

The Silver Lining



*By the breath of God frost is given:
and the breadth of the waters is straitened.*

Job 37:10

*January
2007*

Sermon by Bro. Darren Fehr, West Bend, IA

I Samuel 24; Romans 14

Greetings loved ones. We assemble here this afternoon hour on a Sunday afternoon. I had to think even as we heard so much this morning about the commandment that's been given unto us that we should lay aside our earthly toils and labors because this is the Lord's day. And He's asked us that we would rest and we'd come assemble ourselves around the Word and to find out really what He would want to speak unto each and every one of us.

You know, and the thought crossed my mind, well isn't an hour good enough? Could we have just left here at noon? And maybe for some of us it would be good. But you know for myself, I just had to think as the song writer wrote (and I'm not certain I find myself exactly in the shoes of the man that wrote that hymn), but he said, "As a hart for water panteth So my souls cries, Lord, to Thee!" Zion's Harp #157. I just had to think, loved ones, as we assemble today with that same desire upon our hearts. The Lord wants that from us, does He not? That we would just come and assemble ourselves together and have that longing and desire.

I don't know much about a hart, I think it's like a deer. And we can probably read many times, it's an animal that's probably pretty predominate over in the land there where Jesus lived, the Old Testament people perhaps even. And I don't know - it seems like that's a pretty desert area. And perhaps that animal had to go for a long period of time before it would find a place where it could find a little bit of water to drink. And you would just have to think, would we not, that as that animal came to the point where he found a little bit of water, he would lap it up. Thirsty.

And that's exactly the way, loved ones, we should be. Is it not? And I say to my own shame, perhaps we're not that way as much as we should. Because we have plenty, don't we? It seems like we can oft times gather around God's Word. There's plenty to drink from. We can read in the Word where Jesus says, I am the living water. (Jeremiah 17:13). I am the bread of life. (St. John 6:51). We have it,

don't we? But loved ones, the question that just laid upon my heart as we sang that hymn together is, do we really appreciate it and do we lap it up as that animal would? Are we thirsty for the Word, the living Word of God? We have a blessed opportunity to come as many times as we do, loved ones, just to sit around the Word and to consider it. And I hope and pray that you've prayed for the Spirit this afternoon hour as we look into His Word that the Spirit will speak unto you. It's not the words of men that are going to create the increase in the hearts of you, dear souls. It's the Spirit in your desire.

Certainly a scripture (Romans 14), loved ones, as we read it, personally if I had my preference, it would have been better maybe to read in another chapter. But as we read this scripture we know and realize that it's been down through time that men continually struggle with knowing what is right, and what is truth. What is acceptable, what is not acceptable in our walk, our faith. And I don't think any of us here today are really much different than perhaps these Roman people. And if the letter had been written today, perhaps it's written to us with the same thought in mind. And the very basic thought, as I consider this whole scripture, is what we read in the 19th verse, "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace..." For as we consider the Word, Paul is basically telling the people of Rome that there will be some people within the church who have a greater understanding, who have a greater ability to discern perhaps certain things. There will be others who, perhaps, their faith is not so complex, and they have a rather simple, willing, submissive nature to be instructed and to be told.

We consider the scriptures that we read this morning hour. We remember reading of the Proverbs and many of the Proverbs that Solomon was giving dealt with instruction, did they not? They dealt with the matter of man being able to teach and instruct, but then it also, I believe, dealt with the ability of we as man to accept instruction. To accept those things that are told us. And then the heart that we have when

we receive them things. I think Solomon spoke of those that would be foolish to disregard or to pass off the instruction (Proverbs 1:7).

So we consider the scripture that we read here today, where Paul begins and he says, "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputa-

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

Light From The Word



Writings based
on God's Word

January 2007

The Walk of a Believer

The walk of a believer is certainly different from the walk of an unbeliever. We can talk all we want about serving God, of worshipping Him, of being "on fire" for Christ, of being His child, etc. However, unless we actually walk the life of a believer, all of our talk is in vain.

Vain talk seems to be either of two basic patterns. There are those who are openly false teachers, "...unruly and vain talkers and deceivers... Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake" (Titus 1:10-11). Also, there are vain talkers who say they will do God's will but they do not serve Him. Jesus told of a man who had two sons who were asked to go work in his vineyard. One said he would not go but later repented and went to work. The second son said "...I go, sir; and went not" (Mt. 21:30). The second son was willing to say the right words but he was not willing to do what he said.

What is the walk of a believer? We must recognize there is no neutral place between walking as a believer or as a non-believer. If we are not walking in submission to God, we are walking as an unbeliever. The obvious first step in the walk of a believer is to do as Jesus taught. We must have a new life which is only attainable through repentance (Lk. 13:3), conversion (Mt. 18:3), spiritual rebirth (Jn. 3:3), abiding in the vine (Jn. 15:4), belief and baptism (Mk. 16:16). This beginning was summarized by Paul when he wrote "Therefore we are buried with him into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Ro. 6:4).

All of the above would be impossible without faith and the grace of God: "For we walk by faith, not by sight." (II Cor. 5:7) and "...by grace are ye saved through faith..." (Eph. 2:8). In what does a believer place his faith? In the shed blood of Jesus Christ. "...the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I Jn. 1:7). "But without faith it is impossible to please him (God): for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. 11:6).

The faith we have in the shed blood of

Jesus Christ will cause us to love God for sending His Son to die for us. Our love cannot stop with simply claiming to love God. The first epistle general of John chapter 4 provides a thorough explanation of the need for complete love. Love is of God (vs. 7). If we do not love, we do not know God (vs. 8). God showed His love for us by sending His Son to pay for our sins (vs. 9-10). If God loved us, we ought to love one another (vs. 11) and by loving one another, God's love is perfected in us (vs. 12). God is love (vs. 16). Our love is made perfect in God (vs. 17). There is no fear in love (vs. 18). We love God because He first loved us (vs. 19). If we say we love God and hate our brother, we are a liar (vs. 20). If we love God, we are commanded to love our brother (vs. 21).

How can we show our love for God? "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep His commandments" (I Jn. 5:2)

If we love God and walk as a believer we will be consistent from day to day. "I therefore ... beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called" (Eph. 4:1). James reminds us that we must "...be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (Ja. 1:4). If we waver (are inconsistent), we are like waves in the sea and shall receive nothing of the Lord. "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways" (Ja. 1:8).

James also reminds us that if we are consistent in our walk with God, our faith will result in works. Although we know that it is still our faith that saves us, our works show our faith for "...faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone" (Ja. 2:17).

Consistency in our walk as a believer is possible only if we are very careful in what we do. "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time..." (Eph. 6:15-16).

The walk of a believer must be a Holy Spirit led walk. There are many spirits in the world and we are admonished to "...believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (I Jn. 4:1). How do we know which spirit to believe? The Holy Spirit will be in complete agreement with the Word of God and will confess "...that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh..." (I Jn. 4:2). If we feel led to do something that is not consistent with the Word of

God, we can be sure it is not of the Holy Spirit.

The walk of a believer will also be a light for others to see. "...if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I Jn. 1:7). Although we must let our light shine no matter where we are, we must be careful, as believers, that we do not unnecessarily expose ourselves to the spirit of darkness. If we walk with believers and let our light shine when we are near those who are unbelievers, we will be a bright and shining light.

A believer also walks in truth. "Teach me thy way, O Lord; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name" (Ps. 85:11). "I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth,..." (II Jn. 4).

Perhaps the most obvious need of a believer's walk is to walk Christlike and obey His commandments. The first of all commandments is: "...Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord! And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength:... And... Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself..." (Mk. 12:29-31). "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked" (I Jn. 2:6). There are many scripture passages that encourage us to be Christlike. Jesus said "For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you" (Jn. 13:15). Paul reminded us "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus" (Heb. 3:1). Also, Jesus said "... If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Mt. 16:24).

The walk of a believer is not difficult. It is a simple godly lifestyle that demonstrates contentment, commitment, faith and a desire to serve. To walk the walk of a believer we must be willing to separate ourselves from worldly activities, from immodest fashion, from vainglory and from those things that are contrary to God's will. It is a privilege to walk with Jesus Christ and do His will.



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

Apostolic Christian Home for the Handicapped

The Mission Committee of the Apostolic Christian Church is responsible for a variety of projects in foreign lands. Over the years the Brotherhood has also established services or missions to meet needs in the local churches and communities. These include organizations such as the Apostolic Christian Home for the Handicapped.

The idea for constructing a home for disabled adults was first discussed around 1963. In 1967 the Elder Body gave their support to this proposal. Based on the needs of the Brotherhood, location options, availability of support services, and other details, a decision was made to locate a home for the disabled in Morton, Illinois. A 106-bed facility was built and the Home for the Handicapped opened in 1971.

In the first year twenty-one people were admitted; seven of these individuals are still being served. Initially, individuals having a wide range of abilities were admitted to the large facility. Over time the staff and Board of Directors realized there were individuals who would enjoy and benefit from living in smaller settings with fewer people.

Expansion of services

Services were expanded and in 1988 the first group home was opened. Over fifty-five individuals moved out of the large facility and into smaller settings over the next eighteen years.

Currently, there are 151 individuals being served by the Program. Ninety-six are served at the original, large facility which is now called Apostolic Christian Timber Ridge;

thirty-two are served at the two 16-bed homes, Oakwood Estate and Linden Estate; and the remaining twenty-two individuals are served in homes in Morton. These are houses located in the community, most of which have four people.

Timber Ridge primarily serves residents with high nursing and personal care needs. Presently, there are 66 residents who use wheelchairs and seventeen with feeding tubes, requiring a large number of nursing, direct care and support staff. The 16-bed homes have staff that is available 24 hours a day. The small homes in the community also have staff present 24 hours a day, although they provide services more focused on facilitating home and money management, meal preparation, and other daily tasks.

The residents in each home have similar daily routines. Most go to a job or an adult training program during the day. Some earn paychecks from working and others participate in educational and leisure activities. When they arrive home in the afternoon, most spend time relaxing and interacting with their peers. Some may need care or therapy. In the evening individuals may choose to go on a community outing, take a walk, or simply relax.

Vision

The Home for the Handicapped vision is "Serving According to God's Purpose." The correlating values are: believing God's promises are true; being directed by Christian values and being called to serve; believing all people have dignity and potential and giving our best to help others achieve their best.

Teaching of God's love for each of us and the gift of Jesus Christ occurs at many levels as part of the mission

effort of the Home for the Handicapped. For many of the residents this is done in simple ways like loving care, Christian music and a godly setting. There are also many residents who attend Bible studies in their homes. Those who are able and have a desire attend adult Sunday School classes or regular church services. These are held at Morton and Washington Apostolic Christian Churches.

Needs

People often ask us to describe our greatest needs. From the initial planning period to today, the greatest need is for prayer that God would direct the services and provide for the needs of the staff and residents. Our needs are in three areas.

First, we need professional godly wisdom to know how to meet increasingly complex needs of people in ways that are respectful and add value and meaning to their lives.

Secondly, we need people who are willing to serve that are caring and dedicated. We have been blessed but are concerned by the growing nursing shortage and the difficulty of paying competitive wages to staff at all levels.

Thirdly, we need adequate financing. Public Aid is our largest source of income and is increasingly threatened by state and federal deficits. Each year we need more donations and investment income to make up the shortfall. We have been blessed by your generosity which is essential if we are to provide these services. Another important part of financing is the need to expand the Endowment Fund.

God is good and we appreciate the opportunity as individuals and as a Church to be used by Him in a wonderful work.



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

World Relief strives to see that no Nazarene brethren or families in Eastern Europe are cold or hungry thru local aid activities and self-help projects.

Food and clothing distribution

Clothing and grain are shipped to Romania from World Relief distribution points such as the Distribution Center in Bluffton, IN that are supported by faithful brethren, friends and Sunday School students. American and European brethren coordinate aid shipments and Eastern Europe volunteer activities thru the Antioch Corporation and Arad Distribution Center in western Romania.



Unloading a shipment from Bluffton

Self-help loan projects

There are many young families with children that are the future hope for faith in Eastern Europe. To encourage young couples and brethren to remain gainfully employed locally and support their home church, World Relief assists with self-help projects that can help generate income to support a family and perhaps employ others. Over 125 loans have been advanced to brethren to start up small businesses in activities such as agriculture, livestock, auto repair, beekeeping, bakeries, cabinetry, construction, building supplies, gas

station, greenhouses, hardware, and woodworking, among others. Loan repayments are being recycled as new loans to qualifying applicants as approved by World Relief and local committees in Romania, Serbia and Ukraine.

Livestock projects

Designated donations from American brethren have also provided funds to Antioch Corporation to oversee 280-300 small livestock projects annually in Romania.



Helping families with food needs

These projects enable families and children to raise pigs and poultry for part of their food needs. Involving the family and children in animal husbandry is also part of implementing self-help concepts of World Relief. One third of the project comes back to Antioch each year for either helping other needy brethren or for seed money for the following year.

Farm equipment and tillers

Garden tillers have also been provided where families have garden plots to raise much of their annual food needs. In Ukraine, where land is more plentiful, designated donations have also provided for larger tractors, farm equipment and planting expenses. Brethren share the equipment to enable them to grow

food for the needs of their people. They also can share the benefits with their neighbors and friends, which has created interest in the message of Christ's love and eternal salvation.

Cash aid for the elderly and needy

Cash aid to Croatia, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Ukraine provides for the basic needs of food, medicine, clothing, alms and heating fuel for the elderly and qualifying families in need, and is administered locally in each country by a committee of elders, deacons and brethren.

Summary

Even though communist rule ended in 1989, the needs of the Nazarene believers are still great and have not gone away. Consumer goods are much more plentiful, but many of the believers cannot afford to provide adequately for their basic needs. Most cannot afford to own a car and do not live in homes with the modern conveniences.



Ukrainian Children

Large families are at risk due to underemployment and poverty level wages of less than \$100 per month. In spite of all this, they sincerely wish to remain in their homeland to raise their children in the fear and the admonition of the Lord. Such a desire is the hope and promise for faith in Eastern Europe.

APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN HOME FOR THE HANDICAPPED

Memories of the Christmas season just past fill our minds and hearts. As at your home, our homes are a bit more relaxed now that the busy holidays are behind us.

The resident council kicked off the season with dining out at a restaurant.

How we did enjoy the many carolers that came and sang for us!! Christmas décor kept everyone reminded of the special time of the year that we were in. Tasty holiday treats made their appearance almost daily at our doors.

Many of us had a wonderful Christmas party at the Peoria Fellowship Hall hosted by the Peoria Bible Class. They very graciously served us a delicious meal, not a small task with all of our special dietary requirements. Following the meal we settled back and watched a Christmas play that the Bible Class wrote and performed just for us. Gifts were handed out to each resident in attendance; what a great time! Then we all piled back into our buses and vans to caravan back to Morton.

Staff members draw names for residents if they wish. These many pretty packages are opened with excitement at the resident Christmas party. The staff was also favored with a very nice Christmas party. A festive meal was served at noon with all staff invited. There were beautiful Christmas carols sung, a Bible reading of Jesus' birth, nice door prizes awarded and each employee received their Christmas gift from the Home.

We are glad when everyone is safely home after spending time

with family over the holidays, some nearby and some far away.

It is a blessing for our residents and staff to be remembered and treated at Christmas time. Thank you. Please keep us in your prayers at all times. God has been very good to us; we need His continued guidance and protection.

GATEWAY WOODS APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN CHILDREN'S HOME Lauretta Schafer

"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Matthew 25:40b

This will most likely be my last time writing the Silver Lining News for Gateway Woods, as I plan to retire June 30, 2007. I would like to encourage you who are older to be open to God's promptings in your life to serve Him wherever He calls you.

It was 9-9-99 that we received a call that our first grandchild was born. About an hour later, Bro. Jeff Schumacher called from Gateway Woods offering me a position as one of the counselors. At the age of 64 years old, I accepted the offer. Now after seven years of serving and after seven grandchildren, I am planning to retire at the age of 71.

This has been a most rewarding job working with residents and their families. Some residents had never heard of Jesus as a Savior—only as a swear word. Some had never experienced unconditional love along with guidelines that were consistently enforced. Some had never seen love in action

day in and day out. Some had years where they never felt days without fear of abuse or neglect. Often parents needed direction with consistently holding their child (or grandchild) accountable in a loving way. I experienced a sense of peace and joy in being able to help in the guidance process of leading residents who opposed themselves to a life of surrendering their hearts to the One who can truly guide them. Also, I had the same feeling of gratitude to God for allowing us to instill confidence in parents. It is a joy to behold a broken parent and child relationship mended. I experienced a warmth of blessing in working with other Brothers and Sisters in Christ for the welfare of each resident and family. We work as a team. Often we do not see the results of our labors such as farmers do when they sow seed and see a plant grow and bear fruit, but we work continually and lovingly at sowing seeds. Sometimes we get a glimmer of a tender shoot springing out of a heart, and it thrills us.

It was an opportune time in life for my husband, Bruce Schafer, and me to work at Gateway Woods. Our four children were out of the nest and the last one was in college. (I had been a stay-at-home Mom except for aide positions at school, which allowed me to have off the same days as our children.) I wanted to be a counselor again and was grateful for the opening at Gateway Woods. Bruce is an architect whose skills were used at Gateway Woods for building the school in 2002, a new barn in 2004, and now a fourth residential home in 2006-07. Bruce is 73 years old and still going strong. We feel as

though God used our skills from 1999 to 2007, and now we are ready to pass the work on to others.

Our challenge is to everyone, but particularly to "senior citizens." Don't feel that age works against you as you get older. God knows what you have to offer. He made you and will place you where He can use you and your talents, if you but make yourself available. Look around you. Look inside you. What do you have to offer that God can use right now? Five years from now? Remember what He did with "five loaves and two fishes" and "five thousand men, beside women and children." (Matthew 14:17-21) Again, be available and be open to His promptings. He will use you and give the increase in His timing.

I personally want to thank everyone who helps with Gateway Woods. This ministry could not function without the support of the friends and brethren of our loving church. Thank you for your prayers, your encouragement, your wise counsel, your personal involvement, and your financial support.

NEWS

Bro. Andrew Gerber, Office Manager at Gateway Woods, and Sis. Natalie Lehman, the Assistant Houseparent in the Maple House, were recently announced for marriage. We thank God for bringing them together and pray God's grace on their new life together!

The Gateway Woods Board Retreat held in November was a great success! The Holy Spirit truly was with us as we gathered to plan and strategize for Gateway Woods and enjoy good Christian fellowship. Please continue to pray for the

Board members and management staff as they continue to seek God's direction for the future.

Cypress House: Construction on this new group home is going well so far. Due to some inspection delays we have revised our schedule for skilled volunteers. Please prayerfully consider sharing your talents at Gateway Woods. Please contact one of the Brothers below. Housing and food are provided.

Trim carpentry and cabinet installation start on January 22.

Flooring installation starts in early February.

Bro. Bruce Schafer:

Bro. Tim Sauder

C# (260) 437-9468

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We want to extend our thanks again to all of you who have come out to volunteer so far. Your efforts are greatly appreciated and may God's richest blessings be upon you.

Give thanks!

Before we get too far into 2007, it is good to stop and reflect upon God's goodness in the previous year. Here are a few key facts about Gateway Woods in 2006:

1) Gateway Woods currently has 6 Christ-centered programs:

Residential Childcare - 3 group homes in NE Indiana. The new Cypress House will open in March.

Pregnant Teen Program - In it's second year, this program has been very solid.

Gateway Woods School - Christian alternative school for residents and non-resident day students.

Specialized Foster Care - Christian

homes in the local and regional community.

Adoption - Children from the US and other nations placed in stable Christian families in Indiana, plus progress toward opening a program in Illinois.

Home-Based Services - In-home counseling, parent training and accountability.

2) In 2006, Gateway Woods was able to serve:

- 44 children (including their babies (7)) and 2 day students in our Residential Program.
- 35 children in Foster Care
- 31 children and 16 families in our Home-Based Program
- 34 families assisted with adoption and 19 children adopted and approximately 39 of the children attended Gateway Woods School.

3) Because of your generosity and the LORD's provision, we raised over \$360,000 at our annual Auction. Thank you! This year's Auction is scheduled for August 11, 2007. We hope to see everyone there!

4) In 2006, Gateway Woods provided over \$764,000 in free or subsidized care to troubled children and families. Contributions to Gateway Woods have a direct impact on hundreds of lives each year. Without your donations, many of our clients could not pay for the Christ-centered services they so desperately need.

May God bless each of you for your faithful support of Gateway Woods. The Christ-centered services offered to troubled children and struggling families by Gateway Woods is truly an out-flowing of our supporters' hearts for those in

times of trouble. May we move confidently together into 2007, trusting in God's faithful and loving care!

ARIZONA, PHOENIX
Ron and Ev Hoerr

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:"

Ephesians 2:8

It was a chilly windy evening, December 10, but the love inside church warmed us quickly. Our Sunday school Christmas program was quite beautiful, thanks to our dear children and teachers. Thanks most of all to God for giving us His Son!

Visiting ministers this month were Bro. John Lehman (Wolcott), Bro. Dan Dubach (Prescott), Bro. Curt Kaufman (Tucson), and Elder Bro. Tom Klotzle (Altadena). We thank God for providing for our spiritual needs through our ministering brothers.

Hospital patients were: Mary Ella Klopfenstein, Bro. Ed Frautschi, Bro. Charlie Baumgartner, Sis. Toni Bentley, Austin Lindenbaum, and Sis. Kathie Labudde.

Christmas caroling was December 17. What a joy to hear both young and old sing our favorite Christmas hymns.

We rejoice together as Katie Sutton (Bro. Tim and Sis. Verene) has expressed her need for her Savior, and has made a beginning in repentance. May God grant her much grace.

ARIZONA, PRESCOTT

Jane Hodges

Thoughts for the New Year:

When I behold Thy strength and mighty power,
Thou, God and Ruler of the hosts of light,
The moon and stars and all Thy works so wondrous
Proclaim Thy glory and Thy sovereign might!
How wonderful, O Lord, is Thy creation!
We worship Thee in holy admiration.

Hymns of Zion #118 vs. 5

"Praise ye the Lord, I will praise the Lord with my whole heart...He sent redemption unto His people: He hath commanded His Covenant forever; holy and reverent is His name. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments; His praise endureth forever."

Psalms 111:1,9,10

We wish to thank Bro. Tom Leman (Sis. Marlene, Denver, CO) for assisting Bro. Dan in the ministry this last month. We pray they were blest as we were by their service.

We are looking forward to reporting next month the move of two couples to our Prescott congregation. Lord willing, they will be arriving the end of December. We are praising the Lord for the growth to our church.

ARIZONA, TUCSON

Lisa Knapp

We are having a winter "cold

snap", by Tucson standards anyway. We have had overnight lows in the 20's (very rare for us) and daytime highs hovering around the 50 degree mark. The kids are searching for gloves and the die-hard Tucsonans are pulling out their "long pants" and giving their shorts a break. The mornings are cold but by afternoon our sunshine is warming us all up enough to shed our heavy jackets. Feels like Christmas!

We enjoyed our Christmas caroling last Friday evening at two local nursing homes and then enjoyed hot barbecue sandwiches and goodies afterwards. Then Sunday, December 17, we gathered to listen to the Sunday School classes tell us of the birth of baby Jesus. We always enjoy singing Silent Night together to finish the program. We were warm and cozy inside our beautiful newly remodeled sanctuary and I, for one, was feeling truly blessed by God. I have a feeling I wasn't the only one. We now eagerly anticipate the arrival of our winter visitors, Lord willing.

May God richly bless you and yours in the new year.

CALIFORNIA, ALTADENA

Tina Jackson

We enjoyed our first semi-annual Ladies Breakfast at a local restaurant on November 18. Many of our friends and family from surrounding areas joined us for a warm time of food and fellowship. We appreciate all of those who took the time, away from life's busyness, to attend!

Thanksgiving week for a number of our church family was spent in Magdalena, Mexico. They com-

bined with a group from Denver, Colorado, and were able to experience life at the orphanage during a time of year when we are reminded to reflect on the blessings of God in our lives. What a rich and rewarding experience to realize how truly blessed we are to live in America and participate in its' prosperity. The people of Mexico are truly rich in faith as they are thankful for the more important things in life, namely the joy of their salvation through their Savior Jesus Christ. What a good reminder to each of us as well!

Our annual Christmas Program was held on Sunday, December 17. The students were beaming as they recited various Christmas poems, sang familiar carols and proclaimed prophetic scriptures, reminding us that Jesus truly is "The Reason for the Season".

Bro. Bob Crockett was hospitalized again this month. We continue to pray for his health to return.

CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

Yasmin Koehl

As carols are sung and the birth of our Lord and Savior proclaimed, our hearts are touched as we realize God has given to us freely His most precious gift, His Son. Our Sunday school program joyously shared God's unsurpassing love from the youngest student (3 years old) who bravely told us, "I'm a happy thankful boy, cuz Jesus is my Christmas joy!" to the oldest who reminded us through song as she sang how Christ is more than a babe, but is our redeemer. All 9 students beautifully did their part to share the true meaning of the sea-

son.

Sis. Rose Kaplar (Bro. Joe) and Sis. Mary Theim both underwent surgery and were hospitalized for a couple of weeks. We are so thankful Sis. Rose can once more assemble with us. Our prayers continue for Sis. Mary, as she recovers at home.

Brandon Petrovic (Bro. Phillip and Sis. Tasha) was welcomed with open arms and much love by his family, big sister Ashlyn, and our entire congregation. It's such a special blessing to have a newborn baby in our midst! We pray God's blessing and guidance upon Brandon and his family's lives, as we recognize God creates us all lovingly for His purpose and glory. How blessed our lives can be when we can give Him our entire heart and allow Him to lead us!

KITCHENER, ONTARIO CANADA

Johanna Fortenbacher

Greetings of Christian love to each of you. May you feel the grace, mercy and love that our Saviour so willingly gives us. Do we treat others as we would like to be treated? "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me". (Psalm 51:10).

Bro. Dan Stoller (Sis. Dianne, Rockville, CT) and Bro. Todd Graf (Sis. Lydia, Akron, OH) came this month offering their loving deeds of ministering service.

Our Sunday School Christmas program was a blessing and joy to all. How special it is when the children of our church take a part in spreading the message of His birth. The many visiting children on that Sunday joined right in with the others.

We were very thankful to have retired Elder Bro. Ben Maibach and Elder Bro. Mark Bahr (Sis. Bev) of Detroit here this past Sunday to share the 2006 Memorandum. There was a tremendous amount of loving instruction given. We were also encouraged to know God better and follow Him as Jesus says..."My sheep know my voice, and they follow me" (John 10:27). It was also announced that our four converts feel the peace of God and anticipate baptism in the New Year. The converts are: Naomi Ursu (Bro. Mike and Sis. Barb), Eva Toth (Zoltan and Sis. Maria), and our friends, Murray and Esther Metzger. A tentative date for the baptism Sunday is March 25 and everyone is most welcome to come. We hope to see many of you then.

COLORADO, DENVER Ann Gonglach

A new year has begun. What will it bring?

Jesus is coming to earth again,
What if it were today?

Coming in power and love to
reign,

What if it were today?

Coming to claim His chosen Bride,
All the redeemed and purified,
Over this whole earth scattered
wide,

What if it were today?

Tabernacle Hymns, #144

Once again we appreciated the Christmas program that our Sunday school presented to us and the efforts of teachers and students.

We were blessed to be ministered to by Elder Bro. Peter

Petrovic (San Diego, CA).

As the old year comes to an end we are thankful that Sam Kaufman (Bro. Keith and Sis. Carol, Sabetha, KS) has made the decision to answer the call of God and repent of his sins.

Sis. Karen Martin (Bro. Doug, Eureka, IL), who is a hospice nurse, came and gave an informative talk on death and making end-of-life decisions.

Sis. Leona Lehman (Bro. Verne) is home and recovering after back surgery; we're thankful for the Lord's protection and healing.

Our prayers are with Bro. Larry and Sis. Sue Steffen and their family as they mourn the death of his father, Bro. Earl Steffen (Sis. Kay, Morton, IL).

**CONNECTICUT,
ROCKVILLE
Laura Virkler
Amber Rocke**

"Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord."

Psalm 31:24

As our congregation anticipates the provings and baptisms of a number of souls within the next few months, we pray that God will grant them much courage to continue to fight this spiritual battle. These converts include Sarah Lanz (Bro. Greg and Sis. Linda), Tanya Campbell (David), Sarah Virkler (Bro. Rudy and Sis. Susan), Mark and Audrey Lanz (Bro. Barry and Karen), Bruce Gottier (Guy and Sis. Beth), Josh Bahler (Bro. Steve and Sis. Lori), AnnMarie and Amber Hoffman (Bro. Steve and Sis. Joan), Ashlee Hunt (Kenneth and

Sis. Karen), Carole Hoffman (Bro. Arlo and Sis. Lynn), Suzanne Schillinger (Jeffrey), and Warren Gottier (Sis. Carole, dec.). We deeply rejoice with these souls. May we not forget to remember our converts who continue to strive onward in their repentance, for they too need much courage, love, prayers, and support.

We are also grateful for Bro. Nathan and Sis. Sarah Zahner, as they have given birth to their second son, Wyatt Emanuel. Aidan is now a big brother! Grandparents are Bro. Curt and Sis. Sally Zahner, and Bro. Ken and Sis. Debra Cray. May God richly bless and provide for this growing family.

Our congregation extends a hearty welcome to Sis. Carolyn Virkler as she establishes her new home in our Longview Village. May God grant her much grace throughout this transition.

"You will pray to him, and he will hear you..."

Job 22:27

Our prayers extend to Bro. Paul Hany (Sis. Betsy), and his family, as he awaits surgery next month. May God grant him much peace and courage through this time of waiting.

As we look into the next year, may we reflect back on the many blessings the Lord has given us this past year. May God be with you each one.

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
WASHINGTON
Henrietta Meyer**

Another year is dawning
Dear Master let it be

In working or in waiting
Another year with Thee.

Hymns of Zion #150, vs. 1

In this new year may we draw closer to our Lord and Master.

We have purchased the home of Ken and Roberta Belsley and beginning January 7 we will be holding our services there. Our new location is 2320 Parallel Lane in Silver Spring, MD 20904. It is about 5½ miles north of the Beltway. Directions vary depending on which way you are coming. The best suggestion is to contact the folks listed below or in the minister's book for detailed directions; we have the directions near our phones.

With the new location there will be change in the times of our services. Morning service will begin at 10:00 and afternoon at 12:00 noon. Please be patient as we go through these changes. We have met at the hotel for over twenty years.

Visiting ministers this month were Bro. Matthew Rassi (Sis. Bridget, Chicago, IL), Elder Bro. Ben Wiegand (Philadelphia, PA), and Bro. Gary Anliker (Sis. Edie, Elgin, IL). Other visitors this month were from Sardis, OH; Rockville, CT; and Tremont, IL.

If you are planning to visit Washington, D.C. area 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
FORT LAUDERDALE
Renee Mangold**

We were blessed to have with us several visiting ministers this past month. Elder Bro. Ben Wiegand (Sis. Michelle and their family, Philadelphia, PA), Bro. Tim Hohulin (Sis. Cathy, Roanoke, IL), Bro. Ron Koehl (Sis. Carol, Sarasota, FL), Bro. Clint Schmidt (Winthrop, MN) and Bro. Ron Jones (Portland, OR) came and shared God's Word with us. We pray that God would bless their willing service.

We had our annual Christmas caroling at a local nursing home followed by a potluck at the fellowship hall this month. We pray that God would bless the residents in the nursing home and that they would feel His peace and comfort.

**FLORIDA
NORTH FORT MYERS
Naomi Vogel**

"Joy to the world, the Lord is come, let earth receive her King. Let every heart, prepare Him room." This is our earnest prayer for all who have not prepared their heart to receive the King to do that before it is too late! For all who have prepared Him room, may you rest in the Joy and Peace of His saving grace, especially at this joyous time of year when we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

This month has been rather uneventful at our church. Many of our snowbirds have returned home for the holidays so our congregation is a bit smaller again, but they will all flock south soon to escape the

harsh weather of the coming months. It is always exciting to see the pews fill up!

Since we do not have any regular Sunday School students, we do not have the opportunity to have a Christmas program. We encourage young couples to move to Ft. Myers and bring other young couples with you! It is a wonderful place to live! Jobs are plentiful, the schools are good, and the weather is great!

**GEORGIA, ATLANTA
Kevin Kipfer
Benjamin Stoller**

A child in a foul stable
Where the beasts feed and foam;
Only where He was homeless
Are you and I at home.

We hope this New Year has been filled with the bountiful blessings of our blessed Savior. This month in Atlanta has been filled with the celebration of the nativity. We had a Sunday School celebration where the students' myriad of talents were displayed and a plethora of wings and things were consumed. Also, we had the pleasure of watching our young men and women present the message of Christmas to us through our annual program. From the youngest to the oldest, we were encouraged to look to the manger and see how God revealed himself to us through the Christ child. We were able to share a little Christmas cheer with the community as we caroled at some local nursing homes. Once again, our efforts were rewarded with a scrumptulous feast at church after we were finished.

We were thankful for the minis-

ters who visited us including Bro. Ben Walder (Sis. Juanita, Congerville, IL).

Will Olar was very excited to travel back to his Ohio homeland for Christmas this year. We wait in eager anticipation for his return.

**ILLINOIS, BELVIDERE
Doreen Moser
Sheila McCoy**

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

Isaiah 9:6

Wonderful. Counselor

We were blessed this month to have our Elder Bro. Ron Schambach as a visiting minister. Wonderful counsel we can always obtain if we take the time to pray and listen to our Elders as they pray and listen to the Lord above who is a wonderful and a mighty counselor.

The Mighty God

The story of our mighty God was proclaimed by our Sunday school children in their recent Christmas program. Have we ever wondered what it would have been like to be a shepherd, to have angels appear upon them and to have the heavenly choir sing? Would it erase any doubts how mighty our God is?

Everlasting Father

Our sympathy goes out to Bro. Dean and Sis. Carol Steffen and their family as they deal with the

loss of their earthly father, Bro. Earl Steffen. Although the loss of a earthly father is greatly felt here on earth, we can be comforted that he has gone home to be with his everlasting Father.

The Prince of Peace

As 2007 dawns and the new year is before us, peace can reign in our hearts even though there is no peace in the world. May we pray that our peace will be a light to draw others to Jesus and we can share what He has done for us.

**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. In addition, we again participated in Operation Christmas Child, sending shoeboxes of personal items and gifts to children around the world. We truly have been blessed in sharing the joy of Christ's birth.

We extend our sincere sympathies to Sis. Ruth Lowery and Sis. Dorothy Harsh, who have lost two siblings in recent weeks. Their brother, Orville Rinkenberger, of Gridley, passed away December 8.

We offer our prayers and sympathies to Diane (Steven) Kauzlarich, whose mother, Sis. Dorothy Wagenbach of Tremont, passed away December 7.

We welcome to our congregation two families who have recently begun worshiping with us: Michael and Kay Nazarczuk and their four

children, Chris, Sadie, Casey, and Taylor; and Bro. Dave and Sis. Barb Young.

We are eager to welcome home Ryan Knapp (Bro. Charlie and Sis. Paula) in December. Ryan has been studying in Uganda for the past three months.

Claira Kathleen is the new daughter of Bro. Jon and Sis. Andrea Knapp. She arrived November 21. Claira's older brother is Nicolas. Grandparents are Bro. Steve and Sis. Ann Stoller (La-Crosse, IN) and Bro. Rick and Sis. Kathy Knapp (Goodfield).

Ethne Heiniger also has a new baby sister. Catherine Grace was born December 8 to Bro. Brett and Sis. Jen Heiniger. Catie's grandparents are Bro. Ron and Sis. Kayleen Heiniger of Bloomington and Bro. Tim and Sis. Cathy Hohulin of Roanoke.

We are looking forward to the February 18 wedding of Sis. Natalie Lehman and Bro. Andy Gerber (both of Leo, IN). Parents of the couple are Bro. Nate and Sis. Yvonne Lehman of Denver and Bro. Neil and Sis. Leesa Gerber of Washington. We wish this couple God's blessings as they prepare for marriage.

We continue to lift up in prayer those in our church family who are recovering from surgeries or fighting serious illnesses, and for those with family members who have been stricken. We pray for God's healing touch and comfort.

As we prepare for a new calendar 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 our annual all-church Christmas Caroling. It is always a blessing to see the elderly folks sing along as we go from place to place. Their smiles are always big when they see our children stand so orderly and sing from their hearts.

A few weeks later, we had the blessing of observing our children sing and recite the amazing story of God's love upon fallen man in the sending of His only begotten Son to this earth. We always enjoy our Christmas program.

Our prayers are with Bro. Leroy Streitmatter (Sis. Esther) as he adjusts to his new home at Apostolic Christian Skylines in Peoria. As we age, we are reminded that we have no continuing city here upon earth.

God has allowed us to come to the end of another year and we know not how many more times this will occur for any one of us. May we redeem the time that God affords us.

**ILLINOIS, CHICAGO
Rachel Meyer**

Greetings from Chicago. "Tell Me the Story of Jesus" was the theme for our annual Sunday School Christmas program. This simple message was clearly explained by our students as they heartily sang, shared memorizations and read Scripture, taking us through the greatest true story ever told. Thank you students, parents and teachers for your dedication and hard work.

The following Sunday brought us our annual Christmas caroling and chili supper. What a joy to be

together as a church family and to share the story of Jesus with others. Thank you to everyone who coordinated the event. It is appreciated.

We wish to express sympathy to Bro. Al Montgomery (Sis. Jaron) upon the passing of his father, Kenneth Montgomery, of New Castle, IN. May God bless you with peace and comfort.

It was with sadness that we said farewell to Bro. Rod and Sis. Anne Anliker and their family. As they move to Wisconsin and assemble with the Belvidere congregation, our hearts go with them. We were privileged to fellowship with this dear family over the years and to share God's love and faithfulness together. Thank you, Bro. Rod and Sis. Anne, for your deep devotion and love for Christ. Your family will be missed!

I see a student twice a week for an hour-long speech session in her home. Recently, as we were working, she asked to see the time on my "clock." I showed her my watch and she said, "Good. It's almost time for you to go home." It became immediately apparent that I needed more exciting activities.

I believe we all feel an "internal clock." We know God has plans for us and that some day our physical "clock" will stop. We just don't know what or when. So we prepare. And when God says it is time for us to go home – and we have repented for our sins and made preparation in our hearts – going home will be joyful indeed.

ILLINOIS, CISSNA PARK

**Pam Walder
Andrea Walder**

Our congregation was privileged to go Christmas caroling at several locations including some nursing homes, as is our custom on the first Sunday in December.

Our hospital patients this month were Sis. Judy (Urban) Edelman, Bro. Dennis (Sis. Sharon) Walder, Liz (Gary) Rudin, and Bro. Ed (Sis. Marge) Alt. We trust God to grant healing as would be according to His will.

On the pulpit this month we were blessed with a visitor, Bro. Glen Braker (Princeville, IL). May God reward him for his labors.

With thankful hearts we heard of the safe arrival of Kayla Jo Walder, daughter of Bro. Nick and Sis. Andrea Walder. Welcoming her home are big brothers, Drew and Brett, and grandparents, Bro. Dennis and Sis. Sharon Alder and Bro. Fred and Sis. Joann Maul. Also, Sis. Velma Rinkenberger (late Bro. Steve) rejoices with the birth of a grandson, Austin, born to Bro. Wendell and Sis. Karen Schmidt (West Bend, IA).

Note of Thanks:

We wish to express our heartfelt thanks to our brethren and friends for your many prayers, cards, visits and acts of kindness shown to us since Bro. Dennis' illness and surgery. May our Heavenly Father bless each of you for your deeds of kindness.

*Bro. Dennis and Sis. Sharon
Walder*

ILLINOIS, CONGERVILLE Rachel Schrock

In a recent sermon we were reminded that God is love. This is such a simple equation, yet we can learn so much from it. As we learn about God, we learn about love. Furthermore, the more we learn about love, the more we learn about God.

We are thankful for our ministers who labor through the Holy Spirit to teach us of God's love and truth. Those who have visited our congregation recently include Bros. Gary Anliker (Sis. Edith, Elgin, IL), Brad Gudeman (Sis. Teresa, Bradford, IL), Dale Zeltwanger (Sis. Rachel, Morris, MN), Jim Vierling (Sis. Linda, Eureka, IL) and Steve Martin (Sis. Vicki, Eureka, IL).

Another couple is learning even more about love as they recently began their wedded life. Bro. Brian Cottrell (Eureka) and Sis. Wendy Rinkenberger were united in Holy Matrimony on December 10. Their parents include Bill Cottrell, Sis. Judy Cottrell (Eureka) and Bro. Mike and Sis. Pat Rinkenberger of our congregation.

Our hearts were filled with joy as we heard the wonderful story of love from our dear Sunday School students the evening of December 13. We pray that each child and young adult will remember this miraculous gift from God, and that, in time, they will follow God's call to become one of His dear children.

ILLINOIS, ELGIN

**Amy Gasser
Miriam Gasser**

Another year is dawning!

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

Hymns of Zion, #150

We are thankful for the new beginning in Natalie Martin's life, as she recently turned her heart to the Lord. Her parents are Bro. Dave and Sis. Jean Martin.

On November 21, Bro. Lynwood and Sis. Jamie Schambach announced the birth of another little boy, Keegan Jon. The new baby was warmly welcomed by his brother Braedon. Keegan's grandparents are Bro. Roger and Sis. Karen Weiss and Bro. Don and Sis. Leann Schambach.

Throughout the month, there were four visiting ministers: Bros. Ken Dietz (Bradford, IL), Dale Frank (Oakville, IA), Tim Gerber (Mansfield, OH), and Randy Mogler (Washington, IL). We appreciated their willingness to serve us the Bread of Life.

Our annual Family Caroling was December 10. It was a blessing to sing for those who are shut in and then to return to the Fellowship Center for a meal. On December 17, the Sunday School teachers and students presented a Christmas program through meaningful pieces and songs.

Bro. Dave and Gloria Rinkenberger have our sympathy in the loss of Dave's sister and brother and Gloria's father—all within a short time. The Lord has promised not to try us beyond what we are able to bear.

Bro. Georg Schumacher (Sis. Hilde) spent a brief time in the hospital, and Lori Lodge (Dave) and Sis. Lynette Buckheister (Bro.

Bob) were surgical patients.

Bro. Bob and Sis. DeAnne Cox would like to thank all who prayed for their son Jay, as he was called to active duty in the Navy. He has now returned safely home.

ILLINOIS, EUREKA

Cindy Stoller

Heather Beutel

Our prayers are with our medical and hospital patients this month, including Wilma McCanless (Phil), Bro. Jim Stoller (Sis. Jane), Bro. Marvin Schmidgall (Sis. Dorothy) and Sis. Wilma Blunier (Bro. Ben). We hope for healing and recovery to be granted according to the Lord's perfect will.

Visiting ministers this month include Bros. Greg Stoller (Forrest, IL), Jeff Grimm (Goodfield, IL), John Bradle (Roanoke, IL), Randy Mogler (Washington, IL) and Kent Getz (Elgin, IA). We are thankful for the working of the Lord through them.

Bro. Brent Blunier (Bro. Roger and Sis. Wendy) and Sis. Trudy Zimmerman (Bro. Dale and Sis. Sue) were united in marriage on December 3. Also, Bro. Brian Cottrell (Bill Cottrell and Sis. Judy Cottrell) took to wife Sis. Wendy Rinkenberger (Bro. Mike and Sis. Pat) in Congerville, IL, on the 10th of December. We beseech the Lord's blessing on these couples as their lives join together.

Newborn babies are a frequent occurrence in our Eureka congregation, but the miracle of life still is precious. We rejoice with Bro. Brent and Sis. Kelli Vierling in the birth of their daughter, Lena Rose. Grandparents are Bro. Jim and Sis.

Linda Vierling and Bro. Jerry and Sis. Kathy Leman, and Lena's older brother is Nathan. Again, we celebrate the birth of Joshua Levi, born to Vernon and Sara VanWaters, and older brother Benjamin. Grandparents are Bro. Charlie and Sis. Karen Sinn. Jenna Mae was born to Bro. Chris and Sis. Marlene Leman, following after siblings, Bro. Jarod, Sis. Rebecca, Sis. Miranda, Jonathan and Jason. Grandparents are Bro. Bruce and Sis. Marge Leman and Sis. Verna Wettstein.

As the Holy Word instructs us to "weep with those that weep" we find ourselves grieving with several families in the loss of their loved ones. Sis. Elaine Blunier (Bro. Myron) said a farewell to her mother, Sis. Dorothy Wagenbach (Bro. Robert, Tremont, IL). Also, Sis. Sandy Fehr's (Bro. Ken) mother, Sis. Ida Pfaffman (Washington, IL) finished her earthly race and has passed on to eternity. Additionally, I apologize to have inadvertently omitted recording the passing of Kenny Wiegand who is the brother of Sis. Charlene (Bro. Robert) Schumacher, Bro. Dietz Wiegand (Sis. Loretta), Bro. Bob Wiegand (Sis. Helen), Sis. Elizabeth Blunier (Bro. Sam, dec.) and Sis. Norma Hangartner (Bro. Roy). What a blessing to know the church will help comfort those in distress when the need arises. Let us carry on the intentions of our God.

Note of Thanks:

We wish to express our sincere thanks and appreciation for the cards, gifts, food and prayers that we received during the loss of our son, Doug. May God bless each one of you.

*Bro. Gene and Sis. Carroll
Zobrist and family*

I want to express my sincere thanks and appreciation for the prayers, gifts, cards and the two groups of Christmas Carolers who came to sing for me while I was in the hospital. May God richly bless each and every one for your love and continual prayers.

*In Christian Love,
Bro. Marvin Schmidgall*

Reminder: The Silver Lining collection for Eureka is due in January.

ILLINOIS, FAIRBURY

Lila Fehr

Anna Schmidgall

Our congregation, along with the angels in heaven, are rejoicing that three souls are repenting and seeking to live an overcoming life. Brian Steffen (Bro. Chris and Sis. Kay), Clint Steffen (Jenny), and Kyann Henry (Eric) are our new converts. We pray for God's grace and guidance now and always.

We appreciate our visiting ministers and their families. On Thanksgiving Day, Bro. Duane Rocke (Minneapolis, MN), Bro. Gary Brown (Forrest, IL), Bro. Al Schambach (Remington, IN), Bro. Brian Waibel (Champaign, IL), and Bro. Nate Wieland (Goodfield, IL) shared the pulpit. Bro. Marvin Leman (Bradford, IL) also ministered to us. May God bless them each one.

Eric and Kyann Henry are thankful for a little daughter, Nevaeh Leigh. Her big brothers are Justin and Hunter. Also welcoming her are grandparents, Bro.

Nathan and Sis. Marsha Fehr and Mike and Ruth Ann Henry of Arkansas.

It was uplifting to hear our Sunday School tell us the wondrous Christmas Story in song and verse.

Our prayers are with Sis. Betty Bittner and Sis. Jeanne Bittner. May God be with them both and provide healing.

ILLINOIS, FORREST

Jill Wenger

Lori Leman

Two families in our congregation have been blessed with the birth of baby girls. Ted and Teresa Bachtold welcome home their first-born, Kinzey Jean. Her thankful grandparents are Bro. Marvin and Sis. Mary Bachtold and Ralph and Martha Fehr. Mila Marie joins the family of Bro. Josh, Sis. Molly, Allie, Jerrett, and Kylie Zimmerman. Mila's grandparents are Bro. Mike and Sis. Jeanette Zimmerman and Elder Bro. Curt and Sis. Lila Frank (Lacrosse, IN). May God give these couples wisdom to raise their children in the fear of the Lord.

Our thoughts and prayers are with the family of Bro. Rich Rieger as he has passed from this life to eternity. His children are Dick, Andy, Mary Bradley (Dan), Tom, and Sis. Til Johnson (Bro. Harry). We pray that God will comfort them in the days ahead.

Our prayers have also been with our young Loren Beard (Bro. Joel and Sis. Heidi) as he was hospitalized for surgery this month. May God grant His healing powers to him.

We are thankful for the visiting

ministers who have lent themselves in the work of the Lord. We want to thank Bro. Mark Zimmerman and Bro. Trent Meiss (Eureka, IL), Bro. Joe Dotterer (Bloomfield, IA), and Bro. Bob Beebe (South Bend, IN) for their service to us, and we pray that God will continue to bless them.

ILLINOIS, GOODFIELD

Rita Bauman

Amber Grimm

It is the season of reaching towards new beginnings with the start of a new year.

Welcoming a new life into this world are Bro. Ron, Sis. Cassandra, and Mya Wiegand. They had a baby boy, Lance Henry, on December 9.

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

II Corinthians 5:17

Many rejoiced with Audrey Rocke (Bro. Steve) and her family as she gave her testimony and was baptized on December 13.

Looking forward to a new life together are Bro. Jeff Wiegand (Bro. Ron and Sis. Barb) and Sis. Janel Blunier (Bro. Melvin and Sis. Marilyn). They announced their engagement on December 17.

A special thank you to Bro. Dale Eisenmann (Sis. Judy, Chicago, IL), Bro. Brian Huber (Sis. Jackie, Francesville, IN), Bro. Darren Plattner (Sis. Sue, Champaign, IL), and Bro. John Bradle (Sis. Jill, Roanoke, IL) for bringing the Word of God to us this past month. Bro. Dale helped in the duties of baptism while Bro. Brian, Bro. Darren,

and Bro. John visited family during this special Christmas season.

Sis. Carol Hohulin (Bro. Harold) spent a short time in the hospital this month and our prayers are with her for her speedy recovery.

Sis. Barb Wiegand (Bro. Ron) and Bro. Art Wiegand have had some new health issues come up. The prayers of the congregation are with them and their families as they work through this time.

We are so thankful for all of the Sunday School children and teachers who put together the Christmas program. It was wonderful to hear of Jesus' birth from the mouth of babes. May God bless each one of them.

ILLINOIS, GRIDLEY Perry A. Klopfenstein

Another year has come and swiftly gone. Time moves steadily on and waits for no man. Mindful of our high calling in Christ Jesus, and with a sense of optimism, we should face 2007, and give our best to the Lord's service. The Apostle Paul provides inspirational advice for the believer to face the future: "...but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 3:14).

On Sunday, December 24, a visiting minister meditated on the text found in II Corinthians 6, which further inspires the believer to labor on in the important work of salvation. The Apostle summarizes the possibilities of distraction and persecution, and refers to the power(s) given to the true servant.

All believers, in one way or another, are "ministers" and serve God "in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings." Yet, with a Godly power, they endure and serve "by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honor and dishonor, by evil and good report; as deceivers and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known, as dying and behold we live; as chastened, and not killed. As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things." The believer should take courage for the power and direction that is his if he submits in humility before God.

We were privileged to have three visiting ministers this month. They were Bros. Ned Stoller (Alto, MI), Brace Wieland (Leo, IN) and Curt Rassi (Tremont, IL). Bro. Curt Rassi gave the message on Christmas Day. We are thankful for these efforts, and the willingness of all our ministers and Elders to avail themselves in God's service in preaching. It is among the many great blessings of our brotherhood.

Randy Funk is recovering from surgery. His father, Bro. Roy Funk, has been ill. Bro. Elmer Witzig spent several days in the hospital for surgery and is now home again. It was a serious procedure, but he is doing well and recovering. We surely thank God for all His mercies toward the sick, and the granting of healing if it is His

will. God has allowed much progress in science, medicines and medical procedures from which the seriously ill can be made whole again — and all credit and thanksgiving should accrue to Almighty God. Surely good health is one of the greatest aspects of our earthly "wealth".

We extend our sympathies to Willis Aupperle over the death of his sister, who lives in Florida. And our sympathies go as well to Sis. Esther Kaupp, who lost her sister, Sis. Marie Meyer, of Eureka, and to Bro. J. D. and Sis. Sandy Maurer, regarding the passing of his father, Marvin Maurer, a Gridley resident, who grew up in the Fairbury area.

Melissa Krug Cloudt graduated from Illinois State University on December 16.

A son was born to Bro. Todd and Sis. Nicole Witzig on November 8. He was named Zane Allen. He has an older sister, Kya, 2. Grandparents are Bro. Jerome and Sis. Mary Witzig, Gridley, and Bro. Elwood and Sis. Trudee Yackley (Taylor, MO). Great-grandparents are Bro. Mike and Luann Knapp (Taylor, MO), Sis. Clara Yackley (Peoria) and Bro. Herman and Sis. Oleda Menold (Morton). May God grant these parents much grace as they nurture their children in the fear of the Lord.

ILLINOIS, MORTON Annette Tanner Julie Bahr

What a delight to be treated to the beautiful Christmas Story told by the Sunday School. The theme being "Christmas Joy", as did Bro. Ralph Garber also expound on "Joy" for his topic for Family Wor-

ship night. It came to mind as J-Jesus first, O-Others second, and Y-You last.

A warm Christian welcome is extended to Bro. Jan and Sis. Glenda Neukomm who have moved here from Lexington, Kentucky. Another warm welcome to little Avery Marie, daughter born to Bro. Tim and Sis. Rachel Braker on November 30. Siblings, Kyle and Reagan, along with grandparents, Bro. Joe and Sis. Shirley Braker and Bro. Marvin and Sis. Diane Knobloch (Princeville, IL) welcome her home.

We have experienced the loss of loved ones this month. Anna Foster passed away on November 22. She resided at Restmor. Bro. Elmer Baer also passed away on December 6. His wife is Shirlee Baer of Morton. Shirlee also lost her brother, Bro. Slim Hodel, of Roanoke. Our deepest love and sympathy is extended to each one.

What a tremendous blessing to have workers of the Potters Field. Our thanks goes to ministering Bros. Greg Rassi (Sis. Carla, Chicago, IL) and Elder Bro. Earl Ringger (Sis. Dixie, Gridley, IL). Also to Bro. Gary Psinas, Bro. John Sauder, Bro. Billy Daniel, Bro. Roger Ackerman, Bro. Joe Zimmerman III, Bro. Melvin Aberle, Bro. Mike Davis, Bro. Grant Heinold, Bro. Daniel Knobloch, and Bro. Gerald Sullivan for the positions they have agreed to hold in serving our church body. Our sincere thanks to those retiring these positions. Let God bless you each one.

Note of Thanks:

We were shocked by the sudden, unexpected death of our loved one,

Dorothy Krantz. We, as a family, Greg and Angela, grandchildren and all relatives want to express our thanks for calls, cards, gifts, food, visits, prayers, and your love expressed to us as we deal with this reality. We are so thankful she is now with Jesus and was spared any suffering. May the Lord richly bless all of you, as He has surely blessed us.

Jack Krantz

ILLINOIS, PEORIA
Kristin Menold
Carissa Klopfenstein

Special thanks to Bro. Clark Stoller from Gridley for his words regarding the Beatitudes at our family night, December 6. We appreciated his stories and advice, which is very appropriate and applicable to our lives.

On Thanksgiving Day, Sis. Carissa Klopfenstein (Bro. Wayne and Sis. Carol) was announced for marriage to Bro. Sasha Mojic (Laza and Sis. Ranka Mojic, Detroit, MI). Their wedding is scheduled to take place September 2.

On December 10, Sis. Erin Aupperle (Bro. Dennis and Sis. Cindy) was announced for marriage to Bro. Samuel Sauder (Bro. Tom and Sis. Mary, Roanoke). Their wedding is scheduled for May 20.

God still moves. We praise the Lord to have had the following young people come in repentance: Whittney Stickling (Bro. Craig and Sis. Jacki), Joel Stickling (Bro. Chris and Sis. Marsha), Brooke Nelson (Bro. Breck and Sis. Janie), Hannah Roecker (Bro. Tim and Sis. Diane), Becca Moser (Bro. Matt and Sis. Aimee), Annie

Davidovics (Bro. Fedi and Sis. Ruth), Bethany Reinhard (Bro. Tim and Sis. Joan), Luke Hoerr (Bro. Jack and Sis. Jody), Leah Ramseyer (Bro. Dean and Sis. Holly), and Alex Funk (Elder Bro. Tim and Sis. Debi).

Bro. Darwin and Sis. Robin Stahl are proud parents of a baby girl, Sierra Irene, born November 5. She is welcomed by her brothers, Reid and Hunter, and sister, Chloe. Her grandparents are Bro. Harold and Sis. Karen Steiner from Princeville and Sis. Charlotte Stahl from Bradford. Congratulations to your family!

Bro. Marvin and Sis. Sarah Streitmatter had a baby girl on November 22, named Mazie Kate. She is welcomed by her brothers, Eli and Samuel. Grandparents are Bro. Roger and Sis. Vicki Steffen from Remington and Bro. Bill and Sis. Diane Streitmatter from Princeville.

Our prayers are with Bro. Dale and Sis. Cindy Endress in the passing of Cindy's mother, Helen Jackson. Also, with Bro. Wayne and Sis. Carol Klopfenstein, in the passing of Bro. Wayne's father, Bro. Alvin Klopfenstein, from Latty, Ohio.

Pray for Sis. Gladys Binkele, Sis. LouAnn Funk, and Sis. Amy Moser for recovered health.

December 10 was a big day for the Peoria church. Not only was there a wedding announcement, it was also the day we had our Christmas program, and our all-church caroling and dinner party. The Christmas Program was a marvelous event; to witness the children of all ages, telling the story of Jesus' birth through song. We are thankful for the children the Lord has blessed us with. Children espe-

cially seem to capture the innocent beauty of the Christmas season.

It was so good to join with our Brothers and Sisters in spreading some holiday cheer to others through some good, old-fashioned Christmas carols. And the food afterward was fantastic. Thanks to all the wonderful people who cooked for this.

Many years ago, the Lord inspired a man to write an oratorio that has blessed thousands around the world. Using verses from the Old Testament, it weaves the story of the birth of Christ, to His purpose as the Messiah, who has come as a light to the people that walk in darkness. His triumphant Hallelujah Chorus captures the pure and exultant joy of Christ's birth and beyond that, the purpose of His life. Jesus is not just a baby born in a manger, "He is the King of Kings, Lord of Lords, And He shall reign forever and ever."

May this season be one of joy for you and your family. Merry Christmas from Peoria!

ILLINOIS, PRINCEVILLE
Connie Christ
Vera Baer

This month we have had several dear ones in the hospital. They are Sis. Elsie Mueller, Bro. Nathan Martin (Sis. Esther), Bro. Robert Wieland (Sis. Nancy), Bro. Brian Wieland (Sis. Renee) and retired Elder Bro. Joe Stoller (Sis. Emily). We are thankful they are each home and recovering fine.

Our sympathy goes to Sis. Frances Knobloch (Edward) as her sister, Linda Blair, passed away. Also losing a sister, Sis. Sylvia Blunier (Roanoke, IL), is Bro. Alfred

Streitmatter (Sis. Virginia), Sis. Geraldine Streitmatter, and Sis. Shirley Kieser. May everyone who has lost a dear one feel God's extra comfort at this holiday season.

ILLINOIS, ROANOKE
Judy Sauder
Dee Fehr

My Father's way may twist and turn

My heart may throb and ache,
But in my soul I'm glad I know
He maketh no mistake.

For bye and bye the mist will lift
And plain it all He'll make.

Through all the way, though dark
to me

He made not one mistake.

Many in our congregation and community bid farewell to cherished loved ones in the past month. Sis. Ruth Ann Hodel passed away on November 18. She is survived by six sons: Bro. Steve (Sis. Joyce), Bro. Scott, Mike (Billie Pat), Bruce (Donna), Herb (Susie), Mark (Pam); and four daughters: Sis. Jan (Elder Bro. Kent) Heimer, Mary (Rod) Huber, Susie (Tom) Davis, and Annie (Paul) Trapp. Bro. Warren "Slim" Hodel left this life on November 23. Survivors include two daughters, Sis. Ann Hodel and Sis. Kathy (Elder Bro. Tom) Hoffman. Also on November 23, Chuck (Annie) Fehr passed away. He is the son of Bro. Rich and Sis. Madelyn Fehr and the son-in-law of Bro. Gene and Sis. Evie Hangartner. On November 26, Sis. Sylvia Blunier, wife of Bro. Wilmer, departed from this life. Other survivors include two sons, Jack (Gail) Blunier and Bro. Ray (Sis. Wendy) Blunier. Our sympathy is also ex-

tended to Sis. Marjorie (Wayne) Blunier, at the passing of her step-mother, Mildred Himstedt, from Greenville, IL. As one by one, we see dear ones slip through the valley of the shadow of death, let us bear in mind that "God maketh no mistakes."

On November 17, Bro. Mark Gerber (Bluffton) spoke to us on "Kingdom Finances", covering topics such as giving, stewardship, and covetousness. How we view financial matters is so important, for, as Matthew 6:21 teaches us, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

Little Gabe Gerber became a big brother on November 19, when Austin Jacob was born to Bro. Blake and Sis. Kristin. Austin's grandparents are Bro. Curt and Sis. Denise Knepp and Bro. Roger and Sis. Trish Gerber (Goodfield). Bro. Tim and Sis. Cathy Hohulin gained another granddaughter on December 8, when Catherine Grace was born to Bro. Brett and Sis. Jen Heiniger (Bloomington).

On December 10, the engagement of Bro. Samuel Sauder and Sis. Erin Aupperle was made known. Their parents are Bro. Tom and Sis. Mary Sauder and Bro. Denny and Sis. Cindy Aupperle (Peoria). May God's blessings be upon this dear young couple as they take this step in faith.

December 10 was also the date of our Sunday School Christmas program. From the littlest children singing "Away in a Manger", to the high school students proclaiming "Glory to God in the Highest", the story of Christ's birth was wonderfully portrayed. What a glorious message we heard in the words of the angel Gabriel spoken to Mary:

“He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest.”
Luke 1:32

We enjoyed beautiful new-fallen snow, frigid temperatures, and the light of a full moon to carol by on December 3, the date of our all-church caroling and supper. Thankfully, we were spared the power outages that were experienced by so many in a wide-spread area after our first major winter storm of the season. As the snow's pristine whiteness so clearly reflects the light of the moon and brightens up a cold, dark, winter night, so may our lives reflect the light of the Son, “Jesus, the Light of the World.”

“That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour.”

I Thessalonians 4:4

ILLINOIS, TREMONT

**Teresa Rowell
Sheri Allen**

This month we were blessed to witness the marriage of Bro. Greg Beutel (Bro. Dean and Sis. Karen) and Sis. Mary Rassi (Bro. Curt and Sis. Kathy). They were married on November 26. Visiting for the occasion were ministering Bros. Greg Rassi (Chicago, IL), Dennis Rassi (Fairbury, IL) and Vern Wettstein (Congerville, IL). Also visiting this month was ministering Bro. John Steiner (Oakville, IA).

Announcing their engagement are Tim Wagenbach (Bro. Si and Sis. LaVonne) and Jodi Schick (Bro. Randy and Sis. Jane, Morton, IL). We rejoice with them and wish them God's abundant blessings.

Bro. Nelson and Sis. Mary Koch

are rejoicing over the birth of their little girl, Rebekah Jane. Rebekah was born on December 8. Welcoming her home are siblings, Micah, Abigail and Rachel. Thankful grandparents are Bro. Cleo and Sis. Nancy Koch and Bro. Bill and Sis. Ellie Knobloch (Lester, IA).

Our dear Sis. Dorothy Wagenbach (Bro. Bob) went home to be with the Lord on December 7. Our prayers go out to her family. We especially want to remember her children in our congregation, Bro. Marv (Sis. Paula) Wagenbach, Sis. Karen (Bro. Dean) Beutel and Trish Davis. While this is a time of great sorrow, we can be thankful for the promise of eternal life in heaven.

We have had two people in our congregation that have been hospital patients this month. Our prayers continue to be with Bro. Steve (Sis. Mary) Sauder and Sis. Julie (Bro. Dan) Koch.

We had our Sunday School Christmas program. It is such a blessing to see the children up front singing praises to our Lord. Christmas is a very special time of year. It is a time that often draws loved ones closer together. A time that brings families to church to be reminded of the birth of Jesus. We need to remember what Christ did for us, not just at Christmas, but all year long. As we enter into the New Year, may we each continue to keep our focus on God and all He has done and continues to do for us.

ILLINOIS, WASHINGTON

**Elizabeth Heinold
Nancy Knepp**

Once again the beloved account of the birth of our Saviour was told

to us through verse and song by our Sunday School students. The wondrous story of love and the beautiful carols never grow old. Thank you to all the teachers, students, parents and helpers.

Despite the cold and snow, we had a good turnout for our all-church caroling. Christmas is such a good time to show others we care. As we grow older, the merriment of childhood is replaced by sorrows and cares of this world. What a blessing to have the joy of the Lord in our hearts. When burdened with loneliness or heartbreak, reaching out to someone needier can bring the biggest blessing of all!

On Thanksgiving Day, the engagement of Bro. Andrew Gerber (Bro. Neil and Sis. Leesa) was announced to Sis. Natalie Lehman (Bro. Nate and Sis. Yvonne, Denver, CO). May God richly bless them as they plan their wedding and prepare for their marriage.

Thank you to our young group and Bible Class who both sponsored baby-sitting services for young parents. “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”

On Thanksgiving Day, we were blessed to have ministering Bros. Dean Steffen (Sis. Carol), Randy Kellenberger (Sis. Karen) and Brent Kellenberger (Sis. Beth) share God's Word with us.

We were also privileged to have neighboring brethren minister to us this month. Elder Bro. Ervin Knecht (Sis. Sandy, Eureka, IL) was here for a Sunday and Bro. Frank Sauder (Sis. Kathy, Roanoke, IL) was here on a Wednesday evening.

We share our sympathy with our loved ones who have lost family recently. Dave and Sis. Linda Fehr lost her father, Bro. Earl Steffen, and his brother, Chuck Fehr. Sis. Pauline Schick lost her sister-in-law, Sis. Emma Feucht.

Thanks be to God for the shrinking of Bro. Elliot Yudenfriend's tumor. It is truly a miracle to witness the change. May God be as merciful to all who call on Him for healing! Even as Jesus prayed, "Not my will, but thine, be done," we are so limited in our understanding of His ways. May we all be surrendered to His will in the New Year.

INDIANA, BLUFFTON

Amber Steffen

Amy Gerber

"O SING unto the Lord a new song; for he hath done marvelous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory."

Psalm 98:1

Lifting praises up to our Lord in song is such a blessing! Singing unto God brings us closer to Him in mind and spirit. We were truly blessed on December 2 as nine Apostolic Christian singing groups from Indiana and Illinois shared songs with us. The groups came together on Saturday and blessed us with their voices that night. Many of those who sang on Saturday, stood before us Sunday afternoon and shared a few more songs. The evening also included a free-will offering to Loving Shepherd Ministries. The beautiful singing of this weekend gave us a glimpse of how melodious and glorious the music in Heaven will be.

We rejoiced on November 19 as six souls were baptized and the family of God grew. We cheerfully greeted Bro. Adam Neuenchwander (Bro. Dee and Sis. Lora), Bro. Nick Fiechter (Bro. Dave Fiechter and June Fiechter), Sis. Jessica Fiechter, Sis. Ashley Troxel (Bro. Kim and Sis. Lisa), Bro. Ryan Neuenchwander (Bro. Tom and Sis. Sue), and Bro. Chad Fiechter (Bro. Mike and Sis. Shari) as our new brothers and sisters in Christ. This weekend was such an encouragement for our church: that we would keep lifting up our unconverted loved ones in prayer.

Elder Bro. Steve Gutwein (Sis. Linda, Francesville) and Bro. Dan Beer (Sis. Deb, Milford) were with us for the baptisms on November 19. We were blessed with two other visiting ministers this month. Bro. Clark Stoller (Sis. Cindy, Gridley, IL) was with us December 3 and Bro. Steve Ringger (Sis. Myra, Bluffton North) stood before us on December 13. It is such an encouragement and example of our bond in Christ as brethren from all locations can unite and worship together on Sundays. We always appreciate willing ministers, ready to travel as God leads to share the Word with us.

The Bluffton congregation celebrated with two couples this past month as they marked their 50th wedding anniversary. We rejoiced with Jim and Ruth Reinhard as they reached this blessed milestone. Also, we are thankful for the loving example of Bro. Ramon and Sis. Lorena Steffen. May each couple be blessed for their faithfulness.

We also want to lift a young couple up in prayer. Bro. Ryan and Sis.

Bethany Donaghy will begin serving as alternate house-parents at Gateway Woods beginning around February 1. We are thankful for their willingness to serve and are praying that God will use their talents to further His kingdom.

As we near the Christmas season, we make sure to remember the true meaning for the season: that God sent His only Son to the world, to be born as a man, to lead others to Him, and eventually die for our sins. We can be just as thankful in the Christmas season as in Easter. Without the birth of our Savior, His death would not have been possible. Thanks be to God for His incomprehensible love for us.

INDIANA BLUFFTON NORTH

Tiffani Schladenhauffen
Darren Drayer

Greetings in the Name of Jesus Christ.

We have been blessed with several visiting ministers this month. Elder Bro. Ron Messner (Sis. Pam, Washington, IL) and Bro. Alan Schambach (Sis. Sarah, Remington, IN) were with us on November 26. Bro. Clark Stoller (Sis. Cindy, Gridley, IL) and Elder Bro. Lynn Stieglitz (Sis. Leonda, Leo, IN) visited us on December 3.

On December 10, Sis. Amanda Fritts was wed to Bro. Chris Esterling of Peoria. We wish them God's blessings in their life together. We were also glad that Bro. John Reinhard (Sis. Pam, Bluffton) and Bro. Tim Roecker (Sis. Diane, Peoria) came to assist in the wedding.

Bro. Bryan Steffen married Sis. Ashton Bahler (West Lafayette) on

December 17. Praise God for bringing together another godly couple.

We grieve with Sis. Wava Bertsch on the loss of her husband, Bro. Leonard, on December 3. He is survived by three brothers and two sisters: Bro. Laurin Bertsch, Oscar Bertsch (Sis. Sylvia, Bluffton), Bro. Walter Bertsch (Sis. Lillian, Bluffton), Sis. Gladys Lantz (Bluffton), and Sis. Beulah Schwartz (Bro. Howard, Bluffton). They also have six grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

On December 17 we witnessed the annual Sunday School Christmas Program at our church. The high school choir ended with the song "On this Night." At the end of the song all the students joined in. What a visual: K-12 students blended in harmony because of Jesus. In the same manner, all the members of Christ are joined in unity by our wonderful Savior. Merry Christmas.

"For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ."

I Corinthians 12:12

INDIANA, FRANCESVILLE

**Jessica Murray
Barb Huber**

Greetings dear loved ones in the name of Jesus Christ. As we recall how Jesus came to be, and all the miracles that have taken place, it is wonderful to have so many exciting events in our past.

Now, as Christmas is coming and we hear of the story of Jesus and His birth, we have so many blessings to be thankful for in our present.

This past month has had a few events that we are thankful for and are excited to share with all of you. Our Sis. Brittany Gudeman (Bro. Randy and Sis. Becky) has sought the guidance of our Father for her life's mate and has accepted the marriage proposal of Bro. Darrin Eisenmann (Bro. Bill and Sis. Carol) of Latty, OH. May the Lord bless you and your families as you plan for your wedding commitment.

Our Bro. Jan and Sis. Val Gutwein and family have returned to their mission work in Haiti and this past month Bro. Chad and Sis. Pam Huber had the opportunity to visit them and see first hand how the work is carried out there. We pray for the wisdom to know how to give support to those who serve in the mission field.

On December 10, the Sunday School Classes told us of the birth of Jesus, the star in the sky, and the spiritual story of the candy cane.

The program was such a good example of how our love for Jesus should be. Thanks to all the teachers, the song leader, and parents for helping teach the true meaning of Christmas.

The spirit of Christmas giving should be seen in all our living. This is so true for all we do. No matter how weary we get, as long as we are doing the Lord's will, He will give us the strength to carry it out. May you all be blessed with a great holiday season and may the love of Christ Jesus our Lord shine through you.

INDIANA INDIANAPOLIS

**Gail Bradford
Sandy Lichtle**

We rejoiced as two precious souls, Bro. Daniel Bollier and Bro. Ben Graham, became brothers in Christ on December 10. The evening before they encouraged us with their testimonies of God's faithfulness and the love of Christian family and friends. Many gathered to witness the baptisms, including a pre-school child, who, at the moment of baptism, commented, "This is the best part." Indeed it is.

Ministers at Indianapolis on this weekend were Elder Bro. Wayne Banwart (Sis. Charlen, Champaign, IL), Bro. Curt Rassi (Sis. Kathy, Tremont, IL) and Bro. Alfred Bahler (Wolcott, IN).

Our prayers are with two loving grandfathers, Bro. Jack Bollier (Leo, IN) and Bro. Elmer Witzig (Sis. Marjorie, Gridley, IL), who could not attend due to ill health.

We thank God for his healing mercies as Bro. Bill Witzig (Sis. Conni) is recovering nicely from a recent medical incident.

On a recent Wednesday evening, Elder Bro. Ed Schwartz (Bluffton, IN) led a discussion based on his book, "The Gift of Mercy - How to Understand Differences and Forgive Others." If we all did what this book suggests, there would be peace on earth... and in our own lives.

Other visiting ministers this month were: Elder Bro. Jim Plattner (Sis. Marlene, Princeville, IL), Bro. Jaye Rinkenberger (Sis. Peggy, Goodfield, IL), and Bro. Nile Bucher (Sis. Phyllis, Bluffton North, IN).

Young in age and young at heart joined voices in praise of our Lord Jesus during the Sunday school's annual Christmas program. The children also delivered gifts to needy families and sang beloved Christmas hymns at a nearby nursing home. These deeds of kindness bless those who do them, because: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Matthew 25:40.

INDIANA, LACROSSE
Bethany Johnson
Julie Rocke

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

Luke 2:7

Christmas is a wonderful time to reflect on the true meaning of the season, the birth of our Lord and Savior. It is also a time to be with family, friends and loved ones. Our congregation was very blessed as the children sang Christmas songs and recited their pieces and told us the blessed Christmas story once again. That same evening, we went Christmas caroling to area hospitals, nursing homes and shut-ins. What a joy to be able to do for others and bring smiles to their faces!

Bro. Brad and Sis. Julie Rocke are rejoicing in the safe arrival of Alivia Jo on November 15. Excited siblings are Virginia and Jonathan. Alivia's grandparents are Bro. Bill and Sis. Jo Frank and Bro. Curt and Sis. Beth Rocke (Eureka, IL). Bro. Curt and Sis. Lyla Frank are

thankful for the arrival of a new granddaughter, Mila Marie, born December 1. Welcoming her home are her parents, Bro. Josh and Sis. Molly Zimmerman (Forrest, IL), and her siblings, Allie, Jerrett and Kylie.

We were thankful to have two visiting brothers bring God's Word to us this month. Bro. Lucas Frank (Sis. Crystal, Detroit, MI) and Bro. Jim Butikofer (Sis. Diana, Iowa City, IA) were able to come home and visit their families for the Thanksgiving holiday. We appreciate their efforts.

Our thoughts and prayers are with our friend, Rosie Moser (Wayne), who has been experiencing some health problems.

INDIANA, LEO
Ethelyn Schlatter

Bro. Brace Wieland had our Thanksgiving service. It was very, very foggy that morning. He could not see the church as he turned off the highway and he compared it to our heavenly journey "Our homeland is just ahead." He read Abraham Lincoln's proclamation of Thanksgiving Day as well as various Psalms of praise, concluding with Romans 12:1-2. What do you thank God for?

We welcomed Bro. John Jackson and family (Bay City, MI) on November 26, retired Elder Bro. Alfred Bahler (Sis. Frances, Wolcott, IN) on December 3. We thank them for bringing the Word of Life.

Our prayers are with Bro. Tim Sauder who had a complete shoulder replacement. It will be a slow recovery, but thankfully does not keep him home bound. Bro. Jack

Bollier had a pacemaker implant and our prayers are also with him. We also pray for the Stieglitz family, as their sister in Bloomington, IL, had a massive stroke and is not responsive at this writing.

We are looking forward to two weddings in 2007. Sis. Anna Pfister and Bro. Mitch Schlatter are planning their wedding for February 25. Their parents are Bro. Dan and Sis. Karen Pfister and Bro. Gus and Sis. LeAnn Schlatter (Latty, OH). Bro. Andrew Gerber is engaged to Sis. Natalie Lehman. Their parents are Bro. Neil and Sis. Leesa Gerber (Washington, IL) and Bro. Nate and Sis. Yvonne Lehman (Denver, CO).

Our Sunday School Christmas program on December 10 was entitled "Great Expectations". What were the expectations of the prophets, "...many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see," (Matt. 13:17), Mary and Joseph, Herod, The Wise Men, scribes, Simeon and Anna? What are our expectations? We closed with the hymn "What a Day that will be when my Jesus I shall see, and I look upon His face, the One who saved me by His grace" (Gospel Hymns #831). Bro. Brian Huber (Sis. Jacki, Francesville, IN) and Elder Bro. Mark Streitmatter (Sis. Sara, Bloomington, IL) were here for the morning service and program. May the Lord bless them for their labor of love.

December 14 was our all church Christmas caroling.

And now I bid you farewell and introduce the Schrenk Sisters, who will be Leo's next correspondents. They are the daughters of Bro. Steve and Sis. Linda Schrenk. They are home schooled, understand

sign language and have been on many mission trips to Jamaica.

The Lord's blessings in this new year.

INDIANA, MILFORD

**Carol Haab
Carlton Beer**

This has been a blessed month for our congregation. One Sunday Bro. Mark Gerber (Bluffton, IN) came and ministered to us and encouraged us to follow hard after Christ. We appreciate his help.

We also had our Elder Bro. Bill Schlatter and Elder Bro. Bruce Hohulin (Goodfield, IL) share the Conference Memorandum with us. We appreciate the willing effort that our Elder Brothers render for us.

Also that same evening, Bro. Daron Price was chosen to be our new minister. He had strong support of our brotherhood. After his appointment, our Elder Brothers gave him and his wife, Sis. Monaca, some loving counsel. They also gave them much encouragement. We hope, pray and believe he will be a blessing to our church and we wish him the grace of God.

Our Sunday School Christmas program was presented Sunday afternoon. It is always a blessing to see and hear our young people perform. We would like to keep some of their enthusiasm. As our Bible class is small, they and some adults formed a lovely choir and sang for us.

Sunday evening our congregation formed two groups to go Christmas caroling to our older people. It is a blessing for the carolers and we hope it brought some cheer to those who were sang

to.

Our Bro. Arthur Haab and Sis. Eleanor Beer are both in nursing homes. And we keep those that are nearing the end of this life in our prayers.

INDIANA, REMINGTON

**Tammy Waibel
Beth Virkler**

Bro. Roger and Sis. Vicki Steffen became grandparents again this month. Mazie Kate was born to Bro. Marvin and Sis. Sara Streitmatter (Peoria, IL) on November 22.

Bro. Ken Weerts (Sis. Myrna, Cissna Park, IL) was our visiting minister on the Sunday of our Christmas program. We have certainly enjoyed the visits of "ministering" grandpas over the years.

INDIANA, SOUTH BEND

**Craig Langhofer
Rachel Langhofer**

Greetings in the name of our Savior. Our South Bend brethren have enjoyed all the visitors we have had throughout the last year. As any small church, we always enjoy visitors. As you make your traveling plans for 2007, if possible, be sure to include a stop at any of our smaller churches.

Our mid-week services for the winter months of January, February and March are held at nearby nursing homes the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays, and the other Wednesday evening services are held in the homes of our brethren. Please call one of our ministers or members for place and directions if you plan to fellowship with us.

In this new year may we each desire to bless God with our lives and

dedication to knowing Him more intimately.

INDIANA, VALPARAISO

Marguerite Hoerr

Bro. Greg Lehman and his wife, Sis. Mary Beth, of the Wolcott congregation, visited us on a Sunday when Bro. Garry and Sis. Lois spent time with their family, out of state. The love that promotes the visits of surrounding ministers is so appreciated. We hope, in some small way, our gratitude is conveyed as we worship together.

The following Sunday, we received another loving visit from Bro. Ron Heiniger and his wife, Sis. Kayleen, of the Bloomington, IL, congregation. The Sunday of December 3, Bro. Tom Troxel and his wife, Sis. Louann, of the LaCrosse church, came to spend the afternoon with us. We need to mention the visitors who accompany all of these brothers, too. They are equally appreciated. When children are part of the group they enliven our Sunday school also.

Keith and Tara Frieden became happy parents as they welcomed their first child, Tyler Scott, on November 17. The bouncing boy weighed in at 8' 7" and was 21 inches long. Bro. Byron (Butch) and Sis. Sue Frieden of our congregation are the happy grandparents. Keith and Tara moved into their new home in the Indianapolis area just one month before Tyler was born. May God richly bless this little family.

Bro. Garry and Sis Lois Bucher visited our dear friend, Millie Williams, and her husband Bill, this past month, who will be moving to California to live with their daugh-

ter. Their trip was planned once before, then had to be cancelled. Our prayers accompany them as they make this move, even as we will miss Millie's smiling face in our congregation.

The first Christmas carol sung by our Sunday school students during their Christmas program was "The Babe of Bethlehem". It reminded me of my Uncle, Bro. Henry Beer, who wrote the words to this song. A good friend, Mary Ann (Yergler) Rassi, set it to music. I've always felt each of them received inspiration from God to do this work, and it remains the favorite of carols for me.

During the program the students also told the history of the "Twelve Days of Christmas" and the meaning of each line in the song. During the period 1558 to 1829, people who didn't belong to the Church of England were denied the right to worship openly. Thus the song was written with hidden meanings so it could be sung and taught to children; and in a way that didn't bring persecution on them. The "dear one" referred to God Himself. The "two turtle doves" were symbolic of Old and New Testaments. On and on through the twelve days, each had a symbolic meaning to the Christian faith. History has proved that the Spirit of God can't be quenched when people are persecuted, and this song sung today, seems to be proof of that.

Our good friend, Zack Miller, has joined the Coast Guard. We send our good wishes and prayers with him as he embarks on this journey with men and women who protect our waters and keep our ports safe.

This past Sunday the Chicago congregation shared one of their ministers with us. Bro. Virgil Metzger, his wife, Sis. Mary, and their son, Bro. Darin, came to be with us for the day. We thank Bro. Virgil for his ministry and we thank all three of them for their love. We enjoyed being with them. Sis. Mary is an aunt to our Bro. Dale Schneider, so it was special to Dale and Sis. Andrea to have them visit.

Our son-in-law, Dick Pelath, will be undergoing his stem cell harvest the week following Christmas. Roadblocks have been thrown in the way, but today they have all been removed and he can go on with the treatment he needs. We thank everyone who has remembered him in prayer, and would welcome them during the coming month. One has to be on the receiving end of prayers to realize the awesome effect they have on the recipient and family.

Christmas will be past when this news is read, but the Christmas message will still be deep in our hearts because "it's not the Babe, but Christ the man, who walks in Galilee. It's not the manger but the cross, that sets the spirit free." These words are applicable throughout the entire year as we walk with the One who bore the cross for us. May your New Year be blest with peace and contentment in Him who loves us with His immeasurable love.

**INDIANA
WEST LAFAYETTE
Andria Sprunger
Hollie Meister**

We have had a busy and much

blessed month here in West Lafayette. We were blessed to start off the month by having baptisms for our Bro. Luke Furrer (Bro. Brian and Sis. Lorene) and Katie Widmer (Bro. Neal and Sis. Kris).

We also had the privilege of celebrating the marriage union of Bro. Bryan Steffen (Bro. Mark and Sis. Lori, Bluffton North, IN) and Sis. Ashton Bahler (Bro. Ed and Sis. Annette). It was a beautiful day and we rejoice with the couple and their families.

We were saddened to send off such a couple as Bro. Jason and Sis. Joy Huber (Gutwein) as they moved to Chicago, IL, for a job transfer. We trust this move is of the Lord and our thoughts and prayers go with them.

We had so many Brothers and Sisters visiting us this month and we are thankful for them all. We want to thank our Elder Bro. Curt Frank (Sis. Lyla), Bro. John Reinhard (Sis. Pam, Bluffton, IN), Bro. Jeff Neihouser (Sis. Sue, Francesville, IN), Bro. Kevin Knapp (Sis. Dixie, Bloomington-Normal, IL), Elder Bro. Rick Plattner (Sis. Mary Ann, Fairbury, IL) and Elder Bro. Steve Gutwein (Sis. Linda, Francesville, IN).

**INDIANA, WOLCOTT
Elaine Bahler
Lowell Bahler**

Now thank we all our God,
with heart and hands and voices;
Who wondrous things has done,
in whom the world rejoices.

Zion's Harp #236

With a safe and bountiful harvest behind us and a special Thanksgiving Day set aside by our

benevolent government, we surely do have much for which to be thankful, especially the love and mercies of our Lord and Saviour along with the marvelous gift of salvation.

Bro. Mark and Sis. Shari Schwab have announced the engagement of their daughter, Marissa, to Eric Bahler, son of Chris and Sis. Teresa. We wish them God's blessings in their forthcoming marriage.

Bro. Gene Lehman (Sis. Verna) is recuperating from surgery and has been grateful for the prayers and expressions of love shown to him throughout this time.

Our prayers and sympathies go out to Bro. Jon (Sis. Colleen) Jacoby in the recent loss of his father, Tom. May God's love and tender mercies serve to comfort now and in the days to come.

"...I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people."

Luke 2:10

We were blessed with good tidings as our Sunday School children and various singing groups brought forth the Christmas story in verse and song at our Christmas program. Again, we were reminded "'tis not the manger, but the cross, that sets the spirit free." (Hymns of Zion #36)

IOWA, BLOOMFIELD **Barbara Schock**

This month we've been blessed with being able to sing Christmas carols to those in the community, and sharing with them through the carols, the real meaning of Christ-

mas. We thank the Tremont Young Group for coming on December 9-10 to help us carol. May God bless each of those who made the effort to come and spend the weekend with us.

Consecrate me now to Thy service,
Lord,
By the pow'r of grace divine;
Let my soul look up with a steadfast hope,
And my will be lost in Thine.

Hymns of Zion # 170

Another year is upon us. Another year of service to our Lord and Savior. I oftentimes think of the times that the Lord will say "Go" and I say, "But..." and give a reason or rather an excuse as to why I can't do it, why it can't happen now or any other reason not to. God knows better than I what the future holds. Maybe this year, for my "New Year's Resolution" will be to more fully trust in the Lord and in His will. He has given us another year. Let us all be able to say "I am Thine, Oh Lord, I have heard Thy voice..."

IOWA, BURLINGTON **Krystal Knapp** **Laurie Schulz**

We were blessed with two visiting ministers this past month. Elder Bro. Jon Schmidgall and Bro. Dale Frank (Oakville, IA) both lended of themselves. We always appreciate their willingness to serve.

Shelby Louise joined the family of Bro. Gary and Sis. Melody Schulz. Thankful siblings are Sis. Julie Lanz (Bro. Steve), Bro. Philip (Sis. Kelli), Sis. Brenda, Sis. Laurie, Matthew, Jacob, Andrew,

Zachary, and Camille. Grandparents are Bro. Ezra and Sis. Marie Knobloch (Lester) and Bro. Myron and Sis. Dorothy Schulz (Oakville).

The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away. Little Jace Devin was with us for a short while here upon this earth. His parents, Bro. Jordan and Sis. Heidi Knapp (West Bend), are certainly in our prayers during this difficult time. Also in our prayers are grandparents, Bro. Brian and Sis. Lorna Knapp and Bro. Jim and Sis. Sharon Fehr (West Bend), as well as many other family and friends.

IOWA, ELGIN **Gloria Frieden** **Heidi Butikofer**

We begin the New Year with news of two births, one physical and one spiritual.

Adysen Janae Frieden was welcomed by her parents, Brian and Susie, and big brother, Trent, on December 4. Also welcoming Adysen are her grandparents, Bro. Floyd and Sis. Jan Frieden.

Melanie Stettler (Mark) gave her testimony of faith and was welcomed into the family of God and our fellowship on November 26. We welcome Melanie as our new sister in faith. But, as with us all, the battle isn't over and the victory is not yet won. As long as we remain on this earthly pilgrimage we will have the daily battles of the flesh against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh. But we are comforted to know that no cross or temptation is ever greater than God's grace.

After completing her schooling in Social Services, Sis. Abby Schupbach (Bro. John and Sis.

Janet) is now looking forward to graduation and the Lord's direction for employment. May God bless and direct her in this need.

We are thankful that Aaron Butikofer (Bro. Lon and Sis. Sandy) is able to have a two-week leave from Iraq to spend Christmas with his family. May God be with him throughout the remainder of his duty in Iraq.

As we embark upon another New Year, may we seek God's direction daily for our current needs and trust His perfect wisdom for the future.

IOWA, GARDEN GROVE **Willa Clark**

We finish the old year and move to a new one, and for some not much seems to change but the date. Yes, many make New Year resolutions, promising self-improvement in various ways. But those resolutions are weak if we try to accomplish them ourselves.

The only self-improvement is not really made by "self" but by God. It is only when we call on the strength of our powerful Savior that there is power to change the way we conduct our lives and treat those with whom we live and work every day. And the only New Year's resolutions that will make a difference in the way others see us are the ones that improve our relationships with God and with those about us.

We have been blessed by visits from Elder Bro. Gerry Hertzell (Sis. Ellen) and Bro. David Hartter (Sis. Beth) of Sabetha, Bro. Kevin Banwart (Sis. Sandy) of West Bend, and Bro. Joe Dotterer (Sis. Rose) of Bloomfield.

Our thanks to each who has visited and fellowshiped with us.

IOWA, IOWA CITY **Diana Butikofer**

We are thankful for another soul who has expressed her desire and decision to repent. Rebba Snodgrass (Bro. Wayne and Sis. Becky) has taken that early step of faith in her walk with the Lord and we pray that we can help and encourage one another as we walk together in His grace.

The Sunday School students presented us with Scripture and songs telling of our Lord's birth during our Christmas program. As they reminded us that day, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) Thanks to the teachers and students for the efforts they gave in reminding us of this truth.

We enjoyed two nights of caroling in mid-December. It's a blessing to be able to bring some joy to nursing home residents and staff and the others we sing to who may, or may not, otherwise hear the Gospel message.

IOWA, LESTER **Gloria Moser** **Polly Metzger**

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

Luke 2:11

We have two babies to welcome to Lester this month. Justus Paul was born November 18 to Bro.

Mark and Sis. Lee Leuthold. His sisters, Jenna and Ella, are excited to have a little brother. His grandparents are Bro. Bob and Sis. Cindy Leuthold. On December 14, Jackson James was born to Curt and Cathy Doorneweerd. Sharing in their joy are his grandparents, Bro. Butch and Sis. Kathy Doorneweerd.

On November 25, Jodi Metzger (Charlie and Linda) became the bride of Marty Swensen. May God bless them as they establish their home together. We are happy to share the engagement of Jeff Popkes (Sis. Eleanor) to Betty Ross. May God be near them as they make their wedding plans.

The weekend of December 2-3, Elder Bro. Art Nohl was here to assist Elder Bro. Dennis with the baptism of Paul Messner (Bro. Henry and Sis. Charlene). It is always a privilege to welcome souls into the fold.

We've had many visiting ministers and appreciate their time and efforts. Elder Bro. Doug Schock and Bros. Roy Koehl, Bruce Frank, Roger Aberle, Bernie Messner, Dean Messner, Pat Zaugg and Harvey Kuenzi were with us this past month. May God continue to grant them grace as they bring forth the Word.

Our prayers for God's healing continue to go with those who are in affliction. Our surgical patients are Sis. Beth (Bro. Tim) Feuchtenberger, Sis. Emma Gerber and Bro. Chuck (Sis. Vicki) Leuthold. Those spending time in the hospital were David Warner (Bro. Stan and Sis. Sue) and Sis. Emma Gerber. May they feel God's healing strength in each new day.

It is always with sadness, we bid

the last "farewell" to someone we love. We extend our heartfelt sympathy to Jerry and Deb Larson and family in the loss of his mother, Hazel Larson, of Sioux Falls, SD; Ray and Sis. Carol Cordrey, in the loss of her mother, Rosemary Armstrong, of Mansfield, OH; Bro. Jim and Sis. Lois Metzger and family, and Bro. Bill and Sis. Charlotte Metzger and family in the loss of their sister-in-law, Sis. Dorothy (Bro. Bob) Wagenbach, of Tremont, IL; and to Darrell and Laura Feucht and family and Bro. Dean and Sis. Diana Feucht, in the loss of their dear mother, our Sis. Emma Feucht. We always appreciated Sis. Emma's steadfast faith and her loving example. May God comfort and sustain each one in the lonely times ahead.

In this Christmas season and in the New Year ahead, may we continue to seek God's grace and accept His will, whatever it may be.

IOWA, OAKVILLE Sharla Wiegand

On Thanksgiving Day, Bro. Gary Endress (Bradford, IL) brought forth the Word. May God bless him for his labors on our behalf.

Have you taken it to Jesus?
Have you taken it to Jesus?
Have you left your burden there?
Does He tenderly support you?
Have you rolled on Him your care?

Oh, the sweet unfailing refuge
Of the everlasting arms;
In their loving clasp enfolded
Nothing worries or alarms.

Have you taken it to Jesus,
Just the thing that's pressing

now?

Are you trusting Him completely
With the when, and where, and
how?

Oh, the joy of full surrender
Of our life, our plans, our all;
Proving, far above our asking,
That God answers when we call.

Have you taken it to Jesus?
Tis the only place to go
If you want the burden lifted
And a solace for your woe.

Oh, the blessedness to nestle
Like a child upon His breast;
Finding ever, as He promised
Perfect comfort, peace, and rest.

—Mrs. E.L. Hennessy

IOWA, WEST BEND Sue Schneider Lori Skoglund

We were encouraged by hearing the testimonies of three loved ones, Paula Mogler (Bro. Chuck and Sis. Beth), Jason Banwart (Bro. Kent and Sis. Beth), and Laura Virkler (Bro. Andy and Sis. Becky). Here to assist our Elder Bro. Wayne with the responsibilities surrounding the baptism of these dear ones were Elder Bro. Wayne Banwart (Sis. Charlen, Champaign, IL) and Elder Bro. Lawrence Luthi (Sis. Sandra, Lamar, MO). Other ministering brothers that weekend were Bro. Wes Moser (Sis. Esther, Lester, IA), Bro. Myron Knoblock (Sis. Beth, Lester, IA), Bro. Dale Frank (Sis. Christine, Oakville, IA) and Bro. Kent Mogler (Sis. Mary, Minneapolis, MN). What a blessed weekend for friends and brethren alike.

It was a real privilege to be able to host the National World Relief meeting the first weekend in De-

ember. Many new acquaintances were made and old friendships renewed. Then we were further blessed with many visiting ministers on Sunday: Elder Bro. Ron Messner (Sis. Pam, Washington, IL), Elder Bro. Dan Kilgus (Sis. Jenna, Remington, IN), Bro. Steve Ringger (Sis. Myra, Bluffton, IN), Bro. Chuck Kellenberger (Sis. Debbie, Elgin, IL), Bro. Jerry Bauman (Sis. Martha, Rittman, OH) and Bro. Virgil Kaeb (Sis. Suellen, Sarasota, FL). Surely the Lord will reward all who willingly labor in His vineyard.

We have appreciated having Bro. Wayne Fehr (Sis. Kathy, Portland, OR) and Bro. Dan Moser (Sis. Anne, Elgin, IL) bring forth the Word in the past month also.

Bro. Kent (Sis. Beth) Banwart has undergone surgery in Rochester, MN, and is recuperating nicely at home. Bro. Kent and his family have felt the power of prayer.

We sympathize with Beth (Jeff) Fehr at the death of her brother, Dennis Anderson. May God comfort all those that grieve.

Our hearts were softened by the birth and death of little Jace Devin Knapp, son of Bro. Jordan and Sis. Heidi Knapp. Little Jace was born on December 11 and passed safely into the arms of Jesus nearly one day later. He is survived by his parents and grandparents, Bro. Jim and Sis. Sharon Fehr and Bro. Brian and Sis. Lorna Knapp of Burlington, IA, and many other relatives. Funeral services were held on December 18 with our local ministers officiating. Elder Bro. Curt Frank (Sis. Lyla, LaCrosse, IN) and Bro. Phil Schulz (Sis. Kelli, Burlington, IA) were among the visitors who came to support the

family. Jace's time on earth may have been short, but his life has affected the hearts and lives of many.

May the love and nearness of our Heavenly Father be felt by each of us throughout the new year.

JAPAN, SHIODA

Ayako Inoue

Greetings in our Savior's name.

We rejoice together at this season and thank our Lord for sending His dear Son, Jesus Christ. He gave His life to save us.

This month we had our yearly business meeting on December 3 and discussed about remodeling the church building. We pray for God's guidance as we decide things. Vicki Ramseyer from Bay City, MI, is visiting us and we are enjoying her. We have many special memories spending time with her. She still is very good at Japanese!

For our Christmas, we went caroling at the local hospital on December 17, and had our Christmas service on the 24th. In Japan this is the only time when people go to church and most people never go. We hope that many hearts will be touched and get to know the gospel. We got a thank you note from one patient in the hospital we went to sing to and she said it warmed her heart when she was in great despair since she had a stroke and is still paralyzed. Her card encouraged us and warmed out hearts, too.

We wish you God's blessings and guidance in the new coming year.

JAPAN, TOKYO

Jana Klaus

Traditionally, our church has

the special Christmas service and Christmas Program on the Sunday closest to Christmas, so this year it was the 24th. It was such a full and blessed Sunday! In the morning service it was brought out about "rejoicing in our salvation." It is written many times in Psalms, and then at the time of Christ's birth, many rejoiced for the coming of the long awaited Messiah — the Shepherds, the Wise men, Simeon, Anna, etc.

How wonderful we can continue this rejoicing down through the ages! In the afternoon, our Sunday School children presented songs and verses in both English and Japanese with the theme of "Having room in your heart for Jesus." Then, we enjoyed our usual big supper together. It was such a joy to see a full church with nearly all members present and even several new faces that day including some ladies who attend our monthly Ladies' Meeting and Sis. Urushino's husband. He kindly helped her get to church as her health has become unstable. We pray that all of us would have room in our hearts for Jesus and rejoice in His saving power!

We were also thankful that Miyagawa-san was able to come back from his hometown of Kyushu just in time to be with us for Christmas. He had been there for a couple of months helping his mother who had successful surgery for uterine cancer. Our prayers continue to be with her.

We had several guests in Tokyo this month, which is always a blessing. The Strahm family (Bern, KS), Bro. Brad, Sis. Michelle and their three children, Ryan, Joshua and Kate, were with us for our Christ-

mas Sunday. They are visiting her sister, Lynn Bennet and family, who have been living in Tokyo for 2 years. In mid December, Sis. Eiko Nozawa (Shioda) brought us Sis. Vicky Ramsier (Bay City), who is visiting Yamanashi for several weeks. After services, we enjoyed a slide presentation with them and several others, on Bro. Andrew Klaus' trip to Israel. He had been there for business and stayed on for a few days to tour. It was definitely the most moving tour for him of any other country he has ever visited, and we too, were moved by his presentation.

I mentioned last month about Bro. Yoshio Yamazaki having moved. His new address is: 1-15-1-101 Shibasaki, Chofu-shi, Tokyo 182-0014. Also, the Suzurikawa family had to move from their place which was just near our church. They found a new home in the city of Mitaka, about a 15 minute drive from church. We pray they will continue to make the effort to attend, as they have been such a blessing.

As the year is coming to a close, and by the time this is read it will be a new year. We thank all of you for your love, support and prayers for our churches here in Japan. We extend a warm welcome to any of you to come and visit. God bless you all!

KANSAS, BERN

Sheri Edelman

Rita Menold

We were thankful to greet Barry Stoller (Bro. Darrel and Sis. Gloria) and Myron Strahm (the late Bro. Dale and Sis. Shelby) as brothers in Christ on December 3. May God continue to lead them on this path

of life.

A special thank you is extended to Elder Bro. Lawrence Luthi (Sis. Sandra, Lamar, MO), Elder Bro. Doug Schock (Sis. Clara, Bloomfield-Pulaski, IA), Bro. Roger Aberle (Sis. Lavonne, Sabetha, KS) and Bro. Rex Frieden (Sis. Vera, Lamar, MO) for ministering to us this month. May God bless you for your labors!

Bro. Dominic and Sis. Jenny Meyer welcomed Landon Eugene into their family on December 12. Big sister Kenzie will be a great help! The thankful grandparents are Earl and Sis. Darlene Meyer and Bro. Don and Sis. Ada Plattner (Sabetha, KS).

Our annual Christmas caroling was held and enjoyed by all who were able to attend. What a blessing it is to sing praises to God Almighty.

Our hospital patient this month was Bro. Dennis Esslinger (Sis. Gerty). We pray for his complete healing.

Note of Thanks:

We want to express our heartfelt thanks for the many prayers, cards, food, flowers and memorials at the passing of our father and grandfather. We sorrow in his passing, but rejoice in his victory.

The Family of Joseph Rokey, Jr.

KANSAS, FORT SCOTT
Karen Kellenberger

“...weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.”

Psalm 30:5

Our dear 90-year old Sis. Mabel

(Hartman) Springer was laid to rest on December 18. She was “everybody’s grandmother” and will be sorely missed in our small congregation. Survivors include two daughters, Sis. Debbie Banwart and husband Bro. Lonnie, and Sis. Janice Braker Stoller and husband Bob, a brother, three sisters, fourteen grandchildren, and eighteen great-grandchildren.

We are always grateful for individuals moving into the area and assembling with us. We welcome Danielle Fischer, who is currently residing with her grandparents, Bro. Lyle and Sis. Lillian Fischer. Also welcomed is Robin Lemons, daughter of Bro. Robert and Sis. Betty Lemons.

It was recently made known that Jerod Leeks and Kimmy Byler are engaged to be married. We rejoice with them as they make plans for their future.

Bro. Wes Moser (Sis. Esther, Lester, IA) shared God’s Word with us. We are grateful for the message he presented to us as well as the loving fellowship he and his family provided.

A special weekend for Sis. Nicole Scott and for all of us was December 9-10 when she gave her heartwarming testimony of faith and was baptized. Present for this joyous occasion was Elder Bro. Kent Heimer (Sis. Jan, Taylor, MO) and Ft. Scott’s Elder Bro. John Lehman (Sis. Connie, Bern, KS). May Sis. Nicole always feel God’s presence and unfailing grace, as she joyfully shines her light to her family and all others.

It has truthfully been said, “Always forgive your enemies; nothing annoys them so much.” The Holy Word offers this advice on

how to treat our enemies: “Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirsts, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.” (Romans 12:20).

KANSAS, KIOWA
Janice Bahr
Jenny Stewart

Silent night, Holy night,
All is calm, all is bright.
Round yon virgin, mother and
child,
Holy infant, so tender and mild.
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, Holy night,
Son of God, love’s pure light.
Radiant beams from Thy holy face,
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus Lord at Thy birth,
Jesus Lord at Thy birth.

“Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance.”

Psalm 89:15

As we celebrated the birth of our Lord this month, we were truly blessed to have 41 young people fly and drive in from Indiana, Iowa, Ohio, Illinois, and Kansas, to join us for caroling and share in our Christmas program. Joyful sound? Oh, yes! And beauty beyond compare! We deeply appreciate the fact that these young people would take time out of their busy lives (not to mention expense) to share this beautiful Christmas celebration with our small congregation. May God richly bless each one for caring and for sharing!

We wish to extend our deepest love and sympathy to Sis. Marie Tucker and family, as they laid to rest Dale Tucker, their beloved husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather recently. Dale and Sis. Marie had just celebrated 58 years of marriage the week before his passing and at his deathbed were blessed to hear him say "I love you". May the God of all comfort grant them peace.

To all who took time out of a very busy December schedule to travel to Newton, KS, to work with the MCC, to package meat and other projects to be sent to those less fortunate, may God bless you!

Thought for the coming new year: "In all thy ways acknowledge him and he shall direct thy paths." (Proverbs 3:6)

**KANSAS
LAMONT-GRIDLEY
Eileen Bahr**

The Silver Lining news had just been sent in when the word came that the Lord had granted Sis. Bertha Beyer her wish to "go home to the Lord." I miss her phone call, "Can I bum a ride to church with you?"

Grandpa Bro. Max Burnham eagerly greeted me Sunday morning with "Are you still the correspondent?" Becky presented him with a new granddaughter, Tatum Davis Wernle, on December 8.

Our appreciation and thanks go to ministering Bros. Brandon Emch (Kansas City, MO) for Thanksgiving services and David Hartter (Sabetha, KS) for December 3.

December 5 a van load went to the Newton Mennonite Central

center to check and seal the boxes of meat for distribution. Thanks to the big group of men from Sabetha and Bern – they broke previous records. The ladies quilted or filled containers with personal grooming or school supplies.

The church delivered the annual Christmas gifts to the Hartford Home. December 10 the church caroling went to nursing homes and Sis. Dorothy Young's home at Emporia. A chili supper followed at Neosho Rapids.

The Sunday School (we only have about 7) plus some help from our young group and congregation sang Christmas carols at the hospital and Meadows Assisted Living in Burlington. Sis. Liseten Strahm just moved there to be closer to her children and we hope to see her "back in our congregation" when she is able. Her address is: 1201 Martindale St., Burlington, KS 66839.

**KANSAS, SABETHA
Rebekah Beyer
Dawn Strahm**

"O Come all Ye Faithful." Our all-church Christmas Caroling was held on December 3. Some of those visited were the Apostolic Christian Home (which included the West Village Apartments and the Assisted Living Apartments), Lakeside Terrace and various residences.

The Sunday School Christmas Program took place on Sunday, December 10. The Sunday school classes really put their heart into singing while the congregation and others enjoyed listening to the enthusiastic singers.

On December 17 the Sabetha ju-

nior and senior bible classes teamed up with the Bern junior and senior bible classes for a night of caroling. We are thankful that the students enjoy these activities and others can enjoy listening to them sing praises to God and remember our Lord and Saviour's birth.

Sis. Liseten Strahm moved to an assisted living establishment in the Burlington, Kansas, area so she can be closer to her family and attend the Lamont-Gridley congregation. We will miss her presence in church and wish her well in her move.

Our congregation began Wednesday night services on November 29. Services are rotated weekly between the Bern and Sabetha congregations from Fall to Spring.

Sis. Charlotte Aberle (Bro. Fred) has spent some time in the hospital recently. Our prayers go out to her during this time of ill health.

**KANSAS, WICHITA
Emma Miller**

On Thanksgiving weekend our small assembly was strengthened by two carloads of visitors from the Princeville, IL, area. They were in Wichita to attend a family function and chose to stay and worship with us. This is another example of how we can put the results of the small church survey into practice. Elder Bro. Jay and Sis. Jane Luthi worshipped with us on the following weekend.

Several from the Wichita congregation were able to join others from the Kansas churches at Newton at the MCC work center on December 5. The 23 men present

packed boxes of meat and loaded them on three semis. Their efforts were considered record breaking.

As is our custom in December, Wednesday nights are devoted to caroling in the homes of shut-ins. The children are included and their enthusiasm is a joy to behold. We can expect the same effort from them when they present the Christmas program this coming Sunday.

Our congregation has much reason to be in prayer, interceding for Bro. Max Reimchisel who was hospitalized in Springfield, MO, after experiencing a heart attack. He and Sis. Judy were joining other family members for a short reunion when he was smitten. I received a call this evening telling me that Max should be released to return to his home this Sunday, December 17.

KENTUCKY, LEXINGTON **Barb Huber**

How grateful we are for our ministers who give of themselves to share the Word of God. This past month, we had Bro. Brian Huber (Sis. Jacki, Francesville, IN), Bro. Mike Baumann (Sis. Lilly, Mansfield, OH), and Bro. Tim Gerber (Sis. Wendy, Mansfield, OH). We want to thank these dear Brothers for their words of exhortation and spiritual teachings. May the Lord bless you, your dear families and all who traveled with you. You truly made the Lord's Day a blessed time of fellowship.

It was a "joy" to minister to others the "Good News" of our dear Saviour's birth through Christmas caroling in December. We felt blessed as we sang at the nursing

home and for other shut-in's in our community.

"Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest"

Joshua 1:9

What an encouragement this verse has been as we have said "farewell" to our dear loved ones, Bro. Jan and Sis. Glenda Neukomm, who moved to Morton, IL. Over the years they have helped and served faithfully in our small church. We did so appreciate their support and have many precious memories of their labors of love. Their fellowship and service will be deeply missed; however, we still look forward to their visits back to Lexington. May God's special blessings rest upon them and their dear family.

As we stand on the brink of another year, Joshua 1:9 also provides courage. Let us remember, as God spoke to Joshua, He will be with us and lead us along as we journey through 2007.

We again extend a warm welcome to all who may be in our area or traveling through to worship with us. You may contact Bro. Doug Germann (859) 224-8710 or Bro. Lester Huber (859) 745-2541.

MEXICO, IXTLAN **Claudia Gonzalez**

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

Matthew 1:21

Greetings dear ones in our Saviour's name! As Christmas time is approaching, we are getting ready to celebrate the birth of our Saviour. The Sunday School teachers are preparing the children for the Christmas program that will take place on December 24. The Young Group is making piZatas which is traditional here in Mexico. The Sunday School classes and the Young Group sing songs in front of church. After that, we have a sermon about the birth of Jesus Christ. Then we have a potluck meal since every family brings something different to share. Finally, we break the piZatas by groups according to their age. The piZatas have candies and sometimes fruit in them so you can see happy faces and pockets full of candy!

May the Lord give us grace to have prepared hearts with room and good will for our Lord, not only on Christmas, but always.

MEXICO, MAGDALENA **Gloria Gonzalez** **Carissa Schlipf**

Saludos de amor en el nombre de Cristo, nuestro Salvador!

"And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Matthew 25:40

The fourth week of November we were blessed to have a work team from Denver, CO, and Altadena, CA. During the week,

they continued work on the foundation of the first home and many other projects. Thank you to all for your hard work and interaction with our children! We are encouraged when we see the enjoyment that the children receive from the relationships that are formed as groups come to visit. We also appreciate Elder Bros. Mike Leman (Sis. Deb, Denver, CO) and Tom Klotzle (Sis. Jody, Altadena, CA), who shared God's Word with us on that Wednesday night.

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

Luke 15:10

November 25 and 26, we rejoiced to hear how the Lord has worked in the life of a dear soul, convert Ruth Duarte, and to witness her subsequent baptism. We praise God for her example to others in our congregation, especially as this was our first baptism of an individual from the local community. With much thankfulness to God we welcome her as a sister in our church family. We also were especially thankful that Elder Bro. Mike was able to stay to officiate this special weekend, willingly using his talent in the Spanish language.

"Entrad por sus puertas con acción de gracias, Por sus atrios con alabanza; Alabadle, bendecid su nombre."

Psalms 100:4

We counted it a tremendous blessing to have over 100 people with us to share in our

Thanksgiving dinner this year. Looking back over the past year, we have so much to be thankful for!

The first of December we hosted a young group ("jovenes") event as an outreach to the older children at CVE and the youth in our community. Praise God, almost thirty young people from the community were in attendance! We enjoyed an evening of fellowship, singing, food, and games.

We are prayerful as God has opened doors for us to begin our independent living program off-campus. Saturday, December 2, after an afternoon of painting, two young women, orphans who are too old to live at the orphanage and yet without the support of family, moved into a little house in Magdalena. Please be prayerful for the future of this program as we strive to meet the needs presented to us.

We appreciate the willingness of Bro. Nile Bucher (Sis. Phyllis, Bluffton North) to share the Gospel message with our congregation the weekend of December 9 and 10. We pray that the seeds sown could fall on good soil, take root, and grow!

We look forward with anticipation to the coming holidays and the opportunity to share with our Magdalena community the birth of Jesus, God's greatest gift to all of us!

"That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations."

Psalms 67:2

MICHIGAN, ALTO

Rose Watson

Terri Huber

We have been enjoying fellowship and the opportunity to "do for others" at our Fall World Relief Family Nights. We have been packing dried rice pilaf and soup mixes for local needs and abroad. Even the very youngest children can help! In addition, we had a good turnout for packing shoeboxes to help make Christmas more joyful for the less fortunate. Again, the children do much of the work, and we packed even more than last year.

Those who underwent surgery or illness last month need our prayers. They include Bro. Joe Oesch (Sis. Melva) and Sis. Michele Blough (Bro. Martin).

As the year moves along, we enter the time for remembering Christ's birth. Christmas caroling for the elderly and shut-ins was a blessing for singers and hearers, alike. The Sunday School Christmas program drew an overflow crowd. The songs, some familiar and some new to us, told of the Christ-child, the angels proclaiming His birth, and how we should all "go, tell it!". The pieces and scripture memorized and recited told of the birth of baby Jesus, of His coming, and of His coming again. We are so glad that the children want to tell us all about Jesus: the baby and our Saviour.

Our church rejoices with Donna and Bro. Wally Gerst as their son, Bro. Jake, is engaged to Sis. Mieka Monfre of Goodfield, IL. We wish them God's rich blessings.

The angels are rejoicing that Lisa Zaagman has peace with God and man. Her parents are Ed and

Joy Zaagman. We wish her God's blessings, also.

MICHIGAN, BAY CITY
Sarah Knochel
Janelle Ramseyer

December 17 was our Sunday School Christmas Program. It was a nice evening as we were able to see and hear the young and tender hearts share their songs about Jesus, His birth in a manger, His life, and His death on the cross.

Bro. Dean Pashak (Sis. Connie) and Sis. Margaret Schlatter both had surgery this past month. We are thankful that they are feeling better and we continue to pray for their health to be restored.

We continue to pray for Sis. Rebekah and Bro. Chad Wieland. Sis. Rebekah developed some complications during her pregnancy and their baby was born prematurely. Little Tess Elaine is welcomed by her thankful parents and grandparents, Bro. Glenn and Sis. Maria Ruegsegger and Bro. Merle and Sis. Elaine Wieland. We sincerely pray that the Lord's will would be done and that He would be near Sis. Rebekah and baby Tess as they are restored to full health.

It is so hard to believe that it is almost 2007. It seems like it was just a few weeks ago that we were anticipating the arrival of 2006. What a powerful reminder of how quickly our lifetime will go by.

MICHIGAN, DETROIT
Tiffany Wieland
Kay Rauhe

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder:

and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."

Isaiah 9:6

As we set aside time this season to remember the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ, our congregation always looks forward to the Sunday School Christmas program. So often, our adult lives, with the various responsibilities and duties that come with them, can get so busy and distracting that we can so easily neglect the child-like faith and enthusiasm that we once knew as children. What a humbling reminder it can be to see the happiness and joy on the faces of our Sunday School students as they sing of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, coming to Earth as a mortal man to bring us salvation. May we always cherish this most precious gift of salvation, and how grateful we can be for the many opportunities we have this time of year – Christmas Caroling, time with our families, and sharing our material wealth with those in need – that help us to refocus on the person of Jesus Christ.

We are thankful that Angie Gasser (Bro. Randy and Sis. Sue) has the testimony of that peace which passes all understanding and now desires to be baptized. We want to encourage her as she continues to strive to grow in grace, and, Lord willing, we look forward to hearing Angie and Dan Coughlin's testimonies next month. We will continue to keep them and all of our converts in our prayers.

This month, Bro. Doug Harmon of our Toledo congregation traveled to the Detroit area on a Tues-

day evening to give services for the residents at our Woodhaven facility. Accompanying Bro. Doug for the evening were Bro. Gale and Sis. Janet Stoller, Bro. Howard Harmon, and Sis. Jill Maibach. We want to thank them for their willingness to spend their evening here, and we appreciate the support that the Toledo congregation and our other Michigan congregations lend to the Woodhaven ministry.

We also want to remember those that are suffering from various health complications. This past month, Sis. Linda Shaw spent some time in the hospital, and we're glad that she is able to attend services with us again.

We want to congratulate Joe Kondratek, fiancé to Trisha Hitz (Bro. Tom and Sis. Cindy), as he graduates from Michigan State University. We wish them God's direction as they consider the next phase of their lives.

"Come and behold Him, born the King of angels. O come, let us adore Him: Christ the Lord."

MINNESOTA
MINNEAPOLIS
LaRae Dill

"He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; He shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young."

Isaiah 40:11

This, and the succeeding scriptures listed, are found in Handel's Messiah, which depicts the life of Jesus Christ through music. Han-

del's music, written through divine inspiration provides much spiritual renewal, especially during the Christmas season. Our own congregation was inspired by the annual Christmas program as presented by the Sunday School students on December 10. It's always good to see retired Elder Bro. Leroy Messner here for this event. We also appreciated the ministry and visit of Bro. Joe Klotzle (Altadena, CA). Bro. Joe and Sis. Sue were on their way home from the West Bend, IA, World Relief board meeting, and we're thankful they could spend time here.

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

Romans 10:15

Bro. Jeff Reinhard will be missed as he has relocated to Denver, CO. His cheerful personality and singing ability were certainly an asset. Sis. Amy Moser (Peoria, IL) was a welcome guest for several weeks as she received medical treatment in the area. We enjoyed her fellowship so much!

Sis. Arletta Bragg was a surgical patient this month. We wish her well during her recovery and healing period.

"...for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."

I Corinthians 15:52,53

Sis. Ethel Bednarski submitted this note of thanks, as well as a

poem on behalf of her grandchildren and great-grandchildren in memory of her daughter, Karla Fisher:

"I want to thank each and every one for all the prayers, support, and gifts of love shown to us during the illness and loss of my dear daughter, Karla Fisher. May the Lord bless each and every one of you."

In Christian love, Sis. Ethel Bednarski

Grandmother Poem

My Grandma is an angel now
Way up in the sky
I miss her lots but yet I know
That I don't need to cry.
Cause heaven is a special place
And it needs Grandmas too,
To kiss the baby angels' face
When one of them is blue.
They wash the angels' dishes
And bake the angels' bread
And shine the stars up in the sky
And make sure the angel kids are fed.

So when God needed a Grandma,
He looked around for the best
So he chose my Grandma
Over all the rest.

So if your Grandma goes to
heaven,

There's no need to be sad
Cause she's an angel Grandma
now

And that should make you glad.

"The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever....And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth....King of Kings, and Lord of Lords."

Revelation 11:15, 19:6, 19:16

MINNESOTA, MORRIS
Sheila Reuter
Heidi Nohl

Our congratulations are with our Sis. Dianne Kellenberger on the birth of her grandchildren, Alexis Rose and Jacob Thomas. Alexis' parents are Eric and Janae Wilson and Jacob's parents are Rick and Michele Kellenberger. We pray God will bless them as they raise their children.

We rejoice with Annie Messner (Bro. Bernie and Sis. Joyce) and Virgil Sauder (Mildred) as they have found grace to repent. We pray God will be near them as they begin this new walk with Him.

Hospitalized this month was Virgil Sauder (Mildred). We pray God's healing hand will be upon him and he can assemble with us soon.

Note of Thanks:

A sincere thank you to all my friends and family for making my 90th birthday a perfect day. God bless!

Sis. Thelma Dogotch

MINNESOTA, WINTHROP
Rachel Steiner
Julie Schmidt

Elder Bro. Bill Schlatter (Sis. Emily, Junction, OH) came to assist our Elder Bro. Paul Messner with the reading of the Memorandum. We're thankful for their service to us and their labors of love for us as a church body.

Our sympathy and prayers go to Sis. Lois (Bro. Marlyn) Messner and Sis. Joyce (Bro. Mike) Messner in the loss of their father, Herbert

Boelter, from Gaylord who passed away on Thanksgiving Day. Our overnight hospital patient this month was little Garret Schmidt (Bro. Nick and Sis. Julie). We're grateful for his quick recovery.

Glory to God in the highest!
In remoteness and near by us
Ruleth He with might and grace.
Let us bring our thanks and
praise!

Let us bring our thanks and
praise!

Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
Zion's Harp #9, vs. 1

What a joy to spread the Good News of Christ's birth as we sing Christmas carols during this season. We were able to sing to our area nursing home residents on Sunday, December 10, and then gather together for a potluck supper at the Fellowship Center.

MISSOURI, LAMAR
Mindy Braker
Becky Marti

"Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."
Matthew 18:3

We rejoice that Amanda Schmidgall (Bro. Larry and Sis. Marcy) and Heidi Stoller (Bob and Sis. Janice) have answered this call and are seeking the Lord in repentance.

Bro. Michael and Sis. Kristi Huber were blessed with a son, Eli Jacob, born on November 22. Laura, Seth and Emily welcomed him home. Grandparents are Bro. Raymond and Sis. Violet Luthi and Bro. Gary Huber (Eureka, IL) and

Karen Huber (Peoria, IL).

Hospitalized for knee surgery was Sis. Corrine Marti (Bro. Dale). We are thankful she is home and recovering.

We extend our sympathy to Bob and Sis. Janice Stoller and family. Sis. Janice's mother, Sis. Mabel Springer (Ft. Scott, KS), was called out of this life on December 13.

MISSOURI, ST. LOUIS
Betsy Schrenk

Bro. Tom Schambach (Sis. Connie, Elgin, IL) and Bro. Don Gudeman (Sis. Mary, LaCrosse, IN) were our recent visiting ministers. We thank them for their willing service and loving fellowship.

Nora Ann Miller is the newest grandchild of Bro. Loren and Sis. Betsy Schrenk, born December 10 to Josh and Rachel Miller of Quakertown, PA. Her big sister is Madeline. Psalm 128:6 "Yea, thou shalt see thy children's children...."

"Temptation often enters through a door left open." This thought-provoking quote, told to us recently (source unknown), seems to tie in with thoughts from a recent sermon. We read Mark 5, in which the woman with the issue of blood was healed by touching Christ's garment. He felt virtue go out of Him. Christ healed so many, and got tired. He was restored through prayer and sleep. He modeled for us how to regain our strength, to pray and rest to prepare for each day. We know we are more vulnerable when we are tired or lonely or discouraged. Each morning we can intentionally close the door, bolt it even, to protect our heart and mind, to keep temptation

out.

MISSOURI, TAYLOR
Sally Haerr

"Tell Me the Story of Jesus" (Tabernacle Hymns #197). We sang this hymn in church this past Sunday and it occurred to me what a perfect "Christmas Carol" it is. It tells His story from the cradle to the grave as well as the greatest triumph ever, His resurrection!

Elder Bro. John Lehman and Sis. Connie (Bern, KS) spent Thanksgiving here with their family. It is always a blessing to our congregation to hear him speak God's Word.

The Sunday School Christmas program was held December 17. "Out of the mouth of babes Thou ordained strength..." (Psalms 8:2). The children told us of Jesus' birth with excitement and power. What a personal blessing it is for each child to be taught the true meaning of Christmas.

This year for our all-church Christmas caroling we went to the "Veterans Home". These men and women deserve our time and attention for the sacrifices they have made and still are making to keep our country safe. A blessing we so easily take for granted. Just a "thank you" means so much to them, young and old alike.

Retired Elder Bro. Roy Grimm and Sis. Dona were asked to go to India to observe and encourage those that carry out the Lord's work there. Upon their return we were privileged to see their photos and hear of their experiences. How blessed we are to live in a country that allows us freedom to worship a true and living God. We need to

pray that our government will continue to honor this long-standing right.

There is a special time of reflection at the death of a loved one. Especially when it is one of our parents. They invest so much time, love and prayer in shaping and molding us into a person useful in God's service. Sis. Jan Heimer (Elder Bro. Kent) has recently said farewell to her dear Mom, Sis. Ruth Ann Hodel (Bro. Ben, dec.), of Roanoke, IL. We wish Sis. Jan much comfort in precious memories and God's "heart-healing" power.

Those sick/hospitalized this month were: Clint Sutter (Bro. Steve and Sis. Deb) and Bro. Kenny Knapp (Sis. Phyllis). We pray for special healing for each one.

NEW YORK CROGHAN-NAUMBURG Hope Graves

We were happy to hear of the baptism of our new Sis. Laura Virkler, who moved to Iowa with her family this past summer. We certainly miss them but are glad to know that they are all doing well in their new home. Moving away more recently was our dear Sis. Carolyn Virkler. Sis. Carolyn now resides in Longview Village in Connecticut where she can be closer to her family. We have certainly missed her and wish her well in this new chapter of her life. Sis. Carolyn's new address is: Longview Village - Apt. 21, 34 Middle Butcher Road, Ellington, CT 06029.

Recovering from surgery are Bro. John Rauhe and Bro. Floyd Graves Jr. Our prayers continue for their increased strength each

day.

The many blessings of the Christmas season are once more upon us! We read in Isaiah 9:6, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." What a powerful verse to remind us of the many roles God's Son Jesus plays in our life. May we always allow him free reign in our hearts, minds and souls, for what better gift could anyone have given us? And, God's Word tells us that the best is yet to come! Let us then continue to worship Him on earth, so that we can meet Him in heaven.

We have found many ways to worship Him here at this Christmas season, caroling on several occasions: the Country Manor on the 9th; Lewis County General Hospital and Residential Healthcare Facility on the 15th; and East Road Adult Home and Steeple View on the 17th. Our Sunday School Christmas program was also a blessing to listen to after church on the 17th. It always amazes me how much more like little children we need to be! Even Jesus spoke, "Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me." Mark 9:37. May He bless the parents that so faithfully bring their children to church each Sunday. They are such a joy!

OHIO, AKRON Mara Henico Rachel Pamer

We had a blessed weekend in

hearing the testimonies and witnessing the baptisms of our new Bro. Brian Demrovsky, Sis. Colleen Demrovsky (both Bro. Andy and Sis. Vera), and Sis. Melissa Ordogh (Bro. Peter and Sis. Elvira). We thank Elder Bro. Andy Stoller and Elder Bro. Mark Masters for assisting our Elder Bro. Dave Graf in this work. We also thank Bro. Mike Bauman for his willingness to serve us in the ministry that weekend as well.

Jodi and Andy Lovell along with big sister Ava welcomed home a new baby girl, Mia Faith. Mia's grandparents are Bro. Fred and Sis. Eva Grawunder.

OHIO, COLUMBUS Nancy Banks

We would like to thank our visiting ministers, Elder Bro. Mark Masters (Mansfield, OH), Bro. Tony Manz and Bro. Sam Schlatter (Junction, OH), Bro. Vic Bauman (Smithville, OH) and Bro. Jerry Bauman (Rittman, OH) for sharing the Word with us this month. We appreciate their willingness to be used in the Lord's service.

What a joy to watch our Sunday school children tell the story of the birth of Jesus in our Christmas program. Our hearts were uplifted to watch their smiles and excitement to sing their precious songs.

The Columbus church would like to wish all a very Happy and Blessed New Year. We have so much to be thankful for as our congregation has been blessed with new babies, new converts and baptisms within our fellowship this year. "Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

OHIO, JUNCTION**Cindy Schlatter**

With much rejoicing in our hearts we report that our friend, Alan Manz (Bro. Paul and Sis. Sandra), has turned his heart to the Lord in humble repentance. It sure brings gladness to our hearts to be reassured once again that God continues to hear and answer our prayers. Our prayer continues for our dear friends to surrender themselves to the Lord while the door of grace is still open.

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

St. John 14:27

This wonderful gift of peace has been felt by Brenda Manz (Bro. Ken and Sis. Gwen). We look forward to hearing her testimony some time in the future.

Bro. Ken and Sis. Gwen Manz welcome Julia Christine into their family circle. She is the newborn daughter of Bro. Marvin and Sis. Jennifer Manz of our Latty, OH, congregation.

We are thankful our Heavenly Father watched over Bro. Sam Manz (Sis. Shelby) during his recent appendectomy. Our God in Heaven sure is far above us in how He can make our bodies heal so miraculously. May we ever be grateful for the blessing of good health.

OHIO, LATTY**Amanda Steffen****Carmen Eisenmann**

We were blessed to have several

visiting ministers this month. They were Elder Bro. Curt Frank (Sis. Lyla, Lacrosse, IN), Bro. Lucas Frank (Sis. Crystal, Detroit, MI), Bro. Dan Stoller (Sis. Deb, Remington, IN), Bro. Bill Waibel (Sis. Carol, Bay City, MI), Bro. Alfred Bahler (Sis. Frances, Wolcott, IN), and Bro. Jerry Bauman (Sis. Martha, Rittman, OH). What a blessing it is to have faithful brothers come and preach the Truth.

We were privileged to hear the testimony and then witness the baptism of Bro. Caleb Stoller (Bro. Bill and Sis. Barb) on November 26. We were also thankful for Sis. Kristy Graf (Bro. Bob and Sis. Joan) as she was able to give her testimony and then be baptized on December 10. We pray that God will be near these two dear souls as they continue to walk with Him.

We pray God's blessings will be with Bro. Darren Eisenmann (Bro. Bill and Sis. Carol) as he was announced to be engaged to Sis. Brittany Gudeman (Bro. Randy and Sis. Becky, Francesville, IN). May they feel God's peace and joy as they plan for their marriage.

Our prayers are extended to Bro. Jim Gerber (Sis. Marge) at the passing of his brother, Bro. Jim Gerber, from the Bluffton North congregation. We also want to remember the family of Bro. Alvin Klopfenstein as he went home to be with the Lord. Our prayers go out to his wife, Sis. Ellen, and their children, Bro. Wayne (Sis. Carol), Sis. Ruth (Bro. Craig) Stoller, Joyce, Bro. Lee (Sis. Desma), and Bro. Roy (Deb).

November 18 was the wedding day for Jason Hull and Alicia Rager. Her parents are Bro. Curt and Sis. Denise Rager and his par-

ents are Phil and Janet Hull. Seth Wenninger and Casey Hartsock were married on November 25. Seth's parents are Bro. Larry and Sis. Joyce Wenninger and Casey's parents are Robin McCord and Rick Critchfield. We wish both of these couples God's richest blessings as they begin their lives together.

We have several new babies to report. Bro. Marvin and Sis. Jennifer Manz welcomed home Julia Christine on December 12. Her siblings are Lauren, Levi, Owen, and Emily. Grandparents are Bro. Dwight and Sis. Lori Stoller and Bro. Ken and Sis. Gwen Manz (Junction, OH). Brady Derek was born to Derek and Kim Miller. He is welcomed home by his big sister, Anna. Grandparents are Bro. Ray and Sis. Carol Stoller and Dennis and Janet Miller. November 16 was the birthday for Tyson Richard born to Shawn and Sis. Shane Gerber. His older sister and brother are Kalin and Nathan. Grandparents are Bro. Rod and Sis. Ede Laukhuf and Bob and Connie Gerber. Zavier Quinn was born to Seth and Casey Wenninger on October 13. May each of these couples feel God's love and nearness as they raise their families.

Hospital patients this month included Bro. Dwight (Sis. Lori) Stoller, Sis. Dorothy (Bro. Wayne) Stoller, Sis. Sally Stoller, and Sis. Brenda (Bro. Bill) McClure. We pray God will give them healing according to His perfect will.

OHIO, MANSFIELD**Esther Baumann**

On November 19, it was announced that Justin Miller (Bro.

Roger and Sis. Dorina) has received God's perfect peace. We rejoice with him and his family.

The funeral service for Sis. Lucille Groh was held on December 2. We remember her many years as a faithful example.

Continue to pray for our recently hospitalized patients: Lynette Rau (Mark) and Sis. Elizabeth Ramsey (Bro. John Sr. and Sis. Dawn).

On the evening of December 10, we delighted in hearing the voices of our Sunday School children in their annual Christmas program. We pray for each of these precious tender souls.

Our annual business meeting was held in December. Bro. Chuck Beer's (Sis. Tammy) term as Trustee expired; he was replaced by Bro. Nathaniel Ramsey (Sis. April). Sis. Tammy Beer (Bro. Chuck) is replacing Sis. Tami Griffey (Bro. Chad) on the Kitchen Committee. Sis. Dawn Ramsey (Bro. John Sr.) leaves our Local World Relief Committee as Sis. Julie Webel (Bro. Jeff) was elected. Bro. John Ramsey Jr. (Bro. John Sr. and Sis. Dawn) was elected as our new usher as Bro. Nathaniel Ramsey's (Sis. April) term is complete. Bro. Wilbur Gerber (Sis. Millie) finishes his term as Church Secretary; Bro. Mark Rufener (Sis. Julie) replaces him. Bro. Stephen Domka (Sis. Brenda) was again elected as Head Song Leader. Bro. Nathaniel Ramsey (Sis. April) replaces Bro. Jared Keever (Sis. Abbey) as World Relief Treasurer. Sis. Esther Baumann has accepted another term as Silver Lining Correspondent. We thank all for their service this past year.

He holds the key of all unknown,
And I am glad;...
For what I cannot, He can see,
And in His care I safe shall be,
Forever blest...

Gospel Hymns #399

As the New Year unfolds, let us trust God implicitly and be thankful He holds the key to all unknown.

OHIO, RITTMAN
Sarah Bauman
Hannah Beery

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

As another year unfolds, may we find ample reasons to sing about that special day of gladness. Truly, again, the Lord has afforded us many opportunities to bless His name in our Rittman congregation!

On November 29, Bro. Aaron and Sis. Debra Gasser welcomed Lily Faith into their family. Older siblings of Lily are Kayla, Charity, Brittany and Josiah, and thankful grandparents are Bro. Virgil and Sis. Lois Gasser and Bro. Kenneth and Sis. Jane Hartzler (Smithville, OH).

Bro. Peter and Sis. Laura Bodrogi rejoice in the birth of their daughter, Laura, on December 2. She joins her siblings, Benjamin, Rebeka and Peter. Grandparents are Bro. Steven and Sis. Karen Ramsier.

Bro. Dean and Sis. Jan Hartzler shared their news of a grandchild, Grace Lillian, born to the family of Bro. Eric and Sis. Jami Hartzler (Sardis, OH) on December 6. Older sister Leah can now have a playmate in years to come. Other thankful grandparents are Bro. Gary and Sis. Terry Zollinger (Sardis, OH).

Haley Jill was born on December 7 to Bro. Joel and Sis. Katrina Steiner. Allison and Ashley are her older sisters, and grandparents are Bro. Matthew and Sis. Gail Steiner and Bro. Daniel and Sis. Diane Gasser.

The family of Ryan and Jill Butler announced the arrival of their first child on December 7. Scarlett Elizabeth is the new grandchild of Bro. Arthur and Sis. Bonnie Ingold.

The Bro. Ryan and Sis. Laura Riggerbach family has added another member in the birth of Wyatt David on December 10. He is joyfully received by older sibling, Owen, and grandparents, Bro. Donald and Sis. Gail Riggerbach (Smithville, OH) and Bro. Richard and Sis. Patricia Steiner.

Bro. Marvin and Sis. Sue Hartzler added the 8th child to their nest in the birth of Sage Thomas on December 9. He was eagerly awaited by siblings, Mason, Baylor, Tory, Kya, Bennett, Rustin and Ariel. Grandparents are Bro. Vincent and Sis. Jane Hartzler and Sis. Irma (Bro. Millard, dec.) Stoller (Latty, OH).

Molly Rose was born on December 12 to Kurt and Kelly Gasser as their first child. Grandparents are Bro. Daniel and Sis. Diane Gasser and Sis. Nancy Bauman.

On the weekend of November

19, four young people gave their testimony and were baptized. Bro. Myles Rufener (Bro. Dan and Sis. Karen), Bro. Jared Bauman (Sis. Nancy), Sis. Stacy Bauman (Sis. Nancy) and Sis. Anna Bauman (Bro. Jerry and Sis. Martha) were welcomed as members into the brotherhood. Our congregation rejoiced together as these four promised life-long faithfulness to our Lord and Saviour.

The engagement of Sis. Bethany Dotterer (Bro. Robert and Sis. Mardel) to Bro. Jon Ringger (Bro. Steve and Sis. Myra, Bluffton North, IN) was made known to our congregation on November 19. As souls are united in Holy Matrimony, we trust they will strive to be a strength to our precious brotherhood.

We deeply appreciated the many visiting ministering brothers we had this month. They were Elder Bro. Kenneth Indermuhle (Sardis, OH), Elder Bro. David Graf (Akron, OH), Bro. Ronald Palitto (Akron, OH), Bro. Don Steidl (Akron, OH), Bro. Paul Gasser (Akron, OH) and Bro. Ted Luginbuhl (Smithville, OH). We continue to be thankful for their willing efforts and presence in our congregation.

Sis. Brenda Zollinger (Bro. Rudolph), Sis. Mary Ellen Saylor (Bro. William), Sis. Mary Jane Winkler (Bro. Andrew), Bro. Ralph Weber, Evelyn Hessidence (Roger) and Drew Hanzie (Tim and Sis. Kim) spent time in the hospital recently. May God daily provide for each of their needs.

OHIO, SARDIS Eric and Jami Hartzler

The blessed story of the Christ,
The babe of Bethlehem,
Is worthy of our song and praise,
And stirs the hearts of men.
The fullness of God's love divine,
Surrounds the Christ so mild
Alas, how many only know
The Saviour as a child.

Hymns of Zion #36

Our congregation was privileged to hear the blessed story of the Christ and His birth here on earth through the voices of our Sunday School students during our Christmas program on Sunday, December 10. The older classes especially made an effort to remind us that it was not the manger, but the cross that sets the spirit free.

We rejoice for the birth of another child in our congregation as Grace Lillian was born to Bro. Eric and Sis. Jami Hartzler. Leah enjoys having a baby sister and Bro. Dean and Sis. Jan Hartzler (Rittman, OH) and Bro. Gary and Sis. Terry Zollinger enjoy another granddaughter.

"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;"

Psalms 103:2-3

Our praise and thanks to the Great Physician as Bro. Dale Rigggenbach (Sis. Virginia) has returned home and is able to assemble and worship with us again after requiring surgery and hospitalization.

OHIO, SMITHVILLE Edith Miller Ruth Gasser

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

O Lord may it be pleasing,
Though oft on Thee we call;
Thy mercy we are pleading, pleading,
Thy grace be with us all!
Zion's Harp #134

As we look toward another year, how comforting to be able to rely on God's grace in all of life's uncertainties. And we are thankful for those who minister the Word to us in simplicity and humility. We appreciate the recent visit of Bro. Marvin Dotterer (Forrest, IL) as he has lent himself to share God's Word.

We often seek an extra measure of grace for those in sickness and hard times. Those who needed hospital care this month were Sis. Betty Dotterer (Bro. John) and Sis. Alyssa Miller (Bro. Brian).

We extend our sympathy to Sis. Kyra Klopfenstein in the loss of her grandfather, Bro. Alvin Klopfenstein, and to Marlene Blackford in the loss of her husband, Roy.

Bro. Don and Sis. Gail Rigggenbach have experienced joy as grandparents when Wyatt David joined the family of Bro. Ryan and Sis. Laura Rigggenbach (Rittman, OH).

OHIO, TOLEDO**Teresa Rywalski
Rebecca Beard**

Visiting us on the pulpit this month were our Elder Bro. Bill Schlatter (Sis. Emily, Junction, OH) and Bro. Mark Ramsier (Sis. Alice, Sardis, OH). We trust God will be their Rewarder.

Sis. May Fetter was called home to be with her Savior. She is survived by her brother, Bro. Gene Fetter (Sis. Marilyn, Bern, KS), and sister-in-law, Sis. Betty Fetter, and many nieces and nephews.

Our prayers are with Bev Schlatter as she has finished her college education. May God guide her as she begins the next step in life.

As the new year is upon us, may we always look to God for guidance.

OREGON, PORTLAND**Brianna Strahm**

Our visiting ministers this month were Bros. Ed Knecht (Sis. Judie) and Harvey Kuenzi (Sis. Jennifer), both of our Silverton congregation. We appreciate the labors of these brethren.

On Saturday, December 9, our congregation enjoyed an afternoon of caroling at three local nursing homes. We then assembled at church for an all-church potluck. We were truly blessed as we remembered our Saviour's birth through the hymns we sang.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Bro. Ray Moser (Sis. Barb) in the recent passing of his sister, Eleanor Stalter, of Trivoli, IL. May the Lord comfort them in this difficult time as only He can.

We were again reminded of the Christmas story on Sunday, December 17, when we enjoyed the

Sunday School Christmas program. Through song and verse we were told of our Lord's humble birth so many years ago. We appreciate the efforts put forth by the teachers and the students.

How thankful we can be for the Lord's nearness over the past year. May He continue to guide and direct us throughout the year ahead.

OREGON, SILVERTON**Melissa Kuenzi
Cindy Metzger**

So many times we take the basic necessities in life for granted! Recently, our region had its worst windstorm in more than a decade causing power outages to many areas. We are so grateful that our congregation was spared from severe damage and injury from this storm.

We are happy to announce that Nicole Kuenzi (Bro. Harvey and Sis. Jennifer) has found peace with God and man. We look forward to her baptism.

Bro. Todd Haun (7th & 8th grade) and Bro. Kevin Dettwyler (4th grade) were selected to complete the Sunday school terms that were open due to the recent additions to our ministry.

Bro. Adam and Sis. Lori Kuenzi appreciate the thoughts and prayers during Bro. Adam's health concerns and hospitalizations. Also, we are thankful that Sis. Sherri Kuenzi (Bro. Troy) is recovering well from her recent back surgery.

Thanks again to our Portland ministering Bros. Ron Jones (Sis. Liz) and Wayne Fehr (Sis. Kathy) who have shared with us this month.

**PENNSYLVANIA
PHILADELPHIA**

As it was with the early church, the apostles went by two to the various cities to bring a message of encouragement and advice to the believers. They brought with them letters or epistles from the elders providing clarification and warning along with their message of hope. Recently, we experienced this same practice here in the Philadelphia congregation. Elder Bro. Jay Luthi joined our local Elder, Bro. Ben Wiegand, in sharing with us the Memorandum. It was a blessing to have Bro. Jay, his wife, Sis. Jane, and their daughter Hannah from the Lamont-Gridley, KS, congregation spend the weekend with us.

We often enjoy a weekend visit with retired ministering Bro. Everett Gerber and Sis. Nancy. It was especially nice recently when Bro. Everett shared the Word of God with us. We thank them for their service of love.

Our dear friend, Christopher Lanz, has had major surgery and is recovering at home with his parents, Bro. John and Sis. Kay, and their family. Many prayers have been offered in his behalf.

TENNESSEE, NASHVILLE**Mike and Monica Fritz**

The Lord has richly blessed us from His Word through our loving visiting brothers, whom we wish to heartily thank: Bros. Kenny Dietz (Sis. Mardell; Bradford, IL), Clark Stoller (Sis. Cindy; Gridley, IL), Gary Sinn (Sis. Paulette; Latty, OH); Ken Eisenmann (Sis. Sharon; Cissna Park, IL), and Sid Kaufman (Sis. Sandy; Cissna Park, IL). We

have also been strengthened by the blessed fellowship with brethren and friends visiting from Bradford, Chicago, Eureka, and Gridley, IL; 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: Washington, IL (1/21); Milford, IN (1/28); Smithville, OH (2/4); Oakville, IA (2/11); Kansas City, MO (2/18); Forrest, IL (2/25). Often we meet together on Saturday evenings for fellowship. We also regularly meet on Wednesday evenings for a song service at 7:15 p.m. 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, AUSTIN Amy Ringger Serenity Ringger

As the year begins again we often read and hear about New Year's resolutions such as eating better, getting up earlier, studying more, and getting more exercise.

I remember a time that I asked someone, "So, how was the singing you went to tonight?" The response was different than I expected. "It was a good exercise." I hadn't thought about singing be-

ing exercise so I had to ponder that one for awhile until I recalled a certain hymn that we sing.

With your Zion's harps now chim-
ing
Praise the Lord! Let's do our best.
Soon will come the time of parting;
We'll be laid in earth to rest.
Exercise your self in praising
The true God, and laud His fame,
Tho' our faith at times be waning,
We find courage in His name.

*Zion's Harp #214,
Hymns of Zion #1*

Thank you to those who help us exercise in song and praise—we know it is an effort to come here so far away from many of our churches, but we appreciate it very much.

Our ministers were Bros. Scott Schafer (Sis. Gigi, South Bend), Jeff Neihouser (Sis. Sue, Francesville), Sid Kauffman (Sis. Sandra, Cissna Park), Kent Getz (Sis. Betty, Elgin, IA) and Dale Zeltwanger (Sis. Rachel, Morris). Visitors included Junction, Latty, and Elgin, IA, singles; and some brethren from Oakville, Iowa City, and Valparaiso.

We look forward to these churches serving: Cissna Park (Feb. 4), Congerville (Feb. 11), Bluffton (Feb. 18), Forrest (Feb. 25).

We extend a warm welcome to anyone who may be in the area to worship with us, even midweek we

may meet at times though we don't have a regular schedule for it. 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, perhaps even a month or more if possible, so that we can accommodate you more readily in our week-end gatherings. See the ministers' book for local contact information.

Directions to our church are these: from the intersection of Hwy 71 and 21 on the west side of Bastrop, go east on Hwy 71 about 1/2 mile and take the first exit (by the Ford dealership), proceed on the eastbound frontage road about 4/10 mile. The church is on the right. It is located about 18 miles east of the Austin airport. The address is 1025 Highway 71 West, Bastrop, TX 78602. It is a one-story building with limestone siding and the church sign in the front.

In the church, there are two furnished bedrooms for the ministers to use when coming for services. When you contact someone about coming for services, please let them know if you would like to use the bedrooms during the time you are here.



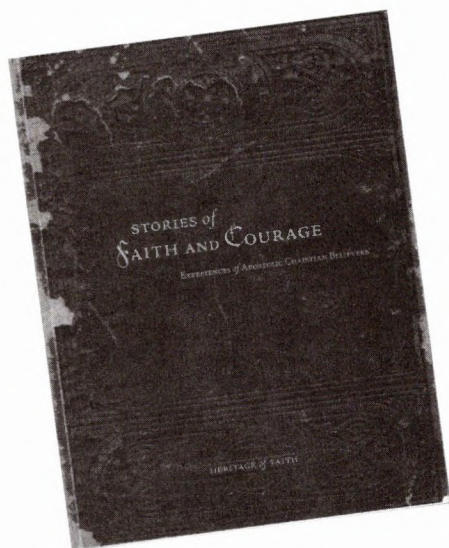
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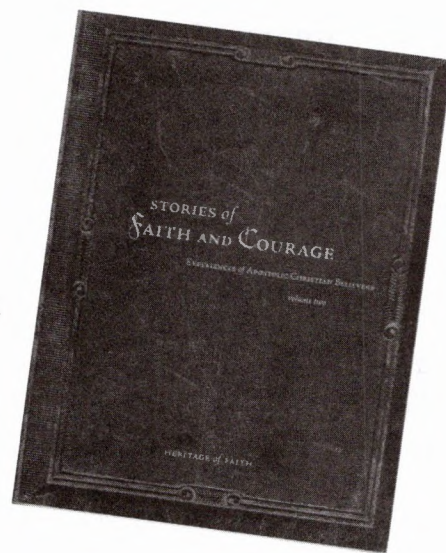
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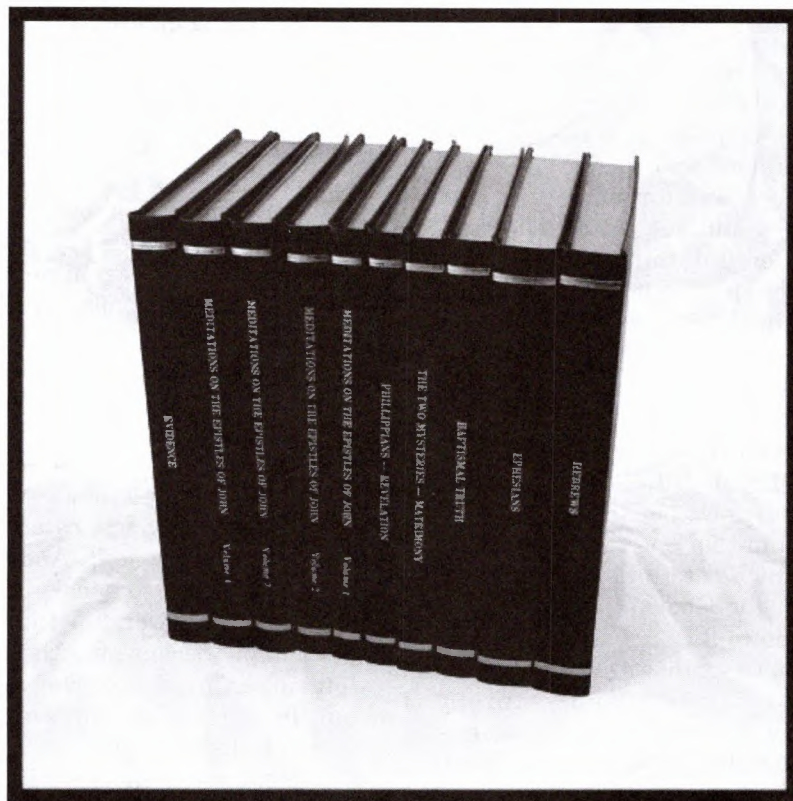
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Sermon continued from page 2

tions." Romans 14:1. You know, I think really what he is saying here is, as we collectively within the household of faith, when we walk together, when we look around and we see another brother or another sister, immediately we have to just give the benefit of the doubt, is the word we would use. He says not to doubtful disputations. But how far do we allow that to go? And that's really perhaps what Paul was saying. We go back to that verse, "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another." Romans 14:19. We'll maybe continue to keep going back to that.

Because he says, "For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs." Romans 14:2. So one man seems to think, well he can eat all meat. And we know very well at this time, and we've talked about this before, that there was meat that was offered unto the idols in the marketplace and men went there to buy meat, and for some reason some people would not eat of it because it was offered unto idols. And if we remember that, that was a very important directive that was given to the new Christian people, that they're not to eat things offered unto idols. But he says here, you know, some are just going to eat herbs because of it. And Paul says, "Let not him that eateth..." the meat I believe he is referring to, "despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him." Romans 14:3.

So here again, we stop and we think about this verse, and naturally, I think, we come to the point where we say, well, that gives us permission that we can all do whatever we want. We can all go out and if I think something is okay for me, I'm just going to do it because the Lord will receive me. We read this morning of liberty, didn't we? Of somewhat being at liberty. Christ comes and sets us free, and that's true loved ones. But we have to think how far will that really go? As we read many, many places, do we not, in the scripture where it's very clear where direction is given that men not serve themselves, men not do what's good

for their own selves, but they do what's right for each other. Servant servitude is what Jesus came for. He came and He washed His disciples feet. And He said, Do in like manner. (St. John 13:14) Be considerate of our brother. And so that's really the message that Jesus gave us. And I don't think Paul contradicts this by saying you're free to go now and do whatever you want because Christ will receive you both ways. There's freedom that's given, true, but it's within certain boundaries that's very, very clear, I believe, as we read through the scripture.

And then the thought that Paul says we have to be careful is that, "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand." Romans 14:4. So we don't go about judging another man's servant. If somebody is working for somebody else, we don't from a distance look across there and say, well he doesn't do a very good job. We don't do that.

He says, "One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." Romans 14:5. Again, loved ones, I feel like he is speaking to the freedom that we have to worship the Lord. And certainly there is many things, even within our precious faith, that we begin to classify and we call them traditions, or we call them customs. And they've all been, in my mind loved ones, established for our very, very benefit. And yet, I believe what he also speaks unto us is that we don't worship the tradition just simply because it's the tradition, but rather loved ones we have within our heart a desire to worship God through that tradition.

We come together, we sit on separate sides of the church. Do we have a problem with that? We shouldn't have a problem with that. There's a blessing in so doing it if our mind and our heart is right, and our attitude as we consider it, is a value to us. And it is a value. We can read in a place where He says that in heaven we're neither married nor given in marriage (Matt. 22:30), and that we're called to come and gather together in heavenly places. (Eph. 2:6) So therefore the custom. Brothers on one side, sisters on

another. Now we can resent that, can we not? We can find fault with it, and say, well what difference does it make? That's not the attitude. But Paul encourages us that we're come to edify one another, and so that there can be a blessing in that particular tradition.

And so we continue on here, it says, "He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks." Romans 14:6. In both cases these individuals were giving God thanks, but for a little bit different reasons. And so, loved ones, as we go forth in life, as we go forth as a church, there will be some subtle differences, little differences, I often think, between us because we're all made different and we're all unique. But if, loved ones, we go back to that verse where we said, everything we follow after is to edify one another, to lift each other up, it makes for peace. What a blessing it can be.

And so Paul keeps going through this almost a rhetorical-type argument. He just kind of goes back and forth and tries to make it clear to these people that we're not as individuals to look at others with a condemning eye and a condemning heart. Jesus himself spoke of that didn't He? Because He remembered the Jewish people, the Pharisees, how they'd be very critical of some of the followers of Jesus. And Jesus had many words for them. He called them hypocrites. He called them many other names. But the thing is, loved ones, as we go forth with the attitude upon our heart in which we are willing to look at the people around about us, namely our brotherhood, how do we look upon them? And we'll get to that a little bit later.

He says, "For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." Romans 14:8. Because this is why Christ died. That we would be a part of Him, we would be part of His purpose. That there would be those men raised up on earth that would seek to follow after the Father, to have a desire within the heart to be more faithful. And then they would not be as

the Jewish people of old simply began to be concerned about the phylacteries upon their heads (Mat. 23:5) or the certain rituals that they would go through and misinterpret that to be the truth. Those are the things that Jesus came to do away with, to set us apart from.

And it says, "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ." Romans 14:10. True, we all will stand. And it says you will stand, but when you stand there will be another thing that you will have to stand for. And it's whether or not, as he said in the 13th verse, if we caused or we've put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in our brother's way.

And so Paul says, let us judge that first. Let us judge ourselves in our own lives, loved ones, and just find out if there's things that we take that are liberties, that we know intentionally will cause another brother hurt. And if that thought is upon our mind, loved ones, Paul was disappointed with the people at Rome that that was their attitude, and I believe the Lord will be too. The liberties that we take, if we take them knowing that it's okay for me to do it, Paul says if meat maketh my brother to offend, I will eat no meat. It's not so much an issue of the meat, is it? It's probably more an issue of the attitude we have towards one another and what we're willing to give in our walk of faith, loved ones, for each other and for the Lord. It's as simple as that, is it not?

We go back to the Old Testament scripture, where David and Saul - We know how David was a man chosen after God's own heart. Because Saul had been chosen king and as he had been raised to power an evil spirit came into his heart and he became wicked, he became obsessed with himself, he became obsessed with his own power, his position, how he was viewed by the people...all those things came into Saul's life. And so the Spirit of the Lord departed from him. (I Samuel 16:14)

And so now we have David, whom God has appointed to be the next king. And we have Saul who no longer has the Spirit of God, hunting David. And we read in this account, did we not, of

here David was in this cave and the armies of Saul were close at him, his enemy, and right at his very doorstep. And David and his men were in the cave and they heard Saul come in, and they heard him lie down. We read there where the men said, David, now is the time you can go kill him, because nobody's going to be guarding him. (I Sam. 24:4) And Saul laid down and he went to sleep. David walked forth. He had the sword in his hand and he could have simply taken Saul's life right then and there. We read there where the Spirit came into David and he could not, it says he could not take the life of the Lord's anointed. (I Sam. 24:6) He loved Saul. He respected Saul, and he put aside his own selfish ambition and desire, did he not, to do what God wanted him to do.

Perhaps it was a test for David, I don't really know. But loved ones, it's a test for each and every one of us as we go forth, is it not, to, when we find a time when we can stab at someone else, will we do it? Or will we refrain and say, no, this too is the Lord's. This is the Lord's child, shall we say. I would rather love this person, I would rather help this person than to be overly caught up in my own selfish desire and to kill that person. That's maybe a little bit of a stretch, maybe, but I think you understand, loved ones, the attitude that David had. David had a great deal of respect for Saul, he had a great deal of love for Saul. And he would not in that particular time and place bring himself to smite and kill Saul.

And in the next day here, or maybe it was later on that same day, Saul got up, he walked out and he was walking down the hill and I think we can all envision this, can we not. Saul's reaching about to the time where David could no longer speak to him. David walked out of the cave and speaks to Saul, and says, Saul, did you not know that I was here? Look here, here is the skirt that I cut off from around you. I could have killed you. (I Sam. 24:8-11)

And you can about imagine, can we not, the humility that Saul would have felt to know that he was in the hands of the one he was hunting and could have very well been killed, but mercy was applied. Mercy was given. And loved ones, that attribute, that desire within

our heart today, I think the Saviour is wanting us to think about that, too. Because He came mercifully. He died for you and for me. He gave His all, and asked us to give of ourselves, did He not? And that where mercy was given, that mercy should be returned.

And so as we consider this scripture that Paul was writing, he's saying too, we too, loved ones, need to be merciful. And yet, you know, I think where we become a little bit mixed up, shall we say, and many of you brothers could probably help me with this more than I could, but when does mercy become confused with tolerance? We've often heard of the sin of tolerance. In the media it's referred to the sin of intolerance. How men today are just too intolerant, and it becomes a sin. But, loved ones, in God's eyes, I believe it's the other way around. In some ways we become too tolerant to the evil that's around us. We just tolerate it. Sin no longer becomes exceedingly sinful. It's no longer such a threat to us. And so we just say, well okay. And you know, slowly by slowly, loved ones, Satan is going to come and try to pull us into that. That's his desire just to kind of pull us away from the truth, to take us to a point where we follow right in. And so there comes a point where we have to make decisions, what is acceptable. And it goes back to the old testament reading of Solomon in Proverbs where he said instruction will be given. And loved ones, it's just for us to consider, I believe.

We read also in the Corinthians scripture this morning, didn't we, how Paul had given instruction to the people, had given them instruction. How did they receive it? Some didn't receive it very well, because they questioned Paul's authority. They questioned that he was man enough, or he was divine enough, or maybe divine isn't the right word. That he had the power from God to specify and to encourage people in a certain walk of faith. They questioned him. They didn't receive the instruction.

Loved ones, I just have to believe, that as we walk here below, there's given to you and I a choice to be made. And it's not that we open our arms and say it doesn't really matter what any-

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body does, we can just all do our own thing, because that's not the way of the Word either. But it's that we're willing to give of our self, to put our self below our brother and we would esteem our brother higher than our self. That we would be considerate enough that we would not offend our brother.

It says, "I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean." Romans 14:14. There'll be certain things, loved ones, that maybe individuals are really determined to be in. Something we should absolutely, totally avoid. And if we are made aware of some of them things, and yet we say it doesn't really matter, I'm going to do it anyway, we served our own good, didn't we? We did it for us, and not for them. Contrary to what Jesus said, that we would serve one another. That's the heart that He wants us to all have, I believe.

"But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitable. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died." Romans 14:15. It says, "Let not then your good be evil spoken of." Romans 14:16. There'll be some things that we can probably find our self involved with, a choice in our walk of faith that's probably okay in God's eyes. But let not our good be evil spoken of. Because if our heart truly is on the mind of our brother, and willing to give of ourselves, there will be no evil spoken of you and I. No one will be able to come and say to me, Bro. Darren, you should have... if I've lived my life the way I should. Conversely, for each and every one of us, it says, "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Romans 14:17. He's speaking specifically, I believe, to the Jewish law, the customs that we're involved with, with the Jewish people. How great emphasis was put upon the tradition and not the meaning behind, perhaps, some of these things. They just worshiped the tradition, and not the intent or the will of God.

That's a caution that's still for us today, loved ones. It's to appreciate the things that we hold, and yet he says

that there will be those that, as we spoke of earlier, that are willing to come and receive simple instruction. That's okay. That's good. Because in all of this, loved ones, we need to be humble. We need to be submissive.

"For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another." Romans 14:18-19. Just a very, very, very strong commandment, loved ones. If we could just think of one verse to take with us today, at least from this afternoon hour, is that as we go forth, the things that we follow after, do they make for peace and do they edify? And if our decisions are made each and every day with that thought in mind, would it not be good for each and every one of us, that we've made for peace and that we've tried to edify.

Paul says, "It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby they brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak." Romans 14:21. That's just the instruction that he gives to this church here, and for all of us today. It is really good for each and every one of us to consider the choices we make. Things that we do here on earth, and not that we should be constantly looking over our shoulder and be so concerned about what people think, but loved ones, that we have a love for each other. And we have a consideration for the feelings, the concerns of others, and in so doing we can build each other up in a Spirit of peace and of edifying.

It says, "Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth." Romans 14:22. It's a very difficult verse for me to consider, and I've spent a lot of time at home, at times, when I've read this verse when he says, "Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth." And I guess where I've resorted in my mind as I look at that word, that scripture passage, the Lord wants us, loved ones, to go forth with joy upon our heart, with love for one another. He wants us to be happy. He wants us to be grateful. He wants us to be appreciative for the blessings that He's given unto us. He wants us to

be rejoicing in our walk of faith. He wants us to be happy. Loved ones, we CAN be happy. We can be happy if we've given everything we can to the Lord. If we've really given of ourselves back in service for Him. We can just stop and think how blessings seem to multiply. How one good deed can affect two people, and then by that example those two people can affect two other people and 1, 2, 4, 8...on and on and on. One blessing at a time, loved ones, can be so good and beneficial for all of us, and can really bring about that Spirit of happiness, joyfulness, thankfulness that God wants amongst His people.

I oft times think of the new church that was established, and this goes back to as many times as I read that story with our children in Sunday school, how when the church was established how Peter and Paul, Peter and James and John, maybe, how they went into these areas and they started these churches. And how people were thankful and grateful, and how they all worked together, and it says they were happy, praising God, daily. (Acts 2:46-47) We can read that in the book of the Acts, I believe. That's really where God wants us to be. To be happy, loved ones.

And not as he says, "And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Romans 14:23. You know, our walk of faith, loved ones, we really need to ground ourselves in this Word that we have before us. To study it. To look therein. To be as the hart that lappeth up the Word. And in so doing, I just really firmly believe, that as we are confronted, and each and every one of us are, we are confronted with these times in our life where perhaps we have some doubt, we have some times of reconsideration, that we can go to the precious Word of life. And we can open these pages, loved ones, and with a prayer upon our heart, I believe and I've experienced it and I know you have too, that we open these pages of life - the answers are here. They're here for you and I. If our heart is right, if our desire is right, the Lord is going to give us this and all things else that we need. Let's come to this Word, loved ones. There's a blessing in being obedient, to trust and obey.

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

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E-mail: bibledist@parlorcity.com

CARIBBEAN BOARD PROJECTS - 2006/2007

All volunteers should contact the project coordinator. Should you not be able to contact the coordinator, for Haiti direct your inquiry to Bro. Rich Bertschi, Ph. 309-467-6110, E-mail lemangm@mtco.com. For Jamaica, direct your inquiry to Bro. Mike Rassi, Ph. 1-309-359-3020 or E-mail michael_rassi@hotmail.com.

HAITI					
ORG.	DATE	AREA	COORDINATOR	PROJECT	CAPACITY
MEBSH	Jan. 26 - Feb. 2, 2007	Les Cayes	Dean Pashak	School Roof	11
SEED	February 9-16, 2007	Les Cayes	Dale Frank	Agriculture Aid	9
Palm Grove	February 9-16, 2007	Les Cayes	Stan Descarpentrie	School Roof	11
SEED	March 9-16, 2007	Les Cayes	Dale Frank	Agriculture Aid	11
AWA-T	March 16-23, 2007	Les Cayes	Troy Struber	Water Aid	5
AWA-FRM	March 16-23, 2007	Les Cayes	Rick Wuethrich	Vocational School	4
AWA-B	March 16-24, 2007	Les Cayes	Bill Rager	Vocational School	2
MEBSH	March 23-30, 2007	Les Cayes	Rich Bertschi	School Roof	9
Palm Grove	TBD	Puit Sales	Tom Hitz	School Roof	11
MEBSH	Apr. - May 4, 2007	Les Cayes	Jon Zeller	Construction/Maintenance	11
MEBSH	May 4-11, 2007	Haiti	Tom Hitz	Caribbean Evaluation	Invitation
AWA-FRW	June 1-8, 2007	Les Cayes	Rick Wuethrich	Vocational School	4
AWA-T	June 1-8, 2007	Les Cayes	Troy Struber	Water Aid	5
AWA-B	June 1-8, 2007	Les Cayes	Bill Rager	Vocational School	2
JAMAICA					
CCCD	March 23-31, 2007	Kingston	Terry Miller	Deaf School	<i>Filled</i>
CCCD	May 19-26, 2007	Deaf Village	Ted Hirstein	Work Place	40/50
CCCD	June 23-30, 2007	Knockpatrick	Bluffton S.S.	Deaf School	40/50

COORDINATOR	PHONE	FAX	E-MAIL
Dale Frank	319-766-3661		frankfarms@iowatelecom.net
Rich Bertschi	309-467-6110		lemangm@mtco.com
Tom Hitz	734-454-9229	734-454-9259	thitzhome@juno.com
Bill Rager	419-263-2989		
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
Ron Palitto	330-336-5373		rcp@lek.net
Ted Habegger	260-694-6765		tjh@adamswells.com
Phil Isabel	219-261-3541		philisabel@earthlink.net
Dean Pashak	989-662-7685		dwpashak@charter.net
Stan DesCarpentrie	309-467-3898		srjed@mtco.com
Rusty Adrian	573-769-3650		radrian@centurytel.net
Ted (Joyce) Hirstein	309-266-8769		hirstein@mtco.com
Terry Miller	309-923-7274 (north) 941-485-4302 (south) 309-696-7804 (cell)	same same	

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 2007

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

Location	Date	Project	Coordinator	Phone	E-mail
Agua Prieta	March 3-10, 2007	Construction	Mike Fiechter	260-597-7330	mfiechter@onlyinternet.net
Agua Prieta	March 10-17, 2007	Construction	Bob Meyer	260-824-3236	rmeyer@nremc.net
Agua Prieta	March 17-24, 2007	Construction	Denis Fry	260-824-3055	fry.d@mchsi.com
Agua Prieta	March 24-31, 2007	Construction	Sam Kaehr	260-565-3200	sckaehr@adamswells.com
Copper Canyon	March 28 - April 5, 2007	Medical/Dental	Cheryl Herrmann	309-385-1082	cherrmann@verizon.net
Juarez	June 16-23, 2007	Construction	Jerry Leuthold	317-578-1170	leuthold.jerald@sbcglobal.net
Juarez	September 19-26, 2007	Medical/Dental	Cheryl Herrmann	309-385-1082	cherrmann@verizon.net
Magdalena	February 10-17, 2007	Construction	Max Burnham	620-427-4603	burnhambuilders@yahoo.com
Magdalena	February 17-24, 2007	Construction	Bob Knepp	309-923-7335	rnep@verizon.net
Magdalena	March 10-17, 2007	Construction	Seth Braker	309-678-4703	sdbrake@ilstu.edu
Magdalena	March 17-24, 2007	Construction	Jeremy Hodel	309-264-4307	jeremy.hodel@gmail.com
Magdalena	March 24-31, 2007	Construction	Roger Reinhard	260-565-3282	rmreinhard@adamswells.com
Magdalena	March 31 - April 7, 2007	Construction	Pete Aberle	309-925-5969	dpabfrms@hotmail.com
Magdalena	June 2-9, 2007	Construction	Scott Klopfenstein	602-721-7409	scottklop@yahoo.com
Magdalena	June 9-16, 2007	Construction	John Ricketts	309-444-9061	jonr@grimmauto.com
Magdalena	June 30 - July 7, 2007	Construction	Brent Knobloch	815-923-4736	BEKMRH@aol.com
Magdalena	July 21-28, 2007	Construction	Tyler Banwart	620-223-1362	tybanwart@hotmail.com
Reynosa	March 10-17, 2007	Construction	Trent Barth	309-696-4157	iccvgcommittee@hotmail.com
Reynosa	March 24-31, 2007	Construction	Jeff Leman	260-565-3815	jvleman@adamswell.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:

Indiana: Tom Neuenschwander
 Phone/Fax: 260-824-4773
 E-mail: tsneuen@adamswells.com

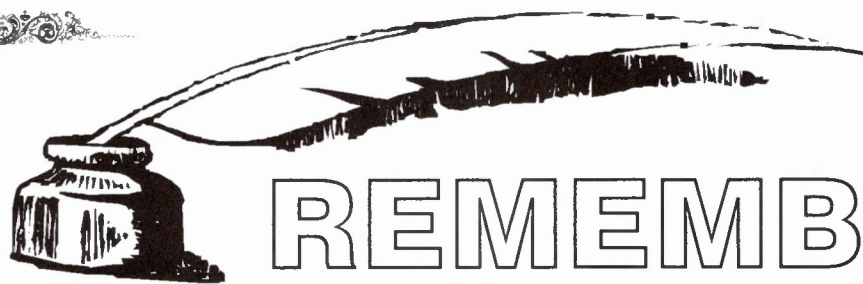
Ohio: Ken Zollinger
 Phone: 330-669-2415
 Fax: 330-669-8520

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:

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NOTICE:

Wednesday night services are now being held in Macomb, IL. For further information, call Bro. Norm or Sis. Jan Rechkemmer at (309) 231-0098.



REMEMBERING

Our Spiritual Heritage

The series on the booklet, "To The King's Administration of Justice" continues. This was translated from the German language and published by Bro. William Stettner, Elgin, Illinois. This segment is the next to last one in this series.

Concerning government: We believe and confess that God has ordained the Government with authority for the protection of the law abiding and righteous people. And to reign over the world, land and sea and the cities. To keep good order by policing the country. (Romans 13). No man should despise or slander the Government, but should respect and honor the same. Be obedient and submissive and help along in all good causes and works. (I Peter 2: 13-14)

Therefore, we are willing to pay tribute and taxes, and support our Government as it is our duty just as the Son of God did teach His followers to do. (Matthew 17:27, Matthew 22:20-21) We should call earnestly to God and pray to Him that we may, under the protection of our Government, lead a just and peaceful life in all godliness and honesty (I Timothy 2:2). And that God may reward the government for all liberties and freedom and kindness which it extends unto the followers of Christ.

Concerning swearing and taking oaths: In regard to swearing and taking an oath, we believe and confess for the sake of confirming anything it was allowed the Fathers of the Old Testament to take an oath in the name of God. But, when Jesus

Christ came into the world He forbade such and gave a commandment not to take an oath under any circumstances.

He taught that the word of His followers should be yea to that which is yea, and nay to that which is nay (Matthew 5:34-35; James 5:12). This declares unto us that in all important matters as well as in minor things it is forbidden for us to swear an oath. Therefore, in all our dealings, whatsoever we say or promise should be confirmed with the words, "Yea" or "Nay". And because we keep our word and live up to our promises faithfully in all matters and dealings, we do believe that everyone should be willing to accept our word, yea for which is yea and nay for that which is nay, without an oath or any other confirmation.

If our honorable government will grant to us such a favor, we will accept it with heartfelt thanks from God and from our honorable government. However, should our honorable government refuse to grant us such a privilege and favor, there is nothing else for us to do but to take the consequence. As the Apostle Peter writes (I Peter 4: 15-16), let none among you suffer as an evil doer or as one who is a busybody in other men's matters. But if you suffer as a Christian be not ashamed, but honor God in such a case, and abide in His fear.

Regarding military service: We believe and confess that Jesus Christ commanded His disciples and followers and all those who believe in Him — those He purchased from the

world and redeemed them with His blood — that revenge belongs to God and not to man. He forbade man all revenge because such does not agree with the teachings of our Lord and Saviour, for mankind should love one another.

Christ teaches, "Love your enemies, do good unto those who despitefully use you." Therefore, we as Christ's followers cannot kill our enemies. The Word of God teaches, Avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay," saith the Lord. Christ came to bring peace among men, and men should love one another. But because the world does not comprehend God, nor live according to the ways which Jesus Christ taught, there are wars and strifes among nations and peoples, and therefore it cannot be different as long as mankind does not obey Christ's teachings.

(Editors Note: There is more written in this document regarding the brethren's attitude toward military service, and it will be included in next month's "Remembering" column.)

By Bro. Perry Klopfenstein

Next issue:

Concluding remarks from "To The King's Administration of Justice"

The Light Of Hope

From Across The Ocean

希望の光

"Give Me The Crumbs, Please"

Elder Bro. Willis Ehnle, Shioda, Japan

As we face the new year, 2007, we pray for God's guidance and grace, for His peace and for His love. We consider the blessings of the past year, and also our failings. We thank God for His blessings and are determined, by His grace, to do better in the New Year. There is always room for improvement, in our individual lives and in our church.

In Japan, it is customary for most people to put up short bamboo and pine branches at the entrance to their homes. This decoration is supposed to bring prosperity and health in the New Year. In my English class at the Jr. College yesterday, I asked my students about this practice. They said that they do it as a custom and do not think about the meaning.

I further asked my students why they go to the shrine at midnight on New Year's Eve. One student put her hands together and bowed her head, and said, "We go to pray." I asked, "To whom do you pray? She

said, "We pray to god." I asked, "What god?" She replied, "The god of the shrine." I further asked, "Is that god alive?" The answer was, "No." I then suggested that they pray to the living God, who created everything. Such a prayer would be, "Dear living God, please help me in the New Year." They seemed to agree with me that their chances of getting help would be better if they prayed to the living God.

In thinking about how much we want from God in the New Year, we tend to want a lot, the more the better, especially in material blessings. We would do better if we would seek earnestly for the best gifts, the intangible gifts, such as love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance.

In Mark, chapter 15, from verse 25, there is an account of a certain woman, a Greek, a Syrophenician, whose daughter was possessed by an evil spirit and controlled by that evil

spirit. Such people lose their reasonableness and are very difficult to help. This woman wanted Christ to help her by healing her daughter.

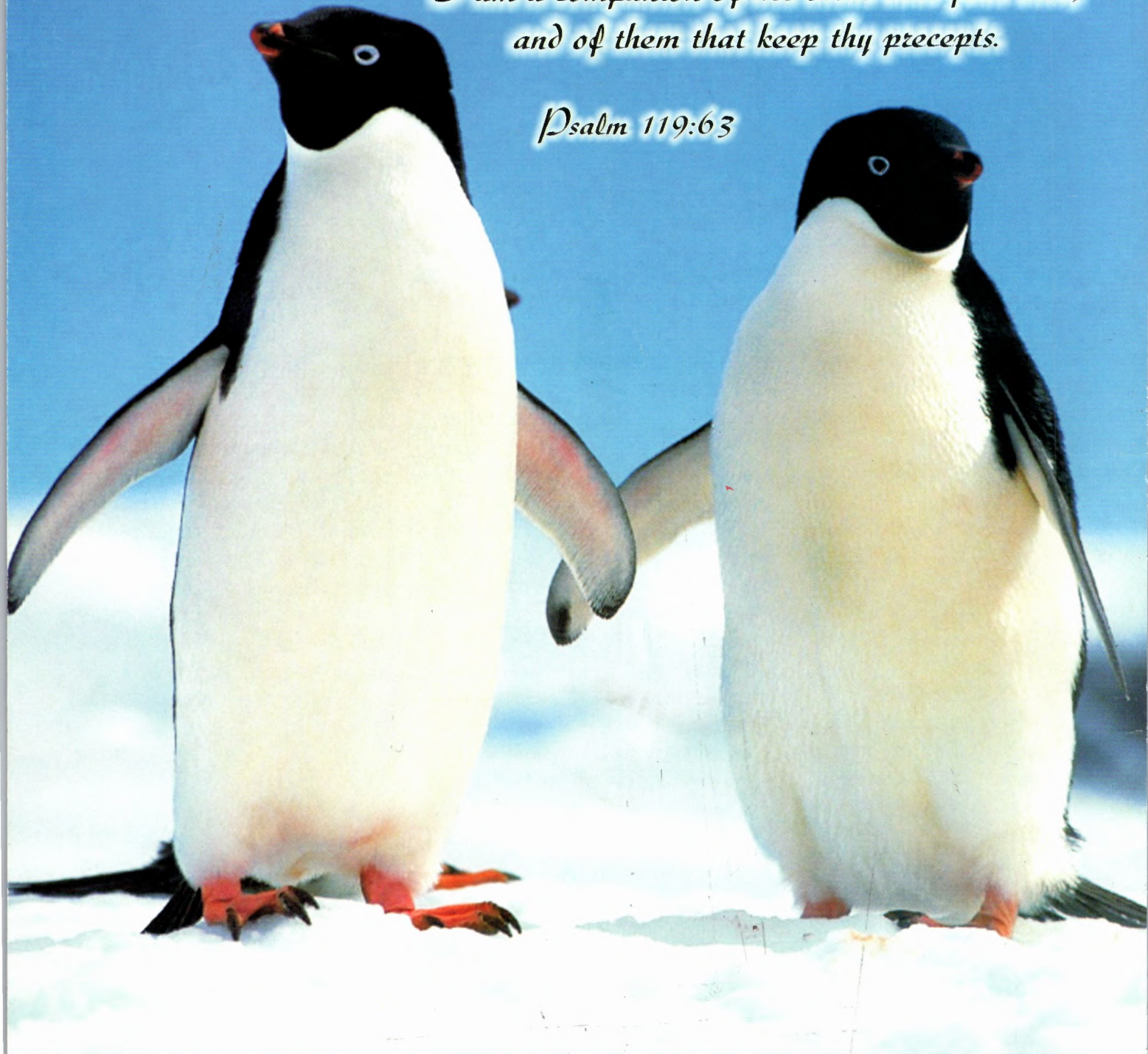
Christ's response is striking. He said, "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs." He must have been testing her. If He was, she passed the test. Her answer was, Mark 15:28, "Yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs." Matthew 15:27 records this as, "Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table." Christ healed her daughter, saying to the woman, "Great is thy faith." Matthew 15:28.

I'm thinking that crumbs from the Lord's table are more than the whole world. Please join the Syrophenician woman and me in this request, "Give me the crumbs, Lord, please give me the crumbs."

希望の光

*I am a companion of all them that fear thee,
and of them that keep thy precepts.*

Psalm 119:63



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