wife, Sis. Elizabeth, and children, Bro. Roger (Sis. Wendy), Bro. Duane (Sis. Eileen), Sis. Mary Wettstein (Bro. Jake), Bro. Keith, Bro. Sam (Sis. Luann), Bro. Kurt (Sis. Livy) and Bro. Dean (Sis. Beth), have our continued

prayers. We are also grieving with Sis. Donna Wettstein, as her dear husband, Bro. Art, was called Home recently and very suddenly. Their children include Bro. Denny (Sis. Emily, Congerville, IL), Bro. Gary (Sis. Elna), Sis. Melanie Huette (Bro. Dave), Bro. Jim (Sis. Dianne), Dan, Sis. Mary Getz (Bro. Wayne) and Bro. Bill (Sis. Heidi); they also have our prayers.

Our medical and hospital patients this month include Bro. Roy Leman (Sis. Wanda), Bro. Harold Hodel (Sis. Mildred), and Bro. Les Martin (Sis. Ruth). We pray for God's healing and helping hand in these times of pain and concern.

We are very thankful for the visiting ministers we had recently, including Bro. Tony Manz (Junction, OH), Bro. Ed Knecht (Silverton, OR), Bro. Lenny Meyer (Chicago, IL), Bro. Richard Gramm (South Bend, IN) and Bro. Kent Getz (Elgin, IA). May God bless them for their service in His vineyard.

We are especially thankful to turn to the simple and comforting Word of Life when we have times of trial and question. "Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. O my God, I trust in thee." (Psalm 25:1,2). We feel love and sympathy for Bro. Mike and Sis. Gretchen Zimmerman and their children, Rose, Lucas, Lois and Joan, as they recently held and had to gently let go of their precious Samson Michael who was born and lived just a few hours. Like unto the death of the Bible's Samson, we pray for much good to come from the passing of this precious little boy. Samson's grandparents are Bro. Leland and Sis. Barb

Zimmerman and Jim and Lois Vietti. We hope they will feel our prayers and the Lord's nearness.

ILLINOIS, FAIRBURY

**Lila Fehr
Anna Schmidgall**

"Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given."

Isaiah 9:6

We were reminded through song and verse by our children at the Sunday School Christmas Program of the most glorious Gift ever given. Also, our congregation has enjoyed all-church caroling and Sunday School caroling.

We rejoice with the angels in heaven when a soul repents. Tyrel Steidinger (Bro. Ted and Sis. Sara) recognized his need of a Savior and turned his back on the world. We pray for God's guidance and grace as he begins his walk with Him.

We have been blessed to have Bros. Ed Sauder (Roanoke, IL), Nate Wieland (Goodfield, IL), John Grimm (Columbus, OH), and Elder Bro. Jay Luthi (Lamont-Gridley, KS) assemble with us. Often we take for granted the fact that we will hear the Bible preached on Sunday or whenever we gather, but many do not have this opportunity and we are thankful for our ministering brothers.

May God's blessings rest upon Bro. Nic Roth (Bro. Ken and Sis. Deb, Forrest, IL) and Sis. Lori Welborn (Bro. Walt and Sis. Rosetta Edelman), whose lives have been brought together in the Lord. A marriage with God at the

center is truly a blessing.

Some of our loved ones had afflictions this past month and spent time in the hospital. Our prayers are with Kyler Stork (Bro. Mike and Sis. Marie), Sis. AnnaLou VanAntwerp, Bro. Merle Kaisner, and Bro. Tom Steidinger.

ILLINOIS, FORREST

Jill Wenger

Lori Leman

Our congregation was blessed with the birth of two new baby girls this month. Bro. Andy and Sis. Valerie Dotterer were blessed with the birth of Anna Jo. Big brother, Jesse, and grandparents, Bro. Bob and Sis. Sally Rinkenberg and Dale and Sis. Elaine Dotterer (Smithville, OH), are thankful for her safe arrival. Lexie Joy was welcomed into the Schaffer family by her parents, Bro. Kevin and Sis. Martha, and siblings, Bro. Matthew, Heather, Heidi, Sis. Valerie, and Jeremy. Her grandparents are Bro. Ronnie and Sis. Loida Mueller and Pete and Emma Schaffer.

Bro. Nicholas Roth and Sis. Lori Welborn were united in marriage on November 20. Their parents are Bro. Walt and Sis. Rosetta Edelman (Fairbury, IL) and Bro. Ken and Sis. Deb Roth. We pray God's blessings upon their family as God has provided for them.

Believing it is God's will, the engagement of our Sis. Stephanie Kuntz and Bro. Mikel Steffen (Congerville, IL) was announced. Their parents are Bro. Rollyn and Sis. Brenda Kuntz and Bro. Mark and Sis. Joan Steffen (Goodfield, IL). May God be with them as they

plan for this special time in their lives.

We've also had several loved ones spend some time in the hospital. They are Bro. Al Kupferschmid (Sis. Wanda), Lorene Boner, and Sis. Lavonne Lanz (Bro. Elmer). May God's healing powers rest upon each one as they recover.

ILLINOIS, GOODFIELD

Amber Grimm

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

On December 4, Sis. Angie Schmidgall became the bride of Bro. Jared Schieber. Their parents are Bro. Randy and Sis. Cindy Schmidgall and Bro. Mike and Sis. Mary Schieber (Congerville). We wish the Lord's continued blessings and guidance for Bro. Jared and Sis. Angie as they strive together to serve Him.

We extend our sympathy to those in our congregation who have lost loved ones. Bro. Randy Berardi (Sis. Elli) lost his mother, Augusta Shaw, on December 7. Bro. Keith Leman (Sis. Dort) laid his mother, Sis. Viola Leman (Eureka), to rest on December 19. We pray that God will comfort them and their families.

On Sunday, December 11, our Sunday School students presented a Christmas program to the church. It was a blessing to see the children recite verses to remind us not to miss the true mean-

ing of Christmas. 'Tis not the manger but the cross that sets the Spirit free. We thank our teachers and students for their efforts to make an encouraging program.

Our hospital patients this past month are Sis. Corrine Roth (Roy) and Bro. Art Wiegand (Sis. Pam). We pray that God's healing hand be felt upon them at this time.

We are encouraged that our Sis. Carolyn Ott was able to move back home since doing therapy at the nursing home. We pray for her that she can continue to gain strength and find comfort during her healing process.

Our visiting ministers this past month were Bros. Tim Hohulin (Sis. Cathy, Roanoke), Ben Walder (Sis. Juanita, Congerville), Scott Schafer (Sis. Gigi, South Bend, IN), Ted Witzig, Jr. (Sis. Donna, Morton), Walt Herrmann (Sis. Betty Lou, Princeville), Don Manz (Sis. Connie, Junction, OH), and Darren Plattner (Sis. Sue, Champaign). We thank each one for coming to be in our midst and proclaiming God's Word in it's truth and purity.

On December 25, the engagement of Sis. Maribeth Moens to Bro. Adam Rocke was made known. Their parents are Mike and Peggy Moens, Eureka, and Mark and Connie Rocke. We wish Sis. Maribeth and Bro. Adam God's blessings as they make plans for their wedding day.

ILLINOIS, GRIDLEY

Perry A. Klopfenstein

In walking in the Gridley Park the other morning, I noticed a man

and his dog. It was evident the dog and his master (the man) had a good relationship. The dog was obedient and submissive. The man and his dog were doing an exercise that was very interesting to watch. The dog would sit at the man's feet — and soon the man would hurl a ball about 40 yards away, the greyhound-like dog would surge away running at top speed, pick up the ball in his mouth and rush back to the man. He would then place his head near the man's feet until he threw the ball again — and off the dog would run. They did this exercise over and over. I noted the dog's zeal and obedience, and his devotion to his master.

The above exercise I noted between the man and his dog had a spiritual connotation. In our spiritual life it is beneficial if we have zeal and obedience for the Lord, and if we are submissive to our Master's teachings and expectations. Each day, over and over, if we are zealous and eager to please our Master above, it accrues to our spiritual well being and it pleases God.

On December 18, the wedding of Sis. Claire Witzig and Bro. Steve Hodel of Peoria took place here in Gridley. She is the daughter of Bro. Jerome and Sis. Mary Witzig. His parents are Bro. Irvin and Sis. Sharon Hodel, Peoria. To join in a lifetime of fidelity and devotion to a spouse is a wonderful thing. The concept of a three-fold cord — the wife, the husband, and God — is the composition that binds and welds souls together, "until death do you part." May God bless this young couple as they begin their

lifetime together under His direction.

We were thankful that Bros. Ken Hoerr (Peoria, IL) and Gary Bucher (Valparaiso, IN) were here on December 18 for the wedding. Also, we were blessed on Christmas Day with visiting ministers — Bros. Brandon Emch (Kansas City, MO) and Bruce Endress (Bradford, IL). May God richly reward all these brothers for their steadfastness in expressing the Lord's message(s) as He directs.

We were sorry, but yet felt blessed, when word came that aged Sis. Lillian B. Witzig, 103, passed away on October 24, 2005. She lived in the Apostolic Christian Home in Eureka, where she had been a resident for many years. She had been a widow since December 9, 2000, when her husband, Bro. Alphai "Alf" Witzig passed away. They had been united in marriage for 66 years since their wedding on February 11, 1934, in the middle of the Great Depression.

Surviving are three sons, Eldon (Linda) Witzig, Roanoke; Duane (Ann) Witzig, Shirley; and Bruce (Lila) Witzig, Peoria; 13 grandchildren, and 24 great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by a daughter, Sis. Karen Brummitt, two brothers and four sisters.

Sis. Lillian reached many important milestones in her life — a faithful wife, a loving mother, and diligent keeper at home and dutiful to the welfare of her four growing children. She was also a humble sister in faith. It has been many years since she attended worship at our Gridley congrega-

tion, but those of us who remember her can call to mind her gentle disposition, and kindness.

Our annual Sunday School Christmas Program was held on Sunday, December 11, 2005. The youngsters did a good job articulating the message of the season, and the Lord Jesus' lowly birth. The singing was beautiful, and the diligent practicing of the three Sunday School choirs — primary, intermediate and Bible Class — paid off as they did well and were a blessing to the listeners. The final song, wherein all the students were up front singing "Joy To The World" and joined in the last verse by the entire congregation, was especially inspiring. God bless the students and their teachers who labored with diligence in preparing for the program.

We are glad to welcome new people to our church: Kevin Reeser and sons, Wyatt and Levi (who are neighbors and friends of the Bro. Dale Schlipf family); and Deborah Carter (a friend of the Bro. Dennis Hodel family). All the newcomers are from El Paso.

ILLINOIS, MORTON
Julie Bahr
Christie Zeller

The Christmas season is upon us again and with it comes many wonderful activities. Our annual Christmas caroling was held December 4. Many enjoyed a blessed evening of carols, food and fellowship.

Our Family Worship was held December 7 by our Bro. Jeff Grimm (Sis. Ruth, Goodfield, IL). His topic was "Keeping Christ the Focus of the Christmas Season".

May we all keep Christ the center of our focus at this Blessed season and always. May God bless Bro. Jeff for his willingness to serve and teach us the Gift of Christmas.

The Christmas Program was held December 11. Once again our Sunday School children portrayed the Christmas Story in song and we all loved their enthusiasm in telling us the story of Christ's birth.

As joyous as this season is, we realize there is sadness too. Many loved ones went home to be with the Lord. Dan Rassi (Pekin, IL) passed away. He is a brother to our Bro. Ben (Sis. Betty) Rassi. Ed Hirstein passed away November 26. He is a brother to our Sis. Edna Fite and an uncle to our Sis. Cindy (Bill) Wiedman and to our Bro. Ted (Sis. Joyce) Hirstein. Donald Sperry passed away at the age of 63. He is a brother to our Sis. Norma (Bro. Oscar) Weisser. Mary Ploussard passed away December 4 after a lengthy illness. She is the mother to our Bro. Dave (Sis. Krista) Ploussard. May God continue to comfort and bless these dear families.

Our visiting brothers for the month were: Elder Bro. John Lehman (Sis. Connie, Bern, KS), Bro. Matt Rassi (Sis. Bridget, Chicago, IL) and Bro. Greg Rassi (Sis. Carla, Chicago, IL). May these dear brothers be blessed for their labors of love.

ILLINOIS, PEORIA

Lou and Marjean Lonteen

"And God said, let there be lights in the firmament of the

heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years."

Genesis 1:14

Elder Bro. Jim Plattner (Princeville) recently spoke at Family Night and his topic was: "Become a More Holy Individual". We appreciate every guest minister who brings good news of the Gospel.

On December 11, Bro. Josh Hoerr (Bro. Bob and Sis. Myrna) was joined in Holy Matrimony with Sis. Bethany Kummer (Bro. Chris and Sis. Patty). May God's blessings be upon your union.

On December 11, the all church Christmas caroling was held and everyone met back at church for a meal together.

Autumn Huett has made known her desire to walk with the Lord. Our prayer is for her growth in grace, love and obedience to the Holy Spirit working in her life.

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."

Galatians 5:22, 23

We welcome Elton Sceggel to our congregation. He is the father of Bro. Mark Sceggel.

We extend sympathy to these dear ones: Bro. Dan and Sis. Miriam Messerli in the death of Bro. Dan's sister, Marie.

Jerry and Marie Hoerr in the death of Jerry's mother, Sis. Frieda Hoerr.

Prayer requests include the following: Bro. Ben Baurer, Bro. Harry Eisenmann, and Sis. Aimee Moser along with many who have continuing health challenges. We pray God is very near each and every one.

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

Philippians 4:8

ILLINOIS, PRINCEVILLE

Kara Blunier

Vera Baer

This past month we have been blessed with visiting ministers and thank each one for being willing to be a servant of the Lord. Bros. Brian Huber (Francesville, IN), Brad Gudeman (Bradford, IL), Dan Stoller (Remington, IN) and Fred Witzig (Indianapolis, IN) were here November 20. Elder Bro. Mark Streitmatter (Bloomington-Normal, IL) had the Thanksgiving services for us. November 27, Elder Bro. Earl Ringger (Gridley, IL) assisted our Elder with testimonies and baptism of two young men. In the waters of baptism Lance Martin (Bro. Alan and Sis. Janice) and Mark Stoller (Bro. Gale and Sis. Sonia) promised to live a life pleasing to the Lord.

Sis. Lucille Rumbold spent a short time in the hospital before going to Restmor Nursing Home

for a short stay. Richard Stahl spent a few days in the hospital and then went to Skyline Nursing Home. Sis. Phyllis Knobloch had surgery and hopes to be home soon. Bro. Doug Streitmatter also had to be hospitalized a few days but is now home.

"This union of our hearts shall stand through grace in Jesus, we walk the path of life while cheer and trust increases." (Zion's Harp #79). Bro. Duane and Sis. Doreen Elsasser celebrated their 50th anniversary November 27. Bro. Alfred and Sis. Virginia Streitmatter had their 50th anniversary December 18. We wish them many more years of serving the Lord together.

Note of Thanks:

We're thankful for the safe and healthy arrival of our twins. We would sincerely like to thank everyone for the many acts of kindness shown to us before, during and after the arrival of our twins.

May God bless each one for your kind deeds.

Love,

*Curt and Mary Beth
Wagenbach and family*

ILLINOIS, ROANOKE

**Doris Fischer
Dee Fehr**

"O Come, let us sing unto the Lord ... Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving."

Psalm 95:1-2

The spirit of thanksgiving was a common thread that ran through many occasions in this

past month. Many of us enjoyed singing songs of praises at our Thanksgiving singing in November, and Christmas carols at our annual church caroling in December. On December 11, our Sunday School children proclaimed in song the Good News that "Christ is Born". Our thanks also goes to Bro. Dan Beer (Milford), who visited us and allowed himself to be used of God.

Surely the angels in heaven, as well as brethren and family members, are rejoicing as one soul has turned his back on sin and is looking to the Saviour for redemption. We rejoice with Brian Schwind (Bro. Dan and Sis. Donna), and wish him much grace as he makes this new beginning in his life.

"O give thanks unto the Lord ... Let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord."

Psalm 105:1,3

As Sis. Wendy Hodel (Bro. Chuck and Sis. Rita) and Bro. Kirk Prather (Bro. Bob and Sis. Marlene, Washington) have sought the guidance of the Lord in seeking a helpmate, so they rejoiced with thanksgiving on their wedding day, November 27. We are thankful for the ministering brothers who assembled with us to witness their marriage vows, including Elder Bro. Ron Messner (Washington), Bro. Dennis Kaufmann (Bloomington), and Bro. Clark Stoller (Gridley). On November 26, Mark Blunier (Wayne and Sis. Marjorie) and Cathy Deppe became husband and wife. We ask God's blessings on these dear young couples as they

begin their married lives together.

Some in our congregation have recently lost loved ones. Bill Mueller, father of Bro. Jim (Sis. Jan) Mueller, passed away on November 23. On December 8, Sis. Edna Blunier, the mother of Bro. Marvin (Sis. Judy) Blunier, departed from this life. Sis. Pearl Leman lost her brother, Bro. Sam Blunier, on December 16. May the Holy Spirit be their Comforter at this time of sorrow.

As I am writing this, Christmas is quickly approaching. In talking with a young woman recently, she remarked that, even though Christmas is on Sunday this year, she didn't think her family would have time to attend church, as they had grandparents and other family members to visit, and so many presents to open. This brings up the question, "Whose birthday is it, anyway?" Are we so busy celebrating and enjoying the holidays that we don't have time to worship the One who truly deserves our thanks and praise on the Lord's Day and every day? Let us always remember the most important gift that God desires is the gift of our heart.

ILLINOIS, TREMONT

**Teresa Rowell
Sheri Allen**

We were glad to have two visiting ministers this month. Joining us for Thanksgiving was Bro. Dennis Rassi (Fairbury, IL). Also visiting was Bro. Ken Dietz (Bradford, IL). We are thankful for the opportunity to hear from other brothers of like mind and faith.

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

Psalm 127:3

Several families in our congregation are rejoicing over the miracle of birth. Welcoming their first child are Bro. Kevin and Sis. Jody Sauder. Abigail Joy was born on November 26. Thankful grandparents are Bro. Marv and Sis. Mary Ann Sauder and Bro. James and Sis. Diane Kaeb (Bern, KS). Bro. Rob and Sis. Marcia Dennis are thankful for their second child, Joshua Robert, born November 28. Leah is excited to be a big sister. Grandparents are Nancy Birkmeier and Bro. Fred and Sis. Jeanette Beutel. Bro. Matt and Sis. Jenni Sauder, along with Daniel and Trevor, are thankful for the arrival of little Adam David on December 3. His grandparents are Bro. Dale and Sis. Joann Sauder and Bro. Jeff and Sis. Ruth Grimm (Goodfield, IL). We pray for the Lord's guidance for each of these parents as they raise these children according to His Word.

“Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.”

Matthew 5:4

We extend our sympathy to Della (Willard) Schweigert on the loss of her sister, Evelyn Reeser, of Eureka, IL. We pray that she and her family may look to God for strength and comfort during this difficult time.

We enjoyed watching the children at the Christmas program. It is always such a blessing to be able

to see them singing praises to God.

ILLINOIS, WASHINGTON

Barb Banwart

Nancy Knepp

Five days before Christmas at my uncle's funeral, his daughter-in-law exclaimed, “Christmas? Who cares about Christmas?” This is Christmas!” This is why Jesus came! A life well-lived! The message of salvation! The gathering of family and friends! Life eternal! All because of Jesus! This is how we can keep Christmas in our hearts all year!

Bro. Kirk Prather (Bro. Bob and Sis. Marlene) and Sis. Wendy Hodel (Bro. Chuck and Sis. Rita, Roanoke) were united in marriage on November 27. Welcome, Sis. Wendy.

Thank you to our visiting ministers, Bro. Randy Kellenberger (Sis. Karen, Kansas City, MO) and Elder Bro. Mark Bahr (Sis. Beverly, Detroit, MI).

We welcome Bro. Keith and Sis. Alisa Beyer and family, who recently moved to Washington from Detroit. We know they will be an asset to our congregation.

Bro. Steve and Sis. Vicki Bucher welcome a new granddaughter, Victoria (Chris and Margaret Bucher).

We are thankful that Bro. Ed Fritz (Sis. Sally) is recovering from surgery, and Sis. Delores Kiefer has been able to worship with us again. Sis. Ellen Cox recently started her fourth round of chemotherapy and appreciates the prayers of the church.

My family recently found some letters from my grandmother, written back in the fifties. They

were all about births and deaths, baptisms and weddings, illnesses and trials, visitors and family gatherings. Life! The same yesterday as today, and on into 2006, until the Lord returns to take us all home.

INDIANA, BLUFFTON

Amber Steffen

Amy Gerber

Elizabeth Frauhiger

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

Luke 9:23

This past month the Bluffton congregation was blessed with ten converts who have laid down their wills for His. Bro. Eugene and Sis. Elizabeth Krizan's daughter, Miriam, was the first to make her beginning. Following her was Victoria Wolf (Bro. Kent and Sis. Viola), Matthew Steffen (Bro. Roger and Sis. Tara), April Steffen (Bro. Eric and Sis. Marcia), Heidi Compton (Bro. Gary and Sis. Jean), Megan Reinhard (Bro. Kevin and Sis. Shelly), Shelby Aschliman (Bro. Derryl and Sis. Peggy), Lena Kaehr (Bro. Keith and Sis. Lou Ann), Lindsay Grube (Bro. Lonnie and Sis. Vickie), and Nicole Sipe (Kevin and Sis. Andrea). We are prayerful for these new children of God as they begin their walk with him.

We were also blessed with an engagement this month, and are prayerful for them as well. Bro. Jason Fiechter (Bro. Dave and June) announced his engagement to Sis. Joni Sinn from Latty. She is the daughter of Bro. Tom and Sis. Kim

Sinn.

November 29 was the birth date of little Alaina Michelle, daughter of Bro. Nick and Sis. Brooke Bertsch. Alaina's joyful grandparents are Scott and Sis. Rita DeHoff and Bro. Stan and Sis. Cindy Bertsch. We are blessed to have another addition to our fellowship.

On December 4, our congregation was blessed with two visiting ministers: Elder Bro. Lynn Stieglitz (Sis. Leonda, Leo, IN) and Bro. Matt Steffen (Sis. Deanna, Princeville, IL). We are thankful for their willingness to let the Spirit move through them.

This past month we had the privilege of listening to the Covenant Chamber Choir. These talented young people came from Peoria, Washington, Bluffton, Leo, Wolcott, Detroit and Latty congregations. Their sole purpose was met as they praised God through their beautiful music.

December 11 was the day of our Christmas program. It was such a blessing to listen to the cheerful voices of the children as they praised our Saviour! We are truly thankful for their open hearts in blessing us in this way. It was also a wonderful way to enter the Bluffton congregation into the Christmas season!

Along with the blessings brought to us this month, there were also many opportunities to pray for our brethren. Bro. Jay and Sis. Ronda Grube's daughter, Rinae, underwent open heart surgery on December 13 to repair a hole in her heart. They have asked for the prayers of the church. Bro. Brett Shorb asked for prayers also

from the church as he faces shoulder surgery. Finally, Bro. Ralph Baumgartner's family has asked for prayers on his behalf as he has rapidly declined from his cancer.

Our prayers are also with the family of Bro. Richard Reinhart. He leaves behind three children, Vaughn, Carol and Patti. This quiet brother was an inspiration of faith and love to God.

Dolores King died on December 12. Our sympathy goes out to her siblings, Sis. Dorothy Moser and Bro. Bob Aschliman (Sis. Ida). Although it's tough when someone we love leaves this earth, we are comforted by the fact that we will soon be with them again.

Sis. Lucille Gerber passed away this month as well. She joins her husband, Bro. Dwight, in heaven, leaving behind seven children: Elaine (Ted) Liechty, Keith D. (Catherine), Sis. Beverly (Bro. Greg) Meyer, Darrell (Cindy), Ronald (Lila), Sis. Karen (Bro. Duane) Steffen, and Brad (Debra). Our love and support goes out to this dear family.

Finally, Sis. Deb Snider and her four sons, Vincent, John, Seth and Noah, are in need of everyone's prayers. Her husband, Bro. Mike, passed away suddenly in the night. As their family goes through this deep time of heartbreak, we lift them up to the Father as their greatest comfort.

We are so thankful and blessed to have the example of Bro. Bill and Sis. Mildred Neuenchwander. This month they are celebrating their 60th wedding anniversary. Our prayer is that they would be blessed for their faithful service to each other and

to God.

**INDIANA
BLUFFTON NORTH
Tiffani Schladenhauffen
Darren Drayer**

Grace and peace be multiplied to you. On November 20, Bro. Allen Stoller (Sis. Susan, Bluffton) visited our congregation and shared the Word with us. He encouraged us to stay tapped into the vine, Jesus Christ, and shun choices that would sever our connection.

Bro. Larry Gerber and Sis. Sarah Funk (Gridley) will not forget November 20, as it was their wedding day. Bro. Larry's parents are Bro. Jim and Sis. Marge (Latty). Sis. Sarah's parents are Bro. Virgil and Sis. Shirley Funk (Congerville).

Bro. Tim and Sis. Robin Joloff welcomed their son, Mason Timothy, into the world on December 11. Mason joins a sister, Chole. His grandparents are Bro. Bob and Sis. Bev Joloff and Mike and Karen Todd.

We extend our sympathy to Sis. Joyce Neuenchwander (Bro. Walt) on the passing of her mother, Helen Schoeff, on December 4.

Sis. Mahilda Dubach and Sis. Sarah Jane Meyer (Paul) lost their sister, Delores King, on December 12. We grieve with them.

We also mourn with Bro. Art Kipfer (Sis. Sarah) on the death of his sister, Pauline Fiechter, on December 12.

Spending time in the hospital this month were Sis. Fern Leman and Bro. Brett Shorb (Sis. Cindy).

On December 4 we had the an-

nual reading of the Memorandum. It started with the encouragement to stay in the Word. What a fitting beginning—if that is accomplished, all the other issues (worldliness, non-resistance, etc.) fall into place.

On December 18, we listened to our children sing the story of Christmas. It was one of the best programs ever. After congregational singing, Sis. Lisa Markley (Bro. Matt) led the nursery through first grade group. One of their songs was a beautiful Christmas Medley. Following them was Bro. Tad Baumgartner (Sis. Stephanie) leading the second through fourth graders. Along with singing, this group recited a wonderful poem: "Let Them Tell Us the Story." Next, the fifth through eighth graders reminded us that Jesus "Made a Way in the Manger." They followed the passionate leadership of Bro. Ked Moser (Sis. Adrienne). The program ended on a high note (literally), with Bro. Brad Baumgartner (Sis. Michelle) directing the high school and graduate singers in three songs. It was a beautiful afternoon of praise.

"We rejoice in the light, and we echo the song that comes down thru the night from the heavenly throng. Ay! We shout to the lovely evangel they bring, and we greet in His cradle our Savior and King!" ("There's a Song in the Air," # 854 Gospel Hymns)

**INDIANA
FRANCESVILLE
Jessica Murray**

Greetings loved ones in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus

Christ. What a special time it was to gather for Holy Communion and what a way to come to a close of a year by looking at our inner selves, to help better see how and what we need to do to make the world better and help spread the love of Jesus.

"Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

Hebrews 13:21

As our hearts were touched by the wonderful birth of Brett Alan Gutwein (Bro. Jan and Sis. Val), we were saddened to hear there were some complications with his health. As we know all things are in the Lord's hands, we pray for their family and rejoice at the Lord's miracles. Brett is welcomed home by his sisters, Tess and Alisha, and brothers, Mark and Derek. May the power of prayer and faith in the Lord's strength lead you in your daily challenges and growing family.

What a joy it was to have Bro. Bob and Sis. Joy Huber and their family home for a few days. Their work as missionaries continues as they are getting a full house at CVE. We send our love and prayers back with you and may the Lord continue to bless you for your works in serving Him.

As we have many who have lost loved ones in our congregation this past month, our hearts and prayers go out to you. May the love of the Lord comfort you at this time and show you ways to cope

and love Him more.

We were so blessed this past month with many visiting ministers and their families. Elder Bro. Curt Frank (LaCrosse, IN) was here to share Communion with us. Bro. John Baumgartner (Bluffton North, IN) was here to share the Thanksgiving weekend with us. And Bro. Ken Wuethrich (Indianapolis, IN) was here in December. Thank you all for your works of kindness and all we learned through your teachings. May you all be blessed and take our love home to your churches.

**INDIANA, INDIANAPOLIS
Sandy Lichtle
Debbie Anliker**

Greetings from Indianapolis.

We were again blessed with many visitors this month. Some came to visit family, some for family outings, and some to hear grandchildren recite the Christmas story. We are thankful for all who joined us in worshipping our Lord and Savior.

Our visiting ministers this month were Elder Bro. Wayne Banwart (Sis. Charlen, Champaign, IL), Bro. Bob Beebe (Sis. Sue, South Bend, IN), Bro. John Bradle (Sis. Jill, Roanoke, IL), Elder Bro. Steve Gutwein (Sis. Linda, Francesville, IN) and Bro. Jaye Rinckenberger (Sis. Peggy, Goodfield, IL). We ask the Lord to richly bless these dear ones for being so willing to share God's Word with us.

December 11 was our Sunday School Christmas program. It was a joy to hear them share this special message through verse and song. That same afternoon we en-

joyed caroling and then a chili dinner together.

Bro. Bill and Sis. Gail Bradford recently had a special celebration – their 40th wedding anniversary. It was a blessing to have their children and grandson home to worship with us. Our prayer is that the Lord will continue to bless their family circle.

“Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.”

Romans 14:6

INDIANA, LACROSSE

**Shirley Frank
Cathy Nuest**

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

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

Zion's Harp #7

Greetings. Once again we gathered together to hear our Sunday School children tell the Christmas story through song and verse. We are thankful we can be reminded of our Father's love for us at this special season of the year.

Several from our congregation have undergone surgery this past month. Emily Elcock (Sis. Ruth), Gene Stoller and Elder Bro. Curt Frank have recuperated and are now enjoying a measure of good health. Sis. Fern Antrim and Sis. Jo Frank have also met with physical infirmities. We pray for a complete recovery for them.

We are thankful ministering

Bro. Dan Moser (Elgin, IL) could be with us on Thanksgiving Day. Other visiting ministers this past month were Elder Bro. Bill Schlatter (Junction, OH), Bro. Warren Schlatter (Junction, OH), Bro. John Lehman (Wolcott, IN) and Bro. Ted Steffen (Alto, MI). Bro. Ron Palitto (Akron, OH) was also here with us for a Wednesday evening service. May the Lord bless their efforts.

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

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

Hymns of Zion #150

INDIANA, LEO

Ethelyn Schlatter

Marcus Jeremiah Grim was born November 16, on his father's birthday. He was welcomed by Bro. Marc, Sis. Diann, Isaac and Micah Grim. His grandparents are Jan and Earl Grim, Bro. Dave and Sis. Wilma Kieser, all of Bloomington, IL. Congratulations to all.

Bro. Trent Schrock had an impressive sermon Thanksgiving morning. He mentioned we are ordinarily thankful for what is temporary and does not last. The desire of his heart was to focus on the eternal. There are two attributes of God that draw a dividing line in our personal lives, the first attribute of God is that He is eternal ... second, God is the Creator ... time is temporary, creation is

temporary except for the soul. What is thankfulness, what does it mean, where does it come from? Thankfulness wells up in the heart out of an understanding who God is. Bro. Trent read Philippians 4. The first three verses reflect an apparent conflict ... then in verse four Paul comes back to rock solid foundation “faith in Christ Jesus” ... there's something about that which is eternal, the more it grows in you the more that it becomes a part of your thinking, the more it changes you ... the less that which is tainted matters. Happiness comes from a thankful heart; we tend to be thankful for temporary or physical things, comfort, being fed, loved, health and free from pain ... in scripture we find a consistent theme ... the believer growing in Christ, shifting from the world's view to God's view ... that which is eternal. God is provider ... it is easy to connect to Him as provider in temporal things, food, drink, life, breath, while meaning and purpose are eternal ... God as protector ... physical harm to the body ... in the spiritual realm we go back to Philippians 4:6-7 “the peace of God ... shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” God is King ... God sets up governments tainted by sin ... fret not about change ... God's kingdom is eternal. He is our Saviour ... we are saved from death, injury, etc. He came that we may have eternal life. He is our Father, as are brothers of Christ ... disappointing relationships with our earthly fathers are temporary “let not your heart be troubled” John 14:1 ... we are

going to the house of the Father; that should cause thankfulness to well up in our heart.

On November 27, the engagement of Bro. Brian Knudstrup and Sis. Julie Waibel (Bay City, MI) was announced. His parents are Mary and Charlie Knudstrup, her parents are Bro. Bill and Sis. Carol Waibel (Bay City, MI). May God's blessings be with them.

Sis. Mary Lantz, 101, passed away November 30 at The Cedars where she resided for over 11 years. Her husband, David Lantz, preceded her in death. A memorial service was held December 5 at the Leo Church. Survivors include two sons, Richard and Wayne (Joanne), a brother, Lloyd White, five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. We rejoice that her prayer to go Home was granted.

Our prayers are with those who have had surgery or health problems: Bro. Sylvan Pulfer, Bro. Bruce Schafer and Meno Zehr. May they feel God's healing power.

Our Christmas program was held December 11.

The church Christmas caroling was on December 16, visiting the nursing home, shut-ins and elderly.

INDIANA, MILFORD

**Carol Haab
Carlton Beer**

Our church had a funeral service for Marian Beer. He was the son of Bro. Henry and Sis. Alice Beer. He was residing in Colorado, but wanted to be buried at Milford. Bro. Victor Beer had the services. He leaves several brothers and sisters and many cousins.

We had Bro. Earl Beery (Rittman, OH) minister to us this month. He empathized the importance of truth and contentment. In the afternoon, he encouraged us to work in the Lord's vineyard.

Because of the encouragement of Bro. Marshall Heinold, Bro. Rob Schlipf and Sis. Kim spent four weeks in and around Acapulco, Mexico. There are some relatives of one of our sisters in Ixtlan who showed an interest in the true Word of God. Bro. Rob and Sis. Kim went to help further the Word. They came home encouraged.

Our congregation, including our Sunday School children, divided into three groups to go Christmas caroling to our old people and shut-ins. It is a great time for the grownups and children to do good things together.

The family of the late Bro. Ezra and Sis. Luella Beer were sobered by the passing of Sis. Viola Leman (Eureka, IL). We are comforted by the fact that she gave her life to the Lord at the early age of sixteen.

INDIANA, REMINGTON

**Tammy Waibel
Beth Virkler**

"Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake."

Psalm 115:1

We've been given another year of Grace! May we all pray to be graced with a pure motive to glorify God only in our hearts instead of living lives unto ourselves.

Kayla Renae entered the lives

of Bro. Brian and Sis. Kristine Schneider on December 6, 2005. Big sisters, Emily and Brianna, are providing plenty of love and hugs also. Grandparents of Kayla are Bro. Ken and late Sis. Loretta Schneider and late Bro. Wilmer and Sis. Clara Fischer of Roanoke, IL.

We are thankful to be adding another young couple to our church fellowship. Bro. Chad Heiniger (Bro. Don and Sis. Peg, Elgin, IL) was wed to Sis. Heather Stoller (Bro. Todd and Sis. Pam, Latty, OH) on December 11 and they will be making Remington their home church as Bro. Chad is employed in this area. Their address is: 3242 Reed Street, West Lafayette, IN 47906.

On Christmas day, Bro. Nathan Virkler (Bro. Stan and Sis. Beth) announced his engagement to Sis. Natalie Knochel (Bro. Herb and Sis. Laurie) of Phoenix, AZ. South Bend, IN, congregation will be able to add this young couple to their fellowship as Bro. Nathan is employed in that area.

INDIANA, SOUTH BEND

**Melissa Gerst
Stacey Feller**

"Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere..." the Sunday School children sang with all their hearts at our Christmas program. Are we willing as Christians to "tell it on the mountain" what Christ has done in our lives today? It is always a joy to hear of the birth of the Christ child from young ones who are so eager to share the Christmas story! We were also blessed in the past month to have two visiting minis-

ters: Bro. Joe Gerst (Iowa City, IA) and Bro. Tony Manz (Junction, OH).

Our congregation will miss our dear Bro. Man Huynh as he has announced he will be returning to Iowa City. Though we know the Iowa City congregation will appreciate his presence, he will surely be missed. Our prayers are with convert Abby Klopfenstein as she will be traveling abroad for the next school semester.

During the winter months of January through March our Wednesday evening schedule will alternate between meeting in homes and in nursing homes. Please contact one of our ministers if you will be in the area and intend to worship with us: Bro. Robert Beebe (574) 291-2158, Bro. Scott Schafer (574) 831-4378 or Bro. Rich Gramm (574) 546-5022.

INDIANA, VALPARAISO

Ed Lester

Greetings of love and joy to all of our family of believers and friends.

This past month we have been pretty busy. We enjoyed a nice presentation from Bro. Steve Stoller. In spite of all the disasters happening around the world, we can not forget about our obligations close to home. We had a wonderful turnout for our annual Christmas caroling. Several individuals' spirits were lifted and some residents of a nursing home, too. The annual Christmas program was held on December 11. The Sunday school children and young adults did a great job of re-

mind us of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thanks to everyone who participated and helped out during this joyous time of year.

We would like to thank Elder Bro. Steve Gutwein (Francesville), Elder Bro. Dan and Sis. Jenna Kilgus (Remington) for worshipping with us and delivering our church Memorandum.

Also we wanted to let everyone know that Bro. Brady Moser (Bro. Andy and Diane Moser) is home from the hospital and recovering. Bro. Ed Lester (Sis. Caroline) is home recovering from hip surgery and Bro. Bob Hoerr (Sis. Marguerite) is home and doing well after knee surgery.

May God continue to lead you into this new year and keep you safe in His loving care.

INDIANA WEST LAFAYETTE

Diana Norman Nettie Haab

Our visiting ministers this month were Bro. Randy Gudeman (Sis. Becky, Francesville, IN) and Bro. Tom Troxel (Sis. LuAnn, La-Crosse, IN). Both have children here in school so we all benefit when they come and visit.

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

Matt 1:21

On December 5, our Sunday School children told us the Christmas story. It is always a thrill to see and hear the faith of these dear little ones.

Snow and icy weather greatly

reduced the number of people who could attend our Purdue Christmas program on December 8, but inside the church the message was still heartwarming and uplifting.

Many from our church spent an evening Christmas caroling for some shut-ins and at several nursing homes. We then gathered back at the church for fellowship and lunch.

Maggie (Jason) Getz had surgery and is now home recuperating.

We extend our sympathy to Bro. Russ, Sis. Darlene Walder and family due to the untimely death of their nephew, Andrew Kaeb, from Cissna Park, IL.

INDIANA, WOLCOTT

Elaine Bahler Lisa Furrer

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

St. Matthew 19:14

Little Ashley Claire lived but a short time, but touched the lives of her family members. Our sympathy and prayers are with her family: parents, Bro. Brent and Sis. Erica Blume; siblings, Dustin and Rachel; and grandparents, Bro. Larry and Sis. Lynell Blume and Bro. Arlyn and Sis. Lanae Rudin, from Cissna Park, IL.

Bro. Gene Lehman (Sis. Verna) had eye surgery and is well on the way to recovery. May God continue His healing powers.

Our prayers are with Bro. Lloyd and Sis. Pat Kyburz in the passing of Sis. Pat's mother, Pau-

line. May God comfort them and the many family members left with a void of a beloved mother and grandmother.

IOWA, BLOOMFIELD

Barbara Schock

Greetings! This past month, we have been blessed with a visiting minister. Bro. Vernon Wettstein (Sis. Judith, Congerville) was here on December 11. We thank him for all his efforts to come and share the Word with us.

We would also like to welcome home Brian Schaer (Don) from Iraq where he has been for over a year. We thank the Lord for watching over him and bringing him back home safely.

On a Wednesday night of this month, we were blessed and gratified that the Lord opened the way, and the support of the congregation was felt as Bro. Joe Dotterer (Sis. Rose) was received into the ministry. May the Lord continue to grant them servant hearts, and may we each esteem them very highly in the Lord for the work's sake. We are thankful that Elder Bro. Jon Schmidgall (Sis. Julie) was here for the evening, and we thank him for the message and the work.

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

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

Hymns of Zion #150 vs. 1,4

IOWA, BURLINGTON

Brenda Schulz

Laurie Schulz

We extend congratulations to Clay Buster and Jessica Heater, who were married this month. May God bless their marriage. Clay's parents are Bro. John and Sis. Ingrid.

We also appreciate the visit of our Elder Bro. John Schmidgall (Oakville, IA). May he continue to feel God's nearness and blessing.

IOWA, ELGIN

Gloria Frieden

Heidi Butikofer

As we embark upon another new year, may we find comfort and encouragement from these two hymns:

Be still my soul, Thy God doth undertake

To guide the future as He has the past.

Thy hope, thy confidence, let nothing shake,

All now mysterious shall be bright at last.

Hymns of Zion #191

Then trust in God through all thy days;

Fear not, for He doth hold thy hand,

Though dark thy way, still sing and praise,

Sometime, sometime, we'll understand.

Hymns of Zion #105

We were saddened to hear of the passing of Kathryn Schneider (the late Laverne Schneider). May God comfort her families.

We are thankful that Trent Frieden (Brian and Susie) and Sis. Sandy Butikofer (Bro. Lon) are

both home after recently spending time in the hospital.

Notice: Silver Lining collection dues will be due the month of February.

IOWA, IOWA CITY

Diana Butikofer

We are thankful for the children's willingness to tell us during our Christmas program of the wonderful story of Christ's birth and the significance of His death. We appreciate the teachers' and students' hard work in preparation for that day.

We thank Bro. Gary Anliker (Sis. Edie, Elgin, IL) for lending himself on the pulpit recently.

Our special prayers go out for Sis. Eunice Feller after her recent fall. She has temporarily relocated to a rehab facility for therapy for a few weeks.

IOWA, LESTER

Dawn Knobloch

Dawn Metzger

Elder Bro. Jon Schmidgall (Oakville, IA) was here to preach the Gospel on Thanksgiving Day. We always appreciate coming to the house of God and finding those Brothers willing to stand before us.

On December 11, we witnessed the baptism of Sis. Emma Metzger (Bro. Rodney and Sis. Polly). Elder Bro. Doug Schock (Bloomfield, IA) was with our congregation for this special weekend. Bro. Virgil Metzger (Chicago, IL) was here as well, and we thank these two Brothers for their willingness to serve others.

Paige Linnea Moser was born to Josh and Melinda Moser on December 8. We wish them God's blessings as first-time parents.

Our sympathy is extended to Bro. Gus and Sis. Florence Knoblock, Bro. Paul Knoblock and Sis. Zelma Knoblock in the passing of their sister and sister-in-law, Sis. Christine Schmidt, of West Bend, IA.

"And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour, it is the gift of God."

Eccles. 3:13

There are several students completing their college education and will now be applying what they have learned in an occupation. They are: Andy Knoblock (Bro. Terry and Sis. Elaine), Chris Leuthold (Bro. Doug and Char), Gregg Metzger (Bro. Mark and Sis. Audrey) and Monica Wulf (Bro. Arnie and Sis. Myra).

Phillip Feucht (Bro. Roy and Sis. Melisa) was hospitalized for surgery this past month, and Nancy Metzger (Arlyn) was also a hospital patient.

"...Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

Luke 7:50

What joy we feel to be able to report that Daniel Messner (Bro. Henry and Sis. Charlene), Elyse Meyer (Bro. Denis and Sis. Jill), and Katie Metzger (Bro. Bruce and Sis. Harriet) have found peace with God and man, and are now awaiting baptism.

With much anticipation, our Sunday School children told the Christmas story on December 18 through poems and the singing of hymns. It is so encouraging to see the entire group gather at the conclusion to sing "Joy To The World" and "Jesus Loves Me". May we take advantage of the greatest gift ever offered to man; forgiveness of our sins through this babe, Jesus Christ.

Reminder: January is our month to collect for the Silver Lining. The suggested donation is \$11 and can be placed in the general fund. Please give any changes to your correspondents.

IOWA, OAKVILLE
Sharla Wiegand
Rosalie Wiegand

God's best gift to us is Jesus
 Born on earth at Christmas time
 Jesus came from Heaven above
 To be a friend of yours and mine.

Children's Harp #102

The Sunday School Christmas program was held Sunday, December 11. It is always precious to hear the children speak and sing of the one gift with eternal value – the Lord Jesus Christ. Our prayer is that some day each one may know Jesus as their Friend, Redeemer and Lord.

God made me, God made me,
 In my Bible Book it says that God
 made me.

Children's Harp #11

Our Heavenly Father has made a darling little boy and placed him

in the home of Bro. Regan and Sis. Tricia Lanz. They named him Jackson Tod and he joins his older siblings: Raiann, Claire, Bryant, and Emma Lee. Also thankful for Jackson's safe arrival on December 3 are Dave and Phyllis Tapp and Bro. Robert (late Sis. Emma Jean) Lanz.

The B-I-B-L-E,
 Yes, that's the book for me,
 I stand alone on the Word of God,
 The B-I-B-L-E.

Children's Harp #23

May God richly bless Bro. Mike Rinkenberger (Congerville, IL) and Bro. Scott Wegman (Taylor, MO) as they brought forth the Truth by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Yesterday, today, forever
 Jesus is the same;
 All may change, but Jesus never!
 Glory to His name!

Children's Harp #28

May the grace and peace from God our Father be with us all in the year 2006.

IOWA, WEST BEND
Lori Skoglund
Sue Schneider

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

Eccles. 12:13-14

Elder Bro. Curt Frank (Sis. Lyla, LaCrosse, IN) read Ecclesiast-

tes Chapter 12 and expounded upon these words while visiting loved ones here. Bro. Dale Moore (Sis. Cheryl, Elgin, IA) also ministered unto us over the Thanksgiving weekend. The efforts of recent visiting ministers, Bro. Roger Aberle (Sis. LaVonne, Sabetha, KS) and Bro. Paul Messner (Sis. Jan) and Bro. Dean Messner (Sis. Wanda), both from Winthrop, MN, were also appreciated.

Two families in our congregation have been blessed with new babies. On November 24, a little girl, Ashley Violet, was welcomed into the home of Bro. Lee and Sis. Alicia Fehr. Ashley has a big sister, Aubrey, and two sets of grandparents, Bro. Fred and Sis. Joann Maul (Cissna Park, IL) and Bro. Jim and Sis. Sharon Fehr.

Landon Joseph was born to Bro. James and Sis. Sarah Montag on December 5. Katelyn, Megan, and Colin are Landon's happy siblings. Bro. Pat and Sis. Julie Zaugg and Ed and Luann Montag are his grandparents.

This passed month three loved ones were hospitalized: Jim (Sherry) Schmidt for surgery, Bro. Cameron (Sis. Tammy) Knobloch for treatment following an injury and Sis. Helen Zaugg due to illness. Thankfully, each are able to assemble with us again.

Sis. Christine (known by all as Sid) Schmidt passed away on December 1. She had been in the Care Center for many years. Even so, death came calling for her quickly. Sis. Sid was preceded in death by her husband, Dick. Surviving family include: brothers, Bro. August (Sis. Florence) Knobloch and Bro. Paul Knobloch of Lester, IA; a sister,

Sis. Pearl Anliker; and sisters-in-law, Sis. Zelma Knobloch of Lester, IA, and Sis. Ida Schmidt. It was mentioned during her funeral that Sis. Sid had often requested Psalm 71 be read to her. She leaves behind many loved ones who will sorely miss her.

Bro. Paul (Martha) Demiter and his family mourn the loss of his mother, Helen, of Akron, OH. Sis. Rosene (Bro. Clifford) Grimm and Marilyn (Arlo) Grimm are saddened by the death of their brother, Lloyd Miller, of Chillicothe, IL. Sis. Adele (Bro. Harley) Bruellman feels the loss of a brother-in-law, John Scott, Topeka, KS. May each heart be comforted by a loving and caring Heavenly Father.

JAPAN, SHIODA Ayako Inoue

Greetings from the Shioda congregation.

We rejoice especially this month and thank our Lord for sending Jesus as our Saviour.

November 27 was our annual business meeting. We are thinking about putting new restrooms in the church. They have been outside the church since the church was first built more than 40 years ago.

On December 18, we went caroling at the local hospital in Ichinomiya town. In Japan most people do not know the true meaning of Christmas so Bro. Willis had a short Bible reading and talked about the birth of Christ and why he came to this earth.

Regardless what our circumstances are, when we think of how

much God loves us and what big sacrifice Christ made for us, it brings us real joy and peace. That peace is the true gift of Christmas.

JAPAN, TOKYO Marie Inoue

“Be still, and know that I am God...”

Psalm 46:10

This portion of scripture is sung as the first song recorded on a recent CD by our Apostolic Christian brethren. As we face the hustle and bustle of this season, the words of that song help to “quiet” our hearts and reflect on the true meaning of this season of God's perfect gift to us in His Son Jesus Christ.

This coming Sunday, the 25th, is our church Christmas as we look forward to the morning service, our afternoon program, followed by a meal together. We hope and pray that many can come. As we prepare for all of this, it is surely a time of working together, reminding us that “...Christ loved the church and gave himself for it;” (Eph. 5:25). With a small church, each one has to do several jobs: prepare the microphone, prepare pieces and songs for the children with some translation and help them memorize. A friend kindly offered to help prepare the “bag of goodies” for the children. Not sure we will be able to sing the “Hallelujah Chorus” at the end of the evening, as two of our good helpers, Bro. Andrew and Sis. Jana Klaus, will not be with us.

At this writing, Bro. Yoshio

Yamazaki is in the hospital after a fall in his home that gave him harsh pain in his right leg. After some rehabilitation, he hopes to be dismissed fairly soon this time. Sis. Shizuko Utsuki's condition has somewhat stabilized, and she is no longer on intravenous feeding. We are thankful God is providing for these dear ones and also for the Klaus family who are living in San Jose, CA, for a time in connection with Bro. Andrew's work.

KANSAS, BERN
Sheri Edelman
Rita Menold

Sis. Maretta Rokey has moved back to Kansas and into the Apostolic Christian Home in our area after living thirty-four years in Illinois. We welcome her and hope she feels at home as she assembles with us in Bern!

October 29 was the wedding day for Tanya Rokey (Bro. Allen and Sis. Glenda) and Jeremy Meyer (Lisa Meyer and Brent Meyer). We wish God's blessings on their marriage!

Steve Stoller (Bro. Arden and Sis. Dar) is engaged to Joan Swanda. They have chosen May 12 as their wedding day. May God be with them as they make plans to be joined together as one.

Austin Esslinger (Bro. Dennis and Sis. Gerty) has been announced for having peace from God in his repentance. We look forward to his upcoming testimony.

Three sets of first-time grandparents are rejoicing in their new roles! Bro. Jim and Sis. Diane Kaeb are grandparents to Abigail Joy! Bro. Kevin and Sis. Jody

Sauder (Tremont, IL) welcome her into their arms. Bro. Earl and Sis. Donna Edelman are grandparents to Taygen Jade Beyer! She was born to a beaming Bro. Kaleb and Sis. Angela (Sabetha, KS). John and Sis. Margaret Hundley are excited to have Aiden James in their family now. Michael and Rachel McLin (Topeka, KS) are the happy parents. May God be with these families as they love and train their new additions.

Bro. Wilfred and Sis. Verona Strahm are grandparents again! Ted and Sara Strahm (Lawrence, KS) had their first child, a baby boy, Hudson William. We wish them God's blessings on this new bundle!

Our annual Christmas caroling and supper was held on December 11. What a blessing to be together and share with others as well! The following week we enjoyed the Sunday School Christmas program. A special thank you goes to Bro. Roger Aberle (Sis. LaVonne, Sabetha, KS) for ministering to us on that day. We pray for God's guidance in our lives in the New Year.

KANSAS, FORT SCOTT
Ethel Smith

The PEACE and JOY of the season to all. Worthy is the Lamb that was slain and hath redeemed us to God by His blood.

We extend our sympathy to our two dear sisters, Mabel Springer and Lucille Schurter, in the passing of their brother, Bro. Harvey Hartman, of Watseka, IL. Our hearts also go out to Beth and Kenny Snyder family on the death

of their son, Jordan Snyder, in an auto accident. Lester Sinn is the grandparent and Beth is his daughter.

November 20, Bro. David Hartter (Sis. Beth, Sabetha, KS) was our visiting minister. The Sinn family reunion was in Ft. Scott the same weekend. Sis. Beth's mother was from Ft. Scott. We are very thankful for the miles traveled and the love and fellowship extended to us.

November 27, Adrian Bahr (daughter of Bro. Jerry and Sis. Maria) and Ryan Lewis were announced to have peace with the Lord and desire baptism. We are thankful how God has worked in their lives and look forward to their baptismal service.

Beginning with the first weekend of December, we experienced the JOY of the season when we hosted the Princeville choir and their families. It was a blessed experience to see the young and old singing praises and glorifying God. They brought with them two of their ministering brothers, Bro. Erik Givens (Sis. Debbie) and Bro. Craig Martin (Sis. Terri). We had many reminders of our hope in the Lord, the importance of being filled and led by the Spirit, the importance of praising God, our blessed heritage, clinging to His Word. Where would we be without the shed blood for the remission of our sins! We were bountifully filled with God's spiritual food. It truly was a joyous weekend.

December 14, we enjoyed our Christmas program. Each child radiated joy and the light of Jesus Christ. The light that should radiate in every born again Christian.

We appreciate the hard work of their teachers.

The home of David and Trista Miller, 8 year-old Allie and 4 year-old Confer, has been blessed with the birth of Mia Grace. Mia remains in the hospital related to some breathing problems but is doing very well at this time. She hopefully will be home before Christmas. They wish to thank everyone for their prayers offered in her behalf.

The year of 2005 has been a blessed year and we thank all of you for your, love, service and support to our little church here in Ft. Scott. We do not know what is in store for 2006, but we are assured that our Lord and Saviour are ever near to guide and direct our paths if we but seek His will in our lives. Wishing you all a blessed New Year!

KANSAS, KIOWA

Jenny Stewart

Bro. Kelly and Sis. Jenny Stewart welcome another blessing to their family.

Sterling Levi was born on December 7. He was welcomed home by his siblings, Staci, Joshua, Carter, Alysson, Gabe, and Kayli. Sterling's grandparents are Bro. Kent and Sis. Darcy Kisling and Larry Stewart of Ponca City, OK.

During Wednesday night services we have been listening to the Conference tapes. The time and efforts taken by the Elder body are greatly appreciated.

The Sunday school had some help caroling this year. Many young members from various churches throughout Kansas and

Indiana joined us for the weekend.

During this weekend the Sunday school had their Christmas program. They had a very special message for everyone.

C- is for the Christ child born upon that day
 H- for Herald angels in the night
 R- means our Redeemer
 I- means Israel
 S- is for the Star that shown so bright
 T- is for Three Wise Men, they who traveled far
 M- is for the Manger where He lay
 A- is for All He stands for
 S- means Shepherds came and that's why there's a Christmas Day.

KANSAS LAMONT-GRIDLEY Eileen Bahr

Correction: The October issue failed to give credit to the article written by Elder Bro. Jay Luthi on "The Christian's Cross."

It was a joy to see our Sunday School full (we have so few normally) thanks to the Edelman family reunion Thanksgiving weekend. Bro. Brandon Emch (Kansas City, MO) was also home and ministered to us.

We appreciate the efforts of Elder Bros. John Lehman (Bern, KS), Andy Stoller (Smithville, OH) and Wayne Anliker (Forrest, IL). Thank you.

Christmas gifts were distributed to the Hartford Handicapped Home. Caroling in Emporia and Burlington nursing homes. Sunday School caroling and supper for all are scheduled for this Sunday at the home of Bro. Ron

and Sis. Jane Isch's.

KANSAS, SABETHA Rebekah Beyer Dawn Strahm

Glory to God in the Highest! With excitement we welcome the Christmas season and remember that we celebrate Christ's birth and more importantly His crucifixion and the forgiveness of our sins. We have enjoyed an evening of all-church Christmas caroling to the Apostolic Christian Home as well as to several residences of members of our congregation. This is always a heart-cheering time of year. Another blessing was the Sunday School Christmas Program. Over seventy youth shared with us scripture and song relating to Christ's birth.

Sis. Marie Martie spent some time in the hospital this month. We are prayerful for her well-being and health.

Bro. Roy Koehl (Sis. Jenell, Morris, MN) shared the Word of God with us this month.

Bro. Kaleb and Sis. Angela Beyer welcome into their hearts and arms little Taygen Jade. She is their firstborn child. First-time grandparents are Bro. Earl and Sis. Donna Edelman (Bern, KS). Bro. Martin and Sis. Karen Beyer welcome another grandchild into their fold.

Our congregation welcomes the Kaufman family from Atlanta, Georgia. Bro. Keith and Sis. Carol and their sons, Sam and Matthew, have recently moved to our area. We look forward to fellowshiping with them and hope that they feel welcome into our community and church family.

KANSAS, WICHITA

Emma Miller

By the time you read this, Christmas 2005 will be history. According to Wichita AC tradition, those who were able caroled on Wednesday nights in place of midweek services. On Sunday, December 11, the congregation was treated to a program prepared by the Sunday School teachers and students. While I was not privileged to be present, I was told by my sister that the children seemed so happy to participate in the program. What a compliment!

I received a Christmas card from a Sister-in-faith, one of my contemporaries, who added this thought to her message. "We lived in a time when Christmas had depth of meaning in the name of Jesus. How fortunate we have been." Yes, we were fortunate.

Tuesday, December 6, several from the Wichita congregation joined with those of the surrounding Kansas churches to work at the MCC in Newton. The men were especially busy packing canned meat for shipping.

Bro. Howard Warner who lives in Hutchinson has been hospitalized to treat his congestion. May the Lord be with him and Sis. Ann. We are thankful that some of their children have homes in that area and they will attend to their needs.

The Wichita job market has been in a slump so we welcome the headlines that report we are making a comeback, especially in the airplane industry. If you are seeking work, investigate the Wichita job market. Our ministers' names

and addresses are correct in the ministers' book. Give them a call if you want to discuss job possibilities.

KENTUCKY, LEXINGTON

Barb Huber

Greetings in the precious name of our dear Lord and Saviour!

We want to thank our Elder Bro. Andy Stoller (Sis. Roberta, Smithville, OH) for traveling to share and read the Memorandum on Friday, November 3. It was a time of encouragement, as well as admonition, when we were exhorted to be fully equipped for our spiritual journey here on earth, and to put on the whole armor of God, that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil (Ephesians 6:11). May the Lord bless Bro. Andy and Sis. Roberta for their many efforts and labors of love toward our small congregation.

The Lord blessed our assembly with other visiting ministers: Bro. Ed Fritz (Sis. Sally, Washington, IL); Bro. Sam Schlatter (Sis. Linda, Junction, OH); Bro. Jeff Grimm (Sis. Ruth, Goodfield, IL); Bro. Wally Ramsier (Mansfield, OH); and retired Bro. Walt Steffen (Sis. Dorothy, Milford, OH). They provided many rich teachings from God's Holy Word. One spoke of the importance of our witness here on earth, in a world of darkness, also. He said, "The darker the world, the brighter our light can be." (Matthew 5:16). We pray the Lord's special blessings on these dear ministers, their wives, and all who traveled with them, for their faithfulness to preach

God's Word.

It was a joy to have other visitors assemble with us representing the following churches: Bluffton, Francesville, LaCrosse, and Leo, IN; Eureka and Tremont, IL; Lamar, MO; and Columbus, OH.

Our prayers go out to our dear friend, Edna Clements, who has been in the hospital. May the Lord restore her to good health again.

What an inspiration it was to sing Christmas carols for the elderly and shut-in's at our church nursing home service in December! We can't imagine how the angels must have been inspired as they rejoiced and sang on the night of our dear Saviour's birth.

"By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went."

Hebrews 11:8

As we stand on the threshold of a new year, may we have the faith of Abraham, who was willing to entrust his future to the Lord. Abraham knew not where he was going, but he obeyed, and had faith to believe and trust God. We, also, know not what the new year may bring, but may we be willing to be obedient to His Word, and step out in faith, believing, and trusting our Lord, for whatever "He Wills" in 2006. Then we can say, "for by His hand, He leadeth me."

Another year is dawning: Dear Father, let it be,
In working or in waiting, another

with Thee;
 Another year of progress, another
 year of praise,
 Another year of proving Thy pres-
 ence all the days.

Another year of service, of witness
 for Thy love;
 Another year of training for holier
 work above.
 Another year is dawning: Dear Fa-
 ther, let it be,
 On earth or else in heaven, an-
 other year for Thee.
 — *Frances Havergal*

Again, we want to welcome
 anyone who may be in our area or
 traveling through to worship with
 us. You may contact Bro. Doug
 Germann (859) 224-8710; Bro.
 Lester Huber (859) 745-2541; or
 Bro. Jan Neukomm (859)
 273-8574.

MEXICO, MAGDALENA

Gloria Gonzalez

Greetings dear ones.

“Be of good courage, and he
 shall strengthen your heart, all ye
 that hope in the LORD.”

Psalm 31:24

This past month we had a lot of
 blessings and things to be thank-
 ful for.

Our visiting ministers this
 month were Bro. Wayne Fehr
 (Silverton, OR), Bro. Mark Gerber
 (Bluffton, IN) and Bro. Stephen
 Baner (Gridley, IL). We thank
 them for their labors and it is our
 prayer that God bless them and
 their families.

With emotional problems and
 without love, we welcome one
 more boy to CVE, Uriel Navarrete

(11 years old). So now our job is to
 show him God’s love through our
 lives and support him in all as-
 pects.

For the days when nothing hap-
 pens,
 For the cares that leave no trace,
 For the love of little children,
 For each sunny dwelling-place,
 For the altars of our fathers,
 And the closets where we pray,
 Take, O gracious God and Father,
 Praises this Thanksgiving Day.
 — *Margaret E. Sangster*

What a Great God we have, and
 on Thanksgiving Day (but not
 only this day) it is our desire to
 come to the Lord on our knees and
 express gratitude for all He has
 done for us.

MEXICO, IXTLAN

Claudia Gonzalez

“O Lord, our Lord, how excel-
 lent is thy name in all the earth!”

Psalm 8:9

As Christmas time is approach-
 ing, we can see Christmas lights,
 presents, and nativity scenes ev-
 erywhere. However, our desire is
 that the Lord’s name, Jesus
 Christ, can be remembered in ev-
 ery home. He is the heart of our
 celebration. May our attention
 not stray from this thought.

We welcome a new baby boy to
 our congregation. Luis Eduardo
 was born November 18 to Bro.
 Lalo and Sis. Silvia Ugalde. His
 sister, Jana Keila, is happy too.
 May the Lord bless this little fam-
 ily.

MICHIGAN, ALTO

Rose Watson

Terri Huber

Please forgive me for neglect-
 ing to welcome Jennifer Stump,
 who is attending Baker College in
 Muskegan and joining us on Sun-
 days when she can. I am sure she is
 missed in her hometown of
 Bluffton.

We are delighted to report the
 engagement announcement of
 Bro. Brian Knudstrup (Charles
 and Mary) to Sis. Julie Waibel
 (Bro. Bill and Sis. Carol, Bay City).
 Though neither of them currently
 live here, we know them well. Bro.
 Brian grew up and repented in
 Alto and is now living and working
 in Leo. Sis. Julie attended church
 here in Alto while she was a college
 student. May God bless the family
 unit they are starting and commit-
 ting to Him.

The week of Christmas was sad
 for one family. Harold Desotell
 was taken from this life unexpect-
 edly. We would like to remember
 his daughters, Pam Morris and
 Penny Couch, as well as all of his
 grandchildren in their sorrow. We
 are so thankful that Desmond,
 Damon and Dominick Couch are a
 vital part of our Sunday School,
 and we know they will miss their
 Grandpa. While he hadn’t lived
 nearby or worshipped with us in
 many years, he left behind good
 friends who have good memories
 of their times together.

Ecclesiastes says for every-
 thing there is a season ... a time to
 be born and a time to die. Bro. Ned
 and Sis. Heidi Stoller are glad that
 little Josie Esther decided it was
 time to join the family! She will be
 coddled and care for by Ellie, Ivy

and Lena.

Another season in life is saying good-byes. We bid farewell to Bro. Curt and Sis. Luanne Kaeb as they head down to spend several months in Biloxi directing the World Relief rebuilding efforts and feeding the volunteers. It is a great undertaking, and one which God has beautifully prepared them for as is so often the case when the time for retirement arrives and those with good health can turn their experience and energy toward fulltime service.

Finally, we continue to pray for those who have been hospitalized: Sis. Bertha Wingeier, Bro. Joe Oesch (Sis. Melva) and Brittney Schlatter (Joe and Jenny).

MICHIGAN, BAY CITY

**Sarah Knochel
Janelle Ramseyer**

Greetings of Love in our Savior's Name! The end of 2005 is quickly approaching and how thankful we can be to our dear heavenly Father that another year of grace has been extended to each one of us. There have been many joys and many heartaches for each one; but God continues to prove faithful to all who call upon His name!

We pray for Fred (Helen) Knochel as he was in the hospital and underwent a surgical procedure. We are thankful that the Lord has given Fred a reasonable measure of health and that he was able to return to his home. Our prayers are also with Sis. Esther Waibel as she was in the hospital and now has returned home.

December 3-4 was a blessed weekend for our congregation.

Four dear souls gave their testimony of how the Lord called them from a world of darkness and how they were able to surrender their hearts to Him. We welcome Sisters Joan (Rick) and Caitlin Long, Rebekah Ruegsegger (Bro. Glenn, Jr. and Sis. Maria) and Jamie Knochel (Bro. Jim and Sis. Kay) into the fold.

Several visiting ministers were with us for the baptism weekend. We are thankful that Elder Bros. Aaron Steffen (Sis. Loretta, Alto, MI) and Tom Klotzle (Sis. Jody, Altadena, CA) and Bros. Randy Gasser (Sis. Sue, Detroit, MI) and Don Manz (Sis. Connie, Junction, OH) were able to be with us for the weekend. We were also blessed by the ministry of Bro. Jesse Bedolla (Sis. Bonnie, Detroit, MI) for Thanksgiving Eve services.

Sis. Julie Waibel and Bro. Brian Knudstrup's (Leo, IN) engagement was announced to the congregation on November 27. Sis. Julie is currently attending the Detroit congregation; however her parents, Bro. Bill and Sis. Carol, are here in Bay City. We pray that this dear couple will feel the Lord's direction in their life as they seek His will for their life together.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Michelle and Jerry Knochel's family in the loss of Michelle's father, Jim Rivard.

Sis. Hermine Kaeb has reason to rejoice this season. Another great-granddaughter, Josie Stoller, was welcomed into the family. Josie's parents are Bro. Ned and Sis. Heidi Stoller (Alto, MI).

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

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

Hymns of Zion, #150

MICHIGAN, DETROIT

**Tiffany Wieland
Mary Weigele**

For our Sunday School's Christmas Program, the theme was "Joy to the World". We were able to listen while the children sang songs and recited pieces that reminded us that, in spite of the suffering and unrest that we have seen around the world and even in our own nation, there is still reason to rejoice as God's gift of Jesus Christ coming to this world is still offered today. There is something special about the excitement, enthusiasm, and innocence that children bring to the Christmas spirit, and we are always encouraged to see evidence of the seeds of faith that God is planting in their souls. The following weekend, many from our congregation had the opportunity to go Christmas caroling to various homes and shut-ins in our community.

Another Christmas activity that has become a tradition in our congregation is assembling Christmas baskets with food for those with material needs. These baskets were distributed to several individuals within our community and to a local outreach facility in Detroit. Many of these local charities are struggling to support needy individuals and

families this year as more donations have gone towards hurricane relief in Louisiana and Mississippi instead of local efforts, and they appreciate any help they can secure.

This month marked the passing of Sis. Ruth Knochel, the wife of the late Bro. Dan Knochel. While we are happy that Sis. Ruth can now rest with the assurance of her eternal reward in Jesus Christ, we will certainly miss her. We especially want to extend sympathies to her family, including children, Gary and Mary Knochel, Kent and Deb Obermann, Dawn Ness, Bro. Dana and Sis. Beth Knochel, Gary and Candice Klopfenstein, as well as many grandchildren. Ministering Bro. John Laukhuf (Sis. Marcia, Latty, OH) was present to lend of himself for Sis. Ruth's funeral service.

Also visiting us and lending themselves to the ministry this month were Bro. Steve Stieglitz (Sis. Jane, Leo, IN) and Bro. Justin Koch (Sis. Marcia, Washington, IL). We appreciate these Brothers traveling to our congregation and sharing God's Word with us.

We also want to congratulate Kay Moilanen and Ron Irwin as they were united in marriage this month. We wish them God's blessings and pray their marriage can be a Christ centered union.

We want to extend our congratulations to Sis. Julie Waibel as her engagement to Bro. Brian Knudstrup (Leo, IN) was announced. We thankful that Bro. Brian and Sis. Julie are able to move forward with the confidence that it is God's will that they be

joined, and we wish them His blessings and guidance.

We want to remember those that have suffered from health ailments this month and lift them up in prayer. They include Sis. Barb Johnson, Dorothy Leman, Sis. Kathryn Losiewicz, Sis. Lorene Maibach, Sis. Anna Sabodos, and Bro. Ernie Weigele. We pray that each of them could feel God's encouragement and, if it His will, His healing.

Finally, we want to congratulate Sis. Manuela Denes for completing a Masters degree in Library and Information Science. We wish her God's guidance as she seeks employment in this field.

MINNESOTA MINNEAPOLIS LaRae Dill

"Silent night, holy night; Son of God, Love's pure light...." The wonder and Spirit of Christmas is always evident when the Sunday School joins together in this favorite Christmas hymn. Our congregation and many visiting grandparents and friends enjoyed the Christmas program on December 11.

Bro. Jeff Bahr (Kiowa, KS) visited our congregation on Thanksgiving weekend, giving us much "food for thought" in his ministry. Elder Bro. Leroy Messner (Winthrop, MN) also ministered here this month. We're thankful he and Sis. Joann could be here for the Christmas program as well.

Our sympathy to Peter and Jessica Zarkovacki. Jessica's step-father, Thom Halstead (Alexandria, MN), passed away.

Bro. Kyle Kellenberger (Lamar, MO) is living here in the Twin Cities during a work assignment in our area. Our congregation and especially Kyle's local aunts and uncles, are certainly appreciative of his presence and fellowship.

MINNESOTA, MORRIS Katie Koehl Heidi Nohl

We appreciated the following visiting ministers: Bro. Wes Moser (Lester, IA) and Bro. Jim Koehl (San Diego, CA). Elder Bro. Dennis Warner (Lester, IA) also assisted our Elder Bro. Art with the Memorandum.

Hospitalized this month were Carissa Timmerman (Bro. Terry and Sis. Connie) and Haley Wulf (Bro. Byron and Sis. Amy). We are thankful they are doing well.

November 27 was the wedding date of Bro. Brent Wulf (Bro. Dave and Sis. Nancy) and Sis. Susie Nohl (Bro. DeWayne and Sis. Janice). We pray they will feel God's presence as they begin this new step in their lives.

Our prayers are with our retired Elder Bro. Paul Fehr on the passing of his wife, Sis. Anna. Our thoughts are also with their children, Sis. Judy (Bro. Leroy, dec.), Bro. Lloyd (Sis. Diane), Sis. Ruby Schmidgall (Bro. Dennis), Sis. Wilda Koehl (Bro. Harv), Sis. Nancy Knobloch (Bro. Jack), Sis. Velma Domnick (Bro. Gary), Bro. Paul Jr. (Sis. Pam), and Sis. Diane Schmidgall (Bro. Mike); and the many grandchildren and great-grandchildren. May God continue to provide for them in the coming days.

Eva Anna was born to Bro. Dan and Sis. Shadow Schaefer. Welcoming her are her sisters, Elena and Esther, and her grandparents, Bro. Paul Jr. and Sis. Pam Fehr and Bro. Steve and Sis. Pam Schaefer. We pray God will direct them as they raise their children.

We welcome Bro. Matt and Sis. Jerilyn Waldbeser to our Morris church as they are moving from the Cissna Park congregation. We pray God will be with them and their two young sons as they make this transition.

MINNESOTA, WINTHROP

Ginny Stoll
Rachel Steiner

We are thankful Elder Bro. Mark Masters (Sis. Jeannine, Mansfield, OH) was able to come and assist our Elder Bro. LeRoy Messner in reading the Memorandum and assisting in the testimony and baptism of Bro. Chris Williams (Nancy). It was a blessed weekend and we welcome Bro. Chris into the fold.

We apologize for omitting a birth in June. Vanesa Isaacson and Kent Rubendall are thankful parents of another son. Brayden Lee was born on June 19 and welcomed home by his big brother, Carter. Grandparents are Jerry and Melissa Isaacson, Chris Kent and the late Allan Rubendall. Great - grandparents are John and Sis. Dorothy Jacobson, Laverne and Judy Kent, Delmer Isaacson and the late Kathleen Isaacson.

This month we had the blessing of singing Christmas carols to the senior citizens and those in the local nursing homes. It is so good to

pause and think of our Saviour's humble birth.

MISSOURI, LAMAR

Wendy Braker
Mindy Braker

We are thankful to have had the Memorandum read to us this past month. Elder Bro. Art Nohl (Sis. Sandra, Morris, MN) was here to assist in reading the letter. May the Lord richly bless him for his service.

Bro. Martin (Sis. Edith) Hohulin spent some time in the hospital this month. We are thankful that he is at home again. Sis. Corrine Roth (Roy) of our Goodfield, IL, congregation was hospitalized during her visit to Lamar. Our prayers are with her and her family.

Our thoughts and prayers are also with Bro. Lawrence and Sis. Sandra Luthi, as well as their family, during Sis. Sandra's illness. May the Heavenly Father be near to them as they seek to follow His perfect will in this difficult time.

MISSOURI, ST. LOUIS

Krista Banwart

Visiting ministers to St. Louis recently included Bro. Steve Sauder (Sis. Mary, Tremont, IL), Bro. Gary Anliker (Sis. Edith, Elgin, IL), Bro. Tom Troxel (Sis. Luann, La Crosse, IN), Bro. John Rowell (Sis. Nelda, Burlington, IA), and Bro. Ben Wysong (Sis. Jan, Sabetha, KS). We appreciate their efforts to share God's Word especially at this time in which Bro. Loren continues radiation treatments after the removal of a cancerous tumor of the tongue.

We are thankful for the healing of his tongue and his ability to speak again. In this year ahead, none of us know what we may face, but we lift our hearts with praise and thanksgiving for the privilege of walking with and trusting God as each moment unfolds.

There's never a promise that He has not kept...
So I will walk with Him — step by step
And in all that I do and don't understand...
I will have peace for He's holding my hand.

MISSOURI, TAYLOR

Sally Haerr

“WISE MEN STILL SEEK HIM.” I do not know who to credit for this quote, but I do know it is true, as anyone who has asked, sought out and found salvation through Jesus will agree. Just two, of many scriptures we find in the Bible that speak of seeking are, Proverbs 8:17 and Matthew 7:7. In this season of gift giving, let's all remember, HE is the Gift of all gifts, and the only one that will last throughout eternity.

We are thanking God for answered prayers as our Elder Bro. Kent and Sis. Jan Heimer have returned home safely after being asked to go to India to inspect some projects there. Before leaving, Bro. Kent shared his heartfelt concerns and encouraged us to be obedient to the teachings in God's Word. We could feel his love for us as well as the prompting of the Holy Spirit.

Our Sunday School Christmas program took place on December

18. It seemed that God worked so mightily through all the children, from the youngest to the oldest. May we never be found guilty of failing to teach our children the true meaning of this Christmas season. "Jesus is the Reason for the Season". Another true quote that I do not know who to give the credit to.

The sick and/or hospitalized this month were: Sis. Susan Haerr (Bro. Shannon), Norman Wilson, a loved neighbor, and Sis. Vonette Sutter (Bro. Kim).

It is so often expressed how much our prayers for healing are felt by those going through a difficult health problem. How sweet the privilege of prayer ... (Hymns of Zion, #205).

NEW YORK CROGHAN-NAUMBURG Hope Graves

The faces of singers and listeners alike lit up as we spent several evenings Christmas caroling. We started on December 2 at the Hallmark Nursing Center, the 9th at the Lewis County General Hospital and ended on the 18th at the East Road Adult Home and Steepleview Courts. Refreshments were enjoyed by all of us at the end of each evening.

Several of the women from church got together on December 12 to put together cheer baskets loaded with goodies to take to people in the community. This is not only a great time of fellowship for us as we assemble the baskets, but a wonderful opportunity to share God's love with the recipients as well as to teach the young children present about the importance of

being a "cheerful giver".

"Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver."

II Cor. 9:7

Our Sunday School Christmas Program was held on Sunday afternoon, December 18. We were thankful for all of the children in attendance and their families for bringing them to church so they could learn about the true meaning of Christmas. May they carry what they have learned with them throughout their entire lifetime. We gathered together in the church basement for chocolate milk and cookies afterwards, which was enjoyed by all!

We rejoice with Jay and Shannon Virkler in the birth of their first child, Derek Mathew. Our prayers are with them as Derek had a little bit of a rough start, but is now doing well. Happy first time great-grandparents are Bro. Lowell and Sis. Celia Virkler.

OHIO, AKRON Joyce Gasser

We rejoice that in the past year nine new members were added to our congregation. There were two new babies born, and there were five deaths.

Our Sunday School children presented the Christmas Story in an interesting program Sunday, December 4. We appreciate the teachers and parents in helping to make it a blessed event.

Two in our congregation lost

their mothers due to death. Sis. Sarah Henico's mother, Helen Demiter, 92, passed away at her home. She was preceded in death by her husband, John.

Bro. Jozsef Kocsis' mother, Katalin, passed away in Romania. Our sympathy goes to these dear families.

We appreciated our visiting ministers: Bro. Jim Vierling (Sis. Linda, Eureka, IL), Bro. Jerry Bauman (Sis. Martha, Rittman, OH) and Elder Bro. Andy Stoller (Sis. Roberta, Smithville, OH). God bless them for their efforts.

We are sorry that Bro. Richard Baumgartner was hospitalized, and are thankful that he was able to return home.

After many years of reporting for the Silver Lining, first at Fairbury, and more recently at Akron, I will be retiring with this issue as the Akron Silver Lining reporter. It has been a joyful experience, as one of the aspects of our fellowship, to communicate with the readers of our Silver Lining. I wish God's abundant blessings to all of you.

OHIO, COLUMBUS Nancy Banks

Special New Year greetings to all from the Columbus congregation. We have been fortunate to have many visiting brethren with us this month and we wish to thank them for their efforts on our behalf. May God richly bless them for their love and support. Bros. Mark Ramsier (Sardis, OH), Ben Manz (Junction, OH) and Earl Beery (Rittman, OH) were willing servants this month sharing His

Word.

What a special blessing to watch our Sunday School sing of the precious Baby Jesus lying in the manger. It lifts our hearts to hear their sweet voices singing of the Babe of Bethlehem.

OHIO, JUNCTION **Cindy Schlatter**

We were privileged to have three visiting ministers with us on three separate weekends this past month. May our Heavenly Father bless Bro. Bill Brake (Sardis, OH), Bro. Chris Wuethrich (LaCrosse, IN), and Bro. Ken Schneider (Remington, IN) for their labors on our behalf.

Bro. David and Sis. Kathy Manz welcomed another little grandson into their family circle when Austin David was born on December 11. Austin's parents are Chad and Jill Christner. Our prayers are with them as they raise their precious little son.

Sis. Vicki Boroff (Bro. Rex) had surgery this past month. We are thankful for the healing touch of our Heavenly Father.

OHIO, LATTY **Bonny Wenninger** **Amanda Steffen**

On November 15, Meara Lynn was born to Bro. Eric and Sis. Sherri Rager. We wish them God's blessings as they raise her with their son, Sammy.

We were blessed to hear the provings of Sis. Jennifer Manz (Bro. Marvin) and Jeremy and Mandy Whitman (Bro. Dick and Sis. Eileen Whitman and David and Mary Lou Pitney, Continen-

tal, OH). We were thankful to witness the baptism of Sis. Jennifer on December 3, and we look forward to the baptisms of Jeremy and Mandy. A little girl, Larissa Jane, was born to Jeremy and Mandy on December 4.

Visiting ministers this month were Elder Bro. Wayne Anliker (Forrest, IL), Bro. John Steiner (Oakville, IA), Bro. Tony Manz (Junction, OH), Retired Elder Bro. Alfred Bahler (Wolcott, IN), Bro. Alan Schambach (Remington, IN), Bro. Paul Zimmerman (Forrest, IL), Bro. Greg Lehman (Wolcott, IN), and Bro. Vic Bauman (Smithville, OH). God bless each of you for your labor of love.

Our prayers have been with Bro. Larry Wenninger, as he has spent some time in the hospital this month. We pray that God will heal and restore strength to him, according to His will.

Sis. Joni Sinn (Bro. Tom and Sis. Kim) was announced to Bro. Jason Fiechter (Bro. Dave and June), Bluffton, IN. May God bless them as they look forward to being united.

On December 11, Sis. Heather Stoller (Bro. Todd and Sis. Pam) was united in marriage to Bro. Chad Heiniger (Bro. Don and Sis. Peg, Elgin, IL). May God bless them as they now serve Him together.

Esther Stoller (Bro. Craig and Sis. Ruth) was announced for having peace with God and man. We wish her God's blessings as she continues to grow in the Lord.

OHIO, MANSFIELD **Esther Baumann**

On November 20, we were blessed to learn of the engagement of our Bro. Mark Rufener (Bro. Ron and Sis. Kay) to Sis. Julie Zobrist (Bro. Clarence and Sis. LuAnn) of Congerville, IL. May they continue to follow God's guidance as they plan for their life together.

We are thankful to have our Sis. Sue Sauder (retired Elder Bro. Ken) back in church with us after she was recently hospitalized.

Our annual business meeting was held in December. Two trustees were elected: Bro. Don Boliantz (Sis. Joyce) and Bro. Chad Griffey (Sis. Tami) are being replaced by Bro. Bruce Sauder (Sis. Denise) and Bro. Curt Walter (Sis. Elizabeth). Bro. Marvin Beer (Sis. Robin) is replacing Bro. Ron Rufener (Sis. Kay) as treasurer; Bro. Matt Domka (Sis. Tami) is replacing Bro. Lonny Moser (Sis. Becky) as assistant treasurer. Bro. Tim Beer (Sis. Traci) was elected to replace Bro. Mike Baumann (Sis. Lilly) as Sunday School Superintendent. Re-election occurred with several positions: Sis. Joy Sauder (Bro. Dave) on the Kitchen Committee, Sis. Robin Beer (Bro. Marvin) on the World Relief Committee, and Bro. Mark Rufener (Bro. Ron and Sis. Kay) as usher. We thank all for their service this past year.

On December 11, we delighted in hearing the beautiful voices of our children during our annual Christmas Program. As we enter the new year, let us cleave to a simple childlike faith so wonderfully illustrated in one of our children's

songs:

God's Clock

I set my life by God's great clock,
His time is always right;...
God's time is right,
There's none so wise as He,
His hand upholds the whole wide
world;
He knows what's best for me.
—EM Clarkson
"The Children's Harp"

OHIO, RITTMAN
Sarah Bauman
Hannah Beery

We were reminded in a recent sermon that a blessing is merely something that draws us closer to God. Whether these blessings be joys or trials in our life, we have reason to thank the Lord at the close of 2005. "Another year is dawning, dear Master, let it be; On earth, or else in Heaven, another year for Thee." (Hymns of Zion #150)

We rejoice with our new converts this month. Doug Raifsnider (Sis. Diana) and Evan Gasser (Bro. Fred and Sis. Mary) have both found a need to seek the Lord in humble repentance. Also, Bro. Lloyd Emch gave a testimony of faith and was baptized on November 30.

Our congregation was blessed to have several visiting ministers with us this month. Bro. Todd Stoller (Latty, OH), Elder Bro. Dave Graf (Akron, OH) and Bro. Marvin Dotterer (Forrest, IL) all shared in bringing forth the Word of God.

Bro. Shane Hartzler (Bro. Dean and Sis. Jan) and Sis. Suzanne Steiner (Bro. Carl and Sis. Carol) have been announced for

engagement. Also on November 19, Jon Hefner and Kristine Bauman (Marion and Sis. Delores) were united in marriage. We trust these couples will feel the guidance of our Lord as they continue to seek and follow His perfect will for their lives.

Randy and Sis. Julie Call rejoice in the birth of Reagan Jared, born on November 26. He joins siblings, Rainey, Riley and Rhianna. Thankful grandmother is Sis. Nancy Bauman.

Sis. Mary Ellen Bauman was laid to rest on December 10 after a period of declining health. Many nieces and nephews mourned her passing.

OHIO, SARDIS
Eric and Jami Hartzler

"... hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?"

Matthew 21:16

We were reminded of the greatest gift that was ever given as the Sunday School classes presented the Christmas program to us. It was a tremendous blessing to hear the youngest classes sing their songs with such a zeal, and a good reminder to each of us as the older classes read the prophecies and the fulfillment of those prophecies in the birth, life and death of Jesus Christ.

Apologies for failing to mention the 40th anniversary of Bro. John and Sis. Paula Figel on October 2, 2005. A reception was held at our

fellowship center and was a blessing to all who attended. May the Lord continue to richly bless and provide for this dear couple.

OHIO, SMITHVILLE
Edith Miller
Ruth Gasser

O blessed are they
In holy array
Who with eager mind
Salvation in Jesus
Did seek and did find.
Zion's Harp #141

We are thankful that in 2006 the Lord is still offering salvation to those who will seek Him. Julie Widmer (Bro. Jim and Sis. Karen), Sarah Rufener (Bro. Larry and Sis. Susan) and Derek Nieman (Bro. Denny and Sis. Kay) are seeking the Lord in repentance. May they experience a true conversion, leading to peace of heart. Sarah has attended the Columbus church, but we also rejoice with her and her parents. It was made known that Brienna Indermuhle (Bro. Brian and Sis. Beverly) has experienced this conversion and we look forward to the time when she gives her testimony.

God has been faithful in providing the Word of Life through many visiting ministers this past month. We wish to thank Bros. Dennis Rassi (Fairbury, IL), Mark Ramsier (Sardis, OH), Jim Vierling (Eureka, IL), Vernon Wettstein (Congerville, IL), Lucas Frank (Detroit, MI) and Virgil Kaeb (Sarasota, FL) for their service of love to share the Word with us.

On November 27, Bro. Aaron Ott (Sarasota, FL) and Sis. Kim Bauman made vows to unite them in Holy Matrimony. Their parents are Bro. Glenn and Sis. Mardell Ott (Congerville, IL) and Bro. Vic and Sis. Brenda Bauman. May the Lord be their Shepherd as they establish a home and become part of the Sarasota congregation.

Times of joy and times of sadness are closely intermingled in life. Bro. Herbert Bauman and Sis. Betty Dotterer (Bro. John) have lost a loved one as Sis. Mary Ellen Bauman (Rittman, OH) gained a victory as she went on to her eternal home on December 8. Amy Blough (Dan) has lost her grandmother, and we wish God's comfort to those left behind.

We have had many reasons to pray for those with physical afflictions this month. Jim Gasser had major surgery and is recovering at home. Also hospitalized were Bro. Harold (Ted) Beery (Sis. Rhea), Bro. Gary Maibach (Sis. Mary Ann), Sis. Beverly Indermuhle (Bro. Brian), and Sis. Grace Gasser. Sis. Becky Marty (Bro. Ralph and Sis. Marie) will be homebound for several weeks following surgery. May they feel the hand of the Great Physician.

OREGON, PORTLAND **Brianna Strahm**

Greetings in the name of our Lord. Our visiting ministers this past month were Elder Bro. Art Metz (Sis. Betty) and Bro. Ed Knecht (Sis. Judie), both of Silverton. We thank these brothers for coming.

Our congregation enjoyed an

evening of Christmas caroling at two local nursing homes followed by an all-church supper on December 10. We appreciate those from Silverton who joined us for the evening.

OREGON, SILVERTON **Melissa Kuenzi** **Cindy Metzger**

We want to welcome Sis. Audrey Kuenzi (Bro. Todd and Sis. Melissa) and Sis. Lydia Schneider (Bro. Tim and Sis. Dana) into our brotherhood. Elder Bro. Ben Wiegand (Sis. Michelle, Philadelphia, PA) was here to help Elder Bro Art.

Bro. Tyler Kuenzi and Sis. Amy Knobloch were married on November 27 in Goodfield, IL. Their parents are Bro. Terry and Sis. Ann Kuenzi and Bro. Dean and Sis. Jackie Knobloch (Goodfield, IL). We welcome Sis. Amy to our congregation.

We are thankful to have Bro. Jason Kuenzi (Sis. Jo) assembling with us again after recovering from his back surgery.

Matt and Sis. Kristen Brockamp have been blessed with a little boy named Orrin Matthew. Orrin's siblings are Austin and Haley. His grandparents are Bro. Chuck and Sis. Karen Walter and Jim and Bonnie Brockamp.

We rejoice with our convert Duane Sinn (Bro. Don and Sis. Linda) as he has found peace. Lord willing, we look forward to his testimony and baptism.

Dan and Denise Henderson will certainly be missed as they have moved back to Missouri recently.

It was wonderful to view

Christmas through the eyes of our Sunday School children at their program on December 11.

Bro. Ed and Sis. Shirley Zollinger have moved to Phoenix, AZ, for several months. We will miss having them in our congregation while they are away.

Our prayers are with Oscar Bollinger as his wife, Tina, has been hospitalized.

We are thankful for our visiting ministers this month: Bro. Wayne Fehr (Sis. Kathy) and Bro. Ron Jones (Sis. Liz) both of Portland, OR.

PENNSYLVANIA **PHILADELPHIA**

Nathan & **MaryElizabeth Gasser**

As is our annual tradition, we were treated once again to a beautiful Christmas program by our Sunday School children in early December. How happy we are that, year after year, our children are so eager to proclaim the true message and meaning of the Christmas story. May we carry that message with us throughout the coming year, and share the truth of Christ's love with the same innocence and joy present in the heart of a little child.

We were saddened recently to bid farewell to Bro. Phil and Sis. Sarah Wagenbach, who moved to Rockville, CT, after spending several years assembling with us. We wish them God's blessings and guidance in all that lies ahead, and look forward to frequent return visits! We also encourage those who might be traveling this winter and coming spring to consider worshiping with us in Philadel-

phia as your plans permit.

TENNESSEE, NASHVILLE
Mike and Monica Fritz

We appreciated the opportunity to hear, and be encouraged by, the Memorandum as our Elder Bro. Phil Stettner (Bluffton North, IN) was able to join us recently on a Wednesday evening to share it with us.

We have a deep love and appreciation for the ministering brothers who come to share God's Word with us. In this past month the Lord has provided encouragement to us through the following visitors: Elder Bro. Lawrence Luthi (Sis. Sandra; Lamar, MO); and Bros. Greg Braker (Sis. Wendy; Lamar, MO), Darrel Stoller (Sis. Gloria; Bern, KS), and Nate Wieland (Sis. Suzanne; Goodfield, IL). We are also thankful for the fellowship of brethren and friends visiting from Goodfield, IL; Bern, KS; Lamar, MO; and Junction and Latty, 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: Bay City, MI (1/22); Bloomington-Normal, IL (1/29); Rockville, CT (2/5); Washington, IL (2/12); Milford, IN (2/19); and Smithville, OH (2/26). 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. Mike and Sis. Monica Fritz, (615) 952-9933; and Sis. Gwen Leuthold, (615)

356-5755.

TEXAS
DALLAS/FORT WORTH
Judith Fehr

Again, God has blessed us richly by sending His able and willing servants to tend to our spiritual needs. We are humbly grateful to the ministering brethren and their wives for the effort they have made for our tiny gathering and we are thankful for their continuing encouragement and support.

From the end of October through December, our visiting ministers were: Bro. Bob Ringger (Sis. Mary, Bluffton North), Bro. Tom Schambach (Sis. Connie, Elgin, IL), Bro. Galen Rokey (Sis. Nancy, Bern, KS), and Bro. Brian Huber (Sis. Jackie, Francesville, IN). We also enjoyed the visitors who accompanied the brethren.

We welcome back our dear friends, Ralph and Beverly Riggerbach, who have recuperated enough to be with us again. We pray God will fully restore their health soon. We also want to welcome Bev's dear mother who has moved from Rittman to live with Bev and Ralph. We hope her health will soon improve enough to join us at Sunday services.

Scheduled churches on minister rotation for January and February are: Fairbury, January 8; Smithville, January 22; Sabetha, February 5; and Oakville, February 19.

We extend a warm welcome to anyone local or passing through the area to attend services with us. We do ask to be contacted in advance simply to ensure proper

planning for lunchtime meals. For additional service dates or other information, please contact Sis. Judi Fehr / Mindy McClard at 972-956-0597 or friends, Ralph and Beverly Riggerbach at 217-741-1502. Services are scheduled every other Sunday, and are held at the Holiday Inn Express in Grapevine, TX, near the intersections of Highways 121 and 114. To reach the hotel while traveling either direction on Hwy 121, exit on Main Street; the hotel is on the south side of the highway.

TEXAS, McALLEN
Sandy Kipfer

A hardy Christian greeting to all. There is always a reason to rejoice. That is why we the brethren and friends located in the Rio-Grand Valley are very thankful to the Elder body for allowing our congregation to be on a minister rotation. As we lost our meeting location that was in Pharr, TX, the Lord opened the door for us to have a new location in McAllen. It's at the Holiday Inn Express, 1921 South 10th St. It's very easy to find, two blocks off the Expressway (highway) on 10th Street.

In November we were thankful in having Bro. Gary and Sis. Diann Tonner (Bluffton, IN) minister to us. And for December was Bro. Craig and Sis. Terri Martin (Princeville, IL). January 2006 services will be on the 15th and 29th and February 12th and 26th.

If you are going to be in the McAllen area, we extend a warm invitation to worship with us. Ser-

vices at 10:30 and 12:30. Please contact Bro. Lloyd and Sis. Joyce Nohl (956) 581-8266; Sis. Kim Kaiser (956) 357-2591; Sis. Erin Knobloch (956) 357-1657; Andy and Kristi Plattner (956) 433-9844 or (956) 607-8329; Pam McMaster (956) 787-7881; Bro. Aaron and Sis. Sandy Kipfer (winter only) (956) 581-5612.

TEXAS, SAN MARCOS

Amy Ringger
Serenity Ringger

Brian and Terri Kaisner are pleased to announce the birth of their son, Matthew Leon. He was born November 17 and has a brother, Bradley. Grandparents are Bro. Leon and Sis. Eunice Kaisner and Ron and Sis. Janet Blumenshine, all of Peoria. In a church our size, babies are few and far between and we are blessed to be reminded of the miracle of a child.

Last Night the Baby Cried
—Edgar Guest

Last night the baby cried. And I,
Roused from a sound and soothing
sleep,
Wondered to hear that little cry.
For ten long years in slumber deep
I've lived my nights, and so it
seemed
That what I'd heard I'd only
dreamed.

For ten long years a banging gate,
The milkman's whistle, or the
horn
Of motors driven at rapid rate,
Have wakened me at early dawn;
But late last night awake was I,
Thinking I'd heard a baby cry.

I leaned upon my elbow there

And wondered did I dream or not?
But once again upon the air
The call came from the tiny cot!
Then peacefully I turned and
smiled
To hear the crying of our child.

Lonely and still the house has
seemed
For ten long years, but once again
We have the joy of which we'd
dreamed—
The joy which many seek in vain!
Oh happy, happy home, thought I,
That wakes to hear a baby cry.

In early December, our church closed on the purchase of a property to be used as a future place of worship. The location is four miles west of Bastrop, Texas and 20 minutes east of the Austin airport on Highway 71. The property has a house that will be remodeled into a church facility. We look forward to hosting those who will be coming to help in the remodeling process beginning in January.

Directions to the property are these: from the intersection of Hwy 71 and 21, go east one mile to the first exit onto the frontage road. Immediately turn right and the church is on the left. The address is 1025 Highway 71, Bastrop, TX 78602.

The following ministers and their wives served us: Bros. Roy Koehl (Sis. Janelle, Morris), Ed Fritz (Sis. Sally, Washington), Duane Metzger (West Bend), Dennis Rassi (Sis. Diane, Fairbury), Wayne Leman (Sis. Julie, Roanoke), Leland Plattner (Sis. Mary, Zapata) and Steve Pamer (Sis. Arliss, Akron). We are also thankful for the visitors from Rittman, Fairbury, Zapata,

McAllen, Congerville, and Princeville.

Upcoming churches serving us in January are these: Bern (1), Tremont (8), Forrest (15), La-Crosse (22), and West Bend (29).

We extend a warm welcome to anyone who may be in the area to worship with us. Please call ahead to help us plan for serving lunch. Also, because visitors add much to our local fellowship times, it helps if we know about your visit well in advance so that we can accommodate you more readily in our weekend gatherings. 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

Sandy Leman

The Zapata church was privileged to host a meeting of brothers and sisters on the World Relief committee early in December. It was thrilling for us to hear about the many ways our church is participating in God's work by reaching out to those in need. Most of the visitors also were able to visit the homes for deaf children south of the border in Reynosa and Rio Bravo, Mexico. It was a weekend of sweet fellowship.

We were blessed by a number of visiting ministers in December. Elder Bros. Wayne Banwart, Kent Heimer, Dan Kilgus, Ron

Messner, Peter Petrovic, and ministering Bros. Jerry Bauman, Arnold Gerst, and Chuck Kellenberger all participated in our church services. We thank all these brothers for serving us by bringing us God's Word.

VERMONT, NORWICH
Areli Reutter

"For unto us a child is born."
Isaiah 9:6

Greetings dear ones in Christ!

We appreciate the ministering Brothers who travel many miles to serve the small flock of Norwich, Vermont. This month we were blessed to have Bros. Dan Stoller and Duane Reutter from Rockville, CT. We also appreciate the many other Brothers who visit us. Please come back soon!

We rejoice with Bro. Kirby and Sis. Areli Reutter as they welcome their first baby into the world. Isaac Dayton Reutter is also the first baby to be born into the Vermont gathering. It is amazing to think that our Savior made Himself as helpless and defenseless as a little baby when He came to save us from our sins.

Grandparents are Bro. Duane and Sis. Kay Reutter (Rockville, CT) and Feliz and Sis. Lourdes Sibaja from Mexico. Great-grandparents are Sis. Loretta Baumgartner and Sis. Ana Marie Reutter from Illinois and Guadalupe Martinez from Mexico.

If you have plans to visit northern New England this winter, please worship with us! Due to heavy snow fall throughout the winter season, we are currently

holding services only on the second Sunday of each month. As always, we appreciate a call in advance to help us plan for your attendance.

Services start promptly at 10:15 in the morning and 12:15 in the afternoon. To arrive at our meeting place, please take exit 13 from Interstate 91 and proceed to 344 Main Street. Look for the two-story Grange building (painted gray) on the right side of the road. There is a fire house to the rear of the building. Please park along the street.

For more information or directions, please contact Bro. Kirby Reutter at (802) 776 - 5293.

"And a little child shall lead them."

Isaiah 11:6



APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN PUBLICATIONS BOOK STORE

Apostolic Christian Publications now has CD sets and cassette tape sets of the Children's Harp Hymn book. These are recordings of children from the Apostolic Christian Churches singing all of the Hymns from the Children's Harp. It would be a great gift idea for Christmas, birthday etc. These are available at the book store in Eureka for \$18.50 per set.

To order this or other material, either stop by the book store between the hours of 8:30am to 11:30am Monday thru Friday or Call 309-467-3611 during those hours to order by phone. If you call after hours you may leave your order on the answering machine or fax your order to the same number.

Zion's Melodies - Available December 1, 2005 - \$6.70

This hymnal contains sixty-seven (67) historic hymns that have been a source of spiritual comfort to Brothers and Sisters of the Apostolic Christian faith for many years. These songs are published with a hope that, with their reintroduction into our brotherhood, they would again become a source of comfort and inspiration as they are sung in praise and honor to God.

The sixty-seven hymns were translated from the following hymnals: *Alte Lieder* - 43; *Heft* - 16; *Zion's Perlenchore* - 6; and 2 from other sources.

The *Alte Lieder* is a hymnal of 43 songs. Approximately twenty percent of the *Alte Lieder* hymns are linked to the *Zion's Harp* or *Hymns of Zion*. They are associated either by melody or verse or both melody and verse as in *Alte Lieder* #5 "The Heavens Are Praising" and in *Alte Lieder* #17 "Anticipation".

The German speaking churches in Europe, associated with the Apostolic Christian faith, have preserved the *Alte Lieder* hymns by publishing them as an integral part and continuation of their *Zion's Harp*.

The *Heft*, also known as the Long Book because of its size and shape, was first published in Bern, Switzerland. It was compiled by Johann Meister. Publications are as follows:

- 1st edition Late 1860's hymns ... 1-54
- 2nd edition Year 1910 added hymns
... 55-78
- 3rd edition Prior to 1939 added
hymns 79-104

An English-language *Heft* was copyrighted in 1931 by the Apostolic Christian Church of America. This hymnal

was titled *Songs of Praise and Worship* and has a total of 75 songs. The first 54 were translated by Elder Ernest Graf. This translation was identical to the German *Heft* with the exception of hymns #3 and #4 in which the songs "What a Friend We Have In Jesus" and "He Leadeth Me" were substituted for the two *Heft* hymns. These two original *Heft* hymns were later added to the *Hymns of Zion* as numbers 298 and 299. The remaining 21 hymns to #75 are not *Heft* hymns. There were selected from other sources.

The *Hymns of Zion* was published in 1958. Sixty-two (62) of the 301 melodies were selected from the second edition 78-hymn *Heft*. The sixteen (16) remaining *Heft* hymns which were not translated are now included in this hymnal. The 3rd edition of *Heft* hymns numbered 79-104 are not included in this hymnal.

The Apostolic Christian Church (Nazarene) English translation of *Heft* verses is used in this hymnal. Each hymn was reviewed using the German-language *Heft*. This was to verify the accuracy of translation and to ensure that the meter of each verse would also match the original text. The poetry was reviewed for its ability to communicate its message. Some wording was changed as a result of this process.

The European churches associated with the Apostolic Christian Church have used the *Heft* continuously from its inception. The churches in Hungary are using the 104-song *Heft* as a continuation of their *Zion's Harp* which also includes 11 *Alte Lieder* hymns. The churches in Germany have chosen to continue the Long Book format, containing 104 *Heft* songs, as a separate hymnal.

The *Zion's Perlenchore* was published in Germany circa 1870. Some *Heft* songs are included in this hymnal. As a note of interest, the *Zion's Perlenchore* hymn #90 "The Twenty-Third Psalm" is the identical rendition of our *Zion's Harp* #212.

The last two songs of this hymnal are "Unity" and "Come To The Homeland". "Unity" is sung to a melody which has been in use for over 100 years. This hymn is also published in the Hungarian *HANGOLJATOK SZIVETEKET* - the Green Book - number 137. The source of "Come To The Homeland" is a small hymnal titled "Komm".

These songs of praise and worship are in numerical sequence, relative to their source, as noted under each title. Two-page songs are exposed on opposing panels, eliminating the need to turn pages while singing. To accommodate this format, scriptural quotations are inserted where blank pages would have appeared.

One of the most precious gifts given to mankind by our Heavenly Father is the human voice. It is an instrument that cannot be duplicated by man. When the Holy Spirit is in control and peace and contentment rule the heart, this musical instrument can express love and appreciation of our Heavenly Father by its ability to blend and harmonize beautiful sounds into songs of praise and honor to God.

"I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live. I will sing praise to my God while I have my being."

Psalm 104:33

Heft Ale Lieder Committee

Sermon continued from page 2

Putting our self lower.

The world preaches self esteem. I would submit today that what we need is not self esteem but self worth. Self worth is different than self esteem. Because self esteem builds up self. Self worth builds up Christ. Because we have great value but it is not in what we have done. It's in what He has done. When we have a true picture of that, then it becomes clear to us how we should treat and interact with one another. Are you willing to go the extra mile for your brother's sake? Are you willing to deny something in your own life that you would take pleasure in, for your brother or your sister - for whom Christ died? That makes it a little stronger, doesn't it?

He said these words in verse thirteen of chapter fourteen. "Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this..." takes the focus off others and puts it on ourselves, "...that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way." Romans 14:13. Those two words mean the same as offense. It is a stumbling block or an occasion to fall. Judge this rather, of your own self, that you would not offend, put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in your brother's or sister's way. That can be in any area of your life. That could be in attitude! If you have a poor attitude and it rubs off on your brother and now he has a bad attitude. He has fallen in that that is sin and you have been a stumbling block. Think about that. We can apply this to any areas of our life. This is not just the biggies.

"...if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died." Romans 14:15. This is what this scripture is talking about. The Apostle Paul used something we can all understand, although maybe we can't quite understand it like the Jews could. Because they were for-

bidden certain types of meat according to their law. But Paul came along and said, I am persuaded that nothing is unclean (Romans 14:14). Peter was shown that vessel that was brought down from heaven with all these unclean animals in it and he was commanded, rise and eat (Acts 10:9-16) in that he was being shown that God was not, His promise didn't go only to the Jews, but that He was going to spread it to the Gentiles as well, the unclean. But Paul was using meat as a reference point, saying, some believe among you that it is okay to eat everything and some believe that it is wrong for you to eat certain types of meat. So he says this statement here, if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably, destroy him not with thy meat for whom Christ died.

Are you going to let your personal choice of diet destroy your brother just because you believe it is okay and he doesn't? Do you have enough compassion in your heart and regard for your brother, do you esteem him high enough that you would be willing to sacrifice what you think is okay for the sake of your brother, so that he won't stumble in an area that he believes is wrong? Because if he believes it is wrong and he partakes of it, it is sin to him. That is what the Bible says. In fact verse fourteen says, "...to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean." Romans 14:14. Then verse nineteen - beautiful verse! "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another." Romans 14:19.

You want to pursue something in life? Pursue that. Pursue that which edifies and lifts up and builds up and strengthens your brother. We can all use this encouragement, can't we? We all need to shift our focus off of self and on to someone else. Not in a way of covetousness. But in a way of, what can I do to help this person that is struggling?

He says in verse one of chapter

fifteen, "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak..." Romans 15:1. And strong does not mean physically strong here. In fact, sometimes those that are physically strong are the weakest spiritually. Not always. But they can be. Those that are strong, he says, ought. That means that is what we should do. We should bear the infirmities of the weak. What are the infirmities of the weak? It is those things that the weak brother has trouble with. He is struggling with this! He really feels like this is wrong for him to partake of. This is wrong for him to do. Even though you think it is okay. He says, if you are strong, bear the infirmity of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

Selflessness. Do we want what we want? Or do we want what is best for our brother? We grow up with this. These are tough choices. I see it in my children and I look back and I see it in myself. When we went through our youth and we were growing up and we had tough choices to make. Choices where if we chose one thing, it was going to disappoint someone else. We try to teach our children, think selflessly, not selfishly. I know you want that and they want that too. Are you willing to give it up for their happiness, as children? It is part of that learning of selflessness. I am willing to trust that God is going to bless me and I am going to receive a blessing and be better off in the end anyway, if I yield what I really want and let someone else have it. It is learning selflessness.

Jesus Christ left the glories of heaven. Didn't even have to. He was asked to. Sometimes we do that to our children just to test them. Say, will you do this? Will you give up this because they want it? Sometimes it goes good for them. Sometimes it doesn't. It is a learning process though.

But he says here, and we know, don't we, some of the issues? Maybe not all of them. But as time progresses and we interact with one an-

other, we soon find we come across areas where one struggles and another one doesn't. Let's be sensitive to one another. Let's remember what offense is. It is putting a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in someone's way. Let's be careful.

"We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves." Romans 15:1. In reading that, it is almost as if we should take on that weakness. So that not only we can relate to them but that we can come along side them and say, I am with you.

Let's every one please his neighbor for his good to edification (Romans 15:2). I hope I am not getting confused with personal preference. But it can actually reach into that. He said, let this be our motive. Not pleasing our self but pleasing our neighbor for his edification, for his spiritual buildup. To come along beside our brother and our sister and build them up spiritually. I am willing to lose what I want, to lose my own identity in order to take on and understand my brother or my sister. I'm willing not to please myself! That is a hard lesson to learn, isn't it? We have to learn it over and over sometimes.

Even Christ - it paints Christ as the example here and let's focus on Christ - pleased not Himself. "...but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me." Romans 15:3. There's so many verses in scripture about esteeming our brother higher. About not considering ourselves but rather considering one another. To provoke one another to love and good works. (Hebrews 10:24)

Yet we live in a world where we are so isolated from one another. How often do we share with one another? I am admonished by this. How often do we actually share with one another? How many of us can look to our brother, to our right or to our left, to our sister, to our right or to our left, and understand what they are going through? What are their needs? What are their weak-

nesses? Could you, do you know what they are struggling with? Are we sensitive?

There are two parts to that. You might be sensitive. They don't want to share. There is that too. Let's be transparent with one another. Let's be able to, as the Word says, confess your faults one to another (James 5:16). Why? For one, it exposes a weakness. That is not the world's way. They don't want to expose vulnerability. But it exposes a weakness when we confess our faults one to another. But it does something. It frees us. The enemy has no more hold over us. Secondly, we have a brother or a sister who understands. Who can come along side us and say, I am going to pray for you this week. I am going to hold you accountable. I am going to ask you next week how you did this week. That is what it is about. To build one another and edify one another. We need to be encouraged to do that, brothers and sisters. We don't do enough of it.

It takes humility. It takes selflessness. And it takes boldness. Because somebody has got to get it started. It is pretty easy for me to stand up here and say it over the pulpit. I don't have anyone talking back. But one on one, that is where it is difficult. But we need to do it, for our own sake.

"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." Romans 15:4. Let's not lose sight of that. If we lose sight of hope, we have lost everything. We need to remember who our Maker is, who our Lord and Savior is, and that He gives us promises that we can hope in. That we through patience and comfort of the scripture - the scripture is to comfort us. It is. And so is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the comforter. We should be comforted by the Spirit. Sometimes we are challenged, and that is not always comforting, but it will lead to that.

"Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus:" Romans 15:5. Now this isn't something that just happens. You don't just get likemindedness. Likemindedness is something you have to work at. And sometimes you have to tell yourself no. I am not going to partake of that, even though I really want to because I want to be likeminded. Unity doesn't come first. God comes first. Obedience comes first. But that will lead to a unity. As we yield to Him and yield to His Holy Spirit, there is only one Holy Spirit. He is going to bring us to the same place, isn't He, if we are likeminded. If we all have the same mind, the mind of Christ.

So he encourages us here, be likeminded. What is that mind that we should have? It is the mind of Christ. We heard a little bit of it this morning. What is the mind of Christ? Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God. He made Himself of no reputation. Took upon Himself the form of a servant. Was made in the likeness of man. Being found in the fashion of man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death. Even the death of the cross (Philippians 2:5-8). That is the mind of Christ! Obedience! Servitude. Humility!

"...be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Romans 15:5,6. I am confident of this. That as we become united in one heart and one mind, drawn nearer by the Holy Spirit, as we do this brothers and sisters, God is glorified in it.

It quotes several verses that are found in different parts of the scripture about rejoicing. "And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy

Sermon continued from page 45

name." Romans 15:9. You know what? We need to remember where we have been brought from. Not that we would go back and desire those things again. But remember where He brought us from and praise Him for it. He is to be praised. He says, "...Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him all ye people. And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust. Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." Romans 15:11-13. Let's read that again. "...the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." Romans 15:13. It is not our strength. It is not of us! It is of Him. As we yield to Him, we experience the power of the Holy Spirit.

The letter of the Apostle Paul to the Romans takes a little turn here. "And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another. Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God, That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost." Romans 15:14-16. What does it mean to be sanctified by the Holy Ghost? It is to be made holy. We are not holy of ourselves. It is the work of the Holy Ghost in us. He is the One that sanctifies us before God.

He encourages them and we should be encouraged with it. These brethren here he said were full of goodness, filled with knowledge and

were able also to admonish one another. Let's be encouraged in that. It is easy - it is easier I should say, it is not easy - it is easier to admonish sometimes than it is to receive admonition. Is your heart receptive to admonition? Is mine? It is difficult. Sometimes our first thought is, who are they to tell me that? Or, they have no business or it is none of their business, or whatever.

How is your heart? Is it receptive? Could a brother or a sister admonish you and you receive it well? When we sat on the front bench we said we would. Do we? I think our heart was right then. Is it right now? I am sure we could have received it then. Maybe some time has passed since then. Could we today? Would we be willing?

This thought ties back to what we have already shared. It has to do with self esteem or the esteem of others. When we regard or esteem our brother higher than our self, we can take admonition very well. But when we have esteem for our self and we esteem our self higher than our brother, it is then that we begin to have thoughts of, who do they think they are? It is because you have esteemed them lower than you. Let's be careful. He said, we are able also to admonish one another. Let's be receptive to that.

Paul said, "I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God. For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed," Romans 15:17,18. The Apostle Paul was focused in his message and his ministry to the Gentile people. He was convinced - for lack of a better word - that he did not want to use anything to bring the Gentiles to Christ except that which Christ had given him. He said, I dare not speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought our worked in me. I only want to use

that which Christ has built in me and developed in me and is using through me to bring the Gentiles to Himself. There was reason for that and Paul had the wisdom of the Holy Spirit in saying that. What happens if we try to bring those to Christ who are outside of the fold, on some other strength than that which God has enabled us to do? Who gets the credit? Who gets the glory? Not Christ. So Paul was so wise in this.

"Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation:" Romans 15:19,20. He was so sure that God was with him, he did not want to build on somebody else's foundation. He wanted only to build on one foundation and that was Jesus Christ. So he did. He said, so have I strived to preach the gospel.

"But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand." Romans 15:21. And aren't we thankful? In closing, as a Gentile nation, as Gentile people who were without hope, without a promise, were brought in, as a wild olive branch we were brought in and grafted in to the true vine through Jesus Christ. Aren't we thankful? May we each one have a desire in our heart to serve the Lord faithfully. To walk faithfully. To esteem our brother higher than our self. To be cautious that we would not put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in our brother's way. To be not so concerned about judging our brother but judging ourselves, lest we be judged. To be receptive to admonition, to be encouraged to be faithful to our God. May God bless the Word we have shared together.

Zion's Melody Music CD

An a cappella singing CD of hymns from the Zion's Melodies recently was recorded with the intention of helping the brethren become more familiar with the Zion's Melodies. The CD consists of 17 hymns and the title of the CD is "The Homeward Journey". Anyone who is interested in purchasing CDs can order from the Homeward Journey, PO Box 20, Fairbury, IL 61739; or e-mail fairview@Route24.net or call: (815) 692-2572 (days) and ask for Sally. The cost is \$12.00 per CD plus shipping (media mail, unless first-class is requested). All proceeds of the CD, beyond expenses, will be contributed to The Good Samaritan Fund of Fairview Haven Nursing Home, Fairbury.

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CARIBBEAN BOARD PROJECTS - 2006

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. Mike Rassi, Ph. 1-309-359-5240 or E-mail michael_rassi@hotmail.com.

HAITI					
ORG.	DATE	AREA	COORDINATOR	PROJECT	CAPACITY
MEBSH	Jan. 27 - Feb. 3, 2006	Les Cayes	Dean Pashak	Grade School	11
SEED	February 10-17, 2006	Les Cayes	Art Mueller	Agriculture Aid	11
Palm Grove	February 10-17, 2006	Puit Sales	Stan DesCarpentrie	Grade School	11
SEED	March 10-17, 2006	Les Cayes	Bob Beebe	Agriculture Aid	11
AWA-T	March 17-24, 2006	Les Cayes	Troy Struber	Water Aid	5
AWA-FRW	March 17-24, 2006	Les Cayes	Rick Wuethrich	Vocational School	4
AWA-B	March 17-24, 2006	Les Cayes	Bill Rager	Vocational School	2
MEBSH	March 24-31, 2006	Les Cayes	Rich Bertschi	Grade School	9
Palm Grove	TBD	Puit Sales	Tom Hitz	Grade School	11
MEBSH	April 21-28, 2006	Les Cayes	Jon Zeller	Construction/Maintenance	11
MEBSH	April 29-May 6, 2006	Haiti	Tom Hitz	Caribbean Evaluation	Invitation
MEBSH	June 3-10, 2006	Haiti	Tom Hitz	Elder Evaluation	Invitation
AWA-T	June 16-23, 2006	Les Cayes	Troy Struber	Water Aid	5
AWA-FRW	June 16-23, 2006	Les Cayes	Rick Wuethrich	Vocational School	4
AWA-B	June 16-23, 2006	Les Cayes	Bill Rager	Vocational School	2
JAMAICA					
CCCD	March 18-26, 2006	Deaf Village	Wolcott SS/Jon Schwab	Work Place	40/50
CCCD	March 24-April 1, 2006	Kingston	Work/Project/Terry Miller	Deaf School	40/50
CCCD	May 19-27, 2006	Deaf Village	Work Project/Ted Hirstein	Work Place	40/50
CCCD	June 3-10, 2006	Deaf Village	Taylor SS/Rusty Adrian	Work Place	40/50
CCCD	July 1-8, 2006	Knockpatrick	Mansfield SS/Pete Webel	Deaf School	40

COORDINATOR	PHONE	FAX	E-MAIL
Bob Beebe	574-291-2158	574-299-8173	rbeebe@surfpure.com
Rich Bertschi	309-467-6110		lemangm@mtco.com
Ron Palitto	330-336-5373		rcp@lek.net
Ted Habegger	260-694-6765		tjh@adamswells.com
Tom Hitz	734-454-9229	734-454-9259	thitzhome@juno.com
Phil Isabel	219-261-3541		philisabel@earthlink.com
Dean Pashak	989-662-7685	989-662-7685	dwpashak@charter.net
Bill Rager	419-263-2989		
Stan DesCarpentrie	309-467-3898	309-692-4002	srdjed@mtco.com
Jon Zeller	309-266-9009		jzeller@mtco.com
Rick Wuethrich	219-567-9488	219-567-2542	topnotch@home.ffni.com
Troy Struber	309-925-2603		tstuber@highstream.net
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Dean Ramsier	330-263-2561		ramsier@neo.rr.com
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Rusty Adrian	573-769-3650		aadrian@socket.net
Terry Miller	941-485-4302	941-485-4302	kjs@a5.com
Pete Webel	419-756-2587		peter.webel@gm.com
Ted Hirstein	309-266-8769		hirstein@mtco.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

Mexico Work Teams 2005-2006

If anyone is interested in leading a team to Mexico, contact Bro. Mike Fiechter at 260-597-7330 or mfiechter@adamswells.com

Location	Date	Project	Coordinator	Phone	E-mail
Magdalena	February 11-18, 2006	Construction	Dennis Zimmerman	815-657-8810	zimmerman@characterlink.net
Magdalena	February 18-25, 2006	Construction	Norm Rechkemmer	309-231-0098	jannorm67@earthlink.net
Magdalena	Feb. 25 - Mar. 4, 2006	Construction	Marvin Hodel	309-263-0050	dove@dpc.net
Juarez	March 4-11, 2006	Construction	Kurt Ifer	260-824-2829	k.ifer@mchsi.com
Agua Prieta	March 4-11, 2006	Construction	Gerald Fiechter	260-597-7494	fiechter@adamswells.com
Agua Prieta	March 11-18, 2006	Construction	Bob Meyer	260-824-3236	bobmeyer@adamswells.com
Magdalena	March 11-18, 2006	Construction	Arlan Miller	309-747-2683	seek_truth@yahoo.com
Agua Prieta	March 18-25, 2006	Construction	Denis Fry	260-824-3055	fry.d@mchsi.com
Magdalena	March 18-25, 2006	Construction	Nic Rassi	217-367-1427	rassi@uiuc.edu
Rio Bravo	March 25 - April 1, 2006	Construction	Dean Fiechter	260-565-3439	dfiechter@adamswells.com
Juarez	March 25-April 1, 2006	Construction	Jay Grube	260-565-3402	grube@adamswells.com
Agua Prieta	March 25-April 1, 2006	Construction	Jim Fiechter	260-565-3248	jimfiechter@adamswells.com
Magdalena	March 25-April 1, 2006	Construction	Courtney Pfister	260-824-5161	fizz@parlorcity.com
Juarez	March 30-April 6, 2006	Medical	Cheryl Herrmann	309-385-1082	cheryl@mtco.com
Magdalena	April 8-15, 2006	Construction	Kevin Fischer	309-923-7684	kafischer80@msn.com
Magdalena	June 3-10, 2006	Construction	Roger Herrmann	309-446-2502	rdkidz@juno.com
Magdalena	July 8-15, 2006	Construction	Rick Kaisner	847-942-1174	rick@kaisner.org
Magdalena	July 15-22, 2006	Construction	Duane Meyer	785-336-3385	
Magdalena	July 22-29, 2006	Construction	Tyler Banwart	620-223-1362	tybanwart@hotmail.com
Juarez	September 20-27, 2006	Medical	Cheryl Herrmann	309-385-1082	cherylh@mtco.com

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: 309-925-4171
 Cell: 309-339-9894
 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

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

The Apostolic Christian Preschool has an immediate opening for a teacher directed of the Lord, with a degree and/or experience in Elementary or Early Childhood Education. It is a wonderful experience to teach children about the Lord in a loving, Christian environment. If you feel the call and want to find out more please contact:

Bro. Mike Moore
 (256) 729-0620
 8653 Beechwood Rd.
 Athens, AL 35611
 Email: ALM@aol.com



This completes the series on The Ties That Bind. A high calling today is to indeed keep, and build up, the ties that bind us in Christ Jesus via brotherhood and Godly love.

Keeping The Ties That Bind

The ties that bind us are centered in the Lord Jesus and the marvelous plan of salvation. Our core beliefs are anchored in His work at Calvary and His redemptive sacrifice for all who repent and remain faithful until life's end.

The greatest tie of all is our faith in the Lord Jesus. Yet, in all fairness, any church denomination in America could say that. Thus, our ties go beyond faith alone. They are rooted as well in the patterns with which we follow Christ and obey the Word of God. Historically, we have been blessed as our spiritual leaders have given definition to the Scriptures so a practical application can be made — and a living, consistent dimension reflected to the world of unbelief. A historical truism exists which says, "If the principles of Scriptures are not given a practical definition for daily application among the brethren, the principles themselves can soon be undermined, and eventually lost."

Our common application of the Word's teachings — and the struggles inherent in denying the flesh so we can submit to the Word — have bred ties that have bound us together with such a high degree of love and esteem over the years. In view of our special Christian heritage, the question remains in our time, "Can we keep the

ties that bind us?" Or, more aptly, "Is our unity in Christ and His ways automatic as the years unfold?"

As the shadows of diversity would want to cast themselves across the church — and individualism would seek to manifest itself — it is well to realize that unity is not automatic; and that the ties that bind us can potentially become unbound. A study of Christian history tells us this.

Diversity of practice (i.e., in following Christ) will hasten the unraveling of the close ties that bind us. Diversity of practice expresses, perhaps unintentionally, a diversity of belief (conviction). It also reflects a diversity of attitude. On the other hand, it is our common beliefs and our common practice of these beliefs that have bound us over the generations since the early days of Bro. Froehlich's God-inspired beginning(s).

The ties that bind us came about because we, as converted believers, were unified around the deep principles of the Bible. We, as a church body, have taken these principles literally, defined them, and by God's grace, attempted to give them the best possible expression in everyday life.

If these expressions (of Godliness) become diminished, or ignored, our ties become diminished. Little by little, as we become prone to widening or diluting the narrow way of Christ and altering our common walk of faith, we can potentially disturb our unity. The ties that bind us can become loose. It is to our own peril if this happens. It is not guaranteed

that the ties that bind us will always remain intact. But they surely can be if we remain humble, lowly in heart and willing to submit ourselves in obedience to God and to those whom He has placed over us in the Lord.

The ties we deem as precious stem from doctrine and it's practical application on a daily basis. There is a sure correlation between doctrine (our interpretational beliefs) and order (the daily living out of these beliefs).

Doctrine and order are linked because the latter reflects the former. If the order is strong and well-practiced, it reflects a solid and firmly-established doctrine. Conversely, if the order strays, becomes widened or lessened in any way, it can possibly suggest the doctrine is becoming weak or inexact.

In today's scenario, the best way to keep the ties that bind us is to adhere to and practice them. As the order is uniformly practiced, likemindedly, it will bolster the doctrine it intends to reflect — and will, by God's grace, enhance the prospect of keeping the ties that bind us, to the glory and honor of God above!

Let us "walk worthy of the vocation to which we are called" (Ephesians 4:1). "...let us walk by the **same** rule, let us mind the **same** thing." (Philippians 3:16).

By Perry A. Klopfenstein

Next Issue:

Misc. historical data

The Light Of Hope

From Across The Ocean

希望の光

“First, Teach Thyself”

Elder Bro. Willis Ehnle, Shioda, Japan

We all know what's wrong with everyone else, but we can hardly see anything wrong with ourselves. Many of us are called upon to teach and to preach repentance and holy living, in accordance with the teachings of the Bible. That's all well and good, but recently I found a Bible verse that slightly stunned me. It is, "Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?" Romans 2:21. In short it means, "First, teach thyself."

I personally have not been going around muttering to myself, "You better give your body as a living sacrifice. You better love God with all your heart, soul and mind. You better love your neighbor as yourself. You must not judge others, for with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged. Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect. Forgive, that your Father may forgive you your trespasses." It is easy for me to tell others to do all those things, after a true repentance and conversion to the

Lord Jesus Christ, assuming all the while that I already meet those conditions. Not that I tell myself that I have met those conditions, it is simply not an issue in my mind.

Now I learn that before I can teach or preach to others, I must first teach myself, and trusting that I am a good teacher, do all those things myself. This idea of following the teachings of the New Testament is a bit challenging. God doesn't want us to make it too difficult but neither does He want us to be too complacent. It would appear that we all have room for improvement.

We all know that Jesus taught us, "How canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye?" This is a well known scriptural teaching, encouraging us to examine ourselves before criticizing others, but this teaching, "First, teach thyself," is broader and includes all of the

New Testament, and is less talked about.

I have been thinking about people like myself who teach God's Word verbally over the pulpit. However, all people professing to be a child of God are teaching others by the way they live. Now, if every one of us would first teach himself or herself, there would probably be some improvement in the spiritual condition of the church and we would be a better testimony of the power of God to change people's lives.

The Bible teaches, and we teach, "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." Romans 12:21. Our World Relief is not only teaching that, but those involved are doing it. It is good to be active doing good. Keep up the good work.

In the new year of 2006, I would like to endeavor to first teach myself more and thereby do a better job of teaching others. Will you join me in this endeavor? Thank you! "First teach thyself."

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*And the cow and the bear shall feed;
their young ones shall lie down together
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.*

Isaiah 11:7



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