


The Silver Lining



*O Lord, be gracious unto us; we have waited for thee:
be thou their arm every morning, our salvation also in the time of trouble.*

Isaiah 33:2

January 2008

Sermon by Bro. Mark Zimmerman, Eureka, IL
Jeremiah 27:1-22; II Peter 2:1-22

Greetings loved ones. What a blessing to be able to gather together. Beautiful morning outside. We can come together with a joy in our hearts, knowing that God is ever looking down on us. It's His desire to bless us if we're just willing to submit, humble ourselves, and wait to see what He has for us. Then the real blessing really comes when we can take the Word that we've heard, and we can apply it to our own hearts, and we can bring forth the fruit.

I had to think...I talked with a brother here this morning. We look out in the fields, we see the harvest is well, well under way. And he said, you know, it really gives him a lot of time to think out there as he's going through the fields, about the harvest that's to come. And really, that's what life is all about. It's not about the beginning, it's not about the middle. It's what happens in the end. Will the fruit make it all the way? Or will it be a stalk where there's nothing there? He said, sometimes you look and you see that stalk, it's broken, but the fruit's still hanging. It can be gathered in. But other times, it's not there.

So let us all take it to our hearts, loved ones. See what the Spirit has to say unto the church, unto us. If it's a call because we stand without, we haven't made our ways right, let's haste and seek the Lord. And those of us upon the way, how can we draw closer? So may God be in our midst.

I have to think here, too, of Jeremiah as we would read this. He is known as the weeping

prophet. The title, or subtitle, here in the Bible says 'Submission to Babylon Urged'. So maybe, loved ones, as we read through this, we think about our own submission, not to Babylon, but unto God.

Seems to be, loved ones, a strong correlation between the New Testament and the Old Testament readings we've read here today. The pulpit Bible here has four different subtitles, as this chapter (II Peter 2) is broken down. The first one, 'Exploitation by False Teachers', 'Punishment of False Teachers', 'Character of False Teachers', 'Folly of False Teachers'. Then we go back, and we look in the Old Testament here, and what Jeremiah came to the people with. He was warning them about false prophets. So we have to wonder, loved ones, what the Spirit has to say unto the church.

It says, "Therefore hearken not ye to your prophets, nor to your diviners, nor to your dreamers, nor to your enchanters, nor to your sorcerers, which speak unto you, saying, Ye shall not serve the king of Babylon: For they prophesy a lie unto you, to remove you far from your land..." Jeremiah 27:9-10.

We live in a day and time when there are many teachings going out. We could say within the church, definitely within the world around us. So, we're all called upon to prove the Spirits. The Word teaches us that. And the Word also teaches us that, by their fruit they shall be known (Matthew 7:16).

So then we have to maybe step back first and let's reflect upon

our own lives. You see, whether we realize it or not, each one of us is a prophet. You see, I think God has put each one of us upon this earth for a purpose. We've got a job, a duty to do. It's going to be different. They're not all going to

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"...that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God" (Col. 4:12)

Light From The Word



Writings based on God's Word

January 2008

Balanced Four-Pillar Mission of the Church

The Bible states that God created mankind "in His own image" for the purpose of bringing pleasure to God and glorifying His worthy name (Gen. 1:27; Rev. 4:11). The four-pillar mission of the church expresses our commitment to the accomplishment of this divine purpose not only as a church but also as individual members of the Body of Christ (Rom. 12:5).

The mission or purpose of the church exemplifies the love of Christ in our hearts that we "might be filled with all the fullness of God" (Eph. 3:19). The church accomplishes its four-part mission by looking to Christ as its Head and pattern for living (Col. 1:18).

The first pillar is to present to the lost the Gospel message of salvation based on faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ and a true repentance and conversion. If a church is to reflect the true gospel of Christ, its doctrines and teachings must be based on the Word, and its members must be truly converted individuals (Matt. 18:3; Acts 3:19, 1 John 5:4). We are called to a consistent Christian example resulting from living a sanctified life. Christ said: "the same works that I do bear witness of me" (John 5:36) and "by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. 7:20).

Christ gave a compelling command to the Church when He said "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:19-20).

Not all of us will be called to travel to "all nations" as indicated by the account of the Gadarene man cleansed from the legion of devils. Denied his request to accompany Jesus as He was leaving his country, this man was instead told to "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee." He obeyed Christ, and "all men did marvel" (Mark 5:18-20).

Although our gifts and callings will vary (1 Corinthians 12), we all have the responsibility to pray for the lost and for those who bring forth the gospel message of salvation. Being prepared every day to speak of our hope and salvation to others is something every believer can do (Psa.

71:15; 1 Pet. 3:15). This can be as simple as inviting an acquaintance to church.

Church-sanctioned missionary efforts include the opening of many new churches in the United States, Japan, Mexico and Canada, together with preaching and teaching sessions among church brethren on university campuses. Church mission work is also active in the Philippines and India.

The second pillar is to teach and nurture believers toward a sanctified life and to faithfulness by God's grace and through His Word. This part of the church mission can be likened to providing spiritual maintenance and growth for all believers after their conversion. The intent is to build up a strong, enduring relationship with Christ that reveals true faith, grace, Christ-like love and Holy Spirit-enabled obedience and good works, along with overcoming of temptation and proper disciplining of others (Phil. 1:9-11; Heb. 3:13; 2 Tim 2:1-2).

Consistent and faithful church attendance provides the believer with the opportunity to hear humble preaching based on the Word of God and by the power and inspiration of the Holy Spirit (1 Pet. 5:2; Eph. 4:11-13; Col. 1:28).

Fellowship within the church is a special blessing to those who are united in the love of Christ. "But 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." (1 John 1:7). Every brother and sister gives and receives in this very special relationship. "And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it" (1 Cor. 12:26).

Loving admonition and discipline are also essential to the maintenance of a purified and spiritually healthy body of believers. Each one of us needs others who love us so much they will tell us when we are in error and will help apply the spiritual remedies needed to remove the stain of sin from the Brotherhood. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (Gal. 6:1).

The third pillar is to preserve sound doctrine and "earnestly contend for

the faith" (Jude 3). In this context, contending means to strive against the opposition of Satan. He was not ashamed to tempt our Lord, and there is no doubt that the devil as "an angel of light" is seeking to deceive the church in these latter times (2 Cor. 11:14). The preservation of sound doctrine depends on our unified efforts against a common enemy. Every believer and the entire Brotherhood needs to "stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel" (Phil. 1:27).

Our doctrine consists of teachings and principles taken directly from the Holy Scripture which is "given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3:16). Our long established practice of earnestly seeking to teach and obey "all the counsel of God" as the literal and absolute truth continues to be another tremendous safeguard (Acts 20:27).

The fourth pillar is to offer loving, humble deeds of service to fellow believers and all mankind in the name of Christ. Jesus gave us the perfect example in giving; not only of His life and blood in payment for our sins, but in service to His fellow man: "the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached" (Luke 7:22). Christ gave freely of His time. He and the disciples were often so much in demand "they could not so much as eat bread" (Mark 3:20; 6:31). As His followers, we also are instructed to "do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:10). World Relief activities including self-help, material aid and work projects throughout the U.S. and abroad offer numerous opportunities.

In summary, we as individuals will vary in gifts and emphasis on one or more parts of the Church mission (1 Cor. 12). However, all of the brothers and sisters should support their congregation's efforts to seek a balanced focus on all four pillars of the Church mission "that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God" (Col. 4:12).

An editorial committee of elder brothers is preparing articles for this section of the Silver Lining to address some of the special needs of our times.

Suggestions for subjects are welcome and can be sent to:

Silver Lining Editorials, 1377 County Rd 1600 N, Roanoke, IL 61561 or by e-mail to cleman@davesworld.net



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

Outreach Committee

If ye love me, keep my commandments. John 14:15

Through prayer and self-examination, the need to be more diligent in reaching out to the lost (in obedience to Jesus' commandment) became apparent to the Mission Committee some time ago. In June 2007, the Mission Committee selected seven brothers to serve on the newly-formed Outreach Committee tasked with helping the brotherhood embrace this vision to reach out to the lost as directed by the Holy Scriptures.

The need for balance

Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he. Proverbs 29:18

Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. John 8:32

These scriptures reveal the need for balance between the visionary and the protective functions of life. Without the vision and inspiration of the Word (Truth), we lack an eternal, lofty goal to strive for. Without the boundaries of divine law, we lack structure within which to reach for the goal. This concept is embraced in our Bible-based four pillar church mission.

The balance between maintaining safe boundaries and embracing Jesus' vision of fields white unto harvest can be a difficult feat. We believe the Word, the Holy Spirit, prayer, and the safety of counsel will provide a way to accomplish this with peace and joy. The Outreach Committee has been asked to help our brotherhood embrace this vision while maintaining the balance of safe boundaries.

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of

the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Matthew 28:19-20

The Outreach Committee has been charged with the following responsibilities:

- Clarify Vision
- Develop a plan to implement Jesus' commandment to share the completeness of the Gospel, teaching to observe all things that He commanded.
- Develop a unified process to select, send, and nurture brethren serving both in service-oriented outreach and evangelism.
- Bring focus to the Word of God in order to promote a unified effort from the entire brotherhood to share our hope of salvation - both locally and internationally.

Ye shall be witnesses

But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. Acts 1:8

The first meeting of the Outreach Committee took place August 18, 2007. In order to better understand the task, they began with a review of historical evangelical efforts, including a biblical review of the New Testament church, the experiences of the Anabaptist movement, and the historical efforts of the Apostolic Christian Church in sharing the Gospel. In a followup meeting, they focused on the priorities assigned by the Mission Committee. Topics of discussion included the danger of stifling the Holy Spirit

with too much structure, identifying and recruiting brethren who are underutilized to aid in this work, how the Holy Spirit chose to use those who were currently ministering to those in need, and a discussion of the role of prayer in supporting the work of sharing the gospel.

Future meetings will focus on unifying the process the World Relief Board and the Mission Committee use to select brethren to serve in foreign lands. Your prayers will be invaluable as they take seriously the call to nurture those who are sent and seek God's leading in this responsibility. The Lord willing, they will also seek to communicate to the entire brotherhood how each one can play a role in spreading the Word according to the gifts and calling of the Holy Spirit.

Sharing the good news

As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

Acts 13:2-3

None of us, of ourselves, are sufficient for these things. As the believers throughout the ages were united in one accord, serving one another, and led of the Holy Spirit, the Lord was able to use feeble men to impact the eternal lives of many. We trust that the power of the Holy Spirit, shared through the living Word of God, will motivate many to reach out to the lost and offer the hope of salvation as a remedy for sin. May we have the vision to see the world as Jesus does and with grace and truth, share the Gospel, nurture the believer, preserve sound doctrine, and minister to others.



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

It Snowed Bicycles!

That was the exclamation from Romanians who visited the Antioch World Relief facility in Vladimirescu shortly after delivery of 400 brand new bicycles provided thru Project Bicycle. Many of these bikes have now been placed with Romanian church families and individuals.



Needy brethren in Ukraine and Serbia have also received 500 bicycles purchased with Project Bicycle. While they remain in stock, grateful brethren in Eastern Europe will be able to receive bicycles from World Relief.

A thank you from Europe

"Dear Brethren in America, first we wish to bring many thanks to God for all of the many, many programs that run through World Relief and are changing the lives of our brethren who just a few years ago seemed lost and hopeless.

But we know God works on this earth through men and women and we sincerely believe that God has placed each and every one of you at this point and time to be His arms and legs. And so in the name of the poor, and not just those associated with World Relief, we wish to thank every donor, large or small, who has helped people who cannot be counted and whom you may never know. Many friends and neighbors

are being helped daily, and we praise God for it.

May God richly reward you with showers of blessings already here on earth, but much more in heaven."

Self-Help projects

Since 1995 there have been over 140 self-help loans to help brethren in Eastern Europe start and expand businesses. World Relief wishes to share an example of an opportunity to assist brethren in a very positive way that will make a difference.

Honey is a staple part of the diet. There are four bee projects running under the auspices of World Relief, and a new one has just surfaced.

Romanian family request

"My name is Mihai, and my wife and I live in Bihor County. We have 9 children and wish to expand our bee yard with 100 additional hives, built to EU standards. This will cost \$200 per hive, which we will repay in honey, giving World Relief one-half of the honey for eight years (to supplement food parcels for poor believers).



Family Bee Project

This is a long term project that we hope will help keep our children at home and away from the horrible influence of street children and the ungodliness of this world, while at the same time building something

for them and us, as well as to maintain the faith of our brotherhood so they can stay in Romania instead of seeking work in some other country, as many do.

May the God of grace and mercy cause His face to shine upon you and grant you the courage and faith to help us."

Assessment and approval

In June 2007, World Relief brethren visited this family to assess their needs and capabilities. The oldest son is a convert, recently married, who with his two teenage brothers farm with their father who is on medical disability. This is an appropriate opportunity for self-help with the enterprising spirit and experience evident in these Nazarean youth.

"It is my opinion, although truly needing God's mercy at all times, that this proposed bee project is one of the best ones we have seen so far.

As your weak and least brother, I give my full endorsement to this project, which seems to be of an acceptable risk, although nothing is risk free." (Romanian minister)

Opportunity to help

Anyone wishing to help with this family bee project or other worthy self-help projects, as new opportunities arise, may send donations designated "Self-help Europe" thru their church treasurer to Apostolic Christian World Relief.

For information contact:
Gene Lehman,
European Secretary
16112 West St
Remington, IN 47977
gv158@midwaynet.net

APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN HOME FOR THE HANDICAPPED

It has been a blessed time of year, enjoying the Christmas holiday and all the excitement it brings. Many groups came to carol at our different facilities, which definitely helps to put everyone in the Christmas spirit. Some individuals and organizations baked cookies and bought gifts for our residents. We appreciate all of the thoughtful gifts and contributions of your time and money that have been sent throughout the year.

These months can also be especially difficult, as it seems we face extra sickness. Several residents have been in and out of the hospital, fighting pneumonia and other illnesses. We hope you will join with us in praying for our residents, staff and their families. God hears those prayers and always provides what is best!

Let us each continue in this new year to press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:14), and to thank and praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! (Psalm 107:8)

GATEWAY WOODS APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN CHILDREN'S HOME Clint Plattner

While talking with a young man recently, he expressed that one reason he does not want to receive help is the feeling of indebtedness that it creates. "Nobody wants to be a charity case." I know what he is talking about and it forced me to think as I tried to come up with an appropriate response. In a perfectly logical world this makes sense. If you do something for somebody else, now they owe you a favor in like manner. Or if you receive a kindness, now you are required to repay in full. I tried to explain that all of us have a need to receive help. None of us are truly self-sufficient. We all have to reconcile

this in our minds as to how we will respond when we are given help we do not "deserve". It seems that the only response that actually works is this idea that Jesus gives to us that we take what we have received and then satisfy that debt by passing it on to someone equally undeserving. Imagine a world where every blessing gave birth to more blessing. That would be "God's will on earth as it is heaven". So no more ridiculous arguments about letting somebody buy your meal at a restaurant and no more refusing an offer for help at a time of need. Say thank you and look for the next opportunity to pass it on. Freely receive and freely give. It is the only way that works.

NEWS:

- We are very thankful that construction is underway, at least in part, for the driveway/road for our fifth group home, the Pine House. The first dirt was moved on December 17, 2007. Further construction will resume in the spring. Please be aware of a special collection for this house in your local congregation soon. Your donation will allow Gateway Woods to continue to expand our services to reach more children for the cause of Christ. Doug Brewer, a former resident, testifies, "Gateway Woods gave me an opportunity to make a new beginning. I am thankful for the godly example of the Gateway staff. Most importantly, I thank God for the gift of salvation I found as a resident. Currently, I attend law school in California and, as with my undergraduate degree, Gateway Woods continues to help me through generous scholarships. Through God, Gateway Woods does touch the lives of young people."

- Gateway Woods Adoption Program Places 100th Child

God's work through Gateway Woods extends far beyond the four group homes on campus. Our adoption program began in May of 2003 and we now have been involved in the placement of 100 children into adoptive

homes. Gateway Woods offers home studies for perspective adoptive families, places children in adoptive homes, and does post placement services after children are placed in adoptive homes. In the placement of these 100 children, Gateway Woods has placed infants and older children (often through the foster care program) domestically. Internationally Gateway Woods has placed children of all ages by working with international placement agencies all over the country. Gateway Woods has been involved in the placement of children from Colombia, Guatemala, Ethiopia, Liberia, China, Philippines, Taiwan, Vietnam, India, Moldova, Kazakhstan, Russia, and Ukraine.

The 99th and 100th placements are Jose, age 10, and Carlos, age 8, from Columbia. Tim and Rebecca Champagne from Griffith, Indiana, brought these brothers home from a foster home in Bogotá, Colombia on December 8. Originally the Champagnes were planning to adopt an infant from Colombia, which is over a 3-year wait. While they were waiting they saw a picture of Jose and Carlos on Children's Hope International's Waiting Children List and fell in love with the boys. The Champagnes came to realize these ages fit in better with their present lifestyle than infants or toddlers. Once they decided to adopt these older boys, their three-year waiting time suddenly crunched down to 3 1/2 months. The boys are adjusting to a new permanent family, a new culture and language but are doing amazingly well and are really making progress in learning English. The Champagnes feel they have the best Christmas gift they could have ever received, two sons. There are hundreds of thousands of children needing a family all over the world and the wait is not long for older children such as Jose and Carlos.

Sis. Jan Baumgartner, Adoption Manager, states, "We feel that there is no more important ministry than offering a permanent home and Christ's

love to a needy child here in the States or from a remote area across the world." If you are interested in Gateway Woods Adoption Services, please contact Sis. Jan Baumgartner at 627-2159 Ext. 103.

- Praise God for His continued provision at Gateway Woods! We are very thankful that He continues to provide us with the right staff. Because of our Adoption services expanding into Illinois, Houseparents moving on to serve God in other capacities, and other ministry opportunities here, there are a number of service positions waiting to be filled. Please see the ads in this month's edition of *The Silver Lining*. We trust that God will continue to provide us with qualified, mature Brothers and Sisters who will be able to serve Him in a ministry that is Turning Lives Around. Perhaps this includes you!

Give thanks!

Before we get too far into 2008, 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 2007:

1) Gateway Woods currently has 5 Christ-centered programs:

Family-Focused Residential Care

Providing residential child care for abused, neglected or delinquent teens in a caring, Christian environment is at the heart of our campus. In addition to our unique houseparent approach, we also provide individual, group, and family counseling, and parent training. A special program designed for pregnant teens and teen moms serves girls in crisis.

Gateway Woods School

Our on-campus accredited school offers students an exceptional education with the proper balance of nurture and structure. Additional components include job skills and independent living training plus tutoring and scholarships. Our faculty strives to give each student an academic, moral and social foundation for a successful future.

Home-Based Services

Home-Based Services is a distinc-

tively Christian program that revolves around one concept: the family. We work intensively with at-risk families in prevention before major problems occur, as a supplement during a child's placement and with continuing support after a child returns home.

Foster Care

Our highly trained and experienced staff offers specialized and therapeutic foster care through our deeply committed Christian foster families. As a team, we supply all necessary services to meet the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual needs of children of all ages.

Adoption

In recent years, Gateway Woods has facilitated over 100 adoptions for Christian families in Indiana. We provide quality, affordable and family-focused services for both international and domestic adoptions. Our caring, skilled and diligent professionals make this complex process a successful, affordable and joyous experience.

2) In 2007, Gateway Woods was able to serve:

- 55 children (including 7 babies of teen moms and 5 day students) in our Residential Child Care Program.

- 41 children in Foster Care.

- 58 children and family members in our Home-Based Counseling Program.

- 35 adoptive families and have placed 27 children in our Adoption Program.

- Approximately 42 of the children attended Gateway Woods School.

3) Because of your generosity and the LORD's provision, we raised over \$401,000 at our annual Auction. Thank you! This year's Auction is scheduled for August 16, 2008. We hope to see everyone there!

4) Because of the Brotherhood's generosity in 2007, Gateway Woods provided thousands of dollars in free or subsidized Christian Counseling, Christian Schooling, and Residential 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 2008, trusting in God's faithful and loving care!

**APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN
PRESCHOOL**

Athens, AL

Melissa Slagel

It seems you can always see a sparkle in the eyes of children at Christmas time. My desire over this past month was to teach and remind the children of the real reason we celebrate Christmas, so that the sparkle they have would not only be because of the gifts, but because of the birth of our King. I wondered many times if Santa Claus would get all the credit... or that they would be too small to understand it... or really take any interest in it. I delight in the Lord that I was wrong. As I read them that story of Jesus they would look at me with such great interest and say what was going to happen next. Then I would get done and they would say "read it again, read it again!" Isn't God good that He gives even a small child the desire to learn more of Him.

God reminded me of His goodness another day when a child was playing with his little friend. He was telling him that he better be nice and be his friend because Santa is watching him and can see when he was being naughty. The other child said to him quite matter-of-factly "well God is watching you too and He is more powerful than Santa." It gave me such joy and hope to see that a child, just a child could see past the thrill of Santa Claus and know that God is bigger and more

important.

Looking back over this past year it is amazing to stop and reflect on how God has blessed our preschool. At Christmas time especially the parents and families express their gratitude to us for this preschool program. All glory and thanks goes to God. We also want to thank all those who support us monetarily and prayerfully. You do make a difference. God bless you all!

ALABAMA, ATHENS

Louise Hall

Our prayer over the past few months has been that the Lord would appoint a new additional minister. The Lord is faithful and our congregation felt direction that Bro. Kerwin Edelman should fill this position. Our prayers continue to go out to him and his wife, Sis. Sara, and their four daughters, Jessica, Amber, Emily and Lauren, during this time of change and in the days to come. May God bless him and his family for being willing in this work of the Lord. Our Elder Bro. Andy Stoller (Sis. Roberta) along with Elder Bro. Ken Indermuhle (Sis. Linda) were here for Bro. Kerwin's installation into the ministry. We thank them for their efforts.

Several in our congregation have had health concerns over the past few weeks. Joey Nix (son of Bro. Tim Hall) had surgery on his feet. He is recovering well. Matthew Moore (Bro. Mike and Sis. Pam Moore) had surgery on his shoulder. His recovery has gone well, too. Bro. Don Ross is currently residing in a nursing home after spending some time in the hospital. He is doing much better and has been able to come back to church. We thank the Lord for His healing power.

We enjoyed having ministering Bro. Arthur Ingold (Sis. Bonnie, Rittman, OH) here with us. Thank you to him and those who came along. It is always such a privilege to have visitors here in our small congregation.

Our Sunday school students told us

the message of Jesus' birth this Christmas season. All of them did a beautiful job singing and saying their parts.

ARIZONA, PHOENIX

Ron and Ev Hoerr

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

1 Thess. 5:18

We welcome our winter visitors (or family); it is a joy to have God's family for a reunion each winter.

Our Sunday School had a lovely program for us on December 9. We are grateful for the efforts of the students and their teachers. December 16, we enjoyed a chili supper before Christmas Caroling. 'Tis such a joyful time.

Visiting ministers this month were Bro. Nile Bucher (Bluffton North), Bro. Loren Schrenk (St. Louis), and Bro. Dan Beer (Milford). Thanks to each of God's servants for their labors of love.

We rejoice with our friend, Annaliese Hoerr (Bro. Jake and Sis. Wanda), as it was announced to the church she has found peace and is awaiting baptism.

Bro. Dick Beery was in the hospital this month.

Dear Readers, as a New Year arrives, let us draw ever closer to our Lord. We can see and feel more danger every time we are out and about. Oh! How we need him!

ARIZONA, PRESCOTT

Jane Hodges

Our church has never had regular fellowship on Wednesday evenings until this year. Bible studies, singings, or visits to a nursing home are now being held every Wednesday with plans announced the Sunday preceding that Wednesday. Anyone visiting our area is welcome to fellowship with us and can call any of our members for details.

On Friday, December 14, Laura Coughlin (daughter of Bro. Ed and Sis. Gayle Schambach) was involved in a head-on collision. At the time of this report (December 16), she has already had three surgeries and remains in critical condition at a Phoenix hospital. We ask for your prayers for her and her family. May the Lord be with her through the weeks ahead and grant her a full recovery. "For with God nothing shall be impossible." (Luke 1:37)

Bro. Greg Stoller (Sis. Jill, Forrest, IL) was our visiting minister in December and we wish to thank him for serving the Lord and us. We have had two or more visitors every Sunday and we are thankful that the Lord has blessed us with the freedom and provisions to travel and fellowship with each other.

ARIZONA, TUCSON

Lisa Knapp

It's a cold, rainy day in December as I write this. We are enjoying our holiday preparations in weather that actually feels like winter, our version of winter at least!

We were blessed to have a group of college students come through on their way to Magdalena, Mexico, for their winter break. We enjoyed the fellowship these Sundays provide. We wish to express our appreciation to Elder Bro. Wayne Banwart (Champaign, IL), Bro. Marshall Heinold (Ixtlan) and Bro. Brian Huber (Francesville, IN) for their willingness to share God's Word with us on the pulpit. It was a wonderful Sunday all around.

We also wish to thank our Elder Bro. Jon Kokanovich and his wife, Sis. Nancy, and our Deacon, Bro. Herb Knochel, Jr., and his wife, Sis. Laurie, for their time and love as they spent the day with us recently. I know God will add His rich blessing to them all.

By the time you read this, it will be 2008. The Tucson church wishes everyone a safe, healthy New Year in our Lord. We are already anticipating the arrival of our winter visitors!

CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

Yasmin Koehl

One by one we can see our little congregation growing! Sis. Shara Dotterer (Forrest, IL) is another answer to prayer. What a blessing it is to have Sis. Shara as a part of our flock. We appreciate her zeal to gather with us whenever we're assembled and her readiness to participate in church activities. We pray the Lord richly bless her here and that she can feel our love and prayers on her behalf.

Cold winter weather brings many of our brethren to sunny southern California! The Lord has opened the way for church services to be held on a trial basis in the Palm Springs area. The first Sunday worship services, Lord willing, are scheduled to be held at the home of Bro. Lazlo and Sis. Maria Cser, on Sunday, February 3, at 10:15 AM and 12:45 PM. All are welcome! The Cser's address is 13070 Catalpa Ave, Desert Hot Springs, CA 92240. Phone # 760-329-0990. If you're planning to attend, please contact the Cser Family or Elder Bro. Peter Petrovic at 760-789-1504 for directions.

We eagerly look forward to the arrival of winter guests and the joys we find in fellowshiping and greeting brothers and sisters who have gathered with us in the past or for the first time. God has tremendously blessed us with a precious brotherhood. May we all continue to draw closer to Him and lift our hearts in constant prayer, one for another.

KITCHENER, ONTARIO

CANADA

Kim Leman

"And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God

shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

Luke 1:30-33

How thankful we are for our Savior, Jesus, who came to earth as a baby, then died for us, that we might have life and hope!

Our children joined together in singing and sharing verses at our Christmas program. What a blessing to pass on the wonderful story of love!

We appreciated the ministering brothers who labored to bring God's Word to us this past month. They were Bros. Gary Brown (Sis. Jane, Forrest, IL), John Lehman (Sis. Ruth Ann, Wolcott, IN), Randy Gasser (Sis. Sue, Detroit, MI), and Todd Graf (Sis. Lydia, Akron, OH).

We wish Amy Saddler (Bro. Wayne and Sis. Alison) and her new husband, Shane Jerome, God's blessings as they were wed on November 24.

COLORADO, DENVER

Ann Gonglach

"Let the year be given to God in its every moment! The year is made up of minutes: let these be watched as having been dedicated to God! It is in the sanctification of the small that hallowing of the large is secure."

— *G. Campbell Morgan*

This past month, Bro. Jeff Bahr (Kiowa, KS) ministered to us. We appreciate visiting ministers as well as those who faithfully serve us week after week.

We had a farewell potluck to say goodbye to Sis. Kathy Bikadi, who has moved to Mansfield, Ohio. We will miss Sis. Kathy and wish her God's leading and nearness in her life.

Sis. Maggie Shrenk has also moved away after three months in Denver as a traveling nurse. We were glad to have Sis. Maggie with us and have the oppor-

tunity to get to know her.

Aside from the typical seasonal colds, we as a church, have been blessed with good health. Many were grateful to be able to travel and be with family at Christmas time. And we're especially thankful for God's healing of Sis. Marlene Leman (Bro. Tom) after knee replacement surgery.

In December, we had our annual Christmas caroling at local nursing homes and our Sunday school Christmas program. It's a blessing to be able to sing praises to our God for His marvelous gift to us and to hear the children do the same.

Also in December, Elder Bro. Mike and Sis. Deb Leman traveled to Ixtlan, Mexico, to help ordain Bro. Matt Gerber as a minister in the church there.

May the Lord be with each of us in the coming year and remind us to make the most of every minute that He gives to us.

Note of Thanks:

A big thank you to all who have kept me in your prayers during my knee replacement surgery and recovery. God has been good and I am almost fully recovered. May God bless each of you.

Sis. Marlene Leman

CONNECTICUT

ROCKVILLE

Laura Virkler

Amber Rocke

All things bright and beautiful,
All creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful
The Lord God made them all.
Hymns of Zion #207

A fond memory as a Sunday School teacher for me is hearing all of the children's voices singing out on this precious song. When I look out the window and see the beautiful snow all about us, their voices often come to mind. Our Sunday School children have worked hard throughout this

past month in preparation for their Christmas Program. May the Lord bless their efforts, and all those involved. We as a congregation anticipate this evening devoted to the birth of Christ.

Earlier this month, Elder Bros. Ben Wiegand (Sis. Michelle, Philadelphia, PA) and Duane Farney (Sis. Karen, Croghan, NY), came to assist our congregation as we prayerfully considered the installation of an ordained deacon. Bro. Warren Zahner (Sis. Bonnie) was blessed with the unanimous support of our congregation to carry out these duties, pending the Elder Conference in February. May this couple continue to feel our love and support during this time of waiting. We appreciated so much having these Elders with us throughout this blessed weekend. May God bless their labors.

How often it seems that death is coupled with the birth of a new soul. It reminds us of the frailty of life and that "...all flesh is as grass, and the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth and the flower thereof fadeth away" (1 Peter 1:22). We sympathize with our Sis. Tecca Virkler (Bro. Scott) as she mourns the loss of her grandfather, Bro. James Zimmer (Sis. Clara) from Mansfield, OH. Our prayers also extend to Bro. Joe Skipper (Sis. Alma) and Sis. Deloris Skipper (Bro. Pete, dec.) as they have lost a dear family member, Sophie.

We rejoice with Bro. Ben and Sis. Carla Virkler at the birth of their first child, Adrienne Freida. We are so thankful for the health of both mother and child.

The Sunday following Thanksgiving, Bro. Bruce Gottier (Guy and Sis. Beth) and Sis. Laura Hills (Bro. Scott and Sis. Luanne) were joined in holy matrimony. We pray that the Lord will provide for this couple as they adjust to the changes that marriage often brings.

As the time of Christmas approaches, may the love of Christ rule in our hearts and actions, and continue to

guide us into another year.

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
WASHINGTON
Henrietta Meyer**

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above."

James 1:17

We have many gifts to remember this month, the first and foremost being our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

We have been blessed this year with many volunteers coming to help our congregation, whether it was the work teams fixing up the building or caretakers coming to be a part of our congregation. Our November caretakers were Bro. Jim and Sis. Juanita Walter from Fairbury, IL. Over the past year three families from Philadelphia have been blessed to have grandparents only a few hours away rather than a 10-12 hour drive.

Ministers giving of themselves to serve us this month were Bro. John Baumgartner (Sis. Tammy, Bluffton, IN), Bro. Shawn Metzger (Sis. Sandy, Philadelphia, PA), Bro. Jesse Bedolla (Sis. Bonnie, Detroit, MI), and Bro. Greg Rassi (Sis. Carla, Chicago, IL).

We are glad to offer the opportunity for worship and fellowship to those away from their home due to work assignments like Bro. Bob Fehr (Iowa City, IA) and Micah Bachtold (Elgin, IL). Other visitors this month were from Philadelphia, PA; Elgin, IL; and Gridley, KS.

Directions to our new location depend on which way you are coming. The best suggestion is to contact the folks listed below or the contact in the minister's book for detailed directions; we have the directions near our phones. Due to the limited parking in the residential area, we need to know ahead of time how many visitors we will have. We may need to arrange for off-site parking.

If you are planning to visit Washington, D.C. area for vacation or business,

please contact Bro. Joe and Sis. Holly Bohart at jbohart@gmail.com or Sis. Henrietta Meyer at (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 thankful to have visiting ministers, Bro. Ron Jones (Portland, OR) and Bro. Gene Lehman (Sis. Verna, Wolcott, IN). We pray for God's blessings on His servants.

Bro. Gene gave a presentation on some of the Eastern Europe projects at our Wednesday night service.

We had our annual Christmas potluck and caroling. We were joined by some of our winter residents and visitors to help spread God's love to those less fortunate and confined to a nursing home.

We were saddened yet rejoicing that our dear Sis. Delores Van Norman's journey on earth has ended. She is survived by daughters, Victoria Stoller and Deborah Kendall; son, Bruce Stoller (Ingrid); their father, Victor Stoller; sisters, Sis. Marge (Bro. Jim) Gerber, Sis. Melvane (Bro. Russell) Stoller; brother, Ken (Candy) Zimmerman; and three grandchildren. Bro. Todd Stoller (Latty, OH) assisted Bro. Roger Sauder with the service for his aunt.

**FLORIDA
NORTH FORT MYERS
Naomi Vogel**

Although our congregation has diminished again because some have returned to their northern homes for the holidays, we have had a lot of things happening this month.

Our Elder Bro. Ed Schwartz and his wife, Sis. Jeni, came early in the month to share the Memorandum with us. We

had a potluck dinner at the church after services. We always look forward to Bro. Ed's visits!

We were saddened to learn of the death of our dear Sis. Sara Hunyady (Bro. Andy). She had been suffering for a long time and now she has sweet peace. Also, Sis. Louise Heinold from Francesville went home to be with the Lord. She and her late husband, Bro. Orié, wintered here for many years, but she had not been able to come for the last few years.

Usually we do not have a Christmas Program like most of our congregations since we do not have a regular Sunday School group. However, the Klopfenstein family from Peoria was here last Sunday and they were willing to sing a few songs for us. They are a very musical family and the three girls have done some recordings. It was a real blessing for us!

Wednesday night we were blessed with the presence of ministering brothers from Mansfield: Bro. Mike Baumann and his son, Bro. Mike Baumann, and their family. Thank you for feeding us with the Living Word.

Once again we are about to celebrate the birth of our dear Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and then the dawning of another year. May we all bask in the wonder of it all and feel the warmth of His love for us!

FLORIDA, SARASOTA
DiAnne Brown
Robin Wiegand

"But while he thought on these things, behold an angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph...fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins."

Matthew 1:20-2

One of the greatest miracles of the

Christmas story is Mary and Joseph's decision to follow God's direction for their lives. The path which Mary, and ultimately Joseph, were called to walk is almost impossible to fathom by today's standards. The strength of their faith continues to amaze and humble us.

Finding Christmas spirit while living in Florida can be challenging. The blue skies, swaying palm trees and bright green foliage all around do not help. I've learned much of my holiday cheer was triggered by gray skies and falling temperatures. We would whine over our cocoa about all the snow and ice we were missing "back home." Then this year we realized, Jesus was born in a desert ... not a snow bank. The wise men probably rode camels...not "one-horse open sleighs." It seems our lack of cheer is a problem not of latitude ...but attitude.

Sarasota was privileged to host the December World Relief Board member meeting. What a blessing that was for our little church. It was exciting to hear over 20 churches represented in the greetings. Such a comfort to see the strength of our brotherhood. The Board gave an enlightening presentation about some of the work being done, which is simply amazing. It was so inspiring and we are thankful that over \$855,000 was allocated to aid the efforts in the coming year. Special thanks to those at our church who assisted with the hosting.

Visiting ministers this month included Elder Bros. Wayne Banwart (Champaign, IL), Kent Heimer (Taylor, MO) and Dan Kilgus (Remington, IN); and Bros. Scott Shafer (South Bend, IN), Darren Price (Milford, IN), Joe Klotzle (Altadena, CA) and Steve Ringger (Bluffton North, IN). Thank you, dear brothers, for your ministry.

December 9 we were treated to the Sunday School Christmas program. The children did a wonderful job sharing the good news about the Nativity story and singing carols, followed by refreshments and fellowship. Thank

you to all who helped make the program special.

After a difficult illness, dear Sis. Sara Hunyady (Bro. Andy) was called home to glory on December 12. Her funeral service was held at the Sarasota church on December 15 by Bro. Lenard Meyer (Chicago, IL). We will miss her sweet, gentle spirit and pray Bro. Andy will feel God's arms around him at this time.

February 9 is the date planned for the annual Sunday School Auction. Please consider how you might contribute and contact Bro. Bill Roscher with any questions. This auction provides most of the funding for our Sunday School programs throughout the year and is always a special time of joy and fellowship. We hope to see you there.

Best wishes for God's abundant blessings and health throughout the New Year.

GEORGIA, ATLANTA
Melinda Gramm

It was a blessing for all to hear the children sing and tell of the Christ Child's birth in their Christmas program. We heard the familiar story of the manger and the angels and shepherds. We also heard that Bethlehem was sleeping and missed the birth of Jesus and went down in history as a city with no room for it's King. Later, in Jerusalem, they missed the Savior of the world dying on the cross and also went down in history as a city with no room for it's King. We were asked will Jesus come again to carry His bride away and leave us slumbering where we lay. Will we have room for our King? The children ended on a joyous note thanking Jesus for being our Savior and Redeemer.

Elder Bro. Steve Gutwein (Sis. Linda, Francesville, IN) shared the reading of the Conference letter with Bro. Tom. We appreciate the efforts of Bro. Steve for faithfully shepherding our flock.

We rejoiced with Sis. Staci Stoller (Bro. Linn and Sis. Brenda) as she gave her testimony and was baptized. Elder Bro. Ted Witzig (Sis. Cindy, Morton, IL) shared in the service with Bro. Tom. Sis. Staci lives in Morton, IL.

ILLINOIS, BELVIDERE
Sheila McCoy
Doreen Moser

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

We are so thankful for our many visiting ministers this month. We thank Bros. Alan Schambach (Remington, IN), Dewayne Dill (Minneapolis, MN), Brian Waibel (Champaign, IL), Jeff Grimm (Goodfield, IL), and Gary Anliker (Elgin, IL) for their work for our Master.

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

Our congregation is filled with gladness that Derek Wettstein (Bro. Chad and Sis. Jan) has begun his walk with the Lord. Our Lord is full of mercy and grace.

Another year of progress,
 Another year of praise,
 Another year of proving
 Thy presence all the days.

It was a joyous occasion to hear our Sunday school children sing praises to our Lord Emmanuel during the Christmas program and proclaim, "There is room in my heart for Thee."

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

We were grateful for the opportuni-

ties to sing Christmas carols at several nursing homes and to be a witness for our Jesus Christ. The chili dinner after caroling is a special time for us. Several in the Madison, WI, area also sang Christmas hymns at a rest home on a Thursday evening.

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

Our Belvidere congregation extends our greetings to you all. May you be blessed with peace, joy and love in 2008.

ILLINOIS
BLOOMINGTON-NORMAL
Jen Heiniger
Betsy Zimmerman

We know that all things, both the happy and sad, can be used by God to bring us closer to Him and bless us. Our congregation experienced many such events this month, including a wedding, several births, and the sorrow of loss.

Visiting ministers included Elder Bro. Ron Messner (Washington), Bro. Jeff Thames (Washington) and Bro. Tim Hohulin (Roanoke). We thank all our ministers for their willingness to serve us.

Our Sis. Jolynn Schmidgall married Bro. Kevin Hodel (Washington) on November 18. Their parents are Bro. Randy and Sis. Marge Schmidgall and Kent and Janet Hodel. May God richly bless your marriage.

Thursday, November 29, was a big day for babies in our congregation — four boys were born that day. Bro. Adrian and Sis. Melodee Rabe had double the blessings with twin boys, Jayden Lee and Jesse Loran. They are welcomed home by big sister, Emma, and grandparents, Bro. Derek and Sis. Julie Rabe and Bro. Marvin and Sis. Mary Bachtold (Forrest). Bro. Kory

and Sis. Megan Kaeb welcomed Sean Gary to their family. He joins big sister, Mya, and brothers, Simon and Jonah. His grandparents are Bro. Bill and Sis. Patsy Kaeb (Roanoke) and Bro. Gary and Sis. Marla Ringger (Gridley). Bro. Ben and Sis. Molly Knochel welcomed their first son, Samuel Benjamin. His happy grandparents are Bro. Dave and Sis. Maxine Hodel and Bro. Eric and Sis. Penny Knochel (Taylor). On December 12, Bro. Andy and Sis. Brooke Feucht welcomed their first child, Annika Joy. Her grandparents are Bro. Brad and Sis. Cheryl Baurer (Roanoke) and Bro. Jordan and Sis. Kathy Feucht (Princeville).

Bro. Jim and Sis. Ann Kellenberger welcomed their first grandchild, Anabella Rose, on November 15. Ana's parents are Justin and Laura Kellenberger. Bro. Dave and Sis. Chris Zeller also welcomed grandson, Ty Madden Zeller on November 11. His parents are Luke and Ashley Zeller. James and Sis. Marlene Steidinger welcomed a new granddaughter into their family. Ellie Joy was born to Jason and Laura Strough on November 16. For all these parents adjusting to the changes of a new baby, we wish you God's guidance.

Finally, we extend our love and sympathy to Sis. Nancy Kauffman (Bro. Jim) and family in the death of her sister.

ILLINOIS, BRADFORD
Philip and Donna Nenadov

By the time this article is read, another year will have passed. Millions of people will have stayed up past midnight to welcome in another year. Some people didn't live to see another year. For them, 2008 was only a time to come, not a time to live. May we live every day as if this is the last year we will see, for if we live for the Lord, there will never be another year to look forward in eternity.

The last baby to be born in 2007 was

Alex Bradley Joos. Alex's parents are Bro. Tyler and Sis. Tonya. Excited siblings are Tori and Lane. Thankful grandparents are Bro. Ralph and Sis. Jenny Joos, and Bro. Brad and Sis. Teresa Gudeman, all from Bradford.

The last wedding of 2007 took place on December 16, 2007, when Bro. Brandon Baer and Sis. Melissa Ehnle took their vows before many witnesses. May the Lord be at the center of their union each day. Bro. Glen Braker (Sis. Audrey, Princeville) was with us that day. Parents of the couple are Ron and Sis. Deann Baer, and Bro. Donn and Sis. Tracy Ehnle, all from Bradford.

Bro. Greg Rassi (Sis. Carla, Chicago) expounded God's Word this past month. Many thanks for serving us.

"To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven."

Ecclesiastes 1:1

Whatever season or time it is in your life, there is always a beginning and an end.

One last thought on time: A ministering brother recently told me something that has stuck with me. He said "time is on the side of the believer." For everyone else, time is running out. God be with you 'til we meet again.

ILLINOIS, CHICAGO

Rachel Meyer

Greetings from Chicago. We wish to thank Bro. Howard Plattner (Alto, MI) for ministering to us this past month. We thank God for inspiring our dear brothers.

Several in our congregation have experienced hospitalization and we thank God for His mercy. Sis. Gladys Fisher fell and broke her hip. We are thankful her surgery went well and pray for a speedy recovery. Our friend, Tim Metzger, son of Bro. Virg and Sis. Mary, is in need of prayers as he faces a long recovery from a broken pelvis/hip. Tim was injured in an accident and is

back home in Chicago recovering. We wish to assure Tim and his family of our love and concern, and most importantly our prayers, during this difficult time. Ed Foxe, son of Bro. George and Sis. Velda, is currently being treated for diabetes. Ed had a very serious foot infection that responded to treatment. He spent time in the hospital in Wisconsin and we thank God that He was merciful. It is during times like these we have the opportunity to pray for and comfort those for whom we care so much.

We were saddened to hear of the passing of Sis. Sara (Bro. Andy) Hunyady in Florida. Sis. Sara was a longtime resident of Chicago and was baptized here. May God be near those who are left behind.

We wish to welcome Bro. Scott Wettstein, formerly of Gridley, IL, as he has found employment in the Chicago area. It is a blessing to have him worship with us. We pray he will feel at home.

The evening of December 8 found the Sunday School children excitedly presenting their Christmas program. The theme was, "Were You There?" and it was beautifully sung and narrated. We thank the children, teachers and parents for their dedication and hard work. An enjoyable day of worship followed along with Christmas Caroling and a delicious meal of chili. May God bless all who worked to make the weekend go smoothly.

Recently I had the opportunity to play some games with a little 7 year-old girl. Due to sickness, she had to stay inside during recess break at school and I joined her. She found a game that she wanted to play but was not sure of all the rules, so I took the box and started to read for the directions. After some silence (I could not find the directions), the young girl piped up, "Is it in a different language?" I was very amused that a 7 year-old child would come up with that question – until I recalled her background. This particular student is bi-lingual. Her family heritage is Pol-

ish and she attends Polish school on Saturdays. Asking about a language other than English was quite natural from her point of view.

What about the Bible? It has always been available in my primary language, but it has come to my attention that there are still people groups – even in the 21st century, that cannot read the Word of God because it has not been translated into their language. I am so thankful that we are given opportunity to share our resources with those on the mission field. Not all are working on learning a new language so they can translate the Bible – but some are. This cannot be an easy task. At this time of year as we gather with family and read the Christmas Story, let us remember to pray for men, women, boys and girls who have yet to hear or read the story of Christ's birth. Let us not forget the missionaries, too, who endeavor to do the Lord's work on foreign soil. A very Blessed Christmas to all.

CHAMPAIGN, ILLINOIS

Jackie Eisenmann

"God Uses Ordinary People in Extraordinary Ways" was the theme for this year's Sunday school Christmas program on Sunday, December 16. The children reminded us that God called humble and willing, yet very ordinary, people to fulfill His plan in sending His Son to this earth. We saw how God used ordinary people in various "extraordinary ways": Joseph and Mary were willing to be used as "instruments" in executing God's plan, the shepherds and wise men were "witnesses" and "messengers" in their obedience "to go and see this great thing", and their willingness to "spread the good news". The children then challenged us to be humble and willing to allow God to use us as He would will in our lives. By our obedience to Him and willingness to seek Him out, we will experience great things in our lives as well. Remember what the angel told Mary in Luke 1:37 "For with God nothing shall be impos-

sible." Let's all be instruments, witnesses, and messengers for God!

The children did a wonderful job presenting their parts and songs to us despite the unfavorable conditions outside. Due to a heavy snowfall and high winds, many grandparents were unable to attend, but we were thankful for God's protection and blessing. After the program, our Sunday school and families had the opportunity to be messengers for God as they Christmas caroled at two area nursing homes. Afterwards we all enjoyed a chili supper at church.

Being reminded by the Sunday school how God uses "ordinary" people in "extraordinary" ways, we are thankful that Bro. Clark Stoller (Gridley, IL) was here to worship with us and was willing to be used on the pulpit on Sunday, November 18.

ILLINOIS, CISSNA PARK

**Pam Walder
Janie Waldbeser**

"Love of all gifts is the greatest..."

We wish God's blessings on the recent marriage of Sis. Janice Manz (Bro. Ken and Sis. Gwen, Junction, OH) to Bro. Chad Kaeb (Bro. Eric and Sis. LouAnn). We had a reception for them here in Cissna Park.

We're thankful to know there are souls still answering God's call to repentance. We pray for the Lord to bless our converts, Joann Kaeb, and Brett Steffen (Bro. Rod and Sis. Beth). Brett is currently assembling with the Champaign congregation.

It was a blessing to go Christmas caroling to several area homes and nursing homes the first Sunday of December. May God bless the efforts to cheer the elderly and needy.

We're thankful to hear of the safe arrival of Levi Joseph, born to Bro. Mark and Sis. Janie Waldbeser. Levi is welcomed home by older siblings, Kaleb, Heidi, Jared and Micah. We wish God's blessings on their growing family.

As we anticipate the Christmas season, may we remember to be thankful to God for the gift of His Son Jesus, who died for us and gave us hope of eternal life.

ILLINOIS, CONGERVILLE

Holly Zobrist

God has blessed our congregation with another minister. Bro. Dale Banwart (Sis. Missy) has been called to this work. We are thankful that they are willing to allow God to use them in this way, and we'll be keeping them in our prayers.

We are rejoicing with Bro. Brent and Sis. Kay Stoller as their oldest son, Daniel, has made the decision to turn his life to the Lord in repentance. The word tells us that angels in Heaven rejoice over one sinner that repents.

We were thankful to welcome two new souls into our fold. Rachel Hoerr (Bro. Max and Sis. Suzanne) and Amber Wettstein (Bro. Dennis and Sis. Emily) shared their testimonies with us and were baptized the first weekend in December. We were thankful to have Elder Bro. Ervin Knecht (Sis. Sandra, Eureka) with us that weekend. Other ministers that joined us that weekend include Bro. Greg Lehman (Sis. Mary Beth, Wolcott), Bro. Ted Steffen (Sis. Sandra, Alto), and Bro. Dennis Rassi (Sis. Diane, Fairbury). Other visiting ministers this past month include Bro. Darren Fehr (Sis. Nora, West Bend) and Bro. Tim Zimmerman (Sis. Barbara, Lamont- Gridley). We are thankful that these brothers have allowed themselves to be used by the Lord.

We bid farewell to Bro. Walt Miller who passed away this past month. Our prayers are with his wife, Sis. Betty, and family: Sis. Sharon McClure (Bro. Bob), Jack (Jean), James (Gwen), and Sis. Kathy Zimmerman (Bro. Ben).

ILLINOIS, ELGIN

Amy Gasser

Miriam Gasser

December 1-2 was a special weekend, during which Natalie Martin (Bro. Dave and Sis. Jean) and Carol Kellenberger (Bro. Lloyd) of Gainesville, FL, gave their testimonies and were baptized. We are thankful to welcome them as our sisters in the Lord.

Our hearts are rejoicing over another soul who has answered the call to repentance. May Chris Leman (Bro. Keith and Sis. Libby) experience the power of prayer and grace, as he yields to God's will.

It was encouraging to receive many visitors during the past month. Among them were Elder Bros. Ron Messner (Washington, IL), Art Metz (Silverton, OR), and Doug Schock (Bloomfield-Pulaski, IA) and ministering Bros. Paul Kilgus (Fairbury, IL), Darren Plattner (Champaign, IL), Alan Schambach (Remington, IN), and Dean Steffen (Belvidere, IL). We were strengthened and exhorted as these brothers spoke through the inspiration of the Spirit.

On December 9, there was a cake reception at Resthaven to observe Sis. Rose Reber's 100th birthday. Our families went caroling the same afternoon. Bringing some joy to the less fortunate produced a blessing for us also.

The Sunday School presented their Christmas program on December 16. We appreciated the preparation that went into such an enjoyable evening.

Sis. Julia Graf, Verona Schock, Carolyn Feucht (Charles), and Mary Krueger (Jim) are home recovering from various surgeries and hospitalizations. Arvid Miller (Cindy) and Carolyn Feucht face further treatments. Our prayers for healing are with each one.

May God comfort those who are in sorrow, at the loss of loved ones. Wilbur Schmidgall (Cicely) passed away November 25 in Surprise, AZ. He

was the father of Sis. Vicki Kellenberger (Bro. Ken). Bro. Elvis Kellenberger, Verona Schock, and Sis. Kathy Schifferer lost their sister, Jan Straugh, on December 4. Such events impress on us the frailty of life. Let us resolve to redeem our time in the coming year.

ILLINOIS, EUREKA
Cindy Stoller
Dee Baer

We are so thankful and rejoice with Dwane and Tami Fehr as they have started repenting in our church. The seed that was planted long ago has sprouted and is bringing forth fruit as the Lord gives the increase. We welcome their children, Lydia, Johnathon, and Hank, as they join us in Sunday School and worship services.

We have been concerned for several who have experienced difficult physical health. These include Sis. Evie Gudeman (Bro. Don), Sandy Jones (Tim), Bro. Hank Blunier (Sis. Wilma), Bro. Sid Lemman (Sis. Ann), Sis. Helen Wiegand (Bro. Bob), and Sis. Jane Stoller (Bro. Jim). While we help and encourage where humanly possible, let us be prayerful and commit their well-being to our compassionate Lord and Creator.

Bro. Roger Bradle (Sis. Ila) has experienced the loss of his mother, Sis. Anna Bradle. We share the sorrow of the parting with their family, and trust the Holy Spirit to comfort and provide.

Leah Jean joined the family of Bro. Phil and Sis. Rebecca Braker. The rest of the children (Hannah, Daniel, Caleb, Jacob, and Jared) have sure shown some excitement toward their new little sibling.

Also, Bro. Tom and Sis. Edie Stoller have two new grandsons. Twin boys, Benjamin and Joshua, were born to Mike and Brenda Geiger (Middleborough, MA). What a precious privilege and yet how tremendous is the responsibility of raising children. We rejoice with these couples as they receive the

gift of the new babies.

Bro. Ben and Sis. Audrey Ehnle just celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary. We are thankful for their good example of faithfulness.

Visiting ministers this month include Bros. Loren Schrenk (St. Louis, MO), Kent Getz (Elgin, IA), Duane Rocke (Minneapolis, MN), and John Wiegand (Silverton, OR). We are thankful that the family ties to Eureka often bring distant ministers home to their relatives. May God bless them as they labor on our behalf.

Reminder: Eureka Silver Lining dues should be paid in January. Please contact Sis. Cindy Stoller or Sis. Dee Baer if you have had a change of address for receiving the Silver Lining.

ILLINOIS, FAIRBURY
Elizabeth Fehr
Anna Schmidgall

In October of 1863, President Abraham Lincoln made a proclamation to set aside the last Thursday of November as Thanksgiving Day. In that proclamation he stated, "They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God, Who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy."

As we reflect on our many blessings, we count our converts among the greatest. We are thankful for Rebecca Herr (Sis. Cindy) and for Rich and Karen Stoller as they have answered God's call to repentance. May He grant them grace and an overcoming spirit.

Our congregation rejoiced with Troy Steffen (Bro. Henry and Sis. Lola), Bryan Steffen (Bro. Chris and Sis. Kay) and Clint Steffen (Jenny) as they shared their testimonies of faith and were baptized the second weekend of December. Elder Bros. Mark Masters (Mansfield, OH) and Wayne Anliker (Forrest, IL) assisted Bro. Rick in this joyous work. Bros. Gary Brown (Forrest, IL) and Clark Stoller (Gridley, IL) shared the pulpit. We also thank Bros. Nate Wieland (Goodfield,

IL) and Darren Fehr (West Bend, IA) for bringing God's Word to us.

Three families welcomed babies into their homes. First-time parents, Bro. Wes and Sis. Erinn Steidinger, have a little son, Lucas Wesley. Bro. Martin and Sis. Trish Steidinger and William and Juanita Kaeb (Arrowsmith, IL) are thankful grandparents. Bro. Mark, Sis. Tonia, Dakota, Justus, Cheyanne, and Summer Bazzell are enjoying little Haley Jean. Her grandparents are Bro. Don and Sis. Carol Bazzell and Fred and Helen Voeste of Forrest, IL. Chris and Abby Kafer welcome Teagan Benjamin along with grandparents, Bro. Ben and Sis. Carol Kafer and Marvin and Cindy Schmid from Cissna Park, IL.

The old story of Jesus' birth was once again told to us by our Sunday School at the Christmas Program. We never grow tired of hearing the familiar hymns and verses.

Our prayers are with Bro. Don Broquard and Ardella Zimmerman as they spent time in the hospital and continue to be with Bro. Ben Lorch during his time of illness.

Note of Thanks:

We want to thank everyone who remembered us during Helen's illness and William's surgery with prayers, cards, phone calls, and visits. It was greatly appreciated. May our dear Lord be your rich Rewarder.

In Christian Love,
William and Helen Fehr

ILLINOIS, FORREST
Jill Wenger
Lori Lemman

We are thankful to welcome our two new sisters, Sis. Dawn and Sis. Jenise Kaeb (daughters of Morris and Brenda), into the fold as we listened to their testimonies. We thank Elder Bro. Rick Plattner from Fairbury for assisting our Bro. Wayne in these duties.

Andrea and Kira Edelman welcome home their new little brother as Wyatt Jeremy was born to Bro. Kraig and Sis. Carrie Edelman. His thankful grand-

parents are Bro. Ray and Sis. Shelly Steidinger and Bro. Levi and Sis. Donna Edelman. We pray God's blessings upon this home as they raise their children to know God and His ways.

Our prayers are with our Bro. Larry Bachman (Sis. Donna) as he has undergone surgery. Though the path may be uncertain, we pray that God will continually be with this family and grant His healing where He sees fit.

We extend our sympathy to Don and Marge Stephens in the passing of his sister, Shirley Brucker. May God comfort the family.

Note of Thanks:

Dear Loved Ones,

We would like to thank everyone who has shown us so much love over the past 4 ½ years through prayers, meals, cards, and gifts of love. We have felt the love from everyone during Blake's illness. We have not been able to thank each of you personally, but know we do appreciate your kindness! Please continue to pray for Blake and his family. God bless you all.

In Christian love,

The Don and Barb Hall family

Also, there was a beige ladies London Fog coat mistakenly taken from Forrest church in April. Left in its place was a beige belted coat with a scarf. Please contact Lori Leman at 815-688-3401 if you have any information.

ILLINOIS, GOODFIELD

**Rita Bauman
Amber Grimm**

"In the beginning God..."

Genesis 1:1

We are so often told to pattern our lives after the Bible, so in this New Year may we start all things with God and keep Him near throughout the year to come.

Ministering the Word to us this past

month has been Bro. Stephen Baner (Sis. Donnalou, Gridley, IL), Bro. Don Manz (Sis. Connie, Junction, OH), and Bro. Brian Huber (Sis. Jackie, Francesville, IN). We are thankful these brothers could be with us during the Christmas season and share the old, old story.

Brenna Marie was born to Bro. Kurt and Sis. Joan Plattner at the beginning of the month. Welcoming her home are her brothers, Reggie, Toby, and Hadley. Grandparents are Bro. Sam and Sis. Pat Plattner and Bro. Wayne and Sis. Rosemary Wiegand. May God grant wisdom to Bro. Kurt and Sis. Joan as they raise their children to know Him.

Our prayers are with Mark Rocke (Connie), JoAnne Wiegand (Ed), and Bro. Shorty Hoffman (Sis. Evelyn) as they were hospitalized this month. We are thankful Mark and JoAnne are home now and pray for Bro. Shorty's continued recovery.

Bro. Tony and Sis. Deonne Monfre had two children announce engagements this month. Sis. Brooke Monfre announced her engagement to Bro. John Widmer (Bro. Neal and Sis. Kristine, West Lafayette, IN) while Bro. Clayton Monfre announced his engagement to Sis. Trisha Sauder (Bro. John and Sis. Peg, Morton, IL). God's blessings on both of these couples.

Special thanks to all of our Sunday School students and teachers for their part in the Christmas program. "Tis not the manger, but the cross, that sets the spirit free." (Hymns of Zion #36)

Note of Thanks:

Our sincere thanks to all of you who expressed love to us in so many ways during my hospital stay and recovery from surgery. Bill and I are especially thankful for all of the prayers said on our behalf. We are blessed to be a part of this body of believers. May God bless each of you.

In Christian Love,
Bill and Terry Hart

ILLINOIS, GRIDLEY
Perry A. Klopfenstein

Very likely the year 2007 will be remembered as one of record crops for corn and soybeans. Augmenting this was a demand factor that led to nearly historic prices. It was a wonderful harvest with high prices. It was a great harvest. Yet, the Scriptures are ever reminding us of a greater harvest, and the most important one! It is the harvesting of lost souls. The fields are "white unto harvest," and we are exhorted to go into that harvest.

The work of spreading the gospel and living Godly lives remain as our utmost duty here on earth. One has to wonder on any given day how many souls, worldwide, evolve from innocence to accountability. And day after day this is occurring! How many in our denomination pass from innocence to accountability each day? We as believers (having repented for our sins and been converted) have a solemn duty to help draw souls to the Saviour, and to uphold and promote His glorious ways.

Our prayers are with Bro. Tom Miller, who has had a recurrence of cancer. May God heal him if it is according to His will. Bro. Jerry Christensen had hip surgery on December 26, and is recovering nicely. Bro. Elmer Witzig is still recovering from surgery. Bro. Keith Zimmerman had pneumonia.

Visiting ministers on Christmas Day were Bros. Brandon Emch (Kansas City, MO) and Bruce Endress (Bradford). We were thankful for the very large crowd, and the many friends of the truth who gathered with us. A full house in church is a wonderful blessing. May the message of repentance resound deeply in the hearts of those who still stand outside the new covenant of grace and salvation. And may the redeemed, by the grace of God, remain true and faithful to the end.

The annual Christmas program was held on Sunday afternoon, Decem-

ber 16. It is a blessing to witness our youth present the story of the Christ child. It is comforting to know that children are being taught the most important thing(s), and may God nurture the planted seeds that when they become accountable they will, by God's grace, turn to Him in repentance. A nice feature of the program is when the entire Sunday School sings "Joy To The World".

Sis. Amanda Hodel was announced for marriage to Bro. Cameron Walder of West Lafayette, Indiana. Her parents are Bro. Dennis and Sis. Brenda Hodel. He is the son of Bro. Russ and Sis. Darlene Walder, West Lafayette. The couple is planning an April 27, 2008, wedding. We wish them God's grace and favor.

During 2007 there were seven births and four deaths. Nine souls were baptized.

ILLINOIS, MACOMB

Norm and Janis Rechkemmer

On November 28, we were blessed to have Bro. Marvin Leman (Bradford, IL) bring God's Word to our services. Thank you to this dear brother and all those who traveled to Macomb to support our gathering here. Our group may be small but we are always reminded of the power of love and prayers of our dear brothers and sisters. The December 12 services had to be cancelled due to the ice and snow. Morton was scheduled to come that evening and we were sad to have to miss our fellowship with them.

We were blessed to become grandparents this month. Luke Matthew was born on November 29 to Lesley and Matt Blackford. Big brothers, Alec and Isaac, were so excited to bring their little brother home. What a joy to see this much-loved baby brought into our family.

We celebrated a wedding this month as Bro. Kevin and Sis. Lindsay (Wagenbach) Frank were married on December 16 in Oakville, IA. We pray

that God will grant this young couple many blessings as they start their life as one in His name.

Our next scheduled service is January 16 with Taylor, MO, as the supporting church. Bro. Kevin and Sis. Lindsay will be housesitting for us as we leave for Tucson, AZ. They will continue to host the Wednesday evening church services in our home. Following are the dates and churches scheduled for the spring semester: Feb. 6th – Oakville, IA; Feb. 27th – Peoria, IL; March 19th – Bloomfield, IA; April 9th – Burlington, IA; and April 30th – Tremont, IL.

ILLINOIS, MORTON

Annette Tanner

Julie Bahr

"I asked the Lord to take from me my super sensitivity!" was a quote I heard recently. As we reflect back on the time we spent with friends, family and church family, the coming New Year should be filled with graciousness and forbearance; forgiveness and Grace. Ministering Bro. Erik Givens (Sis. Deb, Princeville) gave our Wednesday eve Family Worship night topic entitled "Thinking Like A Godly Servant". He concluded the evening with this fact: A museum held many Biblical artifacts but one artifact was not to be found. The foot washing basin that Christ used to wash the disciples feet! The reason it is not found in the museum is because "It is still in use today". What an awesome thought! Other visiting ministers were Bro. Greg Rassi (Sis. Carla, Chicago), Bro. Jedd Rocke (Sis. Marsha, Goodfield), and Bro. Scott Schafer (Sis. Gigi, South Bend).

On November 22, Sis. Edna Dufelmeir (late Bro. Frank) passed away. She is survived by two sons and one daughter: Gerald, Dale and Evelyn (Gebhard). One brother also survives, Bro. Albert Wiedman.

Funeral service for Hilda Psinas was held December 20. She was the mother of Bro. Gary (Sis. Heidi)

Psinas.

On November 21, Sis. Emily Getz passed away. She is survived by many nieces and nephews. Please be in prayer for these families.

Sweet little baby girl, Lucy Clare, entered the family of Bro. Jeff II and Sis. Abby Kaufman along with Ava, Layne and Iris. Thankful grandparents are Bro. Jeff and Sis. Rhonda Kaufman and Bro. Keith and Sis. Kathy Steffen (Washington).

Bro. Bob and Peggy Joos welcome a new grandson, Killian Robert. Rob and Maranda are his parents.

On December 2, Sis. Kristi Daniel and Bro. Jared Zobrist were united in Holy matrimony. Sis. Kristi is the daughter of Bro. Billy and Sis. Sheri. Bro. Jared is the son of Bro. Dave and Sis. Ann (Goodfield).

The engagement of Sis. Trisha Sauder and Bro. Clayton Monfre (Goodfield) was made known. Sis. Trisha is the daughter of Bro. John and Sis. Peg Sauder. Bro. Clayton is the son of Bro. Tony and Sis. Deonne Monfre (Goodfield).

He came A-way to the manger to make A-way to the Cross. Our Sunday school Christmas program "God's Great Love" was held December 15.

Ice and snow has fallen around Central Illinois. The second Sunday in December, church was canceled along with our whole church caroling event, due to a treacherous ice storm. Our ice seemed minimal after hearing about and witnessing scenes of the intense ice storms our Kansas brothers and sisters were having. Many were without all power for a week and longer. Our prayers will continue for these families.

ILLINOIS, PEORIA

Carissa Klopfenstein

Kristin Menold

Congratulations to our newlyweds, Bro. Jimmy Huber, son of Bro. Jim and Sis. Jean Huber, who married Sis. Abi Witzig, daughter of Bro. Phil and Sis.

Cindy Witzig, on December 18 at our church in Morton, IL. Officiating ministers were retired Elder Bro. Chuck Hemmer and Elder Bro. Ted Witzig from Morton, IL. We wish you God's blessings as you begin your lives together.

Three converts were announced for baptisms: Whittney Stickling (Bro. Craig and Sis. Jackie), Leah Ramseyer (Bro. Dean and Sis. Holly) and Robert Getz (Bro. Mel and Sis. Marge). We are looking forward to their testimonies on January 5 and their baptisms on January 6.

The Midwest Food Bank building located in Peoria has been purchased. We are thankful for the willing volunteers that have been getting it ready for deliveries. Lord willing, this building will be in operation the beginning of 2008.

Lighthouse Academy's annual fundraiser, a spaghetti supper and auction, was held at the Peoria Fellowship Hall on November 17. Thank you to everyone that attended this event and for your support of the school.

The Sunday School Christmas Program was held on December 9. The students sang their songs and recited their pieces very well. Thanks to all the Sunday school teachers who worked so diligently to help prepare them for this program. It was good to be reminded again of the reason for the season through the simple message of the children's songs. What a blessing to share our faith with our children and grandchildren, to pass this heritage of love and joy on to them.

A small group of Brothers and one brave Sister traveled from Peoria to Haiti the beginning of December to help put up a roof on the church. With a lot of ingenuity and effort, the team was able to successfully place the steel beams for the frame using only the barest of tools. Despite the many dangers, the Lord protected everyone and by the end of the week, they had accomplished their goal.

The Reinhard family is adapting

well, seemingly cut out for the task. They are making progress in their language skills and daily living as well as their work with the people. The children are healthy and happy. The youngest, baby Faith, is a real charmer. With her fair skin and bright blue eyes she is quite a commodity and is well known around the Haitian cove and village. Bro. Tim's leg is healing very well and has not hampered him from his normal duties. They wish to thank everyone for the prayers and support. Please continue to lift up this family in prayer. Also our Brothers, David Sceggel and Jonathan Aupperle, who are working with the orphans at Casa Vida de Esperanza.

We wish to thank Bro. Ken Hoerr for his message on December 5 for our Family Night. His topic was "The Night Before Jesus Came." He shared information about the Holy Land, the people of Israel and prophecies regarding the birth of Jesus. The choir sang several hymns that went along with the message, including the "Hallelujah Chorus." It was a blessing to hear and learn more about this sacred event.

The Choir Christmas Party was December 11. The whole choir contributed to the Christmas Feast, which was amazing. The choir sang several traditional Christmas carols followed by a few songs from the Klopfenstein Sisters and a photo presentation by Sis. Crystal Klopfenstein of the work team's recent trip to Haiti. Thank you to everyone for your efforts to make this evening such a blessing.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Bro. Bruce and Sis. Leila Witzig with the passing of Leila's father, Bro. Eugene Funk, from Gridley and with Bro. Lou and Sis. Marjean Lonteen in the passing of Marjean's brother, Bro. Vern Lehman, from Denver, CO.

Prayer requests this month include Bro. Lou Lonteen, Bro. David Dunbar, Bro. Randy Marx, Bro. Dick Haefli, and Sis. Evelyn Hoerr for recovery from health issues.

We are happy to welcome Bro. Verle

and Sis. Lavonne Kieser, from Bradford, IL, who have begun worshipping with us. Their sons, Bro. Wes and Sis. Lena Kieser, and Bro. Brent and Sis. Fawn Kieser, both attend Peoria church.

We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

"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

ILLINOIS, PRINCEVILLE

Vera Baer

Connie Christ

We were thankful for God's protection from the icy storms on Sunday, December 9, as Sis. Bernice Stahl and Bro. Ken Schneider (Remington, IN) were married. We pray God's continued nearness and blessings in their lives, and the lives of their families, as they walk life's pathway, following where He leads. We were thankful for many visitors that came to share in the love of God on this special day. The visiting ministers included Elder Bros. Dan Kilgus (Remington, IN) and Wayne Anliker (Forrest, IL), as well as Bros. Gary Maibach (Smithville, OH), Dan Stoller (Remington, IN), Alan Schambach (Remington, IN), Virgil Metzger (Chicago, IL), John Steiner (Oakville, IA), Dean Messner (Winthrop, MN), and Marvin Leman (Bradford, IL). Other visiting ministers this month included Elder Bro. Lynn Stieglitz (Leo, IN), as well as Bros. Ken Schneider (Remington, IN), Fred Witzig (Indianapolis, IN), and John Grimm (Columbus, OH). May God bless all those brothers who willingly served us.

We rejoice with Emily Braker and Stephen Braker, children of Bro. Glen and Sis. Audrey, and Melinda Martin (Bro. Ed and Sis. Gladys) as they were

able to answer God's call to repentance, and begin their walk of faith. May we pray for them, as well as all of our converts, as they humbly surrender to God's work in their lives.

Bro. Craig and Sis. Cherie White have been blessed with a precious baby boy, Jacob Mathias, on December 6. Benjamin and Joseph are happy siblings, and thankful grandparents include Sis. Gloria White and Sis. Marlene and Bro. David Galat Sr. (Rockville, CT). Also, we have some grandparents rejoicing from our congregation as Annika Joy was born to Bro. Andy and Sis. Brooke Feucht (Bloomington-Normal) on December 12. Bro. Jordan and Sis. Kathy Feucht (Princeville) are thankful grandparents along with Bro. Brad and Sis. Cheryl Baurer (Roanoke, IL).

We have several in our congregation who are grieving the loss of loved ones and our prayers are with them during this difficult time. Bro. Earl (Sis. Anna Lou) Grimm has lost his sister, Sis. Alvina Streitmatter. Sis. Mary (Bro. Sam) Martin has lost her mother, Sis. Anna Bradle (Roanoke, IL); and Sis. Mary (Bro. Bruce) Stoller has lost her brother-in-law, Dick Peyton. May God be near and provide His healing power in their lives.

Sis. Evie (Bro. Noah) Herrmann, Diane Stahl and Sis. Esther Herrmann have all suffered bodily afflictions and have been hospitalized. May our prayers continue with them as they recuperate.

ILLINOIS, ROANOKE
Judy Sauder
Dee Fehr

When a Christian dies precious is
the prize!
Lasting joys for days of sorrow,
Rest from conflict on the morrow
Follows when he dies.

Hymns of Zion #248

The family of Sis. Anna Bradle was

blessed to be able to gather around the bedside of their loved one as she slipped peacefully from this life into eternity on December 2. Those of her family include: sons, Bro. Bob (Sis. Mary), Bro. Roger (Sis. Ila) of Eureka; and daughter, Sis. Mary (Bro. Sam) Martin of Princeville; along with 16 grandchildren and 19 great-grandchildren. Virginia Wiedman passed away at Resthaven Nursing Home in Elgin, IL, and her body was returned to Roanoke to be laid to rest next to her husband, Bro. Elmer. Her funeral took place on November 30. She is survived by two sons, Don and John; and four daughters, Nancy Ness, Sue Burrows, Shirley Anderson and Mary Miller; also nine grandchildren.

Bro. Craig Martin (Princeville) spoke on Spiritual Stability the evening of November 28, using Philippians 4:1-9 as his text. The keys to spiritual stability are to walk in harmony with one another with the spirit of joy, expecting less than we deserve, all the while remaining confident in faith and resting in God's peace. We appreciate Bro. Craig's willingness to be used of God in ministering to us.

On November 4, Lorna Peterson of Eureka (daughter of Bro. Ken and Sis. Judy Knepp) married Matt Zobrist from Morton (son of Shirley Brenkman of Morton and the late Alpha Zobrist). The engagement of Bro. Craig Janssen to Sis. Lisa Zaagman (Alto) was made known on November 18. Their parents are Bro. Fred and Sis. Cheri Janssen and Ed and Sis. Joy Zaagman. May the Lord bless these unions with a three-fold cord not lightly rent apart.

Bro. Brad and Sis. Cheryl Baurer became grandparents on December 12, when Annika Joy was born to Bro. Andy and Sis. Brook Feucht (Bloomington). Annika's other grandparents are Bro. Jordan and Sis. Kathy Feucht (Princeville).

We enjoyed our annual all-church caroling and supper on December 2. It is truly a blessing when young and old alike can join together in song to pro-

claim the Good News of Jesus' birth. On December 16, our Sunday School and Bible Class students had the opportunity to tell "The Story That Never Grows Old" as they presented their program of Christmas songs and Scripture readings.

Saints and angels here and there
sing Thy praises
For this newborn sinner's share
in Thy promise.

Zion's Harp #71

The angels in heaven (and the saints on earth) are rejoicing as three dear souls have recognized their sinful nature and their need for a Saviour. May God grant much grace to Marc and Stephanie Rieke and to Daniel Leman as they surrender their wills to the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. Stephanie is the daughter of Bro. Steve and Sis. Shirley Leman, and Daniel is the son of Bro. Dennis and Sis. Karen Leman.

As I am writing this, yesterday's day-long snowfall has ended and this morning dawned crystal clear. The sun is shining in an absolutely blue sky, turning the snow into a field of diamonds glistening everywhere. This beautiful scene brings to mind the passage in Isaiah 1:18: "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow."

ILLINOIS, TREMONT
Teresa Rowell
Sheri Allen

Thanksgiving. A wonderful holiday to reflect on God's goodness and blessings and to begin the Christmas season. If we have the right attitude about this season of busyness, gift buying, cookie making and get-togethers, we can rejoice in the birth of Jesus Christ regardless of our situation. We may be struggling with illness or loneliness or pain, but if we have Jesus, we can be joyful. May we always remember the

real reason for the season and know that the story doesn't end there.

Be not content this babe to know,
Nor stay at Bethlehem,
But go with Christ to Calvary's
brow,
Beyond Jerusalem.
'Tis there men learn to know the
Christ,
For there He bore man's sin,
Then open wide the door of heart,
And let the Saviour in.
Hymns of Zion #36

Our hearts go out to those who have lost loved ones in recent weeks. Roberta Schweigert will be missed by her husband, Cliff, and son, Randy, and relatives as she was laid in her final earthly resting place. May God be a comfort to this dear family.

Our Christmas program was postponed last Sunday because of an ice storm, so we didn't get the privilege to hear the children until Wednesday night. It was worth the wait, as they all sang their hearts out to Jesus and blessed each one that heard them. As the ministering brother finished up, he told them that they had given us a gift, and that Jesus had given us a gift also. He encouraged each one who had not opened Jesus' gift of salvation to haste and seek it with all their heart. The prayer on every parent's heart is that their children will not forget to open the most important gift of all, Salvation.

Note of Thanks:

Thanks for all the prayers, cards, visits, and food while I was in the hospital and since recuperating at home. May God bless you.

Bro. Elmer and Sis. Darlene Kaeb

ILLINOIS, WASHINGTON
Nancy Knepp
Elizabeth Heinold

"So teach us to number our days,

that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."

Psalm 90:12

A new year has begun. What a great time to reevaluate our lives. Do I have my priorities aligned with God's Word? What changes should I make to deepen my relationship with the Lord? God stands ready to answer these questions if we ask Him.

Time spent at church worshipping with fellow believers is always time well spent. We're thankful we had Bro. Randy Kellenberger (Sis. Karen, Kansas City, MO) and Bro. Wayne Leman (Sis. Julie, Roanoke, IL) with us to share God's Word.

Bro. Mike and Sis. Judy Mangold welcome a new baby, Rebecca Sue, into their family. Michael, Erica, and Ryan welcome her home. Our church family welcomes a new family, Bro. Jeremy and Sis. Nancy Leman and little Wyatt. We look forward to getting to know them.

The engagement of Sis. Natalie Hoerr and Bro. Blair Neihouser (Francesville, IN) was announced this month. We pray that God would bless them during their engagement and in their marriage. Their parents are Bro. Doug and Sis. Peggy Hoerr and Bro. Jeff and Sis. Sue Neihouser (Francesville, IN).

We are sad to say goodbye to Sis. Ann Wagenbach as her work takes her to Rochester, MN. We are excited about her new opportunity and look forward to her visits home.

Praying for those going through difficult times is something we can do any time of day or night. Are you waking up at night and unable to sleep? Pray for someone. Are you finding yourself in the van often, driving children here and there? Turn off the radio and pray. Cooking, cleaning, doing laundry – pray. Sis. Sue Ruppert faced a big surgery this month and, thanks to many prayers, did really well. We continue to pray for her.

INDIANA, BLUFFTON
Jan Schwartz
Stefanie Dailey

"Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind one toward another."

Romans 12:15-16a

During this holiday season, the Bluffton church has had a lot of opportunities to rejoice. This month two young men have decided to give their hearts to the Lord. Kyle Gerber (Bro. Kent and Sis. Kim) and Mark Maller (Bro. Bob and Sis. Kim) made a decision to follow Christ and put away the world. We rejoice with them and their families and wish them God's blessings continually through their walks of faith.

We also had the privilege of rejoicing with Bro. Derrick Kipfer and Sis. Stefanie Dailey as they announced their engagement on November 18. Bro. Derrick is the son of Bro. Richard and Sis. Rosie Kipfer and Sis. Stefanie is the daughter of Bro. Doug and Sis. Susan Dailey. May the peace of God encompass their new journey together.

There is always much joy when a new life is brought into this world and we are excited to welcome several new additions to our church family. On November 15, Bro. Travis and Sis. Jenna Frauhiger welcomed Jerin William into their family. Grandparents of Jerin are Bro. Kris and Sis. Ann Frauhiger and Bro. Keith and Sis. Kay Steffen (Bluffton North). Bro. Dennis and Sis. Carol Klopfenstein rejoiced with the birth of their granddaughter, Samantha Lynn, on November 22. Parents of Samantha are Mark and Marci Klopfenstein. Also welcoming a grandchild, Bro. Ken and Sis. Judy Kipfer and Bro. Sam and Sis. Mary Jo Gerber (Bluffton North) said hello for the first time to their grandson, Marshall James, on November 24. Marshall is the son of Kyle and Alyssa Gerber. On November 28, Caden

Christopher was born to Ron and Natalie Steffen. Caden is the grandson of Bro. Ralph and Sis. Lucinda Steffen of Bluffton. We are thankful for the witness that new life brings to our church and community.

Bluffton church was also very glad to enjoy the company of Elder Bro. John and Sis. Marcia Laukhuf (Latty, OH) on December 2. Bro. John was in Bluffton to share the Memorandum with our congregation.

As it states in Romans 12 though, with rejoicing also comes weeping and we have grieved this month with Carl and Sis. Betty Macklin as they laid to rest Carl's mother, Iva Stanford. We pray that God's healing touch will be with Carl and his family.

We have also wept with some families who have had to spend some time in the hospital. Our hearts go out to Bro. John Fiechter, Bro. Ervin Moser, Bro. Hubert Isch, and Bro. Jimmy VandenTop who have all had difficulties with their health. Spending time in the hospital can be trying for patients and family alike, so we are lifting up these families in prayer.

Like any church family, there are moments of rejoicing and weeping. We are thankful though to be of the same mind one toward another and share in the joys and heartaches of living.

**INDIANA
BLUFFTON NORTH
Sherry Pfister
Darren Drayer**

On Saturday, December 1, Loving Shepherd Ministries held a benefit concert at a local high school. The night included seven Apostolic singing groups. It was a wonderful night of worship and praise.

The following day was a great day at church. We were blessed by the preaching of Bro. Clark Stoller (Sis. Cindy, Gridley, IL). We also read the Memorandum. We appreciated the encouragement to strive for unity among our churches and personal holiness in our

lives.

On December 8, Bro. Joe Gerber (Bluffton) described Salt and Light Ministries to us. It is a group of brothers who keep a database of willing workers. Salt and Light then serves as a conduit to connect local work projects to needs.

Our sympathies are extended to Sis. Mary Baumgartner (Herman) in the passing of her brother, Bro. Vernon Lehman, of Denver. Bill Shady (Sis. Delores) is recuperating nicely after having had surgery recently.

Wishing all those who read this a blessed New Year. Perhaps 2008 will usher in the return of our Savior.

**INDIANA
FRANCESVILLE
Barb Huber
Jessica Murray**

What great joy and pleasure it was to give thanks during the Holiday season. We had the privilege of enjoying a great Thanksgiving program on Wednesday evening and letting our hearts be filled with love for one another. Then four weeks later, due to weather conditions, we were unable to assemble on Sunday for services and the Christmas program. But on Wednesday evening the young children shared how special Jesus is and told us in verse and song how He was born to be our Savior. The love of a child is so pure you can't help but thank the Lord for His Son, so we can enjoy the freedom from the guilt of sin, and the peace He gives us.

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

II Corinthians 9:7

As the Christmas season is upon, us let us remember this verse and many others throughout the Bible. Bro. Randy Gudeman shared a wonderful Bible study on giving and charity.

There are many ways in which to give, so give with your heart the talents the Lord has blessed you with and share them with others as He shared with all of us.

Our church family took part in Holy Communion in November. What a privilege to reflect, and remember where our hearts are and what was done for us to have everlasting life. May we each continue to grow stronger in the Lord.

"Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart."

Psalm 37:4

The desire of Bro. Blair Neihouser's (Bro. Jeff and Sis. Sue) heart was fulfilled as Sis. Natalie Hoerr (Bro. Doug and Sis. Peg, Washington, IL) accepted the proposal to be his wife. May you continue to seek the Lord first in your lives as He desires for your hearts to belong to Him.

We send our loving prayers to the families of Sis. Louise Heinold as she was taken to her eternal reward on December 8. May the Lord continue to hold up the family with strength in knowing Louise is now full of life again in Heaven.

There are several who we are still praying for, for strength in the Lord's healing as they are dealing with ailments of the physical body. May you find strength in Him.

We send our thanks to Bro. Nelson Beer (Sis. Shelby, Milford, IN) as he was here to share the Word on November 25. May the Lord bless you and your family.

**INDIANA
INDIANAPOLIS
Penny Schroeder
Gail Bradford**

We are rejoicing with Bro. Adam and Sis. Jill Merkle and their two young children, Madelyn and Hudson, on the birth of baby Cosette Isabel,

born December 6, 2007. Happy grandparents are George and Karen Merkle (Bluffton, IN) and Bro. Don and Sis. Rosie Gramm (Gridley, IL). We are thankful and look forward to getting acquainted with her!

December was filled with traditional Christmas activities, including the Sunday school Christmas program on December 9, Keepers of the Faith Christmas activity on December 12 and Christmas caroling on December 19.

We appreciate our visiting ministers during this period: Bro. Steve Ringger (Sis. Myra, Bluffton North, IN), Bro. Jaye Rinkenberger (Sis. Peggy, Goodfield, IL) and Bro. Garry Bucher (Sis. Lois, Valparaiso, IN).

Central Indiana rarely experiences winter storm warnings. But such a storm occurred on December 16. For the safety of everyone, church services were cancelled. Although we missed each other's fellowship, we worshipped God individually and with our families, perhaps praying, listening to a tape or reading the Bible (or all three!). Even though we were separated, we were united in spirit and in truth.

As we begin the New Year, let us reflect on the blessings of the previous one, and realize that only with the Lord's help can we fulfill the resolutions we have made for 2008.

INDIANA, LACROSSE

Bethany Johnson
Julie Rocke

Greetings of love during this holiday season! Between Thanksgiving and Christmas get-togethers it is nice to take a few minutes and reflect on Christ who came to us as a babe in the manger. It is very humbling to think that God gave us His very best and we do not always do the same for Him.

Our Sunday school students told the story of the birth of Christ through verse and song in our Christmas program on Sunday, December 16. This was also the day of our Christmas car-

oling and although the day started out with much snow on roads and in driveways, we were still able to have our program and caroling.

The Sunday before our program was an exciting day as everyone came together for the wedding of Sis. Kayla Heinold (Bro. Gene and Sis. Evie) and Bro. Fred Manz (Bro. Don and Sis. Connie, Junction, OH). What a blessing it is to see two lives blend as one in the Lord.

As we have the joy of two people starting a new portion of their lives together, we also have the sorrow of one leaving this life. Our prayers are with Sis. Mary Ann Feller in the loss of her sister-in-law, Sis. Louise Heinold (the late Bro. Orie Heinold), of Francesville.

We are also praying for Bro. Ed Frank as he has spent some time in the hospital this month.

There were many visiting ministers this month that we are very thankful for. Elder Bro. Bill Schlatter (Sis. Emmy), and Bros. Don Manz (Sis. Connie) and Warren Schlatter (Sis. Cindy), all from Junction, OH; Bro. Larry Wenninger (Sis. Joyce, Latty, OH); Bro. Ned Stoller (Sis. Heidi, Alto, MI); Bro. Jim Butikofer (Sis. Diana, Iowa City, IA); and Bro. Lucas Frank (Sis. Crystal, Detroit, MI).

May we feel God's presence and peace this Christmas and throughout the New Year.

INDIANA, LEO

Elizabeth Schrenk
Abigail Schrenk

We were blessed this past month with the addition of two new babies into our church family.

On November 16, Navonte Duron was born to Veronica who lives in the Oak House at Gateway Woods. We are grateful to God for the safe arrival of little Navonte. We pray Veronica will know God's nearness as she raises her little son.

On December 7, Jesse Miguel

Schrenk arrived home from Guatemala. He is the adopted son of Bro. Steve and Sis. Linda Schrenk. Jesse was born on December 5, 2006, in Mazatenango, Guatemala. He is also welcomed home by his siblings, Sis. Elizabeth, Sis. Abigail, Hannah, Sarah, and Nathan.

December 13 we gathered for our annual Christmas Caroling. A delightful time of singing was enjoyed by many as we shared the birth of Jesus in song with many shut-ins and elderly people.

Our Sunday school Christmas program was rescheduled due to bad weather. On December 19 our Sunday school children reviewed for us in song and story the true meaning of Christmas. We thank the Sunday school teachers and all our students for the wonderful reminder.

Our visiting minister for this past month was Bro. Dale Zeltwanger (Morris, MN). We thank him for sharing God's Word with us. It is always a joy to have parents visit their adult children who work with us at Gateway Woods.

"Come and worship, come and worship, Christ the Newborn King." Even though this Christmas song is heard once a year, may we daily come to Him and worship Him.

INDIANA, MILFORD

Carol Hurd
Carol Haab

Once again God shows us the beauty of the seasons by the sparkle of newly fallen snow, the shimmering of tree branches covered in ice, and even the weeds heavily coated with frost. No one but our heavenly Father could make such a magnificent display for us. December has given us many of these beautiful scenes.

Our children blessed us with a wonderful Christmas program Wednesday evening, December 19. They shared the history of many of the glorious carols we love to sing, along with their Bible verses. The story of Christ's birth

from Luke 2 was read and although the verses are familiar to everyone, they remind us of God's amazing love for all of us. To send His only Son to become the sacrifice for our sins is the greatest gift we could ever receive. May all of our hearts be soft enough to allow this gift to live within us each and every day.

It is a pleasure to share the engagement of Laura Bowerman and Rhett Mikel. Their parents are Bro. Bob and Sis. Sue Bowerman and Russ and Sis. Pat Mikel. May God watch over and guide them as they make plans for their future.

Our dear friend, Everett Price, spent some time in the hospital this month. We are thankful he is feeling better. He now resides in our local nursing home and we pray God will bless him and strengthen him.

Our prayer for all reading this is that God will be near to you and your loved ones and will bring you many blessings throughout 2008.

INDIANA, REMINGTON

**Beth Virkler
Tammy Waibel**

With great joy, we not only celebrated the birth of Jesus this month, but also the wedding ceremony of our ministering Bro. Ken Schneider. On December 9, he married Sis. Bernice Stahl (Princeville, IL) and their address is: 306 Maine Street, Remington, IN 47977. Telephone (219) 261-3314. Unfortunately, snowy, icy weather prevented some from attending the wedding. We certainly welcome Sis. Bernice to Remington and wish her much grace during her adjustments of her new role as wife, mother and grandmother.

Bro. Sam Schlatter (Junction, OH) shared the Word with us on Thanksgiving Day.

THE TOP TEN PREDICTIONS FOR 2008

1. The Bible will still have all the answers.
2. Prayer will still work.
3. The Holy Spirit will still move.
4. God will still inhabit the praises of His people.
5. There will still be God-anointed preaching.
6. There will still be singing of praise to God.
7. God will still pour out blessings upon His people
8. There will still be room at the Cross.
9. Jesus will still love you.
10. Jesus will still save the lost.

(submitted from email - author unknown)

INDIANA, SOUTH BEND Natalie Virkler Becky Langhofer

"O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together"

Psalm 34:3

We praise God with Bro. Craig and Sis. Rachel Langhofer as they welcomed baby Patrick Allen into their hearts and home on December 7, 2007. His big sister is Christy, and thankful grandparents are Bro. Stan and Sis. Beth Virkler (Remington, IN) and Bro. Marty and Sis. Lavilla Langhofer.

We enjoyed a blessed evening Christmas caroling with our church family this month. It was especially a blessing to carol to our dear Sis. Ernestine Meister as she was in the hospital recovering from surgery. We greatly miss her presence at church with us.

Our Sunday School children performed a program of Thanksgiving and celebration of our Saviour's birth. Scripture was recited to us of Hanna's thanksgiving prayer, and Mary's prayer of exaltation to God.

A very special thank you to Bro. Earl Beery (Sis. Suzanne, Rittman, OH) and many traveling with them for joining us in worship and willingly

sharing God's Word with us. Unfortunately, the weather has hindered us from gathering to worship for several other special occasions this month; we were unable to meet for the reading of the Memorandum, and we also anticipated a minister and large group of visitors from Eureka, but ice kept us all at home. Thank you for thinking of us, and traveling despite the disappointing weather.

INDIANA VALPARAISO Marguerite Hoerr

It seems as if December, of all the months of the year, brings us face to face very poignantly with how our Christian faith came to be. Each phase of the story makes us feel awe at the way things unfolded when that tiny Babe was laid in a lowly manger bed. There was none of the technology that we have today, but yet the Wise men found Him by following the star, and the Shepherds heard the Angels sing, because God implemented it to be possible. With our Heavenly Father guiding the events that night, it gives us a story that is lasting and true and wonderful and one that grows dearer to our hearts as the years go by.

It always seems that people around me act kinder and more courteous with Christmas approaching; and show love more easily. It makes me wonder if His spirit can cause that change in people for the short time of the year we honor His birth; why can't this spirit stay alive through the months that follow? That's the challenge each one of us has, to hold on to the Christmas spirit all year, and to show the beauty of it to our fellowmen. It only takes one to start the love flowing outward.

We had the privilege of a visit this month from ministering Bro. John Reinhard and his wife, Sis. Pam (Bluffton, IN). Bro. John reminded us that as a young man just out of college he taught in Valpo and attended church here. It was a special privilege

to have him come back for a visit. We were richly blessed by his message that Sunday; as we were blessed by the message of our ministering Bro. Mike Thomas.

Because of ice and snow and illness, Bob and I have missed more Sundays than we wanted to. Our little church in Valpo grows in importance each time we can't be with the members that we love. Tomorrow is the Sunday for our Christmas program and we're hoping with all our hearts that we can be there for this special worship of our Lord and King.

I wrote the above paragraph and God changed our plans again. We had a snowstorm with forceful winds and the decision was made to cancel services. We were one of many churches in the Midwest who found it necessary to do that on this 16th of December.

We learned this morning that our son-in-law, Dick Pelath, has been admitted to the hospital for complications. He is on his second round of chemotherapy and there have been a lot of ups and downs this time around. Prayers are always appreciated.

If you're traveling cross country on Interstate 94, the IN Toll Road or U.S. 30, keep in mind that our church is located 2 3/4 miles south of U.S. 30 on State Road 49. A warm welcome awaits you.

**INDIANA
WEST LAFAYETTE
Darlene Walder
Hollie Meister**

"And the angel said unto them, Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

Luke 2:10-11b

To all people...including you. Is He your Lord and your God? Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

We were blessed to have many visiting ministers this month and among them was Elder Bro. Kevin Ryan along with our Bro. Curt Frank. We had a day of fellowship and spiritual encouragement on December 2 when these Brothers brought to us the reading of the Memorandum. Also visiting this month were Bros. Scott Schafer (South Bend), Mark Gerber (Bluffton), Tom Troxel (LaCrosse), and Tom Waldbeser (Atlanta). We really appreciate their labors and support for our growing fellowship.

Our Sunday School Christmas program was scheduled for December 16 but was postponed to December 20 due to the winter storm that blew through the area. It served as a very special night for all the young and older children telling us the blessed Christmas story. Our Purdue students also had their annual Christmas program on December 6; and then on December 13 our church and students had a night of caroling to area shut-ins and nursing homes.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Bro. Les Meister as he has moved to an area nursing home for extended care. We know how faithfully his family has stood beside him in these past years of growing older and they will certainly be blessed for their kindnesses.

We also extend our prayers to Sis. Beth Tonner as she was under the weather for a brief time with an unexpected surgery and now is recovered from that. We thank God for His healing process.

Many of our W. Lafayette young people and Purdue students were able to take a trip to Magdalena, Mexico, and heard that it was a very special trip and many tasks were accomplished there. We are so thankful for these opportunities to serve others.

We have been overjoyed to receive several engagement announcements during this month and it makes for much happiness for our small church. On December 9, our Purdue students, Sis. Natalie Hoerr and Bro. Blaire

Neihouse were announced. Sis. Natalie's family has just recently moved from our congregation so we certainly still claim her as part of our family. She is the daughter of Bro. Doug and Sis. Peggy Hoerr (Washington, IL) and Blaire is the son of Bro. Jeff and Sis. Sue (Francesville). On December 16, Bro. Cameron Walder was engaged to Sis. Amanda Hodel from Gridley. Cameron is our son (Bro. Russ and Sis. Darlene) and Amanda is the daughter of Bro. Dennis and Sis. Brenda. And then on December 20, Bro. Neal Widmer and Sis. Kris was thankful to be able to announce his son, Bro. John, for engagement to Sis. Brooke Monfre, Goodfield. She is the daughter of Bro. Tony and Sis. Deonne. We wish all three couples God's blessings and nearness in their months of planning.

**INDIANA, WOLCOTT
Lowell Bahler
Erica Blume**

Greetings to all!

Bro. Randy Gudeman (Sis. Becky; Francesville, IN) spent a Sunday with us to assist on the pulpit due to a shortage of our local ministers. Bro. Ted Steffen (Sis. Sandra; Alto, MI) also joined us this month. It is to our advantage to have family of these brothers in our church! We thank them for their willingness to come and share His Word with us!

Christmas caroling this year was Saturday, December 15, on a snowy evening. We enjoyed a light meal together afterwards. The event is always a pleasant one and puts us in the frame of mind to celebrate the "reason for the season." The following day, church was canceled due to the snow and blowing conditions, which made travel hazardous, especially in the rural areas.

Brett Schwab (Bro. Jon and Sis. Wendy) underwent surgery recently for broken bone repair. It is such a blessing to have the medical knowledge available in any situation that

arises!

On Wednesday evening, December 19, our Sunday School youth, through songs and recitation, brought us the account of the Holy Birth of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. We thank them for the time and effort put forth. Our prayer would be for all mankind to believe and be saved.

IOWA, BLOOMFIELD Barbara Schock

This past month has been busy, but isn't everything supposed to belong to the Lord, including time? As we are about our Father's business, may we count it a blessing to be "up and doing", not idle, as those that have no hope.

The weekend of December 1-2 surely was a blessing for us, as LaVern Hostetler gave his testimony of faith before the congregation, expressing the work of the Lord in his new found life, then witnessing his baptism in the expression of a good conscience towards God. It is strengthening for all of us to re-live the new birth experience. It was also uplifting for us to have visiting brethren and friends for the weekend, as well as visiting ministers. Elder Bro. Duane and Sis. Karen Farney (Croghan, NY) spent the weekend and a train delay with us, and we appreciate their willingness towards us. Bro. Dan Beer (Sis. Deb) as well as several others from Milford braved the icy conditions to spend the weekend with us and we were blessed with his ministry of God's Word.

The next weekend also brought us several visitors and blessings as several from the Tremont single group came to help our single group carol to many in our community. They have been doing this for a good many years now, and we always look forward to them coming.

The betrothal of Sis. Jenny Schock (Bro. Dale and Sis. Theresa) to Bro. Kyle Banwart (Bro. Kent and Sis. Beth) from West Bend was announced the same weekend. As a three-fold cord

is not lightly broken, their faith in the ways of the Savior will bind them together for a lifetime, short or long, and provide great blessings for them and their families. A March 16 wedding is planned.

We always appreciate Bro. Brad and Sis. Laura Funk when they "come home", as well as all the fellowship we have with our neighbors in Garden Grove. We have been missing Joe Dean and Georgia Wells when we have been assembling. Lord willing, they soon can be together with us and some measure of health can be restored and enjoyed. There is never an end for the need of prayers for those who need to be sustained by the power of prayer.

May this year of 2008 be another year for the Lord.

IOWA, BURLINGTON Laurie Schulz

It was with thankful hearts that we heard the testimony and witnessed the baptism of our new brother in Christ, Kenny Massner (Rose). It's so encouraging to see souls still answering God's calling.

We rejoice with Bro. Dale and Sis. Evelyn Massner as they welcome a new granddaughter into the world. Shay Dale was born to Scott and Sammi Massner and is welcomed by big brother Brant.

We appreciated Elder Bro. Ron Messner (Sis. Pam, Washington, IL) being with us for Thanksgiving services. May God continue to bless him for his willingness to serve.

We laid to rest our dear Bro. Milo Weissinger this month. Our sympathy goes out to his wife, Sis. Arlene, and his two sons, Dale and Don. We pray for God's comfort for all of them.

We were encouraged to hear our children share about Jesus and His birth at our Christmas program. We appreciate our Elder Bro. Jon Schmidgall being here for the occasion.

We are thankful for God's hand in the recovery of Andrew Schulz who un-

derwent a surgery. Andrew is the son of Bro. Gary and Sis. Melody and the late Sis. Karen Schulz.

Note of Thanks:

We would like to extend our thanks for the many ways Andrew was remembered during his hospitalization and since returning home. We are thankful for an extended church family who held us up in prayer during this time. May God bless you.

Bro. Gary and Sis. Melody Schulz and family

IOWA, ELGIN Gloria Frieden

We are on the threshold of another new year. What it holds for us, we do not know. Like every other year there will be physical labors and spiritual battles to face. There will be times of sadness and times of joy. Perhaps it will be a quiet year with little changes, or maybe a year of major changes, we don't know; but we do know that God is going to be with us each step of the way. May this give us much comfort and encouragement.

As we live each day ahead,
May we ever be aware,
That this gift of one more day,
Is but a gift to spend with care.
Every day's a new beginning,
Though the last it may well be.
But if we strive to live each day for
Him,
We can rejoice through all eternity.

We were thankful to have Bro. Jim Butikofer (Sis. Diana, Iowa City, IA) with us for our Thanksgiving services. May he be richly blessed for sharing God's Word with us.

On November 24, Andrea Denger (Betty and the late Richard, Davenport, IA) became the wife of Aaron Butikofer (Bro. Lon and Sis. Sandy). We wish them God's blessings and pray He will ever be the unseen Guest in their home.

Note: Silver Lining dues are due in February. The rate is \$14.00.

IOWA, LESTER
Gloria Moser
Polly Metzger

The holiday season is upon us once again, and with all the hustle and bustle that goes along with it, may we keep our eyes and hearts ever looking to our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

On November 29, precious little Gavyn Lee was born to Collin and Cheri Leuthold. He is welcomed home by his big brother, Ty. His grandparents are Bro. Larry and Sis. Mardi Leuthold. May God bless these dear parents as they raise their family.

“Tis not the manger, but the cross, that sets the spirit free.” (The Babe of Bethlehem, Hymns of Zion #36)

We rejoice with Andy Knobloch (Bro. Terry and Sis. Elaine) as he seeks his soul’s salvation in repentance. May God be near him as he presses on.

On November 25, the betrothal of Sis. JoAnn Meyer (Bro. Pat and Sis. Twyla) and Bro. Willis Nester (Bro. Gene and Sis. Shirley) was announced to our congregation. Robyn Wulf (Bro. Jerry and Sis. Linda, Morris, MN) and Aaron Metzger (Bro. Gary and Sis. Beth) became engaged on December 14. May God bless these two dear couples as they make plans for their marriages.

We have had hospital and surgery patients this past month. Sis. Sherry Knobloch (Bro. Larry), Sis. Amelia Roeman, Sis. Jackie Knobloch (Bro. Denis), Kendra Ver Beek (Tim and Sis. Becky), Brendon Van Wyhe (Bro. Mychal and Sis. Dawn), and Tayton Knobloch (Bro. Derek and Sis. Connie) are all home and recovering. We pray that they will feel God’s healing touch with each new day.

We appreciate Bros. Brad Gudeman (Bradford, IL) and Kent Mogler (Minneapolis, MN) for sharing God’s Holy Word with us. May He continue to bless

them.

Our heartfelt sympathy is extended to Sis. Lucy Knobloch and her family in the loss of her brother, Les Spohr (Elgin, IL). May God comfort them and may we keep them in our prayers.

With 179 children in Sunday School, they presented the Christmas program the evening of December 16. It’s always a blessing to hear their recitations and the singing. It’s become a tradition for all the children to stand together at the end of the program and sing “Joy to the World” and “Jesus Loves Me”. It truly warms the heart to hear that sweet, beautiful singing. A special thanks to all of them and their teachers.

With a new year before us, whatever our lot in life may be, may we continue to pray for one another and look to God for His grace, so He truly can “set our spirit free”.

Note of Thanks:

A special thank you to all who remembered me with cards and prayers on my 90th birthday. My heart was touched and my days were brightened by your thoughtfulness. May God richly bless you.

Bro. Gus Knobloch

IOWA, OAKVILLE
Sharla Wiegand

We are always thankful for visiting ministers. Bro. Scott Wegman (Taylor, MO) shared the Word with us on November 18.

First-time parents, Bro. Mitch and Sis. Renee Schulz, welcomed a precious baby boy, Treyton Keith, on November 30. Grandparents are Bro. Roger and Sis. June Schulz and Bro. Keith and Sis. Tonya Lanz.

How joyful it is when a new lamb is taken into the fold. Wendy Schulz gave her testimony and was baptized on December 2. Wendy’s parents are Bro. Roger and Sis. June Schulz. Ministers helping on this occasion were Bro. Joe

Gerst (Iowa City, IA), Bro. Beirne Messner (Morris, MN) and Bro. Phil Schulz (Burlington, IA).

“Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.” (Romans 12:15) Joy here alternates with woe. (ZH #91) Our congregation has felt a deep loss at the sudden passing of Bro. Rob Steiner, age 27, following emergency surgery on November 19. Our prayers continue to be with his parents, Bro. Tom and Sis. JoAnn Steiner, his siblings, Karen Eberhardt (Brent), Sis. Laura Kuntz (Bro. Trent), Bro. Randy (Sis. Shayla), Anne and Joel, and his grandparents, Bro. Hartzell and Sis. Marian Schmidgall. As it was expressed at Thanksgiving Day services, there is a “Rob-sized” hole in our hearts. May the Lord comfort the family during this very difficult time.

Our prayers are also with Sis. Bonnie Wagenbach (Bro. Jerry Sr.) as her mother, Louise Behne, passed away on December 10. It was always a pleasure to meet “Grandma Behne” when she would come to family events at our church.

IOWA, WEST BEND
Janet Fehr
Sue Schneider

The New Year lies before you like a spotless track of snow. Be careful how you tread it, For every mark will show.

—*author unknown*

The year of our Lord 2008 is here. By God’s grace may we live this year one day at a time, leaving behind an example of a good, God-pleasing, Christian life.

November 18 was the wedding day of Lyndi Bruellman (Bro. Larry and Sis. Teresa) and Eric Forsberg. Clark Anliker (Bro. Leonard and Sis. Helen) and Cynthia Hughes were united in marriage on July 21. Our best wishes to each of these couples. May their homes

be blessed by the presence of our Heavenly Father.

A little girl, Addison Sarah, has joined the family of Bro. James and Sis. Sarah Montag as of December 4. Her happy siblings include Katelyn, Megan, Colin and Landon. Bro. Pat and Sis. Julie Zaugg and Ed and Luan Montag are Addison's grandparents.

Unfortunately, we have had many hospital patients recently. Bro. Ivan (Sis. Evelyn) Schmidt, Sis. Edna M. Banwart, Kurt Metzger, Jim (Sherry) Schmidt, Bro. Archie Banwart, and Bro. Bill (Connie) Zaugg have all received medical care in the past month. We are thankful to report that each one has returned home except for Bro. Bill. We pray they all can feel the Lord's healing touch their lives.

The engagement of Bro. Kyle Banwart and Sis. Jenny Schock was made known on December 9. Their parents are Bro. Kent and Sis. Beth Banwart and Bro. Dale and Sis. Teresa Schock (Bloomfield, IA). May God's blessings be with this dear couple as they take this step in faith.

Donna (Bro. Mike, dec.) Tapavica passed away on December 15 at Lake Geneva, WI. Bro. Mike had faithfully attended church in West Bend for several years until his death in 1993. During this time we became acquainted with Donna. Our sympathy is extended to her family and friends.

On December 16, our hearts were warmed by our young Sunday School children telling us of the "Birth of Jesus" while the Bible Class students sang about the "Keeper of the Inn" at our annual Christmas Program. Many thanks to all the children, teachers and parents for helping teach the true meaning of Christmas.

JAPAN, SHIODA

Carrie Ito

This month we were blessed by the visit from Elder Bro. Charles and Sis. Miriam Sauder from Tremont, IL. After church that day, we went to the lo-

cal hospital and sang Christmas carols in the halls and handed out a small gift. The patients there were so appreciative of the visit and seemed to enjoy our singing, a short explanation of the true meaning of Christmas, and a prayer. This month we also had a ladies meeting at Tokyo church. The sisters and ladies in attendance had a good discussion as we talked about the true meaning of Christmas. In this country where Christmas is basically just a commercial holiday, it is very important to share the reason for our joy in Jesus' birth.

JAPAN, TOKYO

Jana Klaus

Greetings from Tokyo! Sorry for the absence in writing. There is much to report on, so I hope I do not forget anything.

We had a busy November with many guests from America and our annual Fall Shuyokai (Fellowship Meeting). The Shuyokai was again held near one of the lakes around Mt. Fuji and with the fall colors, the views were truly a masterpiece of the Creator's Hand. Elder Bro. Mark Bahr (Detroit, MI) and Bro. Dave Koch (Tremont, IL) were our guest speakers (with Bros. Andrew Klaus and Akihiro Ito interpreting) and spoke on the topic of "Deciding to trust." We appreciate their efforts on our behalf and hope each of us took something home in our hearts to help us in our relationships with others. It was one of the most well attended Shuyokai we have had in a while with many Japanese brethren and friends from both churches as well as many guests. Bro. Mark's wife, Sis. Bev, and Bro. Dave's wife, Sis. June, were also there, as well as Sis. Shirley Kieser (Princeville, IL) and Sis. Meagan Wuethrich (LaCrosse, IN.) Another special guest was Chi from China who is here for a while with her husband, Li, a faithful attendee of Shioda church. She hit the right Shuyokai because a big Chinese meal

was served for our supper.

Bro. Dave and Sis. June were here visiting their niece and former "adopted son", Sis. Carrie and Bro. Akihiro Ito. I say "adopted son" because they opened their home and hearts to him for several years when he was doing his medical residency in IL and attending Tremont church. Then the Lord led him to their own niece, Sis. Carrie, and now they could see where he grew up and how the couple as husband and wife are serving God in Japan. We were thankful to have them in Tokyo church for a Sunday and Bro. Dave once again gave of himself for the afternoon Bible lesson. Sis. Shirley was here for over the 10th time visiting the Klaus family (8 grandchildren!!) and worshipped with us two Sundays as well as spent some blessed personal time with a couple of the dear Japanese sisters she has grown to love over the years. And, Sis. Meagan spent 7 weeks with the Klaus and Inoue families, helping and encouraging, as well as being a part of our church fellowship. We thank her for her labors of love and pray for God's rich blessings upon her.

Of course Thanksgiving is an American holiday, but Japan has adopted a similar holiday during that same week, which is a mixture of giving thanks for the harvest and for the laborers. We Americans in Japan usually celebrate at one of our homes with a small group of whoever we choose to invite, fellow Japanese brethren or neighbors and friends. This year, since Akihiro and Carrie were the hosts and they live in a rather small apartment, they had it at the Tokyo church and invited both churches. It was the largest Thanksgiving feast we have had in Japan! Everyone enjoyed all the special American foods, but there was also the Japanese touch with several native dishes. The dinner conversation included telling about something you were thankful for in the last year, a favorite verse and why, something that happened that made you very thankful etc. And the evening was topped off

with a beautiful singing and "The First Thanksgiving" play by the children. December was also a busy month with Christmas celebrations. Sis. Carrie's parents, Elder Bro. Chuck and Sis. Miriam Sauder (Tremont, IL) were here visiting Bro. Akihiro and Sis. Carrie for the first time since they have been married. Bros. Akihiro and Chuck gave a Christmas message to the ladies at the once-a-month Thursday Ladies Meeting attended by some of our sisters and a number of ladies from the community. We thank the brothers for their loving service. Sis. Marie held her annual Christmas "Tanoshimikai" (party) for the Sunday School children the Monday preceding the program. The children practice for the program after decorating cookies, then have a curry rice or yaki soba supper together followed by a few games. We sure appreciate Sis. Marie's efforts. The program is always held on the Sunday closest to Christmas, so this year it was on the 23rd. For the morning service, Elder Bro. Akito Inoue had a special Christmas message, clearly telling why Jesus was sent to this earth, starting back in Genesis with the fall of man and how "Satan would bruise Jesus' heel, but Jesus would bruise Satan's head" and in the Gospels of just how that happened. Then the program was held after lunch with the children again telling the story of Christmas with songs and verses in Japanese and English, as well as several others from the congregation giving presentations or songs. All was followed by a big supper with a variety of American and Japanese foods.

We had a special guest all the way from Hungary this month also. Bro. Gabor Molnar (Budapest church) was in Japan for business and was able to worship with us for a Sunday. We enjoyed meeting him and thank him for making the effort to come. We hope to see him again!

KANSAS, BERN **Sheri Edelman** **Rita Menold**

We rejoice with Sis. Monica Strahm, Bro. Brady Strahm (Bro. Ed and Sis. Ramona) and Sis. Maria Baumgartner (Bro. John and Sis. Lori), as they gave their testimonies and were baptized the weekend of November 24-25. We thank Elder Bro. Tom Hoffman (Sis. Kathy, Roanoke, IL) and Bro. Max Reimschisel (Sis. Judy, Wichita, KS) for being with us for the weekend.

Amy Rokey (Bro. Mike and Sis. Sue) and Sis. Janet Meyer (Bro. Robert) underwent surgery this past month. We pray for God's healing hand as they recover.

On December 8, Leon Stoller passed on to his eternal reward. Leon's siblings that have passed on before are Sis. Lila Rokey, Bro. Harlan Stoller and George Stoller. Leon will be missed by many, but we know he is rejoicing with his family in Heaven!

We enjoyed our all church Christmas caroling on December 9. It is such a blessing to be able to sing of Jesus' birth and bring joy to others!

Due to an ice storm that caused a power outage, we were not able to hold services at our Bern church. We thank the Sabetha congregation for opening their arms of love as we assembled with them for services!

KANSAS, FORT SCOTT **Karen Kellenberger**

We were privileged to hear Sherry Ford's testimony of faith the first Saturday of December. Our Elder Bro. John Lehman (Sis. Connie, Bern, KS) was present that weekend. Following Sherry's baptism, we lovingly welcomed her as our Sister in Christ.

Bro. Bob Lemons (Sis. Betty) was a hospital patient and is recovering nicely from his surgery.

The joyful story of Christ's birth was shared in a program by the Sunday School the evening of December 16. A

few evenings later, the children and their parents caroled to the shut-ins.

Many in nearby congregations have suffered heavily under ice storm damage. As the days without power extend out, and quality of life continues to deteriorate until power is restored, the question is certain to be asked, "What is the worst case scenario?"

No matter the answer, it certainly is something we can live with. There is only one instance where the response to the question is beyond any hope: What is the worst case scenario if we are not redeemed by Jesus' blood?

"But He answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not."

Matthew 25:12

KANSAS, KIOWA **Janice Bahr** **Jenny Stewart**

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

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

Another year of progress,
Another year of praise,
Another year of proving
Thy presence all the days.

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

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

Hymns of Zion #150

The words to this song are so beautiful, and it is with a heartfelt prayer that

2008, like 2007, can begin and end with Jesus Christ our Lord as the center of all we do.

As we remembered the birth of our Lord in December, we were blessed to have 36 young people from Iowa, Colorado, Oregon, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Kansas share the weekend with us for caroling, and our Christmas program. To hear all those young voices raised in songs of praise to our Lord brought tears to our eyes and joy to our hearts, that they give of their time and effort for the Lord's work. Then, as our Kiowa youth portrayed that first Christmas so long ago with songs, and Scripture and poems, we again could relive a humble birth in a stable with shepherds and angels, and after eight days, wise men led by a star to worship a King. Jesus, who came to redeem us from our sins, is the greatest Christmas gift we will ever receive, and our wonderful God was the Giver. May we never forget to keep Christ in Christmas, for as one of our children read in her poem, if He had not been born, what would we celebrate?!

We also held services at our Kiowa Manor, and shared poems read by our youth and sang Christmas carols. A truly happy and blessed occasion for all of us.

We extend our prayers to Matt Schupbach and his wife, Courtney, as Matt will undergo surgery on his knee and leg this coming week. We are happy to report that Glen Piper and his wife, Donna, are home from Mayo's after he had surgery and a long stay there. They are so glad to be home, and Glen says he will be with us in church next Sunday. Our Sis. Helen Murrow, who fell a number of weeks ago, is still unable to worship with us, and we miss her, as well as any who are ill and unable to be in our midst. May we continually hold each other up in prayer that the Great Physician may heal them and bring them back to our fellowship soon.

KANSAS LAMONT-GRIDLEY Ester Knobloch

O list to the story that never grows
old,
Its tidings of joy repeat,
The Saviour is come by the prophets
for-told,
To Bethlehem's quiet street.
The miracle star shines in splendor
above,
The stable so dingy and worn,
So humble a cradle for One who is
Love,
And there Jesus Christ is born.
Gospel Hymns #865, vs. 1

The story of Christ's lowly birth was recited by our Sunday School students during the Christmas program. We appreciate the efforts of the students and their teachers in reminding us of the love God had for fallen mankind in sending His Son to this earth.

Our prayers for healing are with Bro. Lloyd Kraft (Sis. Nadine) who had an accident and needed to have hip surgery. We trust that he will be strengthened by the hand of the Great Physician.

Bro. Aaron Luthi (Elder Bro. Jay and Sis. Jane) graduated from college this past month.

KANSAS, SABETHA Dawn Strahm Rebekah Beyer

It was nice to have two visiting ministers with us this past month. Bro. Dale Wulf (Sis. Becky, Lester, IA) ministered God's Word as well as Elder Bro. Art Metz (Sis. Elizabeth, Silverton, OR) on a Wednesday evening. We thank these brothers for their labors.

Our own minister, Bro. Ben Wyszong (Sis. Janice), has retired. We have certainly appreciated his labors of love and ministry over the years. May God richly bless him and his wife for serving our congregation.

Bro. Carl Strahm and Dan Wenger (Cheryl) have both undergone surgery

recently. We are thankful for God's healing mercies.

Sis. JoAnn Meyer (daughter of Bro. Raymond and Sis. Twyla, Lester, IA) was engaged to Bro. Willis Nester (son of Bro. Eugene and Sis. Shirley Nester, also of Lester). We will miss Sis. JoAnn dearly, but wish her many blessings.

Our Bro. Roy Bahr recently moved to be near his son, Brian, in Morton, IL. We will miss him and wish him God's blessings.

We were blessed to be together for Thanksgiving services, all church caroling and soup supper, and the Sunday school Christmas program. There is much to be thankful for and it seems we reflect on these blessings even more between Thanksgiving and Christmas. As we will soon be celebrating the birth of our Saviour, may we always remember what God did for us when He sent His only begotten Son.

KANSAS, WICHITA Emma Miller

Just as April brings rain and May brings flowers, December brings snow. That was the case in Kansas this year. First we had rain which turned to ice and then the snow appeared. Church services were cancelled December 9. As the week progressed and the cold and moisture continued, those living in the Wichita area had reasons to be thankful for God's mercy; however, our Brother and Sister Warner who live in Hutchinson, were without electricity for most of the week. Their son took them to the home of one of their granddaughters until the power was returned Saturday afternoon.

Work day had been scheduled at the Mennonite Central Committee workplace in Newton for Tuesday of that week. Because of the weather, it was rescheduled for Friday the 12th. That, too, was rescheduled for Tuesday the 18th.

When the weather permitted it, Wednesday nights were used for caroling in the homes of our shut ins. Pres-

ent plans include having the Sunday School Christmas program Sunday the 23rd. Lord willing, Christmas services will be held Christmas morning,

An acquaintance of mine sent me the following lines. They so adequately express my thoughts.

Jesus loves me, this I know,
Though my hair is white as snow,
Though my sight is growing dim,
Still He bids me trust in Him.

KENTUCKY, LEXINGTON Barb Huber

“Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation.”

Isaiah 12:2

May God bless our visiting ministers this past month: Bros. Sam Schlatter (Sis. Linda, Junction, OH), Nate Wieland (Sis. Suzanne, Goodfield, IL), and Chris Wuethrich (Sis. Carla, LaCrosse, IN). Many thanks to these Brothers for their labors of love in sharing God’s Holy Word and travelling the many miles to make it possible.

Our prayers for recovery continue to go out to Sis. Rebecca Germann (Bro. Doug). We pray that God will strengthen and encourage her and her dear family during this special time of healing. Our dear friend, Edna Clements, has been in the hospital. We pray for God’s healing hand to restore Edna to good health again.

As we face a new year, may it be a time of watchfulness and readiness for the imminent return of our dear Lord. We want to thank all who have visited our congregation this past year as we truly appreciate the fellowship. We welcome all who may be in our area or travelling through to worship with us. You may contact Bro. Doug Germann (859) 223-0294 or Bro. Lester Huber (859) 745-2541.

MEXICO, IXTLAN Claudia Gonzalez

Greetings and love from Ixtlan in our Saviour’s name.

We are thankful to report that another soul has answered God’s call. We welcome Armando Cervantes as a member of our congregation. He gave his testimony of faith on December 8 and was baptized December 9. He is the son of our Sis. Carmen Cervantes and had recently moved back to Ixtlan after being in the Altadena area several years. The ministers that came down to give their support were Elder Bros. Tom Hoffman (Roanoke) and Mike Leman (Denver).

Our little congregation is also thankful to the Lord for the new minister we have to provide spiritual help. Our prayers are with Bro. Matt Gerber as he was called by God to be our minister.

“The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.”

Psalms 19:7

Meet Sis. Cecy:

My name is Cecilia Robledo Chávez, and I learned about the riches of the Lord from the time I was a child. I began coming to Sunday School at six years of age and heard about the name of Jesus, His stories, His miracles, or to sum it up, His greatness. Although I didn’t grow up in the warmth of a Christian family, at that time I wasn’t worried; I just enjoyed hearing about the “spotless Lamb” and the love of God that, at that time, I didn’t know He had for me.

Time passed and I continued to grow with the teachings that filled my heart and above all, were the truth. I didn’t have any problem trusting and knowing that the one true God existed. He desires our worship and is worthy of our obedience. Even though I wasn’t very old, I learned more and more

about God which made it so that I grew up with a different way of thinking than others my age. When I grew older, I continued attending our church but I knew that even though I was young, my life was not complete outside the will of God, as I had learned up to that point. I was 15 when I thought more about what I needed to do. I never doubted repenting and accepting God in my heart, but I feared I would fail Him. From that moment I lived with the responsibility of “What am I going to do?” since I didn’t know how my parents would react.

Two years passed in which I knew I didn’t have the right to the love of God and I lived with the fear that Jesus would return. I was 17 years old and still hadn’t accepted the invitation of the Father so that Jesus would dwell in my heart. The Holy Spirit was working giving me understanding that my sins were still not cleansed. I couldn’t go on and it was then that I decided to repent on June 12, 2006, not only for my own sake, but I also knew that by denying my own convictions, the Lord would work with me so that my family would also come. My life has not been easy since then. My family was not in agreement and my only hope was in knowing that the Lord had offered me life eternal. Even though I didn’t doubt what I was doing, I knew I couldn’t lean on my own understanding, only in the way the Lord made me feel.

I was filled with joy when the moment arrived for me to enter into a covenant with God, my baptism (April 29, 2007). There were afflictions but I was comforted in knowing this was the will of God. Since then my walk with Christ has been the best gift God has given me. Even in this short time of following Him, my life has not yet been a “time of refreshing” (Acts 3:19), but I give thanks for every trial that draws me closer to Him.

MEXICO, MAGDALENA
Gloria Gonzalez
Carissa Schlipf

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

We praise God that He is still working in hearts, turning them to the Truth! We are thankful that in the last few months the following souls have turned to Him in repentance: Karla Galvez, Michelle Martínez, Betza Duarte (Sis. Ruth), Sonia Soto, and Ben Schick (Bro. Bill and Sis. Joan). May God give each one grace to lay a firm foundation in Jesus Christ!

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:”

Matthew 28:19

With great joy we heard the testimony and witnessed the baptism of Sis. Elizabeth Martínez on November 17 and 18. Our prayers are with Elizabeth as she seeks to be an example for Christ to her mother and sisters. We appreciate our Elder Bro. Mike Leman (Sis. Deb, Denver, CO) as he conducted the services for this weekend.

“Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.”

Psalms 100:4

This Thanksgiving as we reflect back over all that God has done here in Magdalena, in our lives, in our church, and in the lives of our children here at CVE, we have much to be thankful for. We were grateful to be able to share some of our many blessings as we enjoyed a delicious, traditional Thanksgiving meal with many individuals and families from our church and the community, as well as work team members from Denver, CO and Altadena, CA. We give thanks for the

talents and hard work that the work team members shared with us during the week and pray that they are blessed for giving of their time and efforts.

Porque mis pensamientos no son vuestros pensamientos, ni vuestros caminos mis caminos, dijo Jehová. Como son más altos los cielos que la tierra, así son mis caminos más altos que vuestros caminos, y mis pensamientos más que vuestros pensamientos. (Isaiah 55:8,9)

Trusting in God's higher ways, on December 4 we said good-bye to our Sis. Amy Fiechter as she returned to Bluffton, IN, to prepare for her upcoming wedding and marriage to Bro. Jon Gerst. We rejoice with Amy and Jon, but also feel sadness as one of our CVE family members moves away. We are so grateful for the time Amy spent here at CVE and among many other things, her work as a Spanish tutor and a mentor for the girls. Amy, we will miss you and look forward to when you return to visit us!

The day after saying good-bye to Amy, we also said good-bye to one of our little boys, Eduardo (also known as “Pollito”), as he returned to live with his mother. Our prayers are with him and his family and we trust that God will continue to work in their lives to bring them to a saving knowledge of Himself.

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

1 Thess. 5:18

MICHIGAN, ALTO
Rose Watson
Terri Huber

A special thanks to our visiting minister, Elder Bro. Ben Walder (Sis. Juanita, Congerville, IL), for giving of himself during our Thanksgiving services.

It is extremely rare and exciting for

Alto to be able to report two engagements within a month! Sis. Lisa Zaagman (Ed and Sis. Joy) has felt led of the Lord to accept the proposal of Bro. Craig Janssen (Roanoke, IL). We are happy for them and pray for God's continued blessings in the coming months.

Bro. Andrew Oesch (Bro. Tom and Sis. Michelle) desires by God's grace to be united in holy matrimony with Sis. Listyn Capman (Tracy). In this we see the hand of the Lord and as with any new stage in life, we are sure they appreciate your prayers.

Christmas caroling was enjoyed by a group of over forty people. While some of our usual recipients have passed on, there were others to take their place and both carolers and listeners were blessed. The Sunday School Christmas program went off with only the usual “hitches”. Isn't it the precious innocence and uncertainty of the youngest ones that makes it so enjoyable and unique from one year to the next? Most of all, we are thankful for yet another opportunity to remember the true meaning of the season in which we remember God's coming to earth in human form.

Pain and sorrow do not take a break over the holidays. We were surprised and dismayed to hear that Sis. Ronda Colter was hospitalized with unexpected heart irregularities. She needs to be kept in our prayers. Bro. Aaron Steffen also had a heart procedure. Sis. Ella Blough suffered a broken collar bone. Please keep her in your prayers, as the elderly are often lonely and discouraged with immobility and a long healing process.

MICHIGAN, BAY CITY
Sarah Knochel
Janelle Ramseyer

We want to remember those who faced surgery or hospital stays in the past several weeks. They include: Norbert (Sis. Linda) Andrzejewski, Bro. Norman (Sis. Leanore) Knochel,

Bro. Robert Knochel, Bro. Victor (Sis. Eleanor) Knochel, Bro. Fred (Sis. Marilyn) Ruegsegger, and Sis. Alice Wieland. We pray that each one would recover such as would be the Lord's will.

We bid Sis. Pauline Wieland a fond farewell as she has returned to Latty, OH. Sis. Pauline will be missed!

A powerful snowstorm came through the Michigan area and church services were cancelled on December 16. Our Sunday School Christmas Program was also cancelled and we are looking forward to it being rescheduled in the near future.

Our thoughts and prayers are with the family of Sis. Alice Eisenman as she entered into her eternal rest on December 18. Sis. Alice attained the age of 99 and was certainly a pillar in our congregation. She will be missed by all, especially her daughter, Sis. Marlene (Lyle) McNally, from our congregation.

February is Bay City's month for Silver Lining dues and all dues should be put into the General Fund. If you have any address changes, please contact one of the correspondents.

MICHIGAN, DETROIT
Manuela Denes
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 Saviour, Jesus Christ, our congregation always looks forward to the Sunday School Christmas program. Because of a snow storm, our program was canceled and rescheduled for Wednesday evening. However, before the snow fell on Saturday evening, many from our congregation went Christmas caroling to

some of our dear ones who are unable to come to church and to various nursing homes and group homes in our area. Not sure who enjoyed it more...the residents or the carolers... because there were smiles all around. "Praise the Lord; for the Lord is good: singing praises unto His name..." Psalm 135:3.

Our heart-felt thanks goes to ministering Bro. Walt Rager (Toledo, OH) for conducting church services at The Woodhaven Retirement Home and to Bro. Ben Harmon for accompanying him. It's always a blessing for the residents!

This month, we were privileged to have visiting ministers, Bro. Doyle Frauhiger (Sis. Jane; Bluffton North, IN), Bro. Howard Plattner (Sis. Kristen; Alto, MI), Bro. Steve Stieglitz (Sis. Jane; Leo, IN), Bro. Justin Koch (Sis. Marcia; Washington, IL), and Bro. John Lehman (Sis. Ruth Ann; Wolcott, IN), with us. We certainly appreciated their willingness to share the Word and to "serve the Lord with gladness." Psalm 100:2.

We were saddened to hear about the death of Sis. Smilja Muric from the Novi Sad church in Serbia. Our deepest sympathy, continued prayers, and love to her nieces, Sis. Sanche Denes and Sis. Miomira Miladinov, and to her family. Sis. Smilja will be greatly missed.

We also want to remember those that are suffering from various health complications this month. Sis. Lorene Maibach (Bro. Ben) spent some time in the hospital, and we're glad that she is now at home recuperating.

"...If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us."

1 John 4:12

MINNESOTA
MINNEAPOLIS
Mary Mogler

A Sunday of blessing and fellowship

was enjoyed by all as many gathered to hear the children tell the beautiful story of our Saviour coming to earth. As their voices were raised in praise to our King, Christ's love and mercy for mankind was truly felt. We were thankful to have Bro. Clint Schmidt and family from Winthrop with us for the day and were blessed by Clint's inspired message and their fellowship.

We warmly welcome Sis. Anne Wagenbach from Washington, IL, as she has taken a position at Mayo Clinic in Rochester. Our congregation is grateful to God for continuing to lead believers to our area, and we look forward to getting acquainted with Sis. Anne.

"Know therefore that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations;"

Deut. 7: 8-10

As we look back upon a year gone by, God's faithfulness is evident. It is with confidence in our great God that we go forward into a new year, knowing that no matter what lies before us, He will be faithful in His promises.

MINNESOTA, MORRIS
Heidi Nohl
Sheila Reuter

Our hearts rejoice with Daniel and Benjamin Furrer (Bro. Tom and Sis. Jill) as they have begun their repentance. We are sorry to have omitted Daniel from the September news. We trust they will feel God's nearness as they make this new beginning.

Visiting ministers that have shared God's Word with us this past month are Bro. Jedd Rocke (Goodfield, IL), Bro. Duane Rocke (Minneapolis, MN), Bro. Rex Frieden (Lamar, MO) and Bro. Dean Messner (Winthrop, MN). May God richly bless them for their labors.

We rejoice with Kurtis and Crystal Koehl as they have welcomed home a son, Kyle Roy. Grandparents are Bro. Roy and Sis. Jenell Koehl and Robert and Mary Rinkenberger. We wish them God's guidance as they raise their son.

Announcing their engagement are Scott Wulf and Alyssa Goeller. Their parents are Bro. Dennis and Sis. Judy Wulf and Georgia Pappé. Also, Alan Schmidgall and Danielle Anderson are looking forward to their wedding day. Their parents are Bro. Neil and Sis. Linda Schmidgall and Lonnie Anderson and Lori Lundquist.

Two couples have been joined in marriage. Bro. Jonathan Joos and Sis. Mindy Wulf were joined together as one in the Lord. Their parents are Bro. Doug and Sis. Joyce Wulf and Bro. Harv and Sis. Debra Joos. Also, Bro. Alex Messner and Sis. Myra Wulf have begun their life together. Their parents are Bro. Doug and Sis. Joyce Wulf and Bro. Sid and Sis. Cheryl Messner. May God bless these couples.

Our prayers are with Bro. Richard and Sis. Corrine Schmidgall at the loss of their daughter, Mary Evink. Also, we remember her siblings, Bro. Rob and Sis. Kathryn Schmidgall, Mark and Sis. Brenda Knobloch and Bro. Tony and Sis. Peggy Ascheman. May the Lord put his loving arms around them and comfort them.

Hospitalized this month was Bro. Leo Dogotch. We trust the Lord will provide for him.

MINNESOTA, WINTHROP

**Rachel Steiner
Julie Schmidt**

We are thankful Elder Bro. Rick Plattner (Sis. Mary Ann, Fairbury, IL) was able to come and assist our Elder Bro. Paul Messner in reading the Memorandum. We are thankful for service to us and their labors of love for us as a church body.

Two souls were baptized this month. They are Landon Messner (El-

der Bro. Paul and Sis. Jan) and Lena Steiner (Bro. Glen and Sis. Rachel). It was a blessed weekend despite the weather and we are thankful that God is still calling souls unto Him. We thank Elder Bro. Wayne Grimm (Sis. Rose, West Bend, IA) for coming and assisting with the testimonies and baptisms.

Our saving hope is all in vain,
If here our love should cease,
For in the man of Galilee,
We find the gift of peace.
'Tis not the babe, but Christ the
man

Who walked in Galilee;
'Tis not the manger, but the cross,
That sets the spirit free.

Hymns of Zion #36 vs. 2

We enjoyed listening to our Sunday School students sing and give their recitations at our Christmas program. What a blessing to listen to the story of the Christ child's birth and to be reminded that "'tis not the manger, but the cross, that sets the spirit free".

We were able to go Christmas caroling to our area nursing homes and assisted living homes on December 9.. What a blessing to be able to share the good news of the Savior's birth through song during this season.

Bro. David and Sis. Bethany Messner and Justin welcomed Darren Lee into their family on December 17. We are thankful and excited to have a new baby in our small congregation. Grandparents are Bro. Tony and Sis. Nancy Messner (Morris, MN) and Bro. Terry and Sis. Ann Kuenzi (Silverton, OR). May God grant them grace and wisdom as they raise their little family.

Our prayers continue to be with Sis. Geri Messner (Bro. Marvin) as she is in the hospital for an extended stay. We pray the Bro. Marvin and Sis. Geri can feel God's nearness as they take one day at a time.

MISSOURI, LAMAR

**Mindy Braker
Becky Marti**

Should praise of man be more to me
Than God's most blessed favor?
And though man might reject His
word,

The Truth remains forever;
Unchanging, sure, it does impart
A comfort to the poor in heart.

Zion's Harp #113, vs. 2

We appreciate Bros. Dan Koch (Tremont, IL), Greg Stoller (Forrest, IL) and Jim Koehl (San Diego, CA) being used in the Lord's service to minister this Word. We enjoyed the blessings of fellowship with them and our many other visitors this past month.

MISSOURI, ST LOUIS

Betsy Schrenk

Bro. Chris Wuethrich (Sis. Carla, LaCrosse), Elder Bro. Kent Heimer (Sis. Jan, Taylor), Bro. Jerry Meeks (Sis. Christine, Sabetha), and Bro. Bob Meyer (Sis. Ann, Bluffton North) were our visiting ministers recently. How blessed and thankful is our little congregation for the willingness of these brothers to come and serve.

We read again one Sunday of the parable of the vine, which is such a meaningful allegory for our spiritual life. Christ is the true Vine, and we are the branches. Our nourishment - indeed, our very life - comes from the vine. The branches need to be pruned to be fruitful. Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance - do our lives exhibit this spiritual fruit? We find ourselves so busy, with so many things vying for our time. This New Year is a good opportunity to evaluate the demands we have allowed to encumber our lives, to pray for guidance to see what can and should be pruned. Then we can look back on 2008 with thankfulness to see what fruitful vines we have been for our Lord.

MISSOURI, TAYLOR Sally Haerr

Christmas ... what a wonderful time of year! There is probably no other holiday that makes hearts "turn toward home" more than this one. Where is our HOME really? I like to think of home as a haven of peace and comfort ... not everyone has the blessing of this kind of home here on earth, but we all have our Heavenly Father's promise of this in Heaven if we just take advantage of and accept this ultimate gift of love, sent to us in the form of a tiny baby (read Holy Bible John 3:16). It is so easy to embrace a baby with their unassuming innocence. However, when that baby grows to be a man and asks us to surrender, it gets a little harder. Let's remember Him, from the cradle to the grave, from the grave to the mercyseat, where He sits, interceding to the Father for us. Talk about a miracle, there is none more amazing!

There were many who took the opportunity to go caroling at the Illinois Veterans Home this month. It brings great joy to the residents as well as those who sing. The children are especially well received.

Elder Bro. Jay Luthi (Lamont-Gridley, KS) was in our area on business and spent a Wednesday evening in church with us. Thank you, Bro. Jay, for being a special part of our worship service.

The Christmas Sunday School program is always a highlight of the year. The teachers and parents, as well as the students, put much time into teaching and learning the true meaning of this overly-commercialized season. As a reward for their cooperation and hard work, the children were given a Pizza Party, once again making precious memories.

Those sick/hospitalized this past month were: Sis. Lois Sutter (Bro. James), Sis. Rosie Massner (Bro. Allen), Craig Sutter (Bro. Steve and Sis. Deb), Cole Sutter (Bro. Rich and

Sis. Kay), Nikki Haerr-Miller (Bro. Norman and Sis. Sally), Bro. James Sutter (Sis. Lois). As I think of those who are sick and hurting, I'm reminded of the promise in Revelation 21:4 "...God shall wipe away all tears ... and there shall be no more death ... sorrow ... crying ... pain; for the former things are passed away..." What a wonderful description of Heaven and Home.

NEW YORK CROGHAN-NAUMBURG Hope Graves

We have been blessed with many opportunities to share the great news of Jesus' birth with others. We all look forward to when we can start giving out Christmas carols! These evenings of Christmas caroling included Lewis County General Hospital and Residential Health Care Facility, Carthage Hallmark Nursing Home, Karcher Estates, Bro. Gerald Lehman's home and Steepleview in Croghan. We enjoyed the wonderful time of singing and fellowshiping together and sharing snacks at the end of each evening.

And in the Father's image pure,
He came earth's trials to endure.
He leads us with a gentle hand,
To that long cherished, happy land.
Hallelujah!

Zion's Harp #7, vs. 3

We were unable to have church services on Sunday, December 16, due to the weather. This year our winter seems to have come swiftly, and doesn't want to let up! We do look out at the trees heavy with snow though, and appreciate the beauty that each season holds for us.

We were able to get plowed out enough to get to church on the 17th to put together cheer baskets for several in our community. May the Lord bless these efforts and may we remember to be giving and share of the bounty He has given us all year round.

Our Sunday School held its Christmas program during the afternoon on Sunday, December 23. We appreciate each child that comes to church and look forward to the little ones that will start Sunday School soon. May the Lord bless these families as they come to learn more of Him.

Our prayers extend to Sis. Anna Mellnitz who fell and has not been able to get out to church for several Sundays. We have been blessed to hear that Emily Virkler's surgery went well in Texas at the end of November. They recently were able to return home to upstate New York and we pray for her continued recovery, healing and strength. May the Lord bless each who have kept them in their prayers.

OHIO, AKRON Mara Henico Rachel Pamer

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

As another year draws to a close, it often becomes a time of reminiscing on the many ways God has provided for His people. He has given new life as many babies were born to our congregation, He has called some of His children home, He has led some to marriage and provided that others could find peace with Him and be baptized. He has granted healing and given grace that others could endure as well as providing for many safe travels. The list could go on and on.

We were blessed to be able to recently host the Eastern Regional Elder meeting on November 17. We trust that these brothers always feel our prayers and support and find God's inspiration and direction in the many decisions that face them.

We rejoice with Bro. Doug and Sis. Maria Demiter as they recently welcomed little Alexis Faith into their

home. Alexis's big brother is Preston. Maternal grandparents are Bro. Andy and Sis. Vera Demrovsky and paternal grandparents are John and Erika Demiter.

We were thankful that Elder Bro. Ken and Sis. Linda Indermuhle (Sardis, OH) and Elder Bro. Andy and Sis. Roberta Stoller (Smithville, OH) were able to be with us and serve us. We appreciate their willing service and trust that God will bless them and their dear families with His nearness and will reward them eternally for their efforts and love.

It was wonderful to hear that our convert, Rebecca Pamer (Bro. Steve and Sis. Arliss), feels she has found peace with God and man. She plans to give a testimony of her faith in the Lord along with Rachael Indermuhle (Bro. Marvin and Sis. Carol) in the middle of December. We trust that God will be with them and give them grace to continue to feel His nearness and believe that He has called them and He will continue to provide.

We are thankful that Mark Gal (Bro. Emery and Sis. Erika) is back home after a short hospital visit for croup. We are so often amazed at God's provision. We trust that God's healing will continue for our Sis. Bonnie Bako following her back surgery. We miss her nearness as she now resides in North Carolina, but trust that she feels our prayers and God's nearness. We also keep Bro. Leon Graf in our prayers as he recently had surgery. We know that God is able to do all things and we trust He will do what is best at all times.

On December 7, the Lord called home Bro. George Hunyadi at the age of 92. He had assembled with us for many years and just a few weeks prior to his death he gave his testimony and was taken into our membership. He was converted in and had been a member since his youth in the Apostolic Christian Nazarene Church. We extend our sympathy to his daughter, Sis. Dianna Bako, and numerous grand-

children.

OHIO, COLUMBUS

Nancy Banks

We thank Elder Bro. Mark Masters (Sis. Jeannine, Mansfield, OH) for being with us on a Wednesday evening and we are also grateful to Bros. Ron Steiner (Sis. Ruth, Rittman, OH), Tim Gerber (Sis. Wendy, Mansfield, OH) and Mark Steiner (Sis. Sue, Smithville, OH) for serving us in the ministry.

What a blessing to watch our young children tell us of the wonderful story of love and the birth of the Babe of Bethlehem during our Christmas program. Their precious smiles and glowing faces warm the hearts of all who were there. Christmas caroling at a nursing home the following Sunday was enjoyed by all. Our small Columbus congregation wishes each and every one the joy and hope in believing this coming New Year.

OHIO, JUNCTION

Cindy Schlatter

What a blessing it is to tell of another soul who has answered the call and come in humble repentance. Our prayers are with Travis Schlatter (Bro. Dennis and Sis. Laurie) as he begins this most important step in his life.

We are grateful to Elder Bro. Ervin Knecht (Eureka, IL) for his bringing forth the Word to us on Thanksgiving Day. There are so many things that we can be thankful for and his visit is one of them.

Our hospital patients were Sis. Inez Rose and Taylor Manz (Bro. Mark and Sis. Cathy). We are thankful that both surgeries went well and both are back in church.

December 9 was the wedding day of our Bro. Fred Manz (Bro. Don and Sis. Connie) and Sis. Kayla Heinold (Bro. Gene and Sis. Evie) of LaCrosse, IN. We wish them God's blessings, guidance and direction as they begin this walk of life together. Welcome to Junc-

tion, Sis. Kayla; we are very happy to have you with us!

December 7 was the birth date of Jared Morris Manz. His thankful family are Bro. Tony and Sis. Denise, Heather, Caleb, Brian, and Carla. May God be with them as they raise their dear family to know and serve Him.

It has been made known that our convert, Alan Manz (Bro. Paul and Sis. Sandra), has found that blessed peace that passeth all understanding. We will continue to keep him in our prayers as he looks forward to the weekend in the future of testimony and baptism.

OHIO, LATTY

Amanda Steffen

Carmen Eisenmann

We are thankful for our visiting ministers this month. They were Bro. Randy Gasser (Sis. Sue, Detroit, MI), Bro. Greg Stieglitz (Sis. Lisa, Indianapolis, IN), and Bro. Doug Harmon (Sis. Lanna, Toledo, OH). May God bless them for their labor of love.

Our surgery patients this month included Sis. Emma Jean (Bro. Oliver) Stieglitz and Bro. Rod (Sis. LeAnn) Stoller. May God continue to give them grace and strength as they recuperate.

OHIO, MANSFIELD

Esther Baumann

On December 16, we heard the good news that Amber Tucker (Archie) has been blessed with God's precious peace. We look forward to hearing her testimony of faith and witnessing her baptism.

Bro. James Zimmer passed away on November 25. He is survived by his wife, Sis. Clara; his son, James (Cheryl); his daughters, Sis. Barb (Dan) Tucker, Sis. Bev (Clair) Keever, Sis. Susan (Rick) Foss, Sis. Jeannine (Elder Bro. Mark) Masters, and Sis. Melinda (Steve) Robertson. We are thankful for his consistent example of faithfulness.

Doris Oesch, wife of Bro. Elmer Oesch, passed away on November 22. Continue to pray for Bro. Elmer and his family.

Isaac Foss (Rick and Sis. Susan) and Bro. Adam Baumann were recently hospitalized. We pray God will add His healing hand to our loved ones according to His will.

We were blessed to have Bro. James Vierling (Sis. Linda, Eureka, IL) minister to us this past month. We thank him for his willingness to be used of God.

On the evening of December 9, 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. Jeff Webel's (Sis. Julie) term as Trustee expired; he was replaced by Bro. Jared Keever (Sis. Abigail). Bro. Tim Beer (Sis. Traci) was re-elected as Sunday School Superintendent. Bro. Pete Webel (Sis. Linda) completes his term as Fellowship Hall Trustee; Bro. Mick Hill (Sis. Delores) begins his term. Sis. Bev Keever (Clair) is replacing Sis. Sieda Hill (Bro. Chip) on the Kitchen Committee. Sis. Lilly Baumann (Bro. Mike Jr.) has accepted another term on our Local World Relief Committee. Bro. Wilbur Gerber (Sis. Millie) replaces Bro. Matt Domka (Sis. Tami) as Assistant Treasurer. Bro. Edward Ramsey Jr. (Sis. Michelle) was elected as our new usher to replace Bro. Mark Rufener (Sis. Julie) whose term is complete. Bro. Mick Hill replaces Bro. Stephen Domka (Sis. Brenda) as Head Song Leader. We thank all for their service this past year.

"I am resting tonight in this wonderful peace,
Resting sweetly in Jesus control;
For I'm kept from all danger by
night and by day,
And His glory is flooding my
soul...."

Gospel Hymns #746, v. 3

As we reflect on this past year, let us be thankful for God's blessing of wonderful peace.

Note of Thanks:

We want to thank all for the prayers, cards and gifts of love shown to us in the illness and death of our loved one.

In God's love,

The James Zimmer Family

OHIO, RITTMAN
Sarah Bauman
Linda Zollinger

"For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."

Romans 3:23

On November 17 we were privileged to be able to hear the testimonies of two precious souls. Bro. Jeran Stoller (Bro. Eric and Sis. Melanie) and Bro. Jason Stoller (Bro. Kenneth and Sis. Lori) were baptized on November 18 and welcomed into Christ's family. We thank Elder Bro. Andy Stoller (Smithville, OH) for assisting our Elder Bro. Merle Hartzler.

We were blessed to have ministering Bros. Todd Stoller (Latty, OH), Ted Luginbuhl (Smithville, OH) and Matthew Rassi (Chicago, IL). May the Lord bless these brothers and their families for their labors of love.

Hospitalized this past month was Sis. Marjorie Weber. Our prayers are with those who are in declining health.

We are thankful to report several births and pray God will richly bless these little ones and their dear families. Kellan Patrick was born November 20 to first-time parents, Tim and Danisa Burke, of Leesburg, VA. Grandparents are Bro. Ralph and Sis. Diane Lanz and Patrick and Jill Burke of Westlake, OH. Michael and Rebecca Bowlby welcome Brooke Elizabeth born November 27. Big brother, Devin, and grandparents, Bro. Stanley and Sis. Karen Beery and Ken and Ginny

Bowlby welcome Brooke. First-time parents are Bro. Sandor and Sis. Rachel Davidovics. Evie Josephine was born December 11. Grandparents are Bro. Michael and Sis. Norene Miller and Irma Davidovics of Peoria, IL.

May God richly bless Joe and Jamie Zollinger who were married December 14. Parents are Bro. Gary and Sis. Terry Zollinger (Sardis, OH) and Marty and Sue Underation.

Our sympathy is extended to those in our congregation who have lost loved ones. Harold Jenkins (brother of the late Don Jenkins) passed away November 16.

Tom Saurer passed away December 3. He is survived by his wife, Mary Lou; and son, Joel; and daughters, Dawn, Rhonda (James) Fox, Jessica and Amanda. Also, his mother, Sis. Esther Saurer; his brothers, Bro. Roger (Sis. Sue) of Smithville, Dan (Sis. Brenda); and sisters, Sis. Marilyn (Bro. Ed) Trent and Sis. Joann (Bro. Ron) Christian, survive.

We remember Sis. Jessica (Bro. Steven) Gasser in the loss of her grandfather, Bro. Jim Zimmer (Mansfield, OH), and Sis. Sarah (Bro. Amos) Maibach in the loss of her grandfather, Bro. George Hunyadi, Sr. (Akron, OH). May we uphold these families in prayer during this difficult time.

OHIO, SARDIS
Faith Beard

"They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing for the majesty of the Lord..."

Isaiah 24:14

On Sunday evening, December 9, we gathered to hear the Christmas story as told by our Sunday School classes, via song and recital. Year after year, it continues to bring joy and fullness to our souls to hear those so young, so exuberantly sing of that Babe in a manger, and of those who announced His birth and worshiped Him. Our high school class shared with us an

original piece, to the tune of "What A Friend":

Are you ready for the Savior, born in
such a humble way,
He who could have had a palace,
chose instead a bed of hay.
Was not He our blest Redeemer,
sent by God for mortal man;
As we count our Christmas blessings
- thank God for His perfect plan.

What do we find most important, of
the season of His birth?
Let's not spend much time in shop-
ping, having not intrinsic worth.
But amid the worldly pleasures, find
no comfort in the same,
But the precious promise given, we
find solace in His name.

Let us therefore be encouraged, that
to us God's plan was shown
In the birth of our Lord Jesus, His
true love to us make known;
Therefore thank our God Almighty,
that the greatest gift to man
Comes not mid the earthly glamour,
but according to His Plan!

"Therefore shall a man leave his fa-
ther and his mother, and shall cleave
unto his wife: and they shall be one
flesh." December 14 was the day cho-
sen for Joe and Jamie Zollinger to
make these vows in front of God and to
each other. Joe is the son of Bro. Gary
and Sis. Terry Zollinger. We pray that
this couple will continue to make God
the apex of their marriage triangle.
They are currently residing in the
Rittman, OH, area.

On December 17, Bro. Allen and Sis.
Janet Indermuhle shared with us the
news of the birth of their newest grand-
child, little Ashlyn June. She is the
daughter of John and Amanda Weslow
and younger sister of Emma Sue.
When Ashlyn was first born she had
some problems that could have been
potentially serious, but then three
days later as of this writing, she has ap-
peared for the most part to have mirac-
ulously recovered. For this we thank

and praise our Lord and God! We will
continue to remember this dear family
in our prayers.

OHIO, SMITHVILLE
Edith Miller
Ruth Gasser

Word of life, the fountain flowing
Purely from the throne above...
Zion's Harp #176

We have been blessed with the
Word of Life through several visiting
ministers. We thank Bros. Curtis
Kaufman (Tucson, AZ), Lucas Frank
(Detroit, MI), Steve Pamer (Akron,
OH), Tim Ramsier (Rittman, OH), Ken
Schneider (Remington, IN), Larry
Wenninger (Latty, OH) and Elder Bro.
Merle Hartzler (Rittman, OH) for serv-
ing us in the ministry. Elder Bro. Merle
assisted Bro. Andy with testimonies
and baptism of three dear souls.

One brother and two sisters made a
covenant with their Lord and were re-
ceived into the fold on December 9.
They are Bro. Craig Stoller and Sis. Sa-
rah Stoller (Bro. Ed and Sis. Verla) and
Sis. Roseanna Stoller (Bro. Dan and
Sis. Kim). May they continue to feel
God's guidance and grow in His ways.

We're glad to hear that little Hunter
Nieman (Doug and Melaney) is healthy
again after a brief hospital stay.

We extend our sympathy to Bro.
Roger Saurer (Sis. Sue) and family in
the death of his brother, Tom Saurer
(Mary Lou). May God be their Com-
forter.

OHIO, TOLEDO
Teresa Rywalski
Rebecca Beard

Greetings of love and a blessed New
Year to all.

Our prayers are with Bro. Howard
Harmon (Sis. Emily) and Jim Harmon
(Norma) as their sister, Sharon, has
passed away. May they find comfort in
our Heavenly Father.

Due to a winter snow storm, church

was canceled on Sunday, December 16.
Once again we are reminded of the ma-
jestic beauty of God's creation.

OREGON, PORTLAND
Brianna Strahm

Our visiting ministers this month
were Bros. Don Sinn (Sis. Linda), Ed
Knecht (Sis. Judie), and Todd
Zollinger (Sis. Michele), all of Silver-
ton. We appreciate their willingness to
labor on our behalf in the Lord's vine-
yard.

We would like to welcome Bro. Andy
and Sis. Renee Angstrom (formerly of
Silverton) to our Portland congrega-
tion. We trust they will soon feel at
home in the midst of our small flock.

Our prayers continue to go out to
Sis. Connie Steffen (Bro. Garth) and
Sis. Kathy Fehr (Bro. Wayne). Sis.
Connie is still recovering from her re-
cent surgery and Sis. Kathy continues
to face chemotherapy treatments. May
each of these dear ones and their fami-
lies feel our love and support during
these difficult and trying days.

"O troubled heart, there is a home,
Beyond the reach of toil and care;
A home where changes never come;
Who would not fain be resting
there?"

Yet when bow'd down beneath the
load
By heav'n allow'd, thine earthly
lot;
Look up! Thoul't reach that blest
abode,
Wait, meekly wait, and murmur
not.

Toil on, nor deem, tho' sore it be,
One sign unheard, one pray'r for-
got;
The day of rest will dawn for thee;
Wait, meekly wait, and murmur
not."

Hymns of Zion #52, vs. 1-2, 4

OREGON, SILVERTON

**Melissa Kuenzi
Cindy Metzger**

Bruce and Stacy Kuenzi had their first little baby named Dalton Bruce on November 27. His grandparents are Bro. Richard and Sis. RosaLee Kuenzi and Bro. Bill and Sis. Charlotte Metzger (Lester, IA). On December 14, Craig and Kristi Walter had their first baby named Madisyn Marie. Her grandparents are Bro. Chuck and Sis. Karen Walter and Joe Gengler and Jan Long.

We are happy for Emily Sinn (Bro. Mark and Sis. Elsie) who was announced for peace in September. Emily is attending college in the Bloomfield, IA, area. Also, we are thankful Kevin Dietrich (Bro. Jim and Sis. Joan) has found peace with God and man. Lord willing, Kevin and Josh Hansen's testimonies and baptisms will take place January 12-13.

Our congregation welcomes Ryan Bence back from Arizona where he recently graduated from college.

We are thankful that Bro. Chad Walter (Sis. Megan) and Byron Kuenzi (Bro. Harvey and Sis. Jennifer) are both doing well after hospitalization. Our prayers are with Alice Gehring as she continues to struggle with her health.

Our prayers are with Bro. Jack and Sis. Janet Kuenzi and family for the loss of Janet's nephew, Kyle Rush.

We are thankful for Bros. Wayne Fehr (Sis. Kathy) and Ron Jones (Sis. Liz) of Portland, OR, who were ministering unto us this month.

**PENNSYLVANIA
PHILADELPHIA**

In biblical times, the Apostles wrote letters, epistles to the churches as a method of encouragement, instruction, and admonition. Through the ages of time, these Epistles have been preserved and are profitable for us today. In our modern day, we continue to the practice, letters of memorandum from our beloved Elder Brethren. We

had a blessed weekend recently when this year's Memorandum was shared with the Philadelphia congregation. Elder Bro. Kevin and Sis. Cheryl Ryan (Rockville, CT) were with us for the weekend. Bro. Kevin joined our Elder Bro. Ben Wiegand in sharing the message. We thank Bro. Kevin and Bro. Ben for their labor of love.

We will surely miss our Sis. Kim Lanz as she will now make her home in Rockville, CT. Sis. Kim has moved to Rockville for employment. We know that Sis. Kim holds in her heart the words of the hymn we all know and love, "Each step I take, my Savior goes before me, And with His loving hand, He leads the way."

The Christmas story from its earliest prophesy to its fulfillment was shared with our congregation by our Sunday School. It is so encouraging to see the joy and adoration that the children have for our Lord Jesus. The children and their teachers put forth much effort in remembering their verses and songs. When it all comes together so beautifully, it gladdens our hearts and surely the hearts of our Lord and His Father in Heaven.

We had a blessed weekend with the visit of Bro. Loren and Sis. Betsy Schrenk (St. Louis, MO). May God richly bless you, Bro. Loren, for your willingness to share the Bread of Life with us.

We also had visitors this month from Gridley, Forrest, Fairbury, Eureka and Princeville, IL, as well as Rockville, CT, and Junction, OH. Every visitor is important to us and we thank all for the effort to join us in worship.

**TENNESSEE, NASHVILLE
Mike and Monica Fritz**

Recently, the Lord has blessed us richly from His Word through our visiting ministering brothers. Our recent visitors have included Bros. Byron Stoller (Sis. Carol; Gridley, IL), John Rowell (Sis. Nelda; Burlington, IA),

Dan Goric (Sis. Mary-Lou; Rockville, CT), and Michael Wagenbach (Sis. Erica; Wolcott, IN). We have also been strengthened by the fellowship of brethren and friends visiting from Rockville, CT; Eureka, Forrest, and Gridley, IL; and Wolcott, IN.

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: Smithville, OH (1/20); Cissna Park, IL (1/27); Kansas City, MO (2/3); Sabetha, KS (2/10); Detroit, MI (2/17); Princeville, IL (2/24).

If you are planning to worship with us, please call ahead to confirm our schedule. Often we gather on Saturday evenings for fellowship. We also 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) 866-5543; and Sis. Gwen Leuthold (615) 356-5755.

**TEXAS, AUSTIN
Amy Ringger
Serenity Ringger**

Baptized into Thy name most holy,
O Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
I claim a place, though weak and
lowly

among Thy seed, Thy chosen host.
Immersed with Christ, I'm dead to
sin;

Thy Spirit now shall live within.

Zion's Harp #41, verse 1

We are thankful that Sis. Jasmine Ringger (Bro. Dale and Sis. Amy) was baptized on December 9. Elders here helping with the work were Bros. Peter Petrovic (San Diego) and Art Nohl (Sis. Sandra, Morris). Also here were Bro. Leland and Sis. Mary Plattner from Zapata.

Other ministers who have served us were Bros. Mark Schmidgall (Sis. Lisa, Eureka), Gary Anliker (Sis. Edie, Elgin, IL), and Ben Manz (Junction). We are thankful for our visitors from

Bay City; McAllen, TX; and Lamar.

The following is the minister schedule for February: (3) Morton, (10) Altadena, (17) Bluffton, and (24) Goodfield.

We extend a warm welcome to anyone who may be in the area to worship with us, even midweek, though we don't have a regular schedule for midweek services. 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 weekend 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 W. Highway 71, 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.

TEXAS, ZAPATA Mary Plattner

We are thankful for the visiting

ministers that share God's Word with us. This month Bro. Duane Metzger (Sis. Ruth, West Bend, IA) was here over the Christmas holidays. We appreciated the visitors over the holiday who came to be with their families. Christmas services were held on Christmas morning followed by a Christmas dinner. Many congregations were represented by our winter congregation. New Year's services will be held on New Year's Eve.

The ladies have been gathering on Thursdays to do sewing and enjoy fellowship with each other. A building was purchased this spring that is being used as a fellowship center and is used for these special events.

Anyone planning a trip to South Texas is most welcome to worship with us.

VERMONT CLARENDON/NORWICH Nathan and Miriam Reutter

Greetings to all! Our visiting ministers this month were Bros. Warren Zahner (Sis. Bonnie), Dan Stoller (Sis. Diane), and Duane Reutter (Sis. Kay), all of Rockville, CT. We so appreciate each one who makes the effort to come and support us in the Word and through prayers. For our Sunday school Christmas program this year, our congregation went to a nursing home to sing Christmas hymns with the children. There was a very nice turnout and it was enjoyed by all who attended. A heart-warming experience, near the end of the evening, was when all the children went to the bedside of one of the residents that could not make it out to the common area

where we were singing. This month she is to be turning 102! It was so sweet to see the children surrounding her bed. The age barriers did not seem to matter as they pondered on what her life must have been like when she was their age so long ago. She has seen many changes that have taken place in the world over her lifetime. One thing that has not changed is: "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).

If you are interested in fellowshiping with us here in Vermont, and would like information about service locations and dates, please contact Bro. Chad and Sis. Jenny Virkler (802-325-2724). We love to fellowship with believers, whether it is during the week or on the weekend. Please let us know if you are planning on being in our area so we can accommodate you. Service times are as follows:

Morning Service 10:10 AM

Afternoon Service 12:30 PM

Sunday school is held during the morning service.

If anyone is interested in purchasing beautiful head-coverings handmade from our dear Sisters in Ixtlan, Michoacan, Mexico, please contact Sis. Areli Reutter at (802-776-5293). Inventory is available upon request. This is a wonderful opportunity to support those of the household of faith (Galatians 6:10).



Apostolic Christian Counseling and Family Services

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

877-370-9988 (toll free) www.accounseling.org

Understanding Seasonal Depression

Psalm 42:5, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted in me? Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance."

Our life on earth is full of ups and downs, joys and sorrows. Sometimes, because of any number of factors, we may find ourselves struggling with depression. Sometimes it creeps up stealthily and pulls us down slowly enough that we don't realize it until we're in quite deep. Sometimes it hits us in full force and unexpectedly.

We need to understand that "Christian" and "Depression" are not mutually exclusive. The belief that "good Christians don't get depressed" can lead to unnecessary feelings of guilt, shame, and confusion when people are faced with certain forms of depression. In the Bible, David and Elijah provide us with two examples of God's people struggling with symptoms of depression.

Seasonal Affective Disorder (S.A.D.), also called the "Wintertime Blues": As we are in the midst of the winter months, some of us may be experiencing a very common and treatable type of depression. Studies have shown that up to 50% of the population experience a change in mood during the wintertime. For some of these people, the change in seasons during the wintertime months from fall to spring is directly related to the onset of clinical depression. In addition, for people already struggling with depression, depressive symptoms may get worse during the winter months. Some of the common complaints of wintertime blues include:

- Depression and anxiety: despair, guilt, hopelessness, restlessness
- Sleep problems: oversleeping, difficulty getting out of bed, needing to nap often
- Overeating: carbohydrate craving that can lead to weight gain
- Interpersonal problems: irritability, avoiding social situations
- Difficulty concentrating: more forgetful, hard to focus on tasks
- Lethargy: fatigue, too tired to do much of anything, everything is an effort
- Physical symptoms: lowered immune system, aches and pains

The decrease in the amount of sunlight is the major factor in wintertime blues. Other factors such as decreased activity level, holiday stress, and changes in our regular routine may also contribute to the problem. Many things can be done to counter the negative effects of decreased sunlight. Research has shown that therapeutic Light boxes are the best treatment for SAD. They are commercially available through stores like Apollo Health (www.apollolight.com). In addition, when indoors, we need to brighten the environment by having lights on and letting in as much light as possible, especially in the morning. Whenever possible we need to get outside to enjoy the fresh air and be in the sunlight, to surround ourselves in an environment that is full of light. Growing some indoor plants and finding ways to make our surroundings more colorful also can provide help.

Interventions to help ward off the wintertime blues

Spiritual: Our spiritual life should be the core from which all other areas of our life radiate. Maintaining a personal and intimate relationship with Christ is of utmost importance. Sometimes when we most need to be connected with Christ and with a body of believers, we have the most difficulty doing it. We need to make efforts to immerse ourselves in a Christ-centered environment. Post encouraging Bible verses on our refrigerators, car dashboards, bathroom mirrors, or other places we pass by often. Taking time to memorize Scripture verses can help us during times we feel blue or are facing temptation. Pushing ourselves to get out of the house and to church helps us to be fed by hearing the Word of God.

Relational: God created us in His image as relational beings. His desire to have a personal relationship with us underscores how important relationships are to God. Overcoming isolation is another key factor in dealing with the wintertime blues and depression in general. Overcoming isolation involves being around people with whom we can open up, relate, and share. We need to look for opportunities that will allow us to encourage others and be encouraged by others.

Biological: When striving to resist and ward off the wintertime blues, we

must not forget to take care of our bodies. We honor our body because it is the temple of God (1 Corinthians 3:16, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"). Even though it can be especially difficult in the winter months to stay healthy with exercise, rest, and proper nutrition, it is extra important to do so. Setting aside time from our busy schedules to exercise regularly not only will help us to feel better physically, but it can also elevate our moods.

The change in the length of days during the winter can throw off our sleep/wake cycle. Many people oversleep during the winter, which can increase the feeling of fatigue. Keeping a daily routine, getting up at regular times, and having activities planned for our days can help ward off many of the negative effects of the shorter winter days.

Emotional: Proverbs 23:7 says, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he." What we think and believe about something determines how we will act and feel. Our thoughts play a key role in our emotions and in battling the wintertime blues. We can choose to focus on "Depression thoughts" or "Coping thoughts." A Depression thought could be something like, "I'm feeling lonely, I hate this. I have three more long months of winter to go. I'll never make it." The hopelessness in that statement is very apparent. It contrasts with Jesus' statement in John 10:10: "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." Jesus' plan for us is hopefulness, not hopelessness. A modification of the above Depression thought could be, "I'm feeling lonely and I don't like it. What can I do to connect with someone else? I can make a phone call, write a letter, or visit my neighbor." Coping thoughts such as this one deal with reality and acknowledge how we feel about a situation; however, they don't leave us stranded and powerless.

Depression is a common and treatable problem, so we need to reach out for support if we are feeling depressed. We don't have to go through it alone. Contact ACCFS for additional information.

Child Placement Manager Opening



As Gateway Woods expands our Christian Adoption Services into Illinois, we are in need of an IL Child Placement Manager. Applicants for this job must:

1. Be a member in good standing of the Apostolic Christian Church with approval of his/her local elder.
2. Have at least a Master's Degree in Social Work from an accredited school and three years work experience in social work administration OR a Master's Degree in a human services field from an accredited school and five years of work experience in human services administration.
3. Have a dedicated interest, love and sensitivity for youth and families.
4. Possess good motivational, organizational, teaching and communications skills.
5. Have ability to establish positive working and interpersonal relationships and use a team approach.
6. Have treatment philosophy compatible with the mission of Gateway Woods - Apostolic Christian Children's Home.
7. Have commitment to ongoing personal and professional growth.

For further information and a job description, please contact:

Bro. Jeff Schumacher
Administrator
PO Box 151
Leo, IN 46765
1-888-443-4283 (GATE)
jeff.schumacher@gatewaywoods.org

Bro. Lynn Stieglitz
Counseling Elder
15417 Doty Rd.
New Haven, IN 46774
260-657-1033
lynnstieg@lightningnet.net

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: 515-887-7788
Cell: 515-320-2404
- Indiana:** Tom Neuenschwander
Phone/Fax: 260-824-4773
E-mail: tsneuen@adamswells.com
- Ohio:** Ken Zollinger
Phone: 330-669-2415
Fax: 330-669-8520

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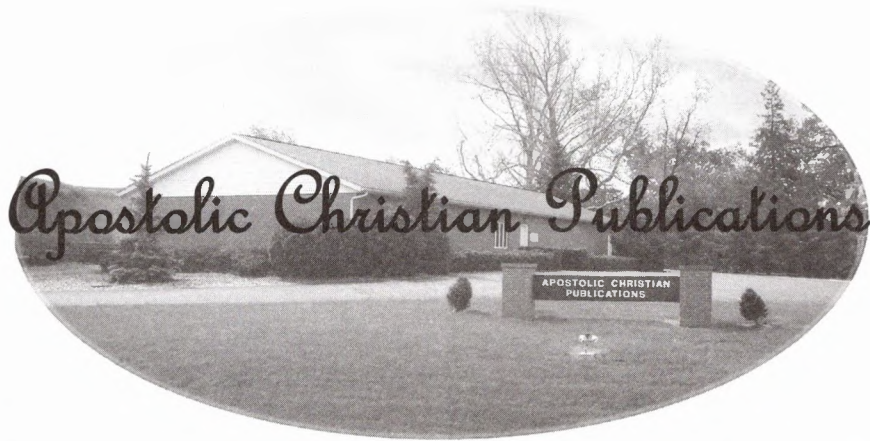
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Proverbs 29:18*

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Gateway Woods, a Christian residential childcare facility, has an immediate opening for a male or female counselor. Qualified persons for this position must hold a minimum of a Bachelors degree in Social Work,

Counseling or related field. A Masters degree is preferred. Responsibilities include individual and family counseling, case management, and consultation with the treatment team.

Jeff Schumacher
Residential Program Director
PO Box 151
Leo, IN 46765
(219) 627-2159

Lynn Stieglitz
Counseling Elder
15417 Doty Road
New Haven, IN 46774
(260) 657-1033

Volunteer Caretaker Opportunity

The Washington, DC congregation would welcome your help. They purchased a house in Silver Spring, Maryland, and are holding services there every Sunday.

Due to the small number of members and friends, and because most live a distance from church, they are looking for volunteer caretakers to live in the house and perform routine household and yard maintenance chores. Caretakers should plan to stay 3-4 weeks.

Caretakers could be couples, singles or families who would enjoy fellowship with the DC congregation and spending time near the Nation's Capitol and other points of interest on the East Coast.

For more information, please contact Barry and Doreen Steffen at 410/569-3635 or bdsteff@yahoo.com.

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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Houseparenting at Gateway Woods offers an opportunity for a couple, directed of the Lord, to come to work in a full-time on going ministry at Gateway Woods. Due to several staff changes, we have a need for several couples. This position offers competitive wages and benefits and a close relationship with brothers and sisters whose hearts and lives are dedicated to a common mission with an eternal reward. If you feel the call to explore these possibilities, please call one of the brothers listed below.

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

Lynn Stieglitz
Counseling Elder
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Director Of Nursing

*Apostolic Christian Home
Rittman, Ohio*

Due to upcoming retirement the Home is looking for a D.O.N. to replace our current manager. If interested please contact:

David Maletich
330-927-1010

The potential applicant should have previous management experience.

Sermon continued from page 2

be the same. But for every soul that's placed here upon this earth, I believe God has a purpose for that soul upon this earth. So then we have to go back to ourselves, and say okay - what is the message that's being communicated by my life? Because there's going to be people that are going to look upon us, upon you, upon me, and from that they're going to make assessments. They're going to listen to the words you speak, they're going to look at the places where you go, where you don't go. They're going to look at who you associate with, and they're going to pull all this together, and they're going to make assessments.

So the question is, what is the message your life is sending to those around you? It's very important, loved ones. Because we read here in the New Testament, many times, about those that were spreading a false message. And the damnation that was going to be brought upon them. So how can we take and glean from this what we've read here this morning, to apply it to our lives, that we not be sending out a false message?

It says here in verse two, "And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you..." II Peter 2:2-3. So, what is our speech? It seems to be one of the first things that was brought up here. It was mentioned back here in the Old Testament as well, "...for they prophesy a lie unto you." Jeremiah 27:14. So

what is our speech? Is it seasoned with salt?

Let's think about that for a moment. You know, salt can be used in a couple different ways. We can think of it, maybe, in a couple different ways. Sometimes salt, if I err not, is used as kind of a cleansing agent. I'm thinking of in a cut. It gets in there, it really burns, it really hurts, it really stings. But if I understand right, that helps kind of cleanse it and clean it out.

So let's think of that as our speech. Is it seasoned with salt? Does that mean we speak things that are going to cut, and hurt and destroy others? We don't have to take any thought ahead of time of what we say? No, that's not what it means. But maybe, we need to stop and think about our words, that when they are spoken, they are words of truth, words that cannot be disputed, words that are full of love, of kindness, and yet they don't diminish the truth.

Perish the thought, loved ones, that we would have salt that's so old, that when it pours into a cut, you don't know the difference. It's like someone speaking to you, and they get done and you think, now, what did they just say? If our speech is seasoned with salt, it's going to be kind, it's going to be compassionate, but it's also going to be the truth, and it's going to be clear, and there's going to be no question where we stand.

The other thing about salt is we often use it as a seasoning. It adds flavor, it adds a little more abundance. So then we stop and we say, okay, what's that mean to me? That means that we need to be speaking upon those things which are true and honest.

Those things that would lift up, that would edify. We shouldn't be one that would speak and say oh-woe is me, oh-woe is this situation, oh-woe is this situation. There's nothing good, it's all bad out there. I'll take my talent and I'll go bury it in the ground and hopefully it'll still be there.

God's not called us to that, loved ones. As ambassadors, we are to go and represent our owner. In this case our country maybe, as an ambassador of a country. In our case, we're to represent God. So if our speech is seasoned with salt, it's going to be speaking of the joys, of the abundant blessings that God bestows upon those who will humble themselves and follow Him. So right there we see, our words can have such an impact on those about us.

It also means, loved ones, that when we say something that's not true, or we say something that's not quite accurate, or we talk about somebody and cut them down, we're not fulfilling the Scripture. And how often, how often that happens. Why? Why loved ones? Why must we be tale bearers? Why must we be easy to talk about someone behind their back? That's our human nature, we might say, and we're supposed to go up against that. That's not the truth. That's the folly of false teachings. That's the folly of a false message that we're communicating.

"...through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you..." II Peter 2:3. So now, we're talking not about what we say, but what others say about us. And how we react to that, loved ones, again, is a message that we're communicating. And people are going to see

and observe. I saw something - sometimes you see on computer screens people have a little message that flashes across - and it said something along the lines of this: A real man is known by what he does not laugh at. I had to stop and think about that. You see, it's not the stuff that we do that's really...we're making a statement, or we're making a point. Sometimes it's the stuff we don't do. And a lot of times, I believe it's that way.

The thought comes to my mind, Satan came before God, to come to Job, to say: Let me do something to him and he'll curse Your name. Job didn't. He didn't say a word against God. It's what he didn't do, that set him apart. So again, if someone comes to us with a tale, are we going to take and spread it and pass it on? If someone comes and starts talking about somebody else and cutting them down, are we going to sit there and agree with them and say, yea, I know what you mean? Or are we going to say, Wait, maybe we shouldn't be saying those kind of things. Are they going to look at you then, and say, well, my goodness, what's the matter with you? Are they going to make merchandise of you? Does it cut to the heart and hurt? Do we feel kind of uneasy to do those kind of things, to stand fast for the truth? To be that faithful witness? To not let bad get propagated? We want to stand fast, loved ones. We want to take that evil, the things that shouldn't be, and we want to cut it off right at the bottom. We want to stop it as soon as possible in our lives. And if God has given us an opportunity, when someone comes up and starts to tell us a tale, or someone comes up and

starts to tear down someone else, God's given us that opportunity to be an example, to speak the right words. We ought to be just like Job. We should recognize it. God's not going to cause us to do two different things or to think it's okay for us to do good and evil.

"For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked:" II Peter 2:4-7. There's so many people that you come across, that don't believe the world's going to be destroyed by fire. They don't believe that God will bring judgment. What's the message that's going forth in your life? What are people able to read or to observe about your belief, and how might it stir their heart?

We often read of a remnant being saved. I think, even as we go back in the Old Testament there and we read about the children of Israel as they were captured and taken to Babylon, there was a remnant that was left. No idea how many people lived upon the face of the earth at the time of the flood. But if you took that eight people that were listed, and divided that by the number of people who lived upon the earth, I have to believe it would be a

very, very, very small number.

Is that how God wants it? Not at all. He wants all men to be saved. He wants all men to come to the knowledge of the truth, and loved ones, He's called us to be ambassadors for the truth. He caused us and called us to be faithful witnesses, not false witnesses. That that which is displayed in our life and all those who see us, there shouldn't be a question about: What is it they stand for? What is it they believe in? It's hard enough, in the world in which we live today, with Satan trying every way he can to bring deception, to bring confusion into this earth... he doesn't need any more help from us, loved ones.

And when we walk our own willful way, when we speak things that are not of the Spirit, that are not of the truth, we're spreading that false message. And I fear that we'll be like those angels that were cast from Heaven. There'll be no hope. We shouldn't look at this as being a negative. So often we hear, well, that's so negative. Loves ones, look at the opportunity, look at the witness that God has called us to. We are ambassadors for the King of Kings, for the Lord of Lords. He's asked us to go live our lives in such a way that His name is glorified, in what we say, in what we do, what we don't say, what we don't do. So we have to examine ourselves. What is the message my life is sending forth? What is the message in your life that's going forth?



Full Time Service Positions in Haiti

The World Relief Child Sponsorship and Caribbean Committee open staff positions for the work with MEBSH in Les Cayes, Haiti. These positions will be centered on the campus of MEBSH in Cite Lumiere with residences adjacent to or near our Brethren currently residing in Haiti. Both positions (described below) will be full time and require a minimum commitment of three years. Financial support will be provided by the Brotherhood and/or WR through the Servant Fund. Candidates for both positions must be willing to learn Haitian Creole at a minimum and preferably also French.

Child Care Support

A Brother or Sister to work in the Child Care Office of MEBSH.

- 1) Prepare financial reports and reconcile bank statements.
- 2) Prepare information packets for new sponsors.
- 3) Order supplies and school packets (from World Relief Child Sponsorship Committee delivered via sea containers).
- 4) Organize correspondence with sponsors.
- 5) Liason between ACWR Child Sponsorship Committee and MEBSH Child Care Board.

MEBSH Construction Department

A sister to assist in the operation and administration of the construction department.

- 1) Supervise and manage the work team guest house.
- 2) Assist with the maintaining financial records.
- 3) Host women on work teams including rural work sites.

Those interested in considering these positions should contact:

Bro. Ted Hirstein
67 Sapphire Point, Morton, IL 61550
309-266-8769 hirstein@mtco.com

Apostolic Christian Counseling and Family Services

73 East Queenwood Rd,
Morton, IL 61550
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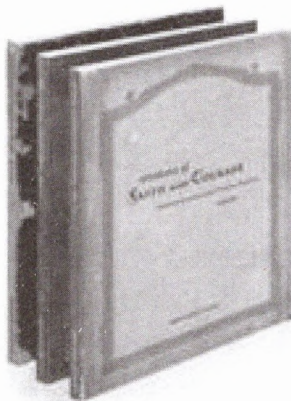
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- Mentoring for students in mental health-related fields
- All calls are confidential

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Assistant to the current Administrator

Parkview Haven Retirement Home of Francesville, Indiana, is seeking an Assistant to our current home Administrator. If you prayerfully feel the Lord's leading and have a desire for this position, please contact Gene Huber Sr. through the following listing:

gbhuber@gmail.com
 Phone: 574-946-3447
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*...This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord.
 Isaiah 54:17*

CARIBBEAN BOARD PROJECTS - 2008

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. 1-309-359-5240 or E-mail michael_rassi@hotmail.com.

HAITI			
<i>Data updated from the Apostolic Christian World Relief web site as of January 10, 2008 - www.acworldrelief.org/work-teams-caribbean/</i>			
Project	Date	Coordinator	Capacity
Les Cayes, SEED Agriculture Aid	Jan 25 - Feb 1, 2008	Dale Frank 319-766-3661 frankfarm@iowatelecom.net	9
Les Cayes, AWA Water Aid	Jan 25 - Feb 1, 2008	Troy Stuber 309-925-2603 troystuber@verizon.net	5
La Higuera Lifeline Mission	Jan 31-Feb 4, 2008	Wayne Banwart 309-932-3316 wbanwart@uiuc.edu	Invitation
Croix des Bouquets, Lifeline Medical/Dental	Feb 12-19, 2008	Glen Steidinger 815-692-3473	8
Les Cayes, MEBSH School Roof	Feb 15-22, 2008	Dean Pashak 989-662-7685 dwpashak@charter.net	12
Les Cayes, SEED Agriculture Aid	Feb 22-29, 2008	Dale Frank 319-766-3661 frankfarms@iowatelecom.net	9
Les Cayes, FRW Vocational School	Feb 22-29, 2008	Rick Wuethrich 219-567-9488 topnotch@home.ffni.com	4
Les Cayes, FRW Simone Orphanage	Feb 29-Mar 7, 2008	Rick Wuethrich 219-567-9488 topnotch@home.ffni.com	8
Croix des Bouquets, Lifeline Medical/Dental	Mar 11-18, 2008	Russ Manz 419-399-4053 russ_manz@campbellsoup.com	8
Les Cayes, MEBSH School Roof	Mar 28 Apr 4, 2008	Rich Bertschi 309-467-6110 lemangm@mtco.com	12
Les Cayes, MEBSH Medical/Dental	Apr 18-25, 2008	Keith Knepp 309-467-3468 kknepp@mchsi.com	6
Les Cayes, AWA Water Aid	May 16-23, 2008	Troy Stuber 309-925-2603 tstuber1@peoplepc.com	5
Les Cayes, FRW Vocational School	Jun 20-27, 2008	Rick Wuethrich 219-567-9488 topnotch@home.ffni.com	4
JAMAICA			
<i>Data updated from the Apostolic Christian World Relief web site as of January 10, 2008 - www.acworldrelief.org/work-teams-caribbean/</i>			
Kingston, CCCD	Mar 8-15, 2008	Terry Miller - 309-696-7804 Roger Stoller - 309-747-3228 rstoller@dtmspeed.net	Full
Jamaica Deaf Village, CCCD Bluffton Sunday School	Mar 22-29, 2008	Courtney Pfister 260-824-5151 fizz@parlorcity.com	Bluffton Sunday School Only
Knockpatrick School, CCCD Morton Sunday School	Mar 22-29, 2008	Al Kaiser 309-256-7251 kecinc@kaiserelectrical.com	50
Jamaica Deaf Village, CCCD	May 16-24, 2008	Ted Hirstein 309-266-8769 hirstein@mtco.com	50
Jamaica Deaf Village, CCCD	May 30-Jun 7, 2008	Keith Herrmann 309-639-4349 kr greetings@winco.net	40
Knockpatrick School, CCCD	Jun 28- Jul 5, 2008	Pete Webel 419-756-2587 wpw47@aol.com	40
Knockpatrick School, CCCD	Jul 12-19, 2008	Dave Zeltwanger dakzelt@urhere.net	40

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 2008

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

Data updated from the Apostolic Christian World Relief web site as of January 10, 2008 - www.acworldrelief.org/work-teams-mexico/

Project	Date	Coordinator
Magdalena Construction	Jan 19-26, 2008	Steve Kaeb 217-379-4707 kaebsb@illicom.net
Magdalena Construction	Feb 16-23, 2008	Bob Knepp 309-923-7335 rnepp@verizon.net
Agua Prieta Construction	Mar 8-15, 2008	Kevin Gerber 260-565-3313 kevgerber@yahoo.com
Magdalena Construction	Mar 8-15, 2008	David Prevo - Illinois State University 309-310-8060 daprevo@ilstu.edu
Reynosa Construction	Mar 8-15, 2008	Tristan Herrmann - ICC-Bradley 309-446-3502 ib_yg@yahoo.com
Agua Prieta Construction	Mar 15-22, 2008	Denis Fry 260-824-3055 fry.d@mchsi.com
Magdalena Construction	Mar 15-22, 2008	Matt Wyss/U of I 309-397-5919 mattwyss@yahoo.com
Agua Prieta Construction	Mar 22-29, 2008	Sam Kaehr 260-565-3200 sckaehr@adamswells.com
Magdalena Construction	Mar 22-29, 2008	Curt Hodel/Roanoke Bible Class 309-923-8091 cjhodel@juno.com
Reynosa Construction	Mar 22-29, 2008	Jeff Leman 260-565-3815 jvleman@adamswells.com
Juarez Construction	Mar 22-29, 2008	Jay Grube 260-565-3402 grube@adamswells.com
Juarez Medical/Dental	Mar 26-Apr 2, 2008	Cheryl Herrmann 309-385-1082 cherrmann@verizon.net
Magdalena Construction	May 31-Jun 7, 2008	Doug Herrmann/Princeville Bible Class 309-446-9677 douglas@elmnet.net
Magdalena Construction	Jun 7-14, 2008	Don Hoerr/Peoria Bible Class hoerrfamily7@insightbb.com
Magdalena Construction	June 21-28, 2008	Brad Gehring/Taylor Bible Class 217-228-9849 bradgehring@yahoo.com
Magdalena Construction	June 28-July 5, 2008	Kent Mogler 651-452-8586 kent.mogler@comcast.net
Magdalena Construction	Jul 19-26, 2008	Blake Stahl 630-740-7461 Chicago-Champaign Bible Class bcstahl01@hotmail.com



REMEMBERING

Our Spiritual Heritage

The Early Days

When the faith of our fathers (in Europe) came to America, it was nurtured by many persons of unswerving devotion to a Biblical doctrine, along with a tireless mode to promote the truth. One such man was John Kreinbill. He was very active in America in the 1850s and 1860s. He is not well known today because none of his descendents are in the church today. The name Kreinbill has several variant spellings including "Krayenbuhl," "Graybill" and "Grabill".

He was born in 1803 (the same year as Samuel Froehlich) and died on August 14, 1887, at age 84. When he left Europe in approximately 1836 at age 33, the Froehlich movement was in its initial stages. Conjecture would suggest he knew of Samuel Froehlich since the latter was widely known in Switzerland and areas of Germany.

Kreinbill first settled in Titusville, Pennsylvania. He later lived in Ohio and finally moved to Illinois. His first home in Peoria, which he purchased on June 11, 1847, was a log cabin at the foot of Munson and Sanford Streets. His dwelling was among a cluster of log cabins in this area. Often, he would take his cow up the hill to graze, possibly in the area between Main and High Streets.

John Kreinbill is thought to be the first convert of the Apostolic Christian Church in Illinois. It is believed he was drawn to God through the preaching of Benedict Weyeneth, the first American Elder

of our faith. He was soon selected as a minister, and by 1852 held worship services in the Sommer home across the Illinois River from Peoria on Metamora Road.

He traveled widely. He was active in helping establish a new church denomination in America (Apostolic Christian). He traveled by buggy to many areas to proclaim the gospel. Among his travel gear was a large handkerchief tied to a stick.

Not only did he travel in the United States, but into Canada as well. He did this to preach and seek converts. A diary entry by his daughter, Catherine Hofstetter, on November 15, 1876, states, "Father starts for Canada from Gridley." An entry of May 5, 1877, says, "Father came home." Thus, it appears the trip to Canada lasted from November to May.

Kreinbill is noted, too, for traveling to the east coast and picking up newly-arrived immigrants who had just made the trip from Europe. He helped them adjust to their newly-adopted country. No doubt, this made them more dependent on him, and perhaps opened a door for him to explain the plan of salvation and inform them of his church body here in America.

From Peoria, he later moved to Partridge Prairie near Metamora, Illinois. His daughter's diary indicates he worked diligently in central Illinois, preaching in all of the churches which existed in those very early days, including Tremont (Dillon), Morton and Congerville.

Kreinbill was remembered by Elder Henry Geistlich of Switzerland, who visited all the then-existing congregations of our faith in America (in 1866). In his diary, Bro. Geistlich wrote, "This has been his country for about thirty years. He is now a minister in our church. He is a lovable brother, being a real example to the unbelievers and unfaithful. He offers almost his entire life to the work of the Lord."

He was married to Jacobena Gehring, who was born in approximately 1807 in Alsace, France. She died of a blood clot in 1885. Thus John Kreinbill survived his wife by two years.

From The Zion's Harp

The lyrics from the Zion's Harp Hymnal are outstanding. And last verses seem to be especially so. For instance, from "The Penitent's Conflict" (page 39), the last verse reads:

*Thou in silence, God will hear thee,
As a Saviour will be near thee:
Have no doubt; He hears you pray!
Just believe Christ intercedeth;
Just believe that all He pleaded
God will grant without delay!*

By: Perry A. Klopfenstein

Next Issue:

More on John Kreinbill

Also, news on the project to update *Marching To Zion*

The Light Of Hope

From Across The Ocean

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"I'm On The King's Highway"

Elder Bro. Willis Ehnle, Shioda, Japan

When Moses was leading the children of Israel out of Egypt to the promised land, he wanted to travel through the land of Edom so he made a request to the king of Edom. "Let us pass, I pray thee, through thy country....we will go by the king's highway, we will not turn to the right hand nor to the left." Numbers 20:17.

In Isaiah 35:8, we also read of a highway. "And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness."

About sixty years ago, I was in Alabama teaching Bible classes in the evenings to our church people there. While driving to these Bible classes in my 36 Chevy, I began to sing whatever came to mind. This is what I sang. "I'm on the King's Highway for Jesus, I'm on the King's Highway to stay. I'm going to do what I can for others, While traveling on the King's Highway. There are others who are needing, Our Saviour and His way. So tell

them of our Saviour, While traveling on the King's Highway."

We like to think of the Christian life as a pilgrimage. "This world is not my home, I'm just a traveling through." I believe we sometimes sing those words. Now if we are just traveling through, we better be careful what kind of a road we are traveling on. The Lord Jesus Christ said, "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life." Matthew 7:14. I prefer the King's Highway, the way laid out and paved by the Lord Jesus Christ.

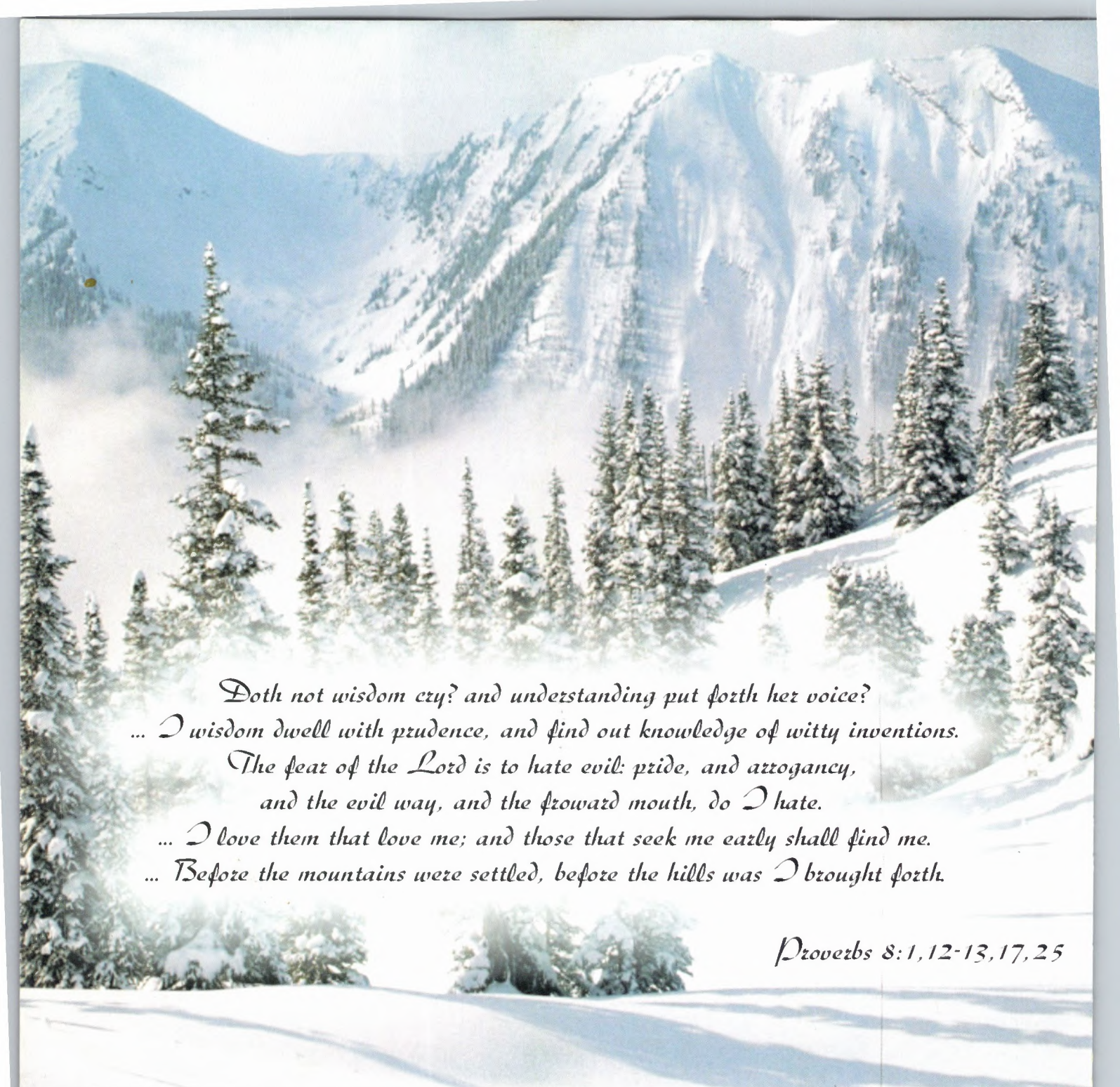
In Luke 14:23, in the parable of the feast, we read, "And the lord said unto his servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled." It is interesting to note that in this parable, the lord seemed to be desperate to have his house filled with guests. He didn't say that his servants could sit at home and hope that someone would come. He de-

manded action, out into the highways and hedges. Evidently he thought some who might come, were hiding in the hedges or behind bushes.

I like the idea of traveling on the King's Highway, far above the turmoil of this present world. There I have a good view of the sun, the moon, the stars, the sun rises and the sun sets. I like it. The Holy Spirit travels with me and I also enjoy my fellow pilgrims. This is the best life and our destination is out of this world.

Now we face a new year, 2008. Let's stay on the King's Highway and turn neither to the right nor to the left. However, I understand from our King, the Lord Jesus Christ, that it is all right to reach over the rail to pull others on board. Let's not become too comfortable nor complacent. We may not be able to do much to help others, but maybe we can each do a little something. And let's sing while traveling on the King's Highway.

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*Doth not wisdom cry? and understanding put forth her voice?
... I wisdom dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge of witty inventions.
The fear of the Lord is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy,
and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.
... I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me.
... Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth.*

Proverbs 8:1,12-13,17,25

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