

the Silver Lining

Vol. 72, #1

Jan. 2017

*O majestic Being, praises now we offer...
Grant that we, day by day, unto Thee
be pleasing and in love increasing.*

Zion's Harp #68

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To Our Readers

Turning the Pages

The future is already written, but only God knows our stories. He is an author we can trust. Sometimes He throws in some surprising “plot twists” we didn’t see coming, but we know that “...*all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*” Standing at the brink of another New Year, let’s go forward in confidence, not with worry or presumption, just relying on God’s grace for each day.

This year at the *Silver Lining*, we plan to again request your contributions on a variety of topics. These special features proved very popular last year and were a blessing to many.

Our next topic is: “What do you love about our church?”

Please send your contributions answering that question to editor@acsilverlining.org by February 20. We’ll publish the submissions in the April issue.

In Christ,

Jeff Grimm & Rick Plattner, Counseling Elders

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Light from the Word

Biblical Approach to Conflict - Part 1

*"And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins."*¹

Conflict

Why does conflict exist? Occasionally, it is because of a deliberate attack by a person of evil intentions. Sometimes, conflict occurs when selfish motives usurp concern for others. But in the family of God, perhaps conflict occurs most often because of misunderstandings and poor communication. When left unaddressed, such conflict may increase tension, diminish trust, and create barriers. The diminished trust often leads to further misunderstandings, greater tension, increasingly lower levels of trust, and ultimately broken relationships that can be difficult to mend. For this reason, it is important that believers learn to address conflict with humility, love, and courage—and to do so without delay.

Even with the best of intentions, it is likely that sooner or later we will experience conflict. The Lord instructs us clearly to overlook (*forbear*) the little things, make the effort to be reconciled in more serious cases, and seek help if and when necessary.² In this first part of a two-part series, we will look at several biblical principles to consider how we can prevent and diminish conflict. In the second part, we will consider how to resolve conflict that has advanced to a state of offense, responding through the power of the Holy Spirit with godly love.

Prevention

Who can judge righteous judgment? The infamous words, "What is truth?"³ which Pilate uttered to Jesus perhaps reflected Pilate's cynical frustration with judgment. Limited by our five senses, each one of us struggles to judge righteous judgment. An unartfully

spoken comment can be perceived as intentional. An experience shared and repeated by the listener often changes with each telling as details are misremembered. Such misstatements soon become fact to the listener and are repeated as truth. Reliable research shows that even the most well-intentioned eyewitness testimony is often erroneous. Stress can degrade our ability to remember accurately, previous experiences may bias our interpretation of an event, and suggestions or biases expressed by others may influence how we recall events.

All of these factors are exacerbated when the experience is related to us secondhand rather than experienced directly. Every retelling of a tale increases the likelihood that it is inaccurate, and paradoxically increases the probability that the incorrect details are perceived to be truthful by the teller of the tale. Perhaps it is for this reason that the Lord, since the days of Moses, teaches us of the sinfulness of repeating "stories."⁴

Refusing to be either provider or receiver of false information is the first preventive step in dealing with potential conflict in a Christ-like manner. The Apostle Paul's observation that, "*Charity thinketh no evil*" not only recognizes that charity refuses to pass on malicious gossip, but also teaches that true Christ-like love refuses to believe the tales that are told without firsthand proof. True Christian love consciously and by nature refuses to believe ill of one another without clear and unequivocal evidence. Putting love into preventive action is perhaps the best method of addressing conflict.

*"It is not good to accept the person of the wicked, to overthrow the righteous in judgment. A fool's lips enter into contention, and his mouth calleth for strokes. A fool's mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul. The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly."*⁵

— Please turn to pg. 61

Monthly Sermon

Sermon by Elder Bro. Rod Bajema, Lester, IA

1 Chronicles 29:20-30 & St. Luke 8:1-25

I'd like to greet each one of you in the name of our Lord and Savior. If you really stop and think about it, if we lived in the Old Testament times, we wouldn't be allowed to do this. The only one that had access to God's holy throne was the High Priest, and that was just once a year. Here we just take it so for granted. We walk through the doors, fall on our knees, pray to God, open His Word, and hear from It. I don't know if we ever really stop and consider how privileged a people we are.

If we would read into the next chapter, it would be prayer that Solomon had to an Almighty God asking for wisdom. We know how Solomon's life went. Great wisdom was granted unto him. You really think about what took place in Solomon's life; he had a tough task ahead of him. First, he had Saul who was a king. You know how that kingship went. Then David came in there; he was a man of war. David himself had a desire to build the temple. God told him, no, that wasn't going to happen. So it fell upon Solomon, and he had quite a task ahead of him.

We read in the Old Testament scripture about David. There came a time in his life when he realized his years were over on this earth. Oft times when I've read this scripture, I wonder how old David must have been. I don't think he'd be any different than us today. It seems as we get a little older in life, maybe not even older, we look back on our life, and we reflect on it.

I think of the two souls that are going to be united today in holy marriage. It will be the first day of their rest of their life together. Then as every day goes by, we as mankind have a tendency to look back on our life. Sometimes we look back on our lives, and maybe we are embarrassed by some of the things we

did or didn't do. Maybe sometimes we wonder why certain things have happened in our life, and we put question marks there.

I wonder if David even looked back on his life. If you want to look at a man who had more struggles I believe than any one of us here had — he had a daughter that was raped, he had sons that all died, he was a man of war, he was a man that experienced the heartaches of this life, he was a man that was accused of many different things, and he was in error. Each time he knew he had to repent of the things that he did, and he humbled himself before an Almighty God. I don't believe in David's life, and the scripture would bear it out as he looked at his life, it didn't turn out like he wanted it too. I believe any one of us gathered here today would say, if we have sons or daughters, we'd like to have them fall in our footsteps and do the things we have taught them. It doesn't happen that way, does it? David is a perfect example of it.

David himself expressed various times that he wanted to do thus and thus and this and that. He lamented over some of the things that he did. He saw the death of a child. He saw the death of his sons. He saw the death of someone he was actually guilty of - that was Uriah the Hittite. He had many, many things happen in his life.

I often ponder when I think about how David was and how it was when he was with Nabal. They called him a foolish man, a churlish man. He had certain things, and you can obviously see as you read the scriptures. Go back in the Psalms and read about how David lamented about his life. Many times in his life, he had pride enter in. The pride came in there, and it welled up. He wanted to teach Nabal a lesson and along came a lady by the name of Abigail. She said, 'No, don't do these things.' (1 Samuel 25)

We often look at our own lives. How many of us gathered here today, when we reflect on our

own lives, do we live them sometimes with regrets of some of the things we might have done? If we could turn the clock back, even at this moment, and say, 'Well if I could just turn the clock back and change something, I would do it.' How many of us here today maybe wish we would have said 'I love you' to your wife a little more often or maybe we would have been a little more patient with a family member or with a child? Or maybe we have had a situation where we would have said, I had aught with someone, and I wish I would have just said, 'I'm sorry, will you forgive me?'

Maybe there is someone here that just can't quite humble himself and say I need to repent. We think of that as David was; we could talk about it the entire time we're here. Think of how it was in David's life. His goal at the end of life was to build a temple before God. His true love was for an Almighty God. He had this in his mind, and God said this is not going to be so. Nowhere in scripture can I read that David was disappointed and upset. We know he probably was disappointed, but what did he do? He knew there was Solomon. He wanted to fulfill the kingdom of God. He helped Solomon get ready to build the temple.

At the very end it talks about David's death. It was an honorable death. It says, *"And he died in a good old age, full of days..."* (v.28) Have you ever thought about that? If any one of us gathered here had to put a mark on any one of our lives, what would we say it would be that we're dying of a good old age? Would you say 50? 60? 70? 80? We don't know. I really believe that when we die of a good, old age, it means that we are prepared to stand before God in judgment. We're prepared to meet Him face to face.

It says, *"And he died in a good old age, full of days, riches, and honour: and Solomon his son reigned in his stead. Now the acts of David the king, first and last,*

behold, they are written in the book of Samuel the seer, and in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer." (v.28-29) I don't know how many of you know it. I've said it at home before. What that means to be a seer is someone that predicts the future and tells what the future is going to hold.

We do that on a daily basis whether we like to think of it or not. How many of you have looked to the week ahead and said this is what the weather forecaster predicts? How many times have they been totally wrong? They say it's going to be such and such a temperature, and it never reaches that temperature. It's going to rain, and it doesn't rain. They always seem to put percentages on things. Fifty percent chance it's going to rain; fifty percent chance of thunderstorms. These men, they were men of God, and God taught them what was going to take place. It says, David died, full of old age.

Then we went into the book of St. Luke. It talked about very familiar scripture — a sower sowing the seed. You in Central Illinois, just like we do in Iowa, know what that's like. Quite quickly here the time is going to come and we're going to take that tiny seed. We're going to place it into the ground. We really don't understand how it works. We know it has to die to germinate, but it's going to eventually bring forth fruit. Now whether it's going to be good fruit, whether it's going to be deformed fruit or whether it brings forth nothing at all depends a lot on the weather and various things, but there are some things we can do. We can prepare the soil. We can prepare the way the seed is going to have the very best that we can offer.

It talks about it here. It says, *"A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture.*

— Please turn to pg. 62

Ministry Program Updates

Rebuilding Ministry in Columbia, SC. *Going Beyond Bricks and Mortar* USA Committee

Beginning in January of this year, volunteers have been ministering to flood victims in Columbia, South Carolina. Severely damaged homes have been torn down and new homes are being built. In addition, many leaky roofs are being torn off and re-shingled. The lives of these disaster victims have been changed significantly. Moving from a mold infested home resulting from the flood into a new home that is fresh and clean is an incredible blessing for these families.

Since the time of this record breaking flood in October of 2015, some families had no choice but to remain in their damaged homes waiting for help to arrive. In the interim, mold filled houses have contributed to respiratory ailments and other health issues for those who had no place else to go. Willing volunteers are restoring hope and health to these families in need.

While we are eager to restore the physical homes of these disaster victims, we are also concerned about their eternal homes. The guiding principles

of HarvestCall state that “We will proclaim and demonstrate Christ’s love such that the gospel is never secondary.” With this in mind, we are committed to be intentional in our spiritual outreach as well as in our rebuilding efforts. We realize that there are more important matters than having a nice earthly home that is temporal. Sharing the message of God’s love and salvation is paramount.



Although the focus of this ministry is to help those in need, God has a wonderful way of blessing us beyond our ability to bless others. Scriptures tell us that “it is more blessed to give than to receive” and many have made that experience while serving others.

Haiti Dairy Program Update: *"God is in the Gazebo"*

Caribbean Committee

One of the first accomplishments of the Haiti Dairy Program (HDP), was building a gazebo and community well. This is a gathering place for meetings and for the community. After Hurricane Matthew, the foliage and trees were stripped away from the area, and nearly every tin roof. Amazingly, the gazebo was left relatively unscathed. The folks in the community like to say that “God is in the gazebo” and they especially enjoy the shade it provides when they are

using the well. Praise God that our missionaries are all safe, no animals within the HDP perished, and major damage was spared at the farm and living area. Our great God also provided an opportunity to strengthen relationships with local farmers, as their crops were demolished. These farmers needed to replant but had no resources. Through HDP, black bean seed was provided to them.

Bro. Les Kaeb, missionary for the program, has been diligent in working on the forage program and building relationships within the community as we waited for the required government approvals before initiating a dairy processing hub. Months of red tape ensued as the needed certificate was delayed or

For the team participant, the experience is often one of great spiritual encouragement. Sharing morning devotions, memory verses, singing and worshipping together are all part of the week's activities. The opportunity to spend time working together with brethren and friends and to share openly from our hearts of our life experiences tends to draw us closer



to each other. Forgetting ourselves as we serve others is what Jesus exemplified for us. We are so blessed as we give our lives in His service.

Nearly five hundred volunteers will serve throughout the three-month duration of this ministry. Each one brings their own gifts and talents to be used for the glory of God. Whether we are skilled tradesmen or just willing helpers, each has an important role to play. Reaching out in love to the families we are serving is something

everyone can do. Taking genuine interest in their lives and patiently listening as they share some of the struggles they have encountered through the flood and other times in their life will exemplify Christ's love.

While our lives may differ greatly from theirs, we are all very much the same. Our spiritual brokenness is universal. Through sharing the many ways that God has cared and provided for our needs, we can assure them of His faithful provision that we have experienced. We can share promises from God's Word that are available to all. Ultimately, we can share our own life's story — that we were lost and now are found. We were blind and now we see. We have been rescued — not by any works of our own — but by His redeeming love and grace.

How you can help:

Please pray that Christ's love can be shared throughout this ministry. Pray for God to prepare hearts to receive the Gospel. Pray for the Spirit to move hearts to share the message of salvation through Jesus. May God be glorified!

denied. Then, just before Thanksgiving, a miracle happened. Bro. Les had been working with a new Haitian accountant and he asked Les to stop by his office. When Les arrived, he was stunned to be handed the needed certificate! Praise be to God! We continue to trust in His timing.

Now that this huge obstacle has been put aside, the decisions of finalizing equipment, cows, and



Hurricane Matthews destructive path was witnessed throughout the region. Amazingly, the HDP gazebo and community well were left relatively unscathed.

building priorities are here, and there are many details to consider.

How you can help:

The program committee asks for prayers that the decisions made will glorify the Father, further the gospel, and fulfill the mission. Financial contributions to the HarvestCall Haiti Dairy Program are needed and appreciated.

Keys to Accountability

"We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves." Romans 15:1

"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." Galatians 6:2

"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed..." James 5:16

In the Scriptures we see a clear call in the early church to be encouragers and supports to each other. As *"members one of another"* (Romans 12:5), we are to lean upon Christ and the collective strength of His Body to help us to overcome and grow in *"love and good works"* (Hebrews 10:24). One area where we frequently see this role of the Body played out is in the area of accountability. In this short article, we will look practically at what accountability looks like and some keys to successful accountability. Our hope is these accountability principles will encourage us all to engage in the opportunity of meaningful accountability.

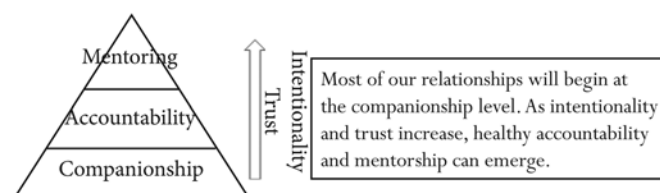
What does accountability look like?

Accountability is defined by Merriam-Webster as "a willingness to accept responsibility for one's actions." It is rooted strongly in the realizations that you, and only you, are responsible for your behavior and choices, but also that there is health and help in allowing others to see parts of your life you have previously tried to hide.

A good accountability partner is someone willing and able to invest the time and energy needed into the relationship. Personal experience with the struggle and spiritual maturity gained through overcoming can add to the depth of the accountability relationship. However, you don't need to look for someone with the exact same struggle in order to still receive help.

It takes initiative on the part of the one struggling to first reach out to another and ask for help in the form of accountability. This first step is often the most difficult in the relationship.

How does accountability differ from other relationships?



What are keys to successful accountability?

Be committed. Initiate regular and consistent contact with your accountability partner(s) instead of waiting on them to contact you. Typically, accountability is required more frequently at first or at more difficult times and then should somewhat taper with success in overcoming.

Be proactive. Plan on proactive accountability first, and reactive accountability only when needed.

- Proactive: anticipating times of weakness and informing your partner(s) before meeting the temptation with a plan to prevent. Consider having a specific day or time where you check-in



consistently. Having a scheduled check-in can be a helpful way to engage proactive accountability.

- **Reactive:** confessing to a failure and discussing how the behavior could have been prevented.

Be consistent. Change takes time. Celebrate victories, pick yourself up after setbacks, repent, learn, and continue to grow.

Be real. Be willing to invest deeply in each other's lives and ask hard questions.

See progression. Meeting in person can seem cumbersome but is most effective, especially early on. Over time, meetings might evolve to the effective use of technology such as texting.

Specific keys for helpers

There will be times when accountability relationships grow to be more one-sided, with one individual pouring into the other individual as he/she strives to overcome. In these situations, a few keys for the helpers are important:

- **Be confidential.** Nothing destroys trust and accountability as quickly as breached confidentiality.
- **Expect change while offering hope.** Expect, even demand, growth but offer the hope of the Gospel as well. It is critical to prayerfully strive for a balance between grace and truth when helping others.
- **Know when to reach out for further help.** Sometimes we can find ourselves in areas where we feel unqualified or where we believe those we are helping may need more help than we alone can offer. Know who your resources are. Be honest with your partner in these situations. Gently but firmly suggest the need for involvement from others. Be willing to seek counsel from your elder in such situations as well.

A note about groups

Accountability will most often start as a one-on-one relationship. However, with certain circumstances (i.e., severity of situation, continual struggling in certain areas), this accountability might shift toward a group model. A group of 3-5 concerned brothers or sisters in Christ can offer a community of support for those struggling which one individual by themselves can not. They can work together to ensure an individual feels supported, challenged, and loved.

One Final Note

In Luke 22, Christ says this concerning Peter, "... behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." (v. 31-32). We, likewise, have an Adversary who desires to "sift us as wheat." And we, likewise, have the opportunity to pray for each other, encourage each other, and strengthen each other through the grace which God gives us all. May we, as the Body of Christ, be willing to engage in this opportunity.

ACCFS has numerous resources to assist someone as they interact with and help others. Our relationships can range from formal mentoring situations to the informal, encouraging conversations we hold nearly every day. Resources, discussion aids, and sample accountability questions can be found on our website at www.accounseling.org/mentoring. In addition, our Mentor Training presentations can give practical skills regarding helping others. If you would like more information, please contact ACCFS at (309) 263-5536.

Congregation Updates

Apostolic Christian Home for the Handicapped

www.achh.org

"But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:"

Romans 5:20b

"His grace abounds in deepest waters." Have you read this or heard this phrase lately? It seems like this phrase has been placed in my path in various and numerous ways over the past several weeks. As sometimes our world seems to be spinning in a direction that is less than God-honoring, this verse becomes an even greater source of comfort. The verse and the corresponding phrase relates to each of our lives and to the lives of our residents as well. Even though there may be times of struggle and disappointment, the grace of our Lord only appears to compound. And what is grace? According to the dictionary, grace is *the free and unmerited favor of God, as manifested in the salvation of sinners and the bestowal of blessings.*

Truly grace is amazing and so undeserved, but we are so grateful for this blessed and unmerited favor. We thank God for this gift in our individual lives and we thank Him for His grace toward each resident and staff member. It does not take any effort at all to see the Lord's grace and protection in the lives of our residents. God sees our residents as they travel the icy and cold roads to and from work each day. He

knows every detail of each life, every health concern or emotional need. He knows each pain and hurt that our residents and staff sometimes feel. And in all things He provides a way for our residents and for our staff. He provides a safe place to work for our staff and provides a loving and caring home for each resident to live.

When we look into the eyes of our residents, we see that they fully trust in the care that is provided them by our staff. It seems God gives them an extra measure of grace and trust. We are thankful for this and realize that we must do our best to maintain that trust each day. We know it's by God's grace alone that we do. We want to thank each of you for your continued support and prayer. We need and appreciate the prayers of each and every one.

Gateway Woods Apostolic Christian Children's Home

Kristi Baran — Assistant Houseparent

I have a challenge. Let's just imagine that it's bedtime and you're heading back to your room. That sounds perfectly reasonable, no?

Ok, so it's 8:45 and you're 16. That's less palatable, but still reasonable.

Ok, so maybe you're scared of the dark. You're fine; there are no monsters under your bed.

Ok, so maybe you're not scared of monsters, but maybe you're scared of your perpetrator. I understand, but you're safe here. He can't get you.

Ok, so maybe you never learned that you have boundaries.

Ok, so maybe you've never experienced safety.

Ok, so maybe your brain never learned to think outside of survival.

Ok, so maybe you don't know how to trust. At all.

Ok, so maybe being alone sends you right back to where you came from.

Ok, so maybe loneliness is your greatest trigger and your greatest fear.

Now, go back to bed. Sweet dreams.

Welcome to the worries of Emma. After many failed attempts to convince her of her irrationality, we were finally convicted to see the world through her eyes. Instead of irritation and high expectations, we tried empathy and compassion. One of our methods was to start reading to her at bedtime, and what could be better to start with than C.S. Lewis' *The Chronicles of Narnia*? As I experience her excitement from the stories, I have been struck by the goodness of God, revealed in simple ways through the great Lion of Narnia.

One such example was with the main character, Digory. He has been desperate to find a cure for his dying mother. Sensing that he was losing time, he makes a bold decision to approach Aslan.

“But please, please - won’t you - can’t you give me something that will cure Mother?”

Up till then he had been looking at the Lion’s great feet and the huge claws on them; now, in his despair, he looked up at its face. What he saw surprised him as much as anything in his whole life. For the tawny face was bent down near his own and (wonder of wonders) great shining tears stood in the Lion’s eyes. They were such big, bright tears compared with Digory’s own that for a moment he felt as if the Lion must really be sorrier about his Mother than he was himself.”

The contrast of majesty and gentleness are poignant reminders of God’s character. The Lion’s might and strength are not diminished through his tears and tenderness toward this wayward Son of Adam. My kids so desperately need to know that there is a great King who, though strong and powerful, tenderly cares for their broken hearts; in fact, His care is greater than our own. I pray for them to see His power and greatness. I pray for them to see acceptance, compassion, and mercy, which far exceed that which we caregivers can ever provide. I pray

for my kids to see Jesus as He is: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

News:

God gave us the ability to serve over **842 children and family members in need over the past 12 months**. Through our six Christ-centered programs, we touched:

- 161 children and family members in our Residential Child Care Program.
- 47 children in Foster Care.
- 310 children and family members in our Home-Based Counseling Program.
- 118 adoptive families assisted by the Indiana Adoption Program.
- 26 adoptive families assisted by our Illinois Adoption Program.
- 180 lives touched through our new LARC initiative.

We have a need to fill two career positions at Gateway Woods: one opening for a Home-Based Worker, and one opening for a Part-time Adoption Case Manager. For more information please see our ad in this edition or visit the Career Opportunities page on our website at gatewaywoods.org/careers. We trust that God will provide qualified, mature brothers and sisters who will serve Him in a ministry that is ‘Turning Lives Around’.

Alabama, Athens

Monica Price

It’s great to have Christmas following the Thanksgiving holiday to get us in the mindset of thankfulness, so we can be thankful for the greatest gift of all, the gift of God’s Son. What a blessing that the church activities this month remind us of the Savior. It can be easy to get lost in the busyness of the holiday season and lose sight of what we are really celebrating: Jesus.

Some of the activities that helped us focus on the reason of Christmas were our church Christmas dinner and Christmas caroling. It is a special time for us to get together as believers. We were able to Christmas carol at our local nursing home as well as Sis. Corrine Thomas’ house and Bro. Milton and Sis. Joyce Ray’s house. Also our Sunday school children presented the Christmas story to us through Bible verses and song during their Christmas program.

Bro. Mike Grimm (Sis. Amber, Goodfield, IL) as well as several from the Goodfield church came to worship this month. We were very blessed that they took time out of their busy schedule to help fill our church. Thanks to all who came to visit us this past year. We welcome you back anytime. In fact you are welcome to stay in our guest house if you would like.

It is available for anyone who would wish to use it. Please call Sis. Rebekah Klaus at (815) 674-5411 for accommodations.

Arizona, Phoenix

Marge Lindenbaum

"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" Luke 11:13

The best gift ever given is the gift of the Holy Spirit to the children of God. It is the oft-repeated promise of the Old Testament, fulfilled in the mystery that is the miraculous birth, tortured death and victorious resurrection of Jesus Christ, and given in full measure to His church at Pentecost. The Spirit was present and working in some degree throughout the Old Testament. King David's plea was that it not be taken from him (Ps. 51:11).

So, what is this gift? It is the imparting of God Himself into the person of His children. It is a transforming power that the world can never know or begin to understand. It blesses God's people and their offspring (Is. 44:3-4). As I grow older, I find more and more often (or is it the times we live in?) a complete lack of comprehension of God in the minds of people who have not accepted this gift. They not only don't understand, they have no interest in knowing and sometimes are actively opposed to hearing about it. Their eyes are blinded and really, how can they know what we ourselves can barely

understand or explain? This gift comforts, teaches, reminds us of the Word and brings us Christ's peace (John 14:26-27). He leads us (Ps. 73:24), causes us to worship (Gal. 3:14), gives us understanding and wisdom (Prov. 1:23) speaks to God for us (Matt. 10:20). He also identifies us as belonging to God (Eph. 1:13). It is our privilege as sons and daughters of God to enjoy the Holy Spirit's indwelling and, as a result, become pure, holy and righteous as He is pure, holy and righteous (1 John 3).

How wonderful of God to provide us with everything we could ever possibly need or want in the gift He instills in us when we are adopted into His family. Our Creator knows what we have need of, knows it before we do, and provides perfectly for its satisfaction. His gift, His timing and His provision demonstrate His great love for us, and instills that love in us through the gift of the Spirit. What an amazing God who gives us the one gift that responds perfectly to all our needs! The unspeakable gift of His very essence infused into our being.

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." James 1:17

As we say goodbye to another year, we remember with thanks the gifts we have received through the year and look forward to what our Lord has in store for 2017. It hardly seems possible we are this far into the millennium already!

We are grateful for our visiting ministers, including Bro. Steve Ringger (Sis. Myra, Bluffton North, IN), Bro. Jim Meiss (Sis. Candy, Austin, TX), and hope you will return often to lead us in worship!

Our Sunday School brought us a joyful Christmas program, with many songs and verses from the Word proclaiming the birth of our dear Savior. We appreciate all the time and talent that went into that presentation.

We also enjoyed our annual Christmas Caroling, and the many opportunities for giving and showing Christ's love to others throughout the Holidays. (Yes, we carol in the desert and invite any who are interested to come and experience it with us!)

We remember and continue to lift up those among us who are struggling with disease and difficult times, which can seem more intense during the holidays. We encourage them with the thoughts of 1 Thess. 5, we are the Lord's forever, to obtain salvation and be with Him eternally, whether here on earth or in Heaven. 2017 may very well be The Year – look up, lift up your head! I pray it will be a year of bringing more praise and honor to our Lord, whatever He has in store.

Arizona, Prescott

Autumn Rokey

Our church has been reading through Ephesians. As we close this year and the celebration of Christ birth, the New Year

resolutions dialogue begins to surface. Some are enthusiastic about goals and changes in their lives, while others don't change a thing because honestly those New Year resolution habits never last.

But as the next year is approaching, Paul's call to the church at Ephesus struck me this Sunday. *"If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind: And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."* Ephesians 4:21-24. How much more beautiful and Holy is God's call to our everyday life no matter the time of year? We can be renewed by Christ, and His blood, that our self-determination isn't the measure that brings us into communion with God. So in this holiday time and new year, rather than focusing on all the goals and changes you can make yourself, come before our Heavenly Father for renewing.

We were thankful to have ministering Bro. Mike (Sis. Amber) Grimm join us from Goodfield this past month.

Arizona, Tucson

Dean and Jackie Knobloch

Our hope and prayer is for a blessed New Year and one focused on serving, loving and always obedient to God's Word.

Some of our winter visitors have started to return. We

welcome them as we meet on Sundays and Wednesday evenings.

We were able to carol at two local nursing homes and then to gather for fellowship and food.

Our Sunday School children presented the Christmas Story. We were blessed to hear about the greatest gift to mankind. It is always heartwarming to see the children's smiling faces.

We want to continue to remember those who are suffering with physical problems: Tom Todd (son-in law of Bob and Carole Haas) continues his chemotherapy, as well as Rob Wilson (son-in-law of Don and Glo Bauer). Bro. Jay Knapp (Sis. Lisa) has also had surgery on a knee and experienced some complications. We lift each up in prayer and commit all care into God's hands. We know there are others who suffer without our knowledge and we are comforted that God knows each person's needs.

Note: A two bedroom fully furnished townhouse is available if you are visiting our area. Call Dean Knobloch at 309-231 8428 for information.

California, Altadena/Los Angeles

Kali Sauder

We always excitedly look forward to our Christmas celebration together as a church! Maybe the most anticipated part is the Sunday School program which is always particularly moving. This year the kids presented *People Wait*, based on the scripture found in Isaiah 25:9. *"And it shall be said*

in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation."

Beginning with Eve in the garden, the students shared the stories of great people in the Bible who longed for and pointed to the coming Messiah and God's plan of Redemption for the world. We heard from Moses, David, Isaiah, and even Mary and Joseph, along with others, all looking with eyes of faith for God's promise to be fulfilled.

"O Come, O Come Emmanuel" sang the children, and they told us not only of Christ's first humble coming in the manger, but of His glorious coming as King which we all expectantly await!

Peter writes of this expectation in his first epistle: *"Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come to you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow."*

1 Peter 1:9-11

Yes, the Messiah came. He suffered for us, bearing the punishment for our sins. He opened the way for us to receive salvation and the Spirit. And now, what follows? Glory! Amen. Even so, Lord Jesus, come!

California, San Diego

Annaleise Wagenbach

Our Sunday school kids presented a beautiful program. Together we traveled back to prophesies of our Lord's arrival and the fulfillment of prophesies in Bethlehem. Next we envisioned the glorious angels who declared the King of Kings' birth. Following that we imagined the awestruck shepherds and wise men from distant lands. And finally we journeyed to the cross of Christ, where the gift of salvation became available for all of us. Leaving church that night, songs rang in our minds and joy filled our hearts. The program was a wonderful way to welcome the Christmas season!

We were blessed with several visiting ministers. Thank you for preaching the Word of our Lord: Bro. Kevin & Annie Wulf (Morris, MN), Bro. Ron & Sis. Lynelle Palitto (Akron, OH), and Bro. Dan Cargill & family (Prescott, AZ). God bless each of you.

If anyone is vacationing in the Palm Springs/Palm Desert area this winter, please feel free to contact Bro. Doug and Sis. Janelle Brewer at djbrewer2003@gmail.com or 309-256-9606. We plan to have midweek services in early 2017. Also, if you know of anyone with church connections living in the area, we would also like to know about them so we can reach out to them.

Colorado, Denver

Naomi Wiegand, Tess Leman

Greetings of love from Colorado!

"When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy." Matthew 2:10

This past month has brought many reasons to celebrate! The biggest and most glorious reason is Jesus. Our church family enjoyed caroling about Him to elderly folk at several local nursing homes. It's amazing to see Alzheimer and dementia patients joining right in and praising God with us. A love for the old hymns is tucked away in their hearts! We rejoiced with our children as they shared about Jesus' birth at our Christmas program. A big thank you to our Sunday school teachers for working with and encouraging our youth! The love and care you give our children is greatly appreciated!

With joy we share the marriage of Bro. Joshua Martin (Bro. Mike & Sis. Bethann Martin) to Sis. Olivia Robinson (Bro. Mike & Sis. Liz Robinson, Bloomington, IL). We look forward to having another young couple among us and pray that the Lord will always remain the #1 focus as they start on this journey together. We welcome you, Sis. Olivia!

We want to thank Bro. Jeff Bahr (Sis. Janice, Kiowa, KS) for sharing the Word. It was a small Sunday and we appreciated the added fellowship of your family!

As believers, we have many reasons to celebrate and rejoice. No matter the difficulties we may find ourselves in, we have such a

splendid hope and a peace that supersedes any that the world may offer.

Connecticut, Rockville

Sheila Gerber, Lauren Gottier

"And he took a child, and set him in the midst of them: and when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them, whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me." Mark 9:36-37

Our congregation was recently blessed with two sweet baby girls. Caroline Sherry joined the family of Wade and Lauren Mattesen and big brother Warren on December 5. Thankful for her safe arrival are Bro. Everett and Sis. Sherry Skinner and Louis and Laurie Mattesen. Also welcoming a second child are Bro. Kevin and Sis. Lauren Gottier. Grace Beth was born on December 7 and joins brother Owen at home. Her grandparents are Guy Gottier and Sis. Beth Gottier and Bro. Bob and Sis. Lynette Goric. Bro. Ben and Sis. Christie Carlson, Colton, and Peyton are happy to have a new baby boy join their household. Tanner David was born on December 15 and is already loved by his grandparents Bro. Wally and Sis. Judy Carlson and Sis. Jody Spielman.

We pray for God's loving hand to be upon these innocent souls.

Our congregation was blessed to have visiting minister, Bro. Adam Luginbuhl (Sis. Jamie, Philadelphia, PA) preach the Word over the Thanksgiving holiday.

We want to welcome Don and Karen Geiger to our church, as they have moved here from IN.

District of Columbia, Washington

Henrietta Meyer

We had returning caretakers in December, Bro. Ralph and Sis. Diane Lanz (Rittman, OH). There are several months in 2017 that still need caretakers. If you feel led to support one of our small churches, being caretakers here would be a wonderful way to do so. If you are interested and are free to spend 3-4 weeks in the DC area, please contact Sis. Doreen Steffen at dkgsteffen@gmail.com or 302-540-6574.

Our ministers this month were Bro. Tim Ramsier (Sis. Joni, Rittman, OH), Bro. Dale Wulf (Sis. Becky, Lester, IA), Bro. Curt Walter (Sis. Elizabeth, Mansfield, OH) and Bro. Joe Sprunger (Indianapolis, IN). Other visitors this month were from Rittman.

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.

Florida, Ft. Lauderdale

Renee Mangold

We were blessed to have two visiting ministers this month. Sharing God's word and worshipping with us were

Bro. Brent Walder (Sis. Naomi) Rockville, CT and Elder Bro. Art Ingold (Sis. Bonnie) Rittman, OH. We pray for a blessing for them. We enjoyed our annual Christmas caroling at a nearby nursing home. Our hope is that we brought a bit of holiday happiness and the feeling of the Lord's presence to cheer them.

Florida, Ft. Myers

Dustin Hodel

"Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all." 1 Chronicles 29:11

In 2014 my wife and I were serving as Houseparents at Gateway Woods. To make a long story shorter, we felt it was time to move on from that position and over time we felt the Holy Spirit guiding us south to Ft. Myers. As you can probably tell we still reside here. This move was very difficult for us and myself in particular. You see just five short years before this God called us from Roanoke, the only home I had ever known, to Leo. I seriously fought God over the prospect of moving to Florida and starting over again, but in the end it's always better to trust than to doubt.

After moving down, it was as I expected. I was very lonely and I missed my friends desperately. Everyone in the church was welcoming and friendly, but the Ft. Myers congregation was

decidedly older than our family and I wasn't good at making the effort to make friends. Pretty quickly after moving down, we met Ray and Jeanie Haerr who were year-rounders. We got to see them every Sunday. Jeanie especially was such an outgoing person who only knew a stranger for a few minutes before they were no longer strangers. Her friendship to us and toward our children helped tremendously to smooth our transition time. God convicted my heart as only He can to never judge a situation, but just to trust Him as He provides.

I am very saddened to report that our dear Sister Jeanie passed away on November 29 due to complications from a blood clot. It was sudden and unexpected. It took us by surprise and her passing has broken our hearts in the Ft. Myers church. Even now, I can't stop from weeping with our dear Brother Ray as I think about her life. She was a vibrant, spirited example of God's love. As I mentioned before, her compassion and care for others, combined with her willingness to serve and be used for the Kingdom, created such an atmosphere of love surrounding her. The heartache her passing has caused only lends more testimony to the force of good she was on this Earth; and I will miss her dearly.

Even though Jeanie's passing was sudden and unexpected and makes us sad and maybe even a little angry, we trust the sovereignty of God. The

author, giver and taker of life has everything right where He needs to, just as the verse above states, and we take comfort in that.

Now the church has a responsibility to help our Brother Ray through this difficult time. I have no doubt that his years with Jeanie were wonderful and to share life with such a companion as her makes the parting much harder. So those of you who live far away, pray for him mightily and pray for us that we are convicted to do our part to encourage and support our brother. As a church, and from our family, Ray, we thank you for sharing Jeanie with us. We will miss her.

As I processed through Jeanie's death, the lyrics to one of my favorite songs kept coming to mind and I will close you with those: *"When hope is lost, I'll call You Savior / When pain surrounds, I'll call You Healer / When silence falls, You'll be the song within my heart / And I will praise You."*

The New Beginnings

Sometimes at The New Beginnings is easy to just get into the everyday mundane groove. Breakfast, school, kids, dinner then bedtime. As mentors, it is easy to sometimes just get on autopilot. Then you wonder, is any progress being made? So you stop and look around and take stock, especially as we approach the end of the year, we do that as well.

As I take stock this year, I thought about one thing in particular...well, two things really, as I thought about the babies at

TNB! To be honest they aren't babies any more, they are toddlers. They are walking, talking and becoming more independent. The thought I had toward them was that both Lolah and Isaiah have been with us since their birth. All they have known is the structure of The New Beginnings and the Apostolic Christian Church. Isn't that something to be encouraged by? To know these babies are sitting under the sound of God's word while their mothers are being taught from God's word and being held to a standard of God's word? We thank all of you who support The New Beginnings for making this possible. We could not do what we do without you!

Georgia, Peachtree City/ Atlanta

Lexi Knapp

As Christmas arrives, we ponder the meanings and events that surround this season. Yet, have we made time to stop and consider the real meaning behind this time? Does the truth that the Creator of the universe took on the form of a helpless infant strike awe in our souls or has it become commonplace? Does the fact the angels appeared to common shepherds make us merely smile or does it bring tears to our eyes at the majesty of such a moment? Does a virgin birth slip to the back of our minds or do we marvel at the power of God and what Mary must have experienced? These thoughts and many more were brought to mind during our

Christmas program. It is such a joy to see the truth of Christmas presented through song and word from such a variety of ages.

Also, we were blessed to have Bro. Mark Ramsier (Sis. Alice, Sardis, OH) and Elder Bro, Steve Sauder (Sis. Mary, Tremont, IL) minister this past month. We are blessed by their service to us!

If anyone is coming to the area, we would love to have you worship with us! Our address is: 202 Robinson Road, Peachtree City, GA 30269. However, please call ahead! (Tom Waldbeser 770.463.4788 or Matt Knapp 815.674.1498). For photos and additional information, visit our website at www.ptcacchurch.org.

Haiti, Bonne Fin - Hospital Lumiere

David and Janella Zimmerman Rick and Komari Aberle

Greetings in the name of Jesus from warm and sunny southern Haiti. The season of the year where we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior is upon us. It is in this season that we often find ourselves missing the blessing of being with family. The enemy attempts to discourage us with these feelings of separation. Therefore, it is good to remember the blessings that God gives to us, and certainly the pleasant weather is one of those blessings, as we've heard of very cold temperatures in the United States during December.

Looking back at the past several weeks, we've been blessed as well with our annual

HarvestCall missionary retreat. We're thankful that we had many support personnel including HarvestCall Management Team, ACCFS, Committee and Board members and former missionaries come to be with us over the support weekend. We are thankful for the opportunity to disengage from the daily work with our respective missions and focus on spiritual renewal.

We recently assembled together with our brethren and other missionaries in Les Cayes to carol at the rest home, Azile Dorcas, as well as a local hospital. We are thankful for the opportunity to share in song and prayer the message of the birth of our Lord Jesus.

We are thankful that Sis. Dona Fehr has joined our missionary family as the school teacher for our missionary children. She will be serving here through the end of the 2016-2017 school term. We also look forward to Bro. Lucas and Sis. Raya Nussbaum, and their children: Alayna, Tucker, Cy and Henry, joining us in early February. We're thankful for the talents they will bring to our team. Please pray for all of our new missionary team members as they come on-board and begin their service and ministry here in Bonne Fin.

We also say farewell and thank you to Bro. Bob and Sis. Sue Beebe who have served as teachers for the missionary school children this past fall. May God reward them for the blessings they have

brought to the mission here in their service.

Haiti, Les Cayes

Mike & Susie Walder

This past month it was a privilege and a blessing to host a variety of Caribbean Committee and HarvestCall board members here for a week or so as they had business or meetings in the area. As a group, we concluded the week by attending a HarvestCall retreat near Cotes-de-Fer where Bro. John Huber and Bro. Kirk Plattner (Sis. Keri, West Lafayette, IN), and Sis. Amber Miller gave timely presentations.

In addition, Bro. Eric and Sis. Jami Hartzler and family (Sardis, OH) were present to host a children's and young adult Bible School. We certainly appreciated the love, support and fellowship we experienced that special weekend. We were all motivated to stay healthy both mentally and spiritually as we stay directly connected to the vine, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Two brothers also served our Cite Lumiere Wednesday Bible Study while they were here. The encouragement to know who God is and what He is accomplishing in our lives was shared by Bro. Art Mueller (Belvidere, IL) and Bro. Tom Schambach (Elgin, IL). We want to thank them for their special effort speaking to the many local missionaries that night!

God provided a perfect, cloudy day for a large group of missionaries and visitors in south

Haiti to enjoy a Thanksgiving meal together outside. After the meal, some shared expressions of thankfulness for the acts of kindness and assistance they received from others following the hurricane. We all shared our thanks to God as we sang "God Is So Good" together. Come what may, we are so appreciative of the continued grace and goodness poured out upon us from our Heavenly Father.

Recently, Bro. Scott and Sis. Mandy Yordy and girls enjoyed a visit from Mandy's parents, Bro. Rob and Sis. Gina Luginbuhl (Roanoke, IL). Bro. Brent and Sis. Alisha Wagenbach appreciated the visit of Brent's father, Bro. Doug Wagenbach (San Diego, CA). Thanks for sharing your love and support for them with your visits.

"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." Luke 2:11

The Christmas season is the perfect time to share the message of love that Christ came to redeem all sinful men. Many were able to load into vehicles and spend a Sunday afternoon Christmas caroling at a local nursing home and a medical clinic. The Haitians were quite surprised to see so many "blan" together at once! When we sang in Creole, the residents and patients could sing along. Afterward, we shared a meal and a precious time of fellowship.

May God bless each of you as a new year of expectation and promise is dawning!

Illinois, Belvidere

Krista Anliker, Shayla Steffen

Greetings from Belvidere!

We extend a warm, loving welcome to Bro. Rudy and Sis. Rosario Troxel and their children: Nathan, Maryana, Olivia and Nolan, who moved to Wisconsin recently from LaCrosse and are worshipping with us in Belvidere. We have been blessed to have Sis. Rosario's mother gathering with us also, Sis. Bertha from Ixtlan.

Bro. Rudy directed the junior and senior Bible class's singing at the Christmas program. We were privileged to be able to hear from the youth the story that never grows old. We had the opportunity to sing Christmas carols at local nursing homes, followed by a chili supper back at church.

We thank our Elder Bro. Duane Rocke from Minneapolis for making the effort to come and visit our church family on a Wednesday evening to present a topical presentation on Intercessory Prayer.

The Single Group had the opportunity to host a babysitting night for children at the Elgin Fellowship Center with single brothers and sisters from Elgin. May we each grow closer to our Lord throughout the coming year.

Illinois, Bloomington-Normal

Jenae Herrmann, Megan Kaeb

"And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the

angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." Luke 2:9-14

These words will never get old, nor will the opportunity to celebrate the amazing gift of Jesus. From Thanksgiving to Christmas our church family was blessed with many happenings, including visiting ministers! Bro. Jesse Bedolla (Sis. Bonnie) from Detroit, MI, Bro. Eric Strassheim (Sis. Jodi) from Indianapolis, IN, and Bro. Kirk Plattner (Sis. Keri) from West Lafayette, IN have ministered over the past month. We are thankful for their willingness to serve.

Babies are always special, but having a new baby at Christmas time can bring new meaning to the Christmas story. Bro. Drew and Sis. Hannah Banwart welcomed baby girl, Ember Grace Louise Banwart, into their hearts and home on November 19, 2016.

This month we celebrated the wedding of Sis. Olivia Robinson to Bro. Josh Martin (Denver, CO) on December 18. Olivia's parents are Bro. Mike and Sis. Liz Robinson of Bloomington. Josh's parents are Bro. Mike and Sis. Bethann of

Denver, CO. We wish them much joy as they begin their life together.

The month of December brought with it many joyful celebrations including our Sunday School Christmas program and the Church Choir evening program, joined this year by a special youth choir. Many in our church family also participated in our annual Christmas caroling/chili supper. The singing of the stories of Christmas seems to minister to hearts in ways words alone can never quite reach. What a blessing to hear voices, young and old share the Christmas story.

We have been given so much, both materially and relationally. In a small effort to give back, our church collected and passed out Thanksgiving baskets to families in our community. We also participated in our community's "adopt-a-family" program in which we collected Christmas gifts for families in need.

As we look forward to the New Year, we have much to give thanks for, most of all for the gift of Jesus, for whom this weary world rejoices.

Illinois, Bradford

Roseann Stahl, Rebecca Endress

"I will praise the name of God with a song and will magnify him with thanksgiving." Psalm 69:30

On Thanksgiving Day we were blessed to have Bro. Jim Butikofer (Sis. Diana, Iowa City, IA) and Bro. Ned Stoller (Sis. Heidi, Alto, MI) bring forth the message. We appreciated their willingness.

"Thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth."
Luke 1:14

Despite the cold weather outside, our hearts were warmed at our Sunday School Christmas Program as the children told us with joy and gladness of Jesus and his birth. We rejoice not only at Christmas time, but also throughout the year in the hope we can have in Christ.

Bro. Larry Endress (Sis. Rebecca) is recovering at home after a hip replacement. We look forward to his assembling with us again.

Sis. Rosie Hoerr (Congerville, IL) has finished her schooling nearby. We have had the privilege of having her assemble with us on Wednesday evenings. We will miss her, but hope she will still come visit us.

Illinois, Champaign

Brent Young

There are many great 'hinge' points in history, where suddenly everything changed and could never be the same again. We have them in our personal lives as well, both encouraging as well as challenging. One of the greatest hinge moments both in the history of the world and for each us individually was when the angel arrived with these words: *'that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. . .call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.'*

Several of our Champaign church family have recently

experienced a hinge moment. We are blessed to be the sending church for Sis. Dona Fehr as she answers the call to serve as a teacher at the missionary school in Bonne Fin, Haiti. Sis. Dona served our church family in many ways, including as a Sunday school teacher and writing for the *Silver Lining*, for which we are grateful. Recently, another of our missionaries, Sis. Carissa Schlipf was back for a visit and spoke to the church about her experiences in Mexico over the past ten years. We were encouraged by God's faithfulness to her and all those we send to the foreign mission field.

For many of us, seeking in faith for a spouse has been one of the greatest hinge experiences in our lives. Bro. Brian & Sis. Wendy Waibel were pleased to announce the engagement of their son, Bro. Seth Waibel, to Sis. Adrienne Lehman, daughter of Elder Bro. Greg and Sis. Mary Beth Lehman, Wolcott, IN.

Our Elder Bro. Wayne Banwart and Deacon Bro. Brian Waibel read the Memorandum to the congregation. We appreciated the detailed, challenging, and relevant exhortation. As is our custom, we plan to listen to the conference recordings on Wednesday evenings while our students are on Christmas break.

Our Bible study series on the Attributes of God has been on-going. We sincerely appreciate Bro. Nathan Wiegand (Sis. Laura, Goodfield) sharing with us on the topic of God's sovereignty.

Our Champaign Church family has several events that mark the Christmas season for us each year including our Sunday School program, caroling, and chili supper in mid-December.

Christmas marks that moment where the old dispensation ends and the new begins, never to go back. With the angel's announcement, in a moment's time, everything changed!

Illinois, Chicago

Diana Eisenmann

Blessings to all in this New Year! We appreciated ministering Bro. Randy Mogler (Sis. Evie, Washington, IL) visiting us in December.

Chicago church hosted an all-church singing shower honoring Bro. Nelson Eisenmann and Sis. Janelle Grassi. We wish them God's continued blessing throughout the remainder of their engagement and look forward to their wedding in January.

After a wonderful day of Christmas caroling and a delicious chili supper, the Sunday School children treated us to an evening of song and worship for our annual Christmas program. The theme of the program was, "What Can I Give Him?" Thanks to all the Sunday School students and teachers, the food committee, and all others who had a part in this event. We enjoyed fellowship as we celebrated together and remembered the miraculous birth of our dear Savior.

Our prayers are with Levi Young (grandson of Bro. Greg and

Sis. Carla Rassi) and his family as he remains in the NICU in Peoria following intestinal surgeries due to complications of his premature birth in October.

We mourn with our brothers and sisters who have lost loved ones in the past month. Sis. Jeanie Haerr (Bro. Ray, Ft. Myers, FL) passed away in November. Jeanie was the mother of Sis. Heidi Haerr and Sis. Heather Knapp (Bro. Randy) and the sister-in-law of Bro. Lenny and Sis. Charlotte Meyer.

Jack (Sonny) Montgomery (Fairbury, IL) and Sis. Jeanette Graham (Bro. Richard, Princeville, IL) passed away in December. Jack was the brother of Bro. Adrian Montgomery (Sis. Jaron), and Sis. Jeanette was the grandmother of Sis. Rebekah Herrmann. Please continue to remember these families in your prayers as they enter the holiday season with sorrow for the absence of their loved ones.

Illinois, Cissna Park

Sandy Rudin, Pam Walder

Our church was blessed this past month to have the following visiting ministers share the Word: Bro. Ed Fritz (Sis. Barb, Washington, IL) and Bro. Don Sinn (Sis. Linda, Silverton, OR). We thank them for their willingness to labor in the service of the Lord.

Several of our loved ones have experienced medical problems recently. Those in need of our prayers are Sis. Jeannie Kaufmann,

Bro. Les Stock, Bro. Les Walder, Lexi Maul (newborn daughter of Bro. David and Sis. Vickie), and Wyatt Kaeb (newborn son of Bro. Ben and Sis. Bethann). We wish Sis. Marilyn Knapp well as she has moved to Fairview Haven.

Our sympathy is extended to those who have lost loved ones recently. Ray Young of Cissna Park passed away. He was the brother of Sis. Dorothy Rudin. Sis. Eileen Greiner passed away, who formerly attended our congregation for many years. Her husband, Bro. Bob Greiner, remains at Fairview Haven.

We wish God's blessings on the marriage of Sis. Dana Schmidt (Bro. Wendall and Sis. Karen, West Bend, IA) to Bro. Jason Kaeb (Will and Juanita, Forrest, IL). We will miss Sis. Dana, as she made her home here in Cissna Park for the past few years.

Illinois, Congerville

Erica Steffen

*"Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above."*

Hymns of Zion, #156 vs. 1

Our church has enjoyed a month of celebrating the holiday season together and with families, including coming together for our Thanksgiving service, Christmas caroling and the Sunday School Christmas Program. Although these events require much planning and many willing hands, it is always such a blessing to share these times together as brethren!

Thank you to each one who helped make these precious times of fellowship and blessing possible this year!

A special thank you is also extended from our church to the many visiting ministers and their families who joined us and preached God's Word this month. Bros. Kevin Banwart (Sis. Sandy, West Bend), Leland Plattner (Sis. Mary, Zapata), Brent Walder (Sis. Naomi, Rockville), Nathan Walder (Sis. Denise, Cissna Park) and Jeremiah Psinas (Morton) were such a blessing. May they feel God's ever present Spirit as they labor on in His work.

*"We share our mutual woes,
Our mutual burdens bear;
And often for each other flows
The sympathizing tear." vs. 3*

Sis. Gay Knapp, along with her children: Bro. Kevin Knapp (Sis. Kari, Lester), Sis. Lori, Sis. Rachel and Sis. Emily Zimmerman (Bro. Matt) experienced the unexpected loss of their husband and father, Dennis Knapp, this month. Dennis was also a son to our Sis. Jeanette Knapp. We continue to lift up this dear family in prayer as they grieve, knowing God understands each thought and tear.

*"Before our Father's throne,
We pour our ardent prayers;
Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one,
Our comforts, and our cares" vs. 2*

As our year winds to a close, it is always a great opportunity to look back on the previous year and to remember the many ways that

God has been our ever-faithful friend. Our church has an ongoing tradition that at the end of our evening of Christmas caroling in our community, we come together for a meal and fellowship. Before we part, we sing "Silent Night" and "Blessed be the Tie" with united voices to our God.

I have always taken a moment during our final hymn to look around the room full of loved ones. God always seems to point out ways in which various ones have had life changes over the past year. The loss of a love one, the birth of a baby, a move, a job change, the next step in education, some trial of body or mind, a renewing of mind and rebirth in the Savior. There is never anyone exempt from change over the course of the year. I usually shed a silent tear during these thoughts, as well as greater love and appreciation for the faithfulness of our Lord.

Some of these trials may not have been resolved. Some hearts may still hurt, and many may have anticipation of new changes in the days, weeks and year to come that are still fresh in their minds, but there remains an unchanging God, Christ as our Savior and promises in His Holy Word that will be there until He returns!

Illinois, Elgin

Amy Gasser

We thank Bro. Brad Gudeman (Sis. Teresa, Bradford, IL) for sharing God's Word on Thanksgiving Day.

We extend sympathy to Sis. Jean (Bro. Dave) Martin in the passing of her aunt, Sis. Eileen Greiner of Gridley, IL, who had resided at Fairview Haven in Fairbury, IL.

Sis. Sandy (Bro. Bill) Kinsinger recently had hand surgery and is recovering well.

Our Family Christmas Caroling was held on Sunday, December 4, followed by a chili supper at the Fellowship Center.

The Sunday School students presented the Christmas program on Sunday, December 18, providing a blessing through verse and song.

"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

We are very thankful that Jay and Jen Cox are at peace with God and are looking forward to their testimony and baptism. We also rejoice with Heather Schambach (Bro. Jason and Sis. Karen), who has begun her repentance.

Mary Krueger (the late Jim) is delighted to have a new granddaughter, Sydney Jean, born on December 18 to Bro. Jeff and Sis. Heidi Beer (Milford, IN). Her big brother is Tyler. Her paternal grandparents are Bro. Fred and Sis. Patsi Beer, also of Milford, IN.

Illinois, Eureka

Debra Blunier, Linda Rocke

As each New Year dawns, we

may have feelings of eagerness and also of anticipation, wondering what the future will hold. If our anchor is in Christ, we need not be fearful, but rest on His promises.

"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending..."
Rev. 1:8

The best of new beginnings is when a soul turns to the Lord in repentance. Our hearts rejoiced in the news that Debbie Wiegand (Merle) desired to make this change in her life. She is the daughter-in-law of Bro. Elton and Sis. Loretta, and has been suffering with a brain tumor for several years. Recently, she has confessed she is at peace with God and was baptized in her home on November 21. We welcome this dear Sister into the family of God, and pray that God will be her guide and comfort as she continues her battle with cancer.

We are always thankful for visiting ministers. This month they included Bro. Don Manz (Sis. Connie, Junction, OH), Bro. Doyle Frauhiger (Sis. Jane, Bluffton North, OH), Elder Bro. Randy Beer (Debra, Milford, IN), and Bro. Matthew Steffen (Sis. Deanna, Princeville, IL).

Those who have struggled with illness or injury this past month included Sis. Carol Zobrist (Bro. Gene). We pray she may quickly heal after her fall and be able to be home again soon.

Note of Thanks:

A special thanks to all who sent prayers, cards, phone calls

and gifts of love. We are so thankful that Debbie has found God's peace and was baptized. We can feel the prayers of those we love! May God bless you all, and continue praying as she continues to battle brain cancer.

Merle, Sis. Deb, and Bret Wiegand.

Illinois, Fairbury

Janelle Stoller, Trish Steidinger

"But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 19:14

Our thoughts and prayers are with Bro. Denver and Sis. Sharon Rassi as their son, Carson David, was stillborn on November 24. May God comfort their family as they grieve the loss of their precious little one. Carson's older siblings are Cayden, Brendal and Kenna. His grandparents are Bro. Dennis and Sis. Diane Rassi (Austin, TX), Bro. Morris Kaeb and Brenda (Chuck) Mueller. We can take comfort that little Carson is safe in the arms of Jesus!

We also extend sympathy to Joyce (Frank) Nestor as she bid farewell to her father, David Schmid, on November 22.

Jack "Sonny" Montgomery passed away on December 6. Our thoughts and prayers are with his children: Jennifer Childres, Amanda Schumm, Kenny (Casey) Montgomery, Courtney (George) Brawner and Paige Montgomery. He is also survived by a sister, Peggy (Marty) Whitson, and a brother, Bro. Al (Sis. Jaron)

Montgomery, (Chicago, IL). May God be near each one.

We always appreciate the labors of those who stand and minister to us. The past month we enjoyed our visiting Bro. Jerry Wagenbach (Sis. Bonnie, Mediapolis, IA) and Bro. Dennis Rassi (Sis. Diane, Austin, TX).

Bro. Duane Kilgus (Sis. Arlene) and Bro. Harve Schieler (Sis. Jan) were both hospital patients the past month. We wish them God's healing and a speedy recovery.

It was a blessing to gather with our Sunday School children on Sunday evening, December 11, to listen to our annual Christmas program. We appreciate the many efforts our teachers and students put in to providing us with an evening of blessing. Through the busyness of life may we always take time to worship, honor, and praise our Lord and Creator.

Illinois, Forrest

Carissa Knapp, Shannon Brown

"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

Our annual Sunday School Christmas program was held on December 14. It was a blessing to hear the children tell the Christmas story through verse and song. We are thankful for the visiting ministers that we had this month: Elder Bro. Rick Plattner (Sis. Mary) and Bros. Ned Bahler (Sis. Anna)

and Matthew Kaisner (Sis. Jodi), all from Fairbury, IL. We thank Bro. David Eisenmann (Sis. Jackie, Champaign, IL) for sharing the Word on Thanksgiving morning. May God bless them. *"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*

We rejoice with our convert Chad Steidinger (Bro. Ray and Sis. Shelly) who has repented, found peace with God, and is now desiring baptism.

Bro. Jeremiah and Sis. Larissa Rinkenberger and big brother, Trevor, welcome home a new son, Drake Allen. Grandparents are Glen and Holly Steidinger and Keith and Susan Rinkenberger.

December 11 was the wedding day of Bro. Reuben Kaeb (Bro. Morris Kaeb and Brenda Mueller) and Sis. Karla Edelman (Bro. Karl and Sis. Bethany). May God be with them as they begin their new life together.

Sis. Deborah Nussbaum (Bro. Terry) spent some time in the hospital this passed month with shoulder surgery. Tom Hamilton (Sis. Earlene) also spent some time in the hospital for a heart procedure and is home now and doing well. Our thoughts and prayers have been with them and we are thankful for God's healing hand.

Illinois, Goodfield

Judy Knapp, Melissa Rokey

We are very thankful to announce that Roman Bauman

is at peace with God and man and is ready for baptism. Roman is the son of Bro. Rick and Sis. Stacie Bauman.

We joyfully announce the birth of Kason Levi on December 12, born to Bro. Bob and Sis. Ashley Schieler. Kason is welcomed home by Braden, Trey, and Brynley. His grandparents are Bro. Keith and Sis. Nadine Edelman (Eureka, IL) and Brian and Teresa Schieler.

Please pray for Kendahl Evans' great-grandmother who was recently run over by a car in Eureka. She is around 90 years old and has quite a few injuries. Please pray she could be healed and God's will could be done.

Our church family gathered for Christmas caroling on December 2, followed by a meal together. It was an evening of fun for all ages.

Our Sunday School Christmas program was held Sunday, December 11. We were able to hear the birth of Christ told through our youth.

Bro. Barry and Sis. Joyce Kloter shared their journey with HarvestCall through a PowerPoint presentation recently. It was very interesting to see how that work began, and continues on. This year, work teams will be rebuilding homes damaged by flooding in Columbia, SC.

We appreciate Elder Bro. Doug Schock (Sis. Clara, Bloomfield, IA) visiting and ministering to us. We are thankful Bro. Ted Witzig, Jr. (Sis. Donna,

Morton, IL) joined us and completed the Bible study on "Dealing with Hurt and Moving toward Healing."

Illinois, Gridley

Perry Klopfenstein

We have had several deaths in our congregation recently. Two were referenced in the December issue. And now, two more have died. We rejoice, however, since the deceased served the Lord. We have a wonderful hope of eternal life for them.

Bro. A. John Kilgus, 87, died on November 24, 2016, at the medical center in Pontiac, IL. His second wife, Sis. Shirley Jean Kilgus, preceded him in death on November 2, 2016. His first wife, Barbara, died on November 4, 1993. He is survived by his children: Tom (Pam) Kilgus, Forrest, and Joe Kilgus, Bloomington; step-children: Kari (Jeff) Kamrath, Forrest; and Jon (Diane) Zimmerman, Fairbury; a brother, Bro. Earl Kilgus, Francesville, IN, and a brother-in-law, Gene Myers, Chenoa. He is further survived by several grandchildren and great-grandchildren, and many step-grandchildren, and step-great grandchildren. Bro. John was a son of a former elder at Forrest, Elder Henry Kilgus. He was a congenial brother in faith, and took a sincere interest in those he fellowshiped with at church.

Sis. Eileen Greiner, 91, passed away on November 29, 2016 at the Fairview Haven Nursing

Home in Fairbury. She is survived by her husband, Robert Greiner, who resides at Fairview Haven. She is survived by one daughter, Sis. Ardean (Bro. Larry) Stoller, Gridley; three grandchildren, and eight great-grandchildren; three sisters, Sis. Edith Stahl, Peoria, Sis. Betty (Ray) Wagenbach, Princeville, and Sis. Shirley (Bro. Roy) Wyss, Goodfield. She was preceded in death by her first husband, Bro. Arthur Schlipf, Gridley, who lost his life in a flooding accident north of Gridley in 1951. She was also preceded in death by her parents, Bro. Edward and Sis. Helen Knapp, Cissna Park; two brothers, Bro. Glenn and Bro. Larry Knapp; one sister, Sis. Iola Feucht, and one son-in-law, Bro. Robert Romersberger. Sis. Eileen is surely remembered as one who suffered grief with the loss of her first husband, and was later able to remarry and enjoy 44 years of marriage with her second husband. She was of a mild and pleasant personality, with a kindly interest in those she met. Her passing is a loss to our congregation.

Bro. Jason Kaeb was married to Sis. Dana Schmidt, Cissna Park. The wedding was held in West Bend, IA, her home town. He is the son of William and Jaunita Kaeb, Arrowsmith. She is the daughter of Bro. Wendell and Sis. Karen Schmidt, West Bend, IA. A second wedding reception was held at Gridley on December 4. We surely wish the very best to this young couple, and may God bless their union. Visiting

ministers were Bro. Kenneth Eisenmann, Cissna Park, and Bro. Ron Bollier, Indianapolis, IN.

Our sympathies are extended to Bro. Ron and Sis. Edie for the loss of their fathers within four days. Bro. Elmer Witzig (November 9) and Bro. John "Jack" Bollier, Leo, IN (November 13). Both labored as ministers for many years.

Sis. Willow Gramm recently underwent hip surgery, and is recovering.

Note of Thanks:

The Elmer Witzig family wishes to thank all who blessed Bro. Elmer's life through the years and the last seven months at Fairview Haven. Thank you for your prayers, visits, encouraging cards, and Christian love.

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."
Psalms 46:1

Illinois, Morton

Annette Tanner, Julie Bahr

Our Sunday School Christmas Program was entitled "Christmas Is the Gift". Do any of us really cherish fervently that God came to us in the form of this tiny baby just to die, in order to give us His Precious Gift of Redemption for our Souls Salvation! As the New Year of 2017 approaches, I'm wondering if we, as believers, could resolve to think about a few things as "Lights In a Dark World"! THINK before speaking. Is what I am saying TRUE? Is what I am saying LOVING? Are my words carefully CHOSEN?

Are my words FAIR? And lastly, is it the RIGHT TIME to speak them? Fellow believers, think on these things and have a very blessed and godly New Year!

We are thankful and blessed for our visiting ministers. We want to say thank you to Bro. Jonathan Hodel (Sis. Megan, Roanoke), Bro. Greg Rassi (Sis. Carla, Chicago), and Elder Bro. Harvey Kaeb (Sis. Judy, Gridley). Bro. Harvey presented our Wednesday Evening Worship topic "Worship Jesus" from our series "Come and See".

We offer a huge welcome to Bro. Philip Huetten and Bro. Nathan Huetten into our Morton Church Family! Both brothers moved here from Phoenix and are the sons of Bro. Doug and Sis. Jill Huetten.

We are excited to have another wedding engagement announcement. Bro. Nathaniel Kaiser became engaged to Sis. Brooke Bolliger of Tremont. Bro. Nathaniel is the son of Bro. Mike and Sis. Joyce Kaiser. Sis. Brooke is the daughter of Bro. Dean and Sis. Judy Bolliger, Tremont.

Our deep love and sympathy goes out to the family of Mabel Bauman Roeschley Yentes who passed away. Mabel was the mother to our Bro. Steve (Sis. Lynn) Roeschley, and also a sister-in-law to our Sis. Doris Bauman.

Our sympathy is also shared with our dear Sis. Marvel Knobloch (Bro. Bob) in the passing of her sister, Sis. Jeanie Hoerr (Bro. Ray), from Taylor and also from Ft Meyers.

The family of Sis. Eleanor Zimmerman grieved over the loss of their dear Mother. Her son and two daughters survive: Robert (Sue) Zimmer, Marybeth (Walter) Block, and Lela Zimmer.

Our Bro. Karl (Sis. Elsa) Schuon also grieved the loss of his brother Hans Schuon, Germany.

Illinois, Peoria

Crystal Klopfenstein, Bonnie Bach

Sis. Alexandra Elsasser and Bro. Brett Hoerr have announced their engagement. Parents are Bro. Brian and Mary Elsasser and Bro. Carl and Sis. Debby Hoerr. We wish God's blessings on this couple! We were blessed to have Bro. Brett's brother here, Bro. Ryan Hoerr (Sis. Joy, Princeville, IL) as a visiting minister that joyful day. Another visiting minister this month was Bro. Rick Kaisner (Sis. Michelle, Chicago, IL).

Christmas activities are in full swing as we have opportunities to celebrate the birth of our Savior. We enjoyed a Sunday School party, the annual Bible Class Christmas play for the Sunday School students and residents of the Home for the Handicapped group homes, Christmas caroling, and our annual special Christmas Wednesday night service where the choir sang and Bro. Craig Stickling's message reminded us the name Emmanuel means "God with us." Just as God was with Mary as she learned she would give birth to Jesus, God is with believers every moment of our lives also.

“Matthew 1:21 ‘And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.’”

Illinois, Princeville

Renee Herrmann, Melinda Christ

If the Lord tarries, by the time you receive this publication, we will have begun a new year. I believe that many of us appreciate new beginnings: a new day, a new week, a new friendship and the ultimate new, a new creation in Christ. New gives a feeling of a fresh start with old mistakes behind us. We all have things that we long for in the New Year. I am reminded of a couple of verses to ponder. *“Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.”* Psalm 37:4 and, *“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”* Matthew 6:33. When we delight ourselves in the Lord and prioritize His kingdom as number one in our lives He promises that we will have our desires. What could be a better way to live in the New Year?

Many visiting ministers have blessed our congregation this month. They are Elder Bro. Steve Sauder (Sis. Mary, Tremont, IL), Elder Bro. Brad Eisenmann (Sis. Cindy, Chicago, IL), Bro. Craig Stickling (Sis. Jackie) and Bro. Gregg Rumbold (Sis. Heather) both of Peoria, IL, Bro. Ted Hirstein (Sis. Joyce, Morton, IL), Bro. Fred Witzig (Sis. Nancy, Washington, IL), Bro. Ed Sauder

(Sis. Bonnie, Roanoke, IL) and Bro. John Reinhard (Sis. Pam, Bluffton, IN). We thank God for blessing us with their service.

We rejoiced to hear the testimonies and witness the baptisms of Lacey Givens (Bro. Erik and Sis. Deb) and Austin Beutel (Bro. Steve and Sis. Kari). We are thankful that God is continuing to add to His church. May God give them courage to be strong witnesses for Him at school.

Our sympathies go out to Sis. Betty Wagenbach and Sis. Edith Stahl at the passing of their sister, Sis. Eileen Greiner of Gridley, IL. We also offer condolences to Sis. Ginny Streitmatter at the death of her sister, Mabel Yentes of Morton, IL. We were saddened by the unexpected death of Sis. Jeanette Graham. We extend our sympathies to her husband, Bro. Dick and their children: Bro. Bruce (Sis. Pam) of Princeville, Sis. Doreen Leuthold (Bro. Jerry) of Indianapolis, IN, Sis. Darlene Herrmann (Bro. Roger) and Sis. Deanne Knobloch (Bro. Jay) of Princeville, Brent (Deb) of Edwards, IL, Blake (Rachel) of Princeville, Brandon of Peoria and Bro. Ben “B.J.” (Sis. Suzanne) of Indianapolis, IN. We also extend our sympathies to her sister, Sis. Marlene Plattner (Bro. Jim), sister-in-law, Sis. Loretta Rumbold and her step mother, Sis. Lucille Rumbold. May God comfort them with the blessing of many wonderful memories and the hope of a future heavenly reunion.

We enjoyed witnessing the union of Sis. Lindsey Keiser (Bro.

Tim and Sis. Denise) and Bro. Kyle Isch, Valparaiso, IN (Bro. Jeff and Sis. Karen) on November 27. May God be with them in their many decisions as two become one and they begin their married life together.

Our Sunday school children blessed us with the story of Jesus in both verse and song. May the seeds planted in these years grow and bear fruit as these children grow and develop into young adults.

Bro. Erik Givens has been hospitalized to recover from the effects of a recent fall. Please pray for his quick recovery. May we also remember in prayer those who are unable to assemble with us due to the weakness of their physical body. We wish them renewed strength in the coming days.

Illinois, Roanoke

Barb Schwind, Judy Sauder

Devon Yoder of Toluca passed away November 17. He was a brother-in-law to Bro. Walt (Sis. Arlette) Fehr. We offer our love and sympathy to his family and pray for our Lord's comfort upon them.

Our annual Thanksgiving singing was held on November 20 at our Fellowship Hall. It was a wonderful evening of praise and worship.

St. John 13:35 “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”

On November 30, Bro. John Bradle (Sis. Jill) presented a Bible study on “Jesus' Interaction with His Disciples”. We thank him for his timely and convicting message.

December 4 was our annual church caroling and supper at our Fellowship Hall. It is a blessing to sing for residents at area nursing homes, other group homes, and for our older brothers and sisters who are still living in their own homes.

December 7 was our annual church business meeting and also our nursing home board meeting. Bro. Rich (Sis. Bev) Bertschi was selected our new church trustee. Bro. Clark (Sis. Lisa) Leman will serve as our new nursing home board member. And our new fellowship hall trustee is Bro. Jim (Sis. Jan) Mueller. This is always a time to reflect on the many ways in which God has faithfully provided for our needs over the past year. We thank all those who so willingly give of their time and talents to serve the many needs of our church.

We also discussed the upcoming Brotherhood Conference which our church will be privileged to host in August of 2017. We look forward to uniting together as a church body to serve our fellow brothers and sisters in this effort.

Psalms 98: 4: "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise."

Our annual Sunday School Christmas program was held on December 11. Bro. Nate Hodel (Sis. Jamie) had the inspirational message. He talked about interruptions in life and how we deal with them. Do we look at

unplanned events as burdens or as opportunities sent by the Lord to refine us and make us more dependent upon Him? We thank the students and all those involved for bringing us the beautiful story of Christ's birth in word and song.

Augustus Winston was born to Bro. Steven & Sis. Susan Bertschi on November 26. Older brothers and sister are Theo, Charlie, and Marie. Thankful grandparents are Bro. Clark & Sis. Lisa Leman and Bro. Rich & Sis. Bev Bertschi.

Max Adam arrived on December 7 to bless the home of Nick & Allison Ruzicka of Brimfield. Grandparents, Bro. Tom & Sis. Mary Sauder, are also rejoicing at Max's arrival.

Chris & Emily Miller of Eureka welcomed Duke Elijah into their family on December 9. His grandparents are Bro. Tim & Sis. Linda Martin. May our Lord bless these dear families as they raise their children in the ways of the Lord.

We continue to pray for Bro. Jim Wiegand and Bro. Dennis (Sis. Rita) Schwind for our Lord's healing, strength and nearness. Bro. Jim and Bro. Dennis continue to be wonderful Christian examples in exhibiting thankfulness and faith in our Lord's provision for them in their journeys.

Illinois, Tremont

Debbie Aberle, Janice Sauder

"Nearer, still nearer, close to Thy heart

Draw me, my Savior so precious Thou art!

*Fold me, oh, fold me close to Thy breast
Shelter me safe in that Haven of Rest
Nearer, still nearer, nothing I bring,
Naught as an offering to Jesus, my king;
Only my sinful, now contrite heart.
Grant me the cleansing Thy blood doth impart..
Nearer, still nearer, Lord, to be Thine!
Sin, with its follies, I gladly resign,
All of its pleasures, pomp and its pride,
Give me but Jesus, my Lord, crucified.
Nearer, still nearer, while life shall last
Till safe in glory my anchor is cast
Through endless ages ever to be
Nearer, my Savior, still nearer to Thee!"*
Nearer Still Nearer, Gospel Hymns #434

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." 2 Timothy 4:7

Our hearts have been touched over the past nine months with the illness and now death of our Sis. Dorothy Meister. We continue to remember in prayer her husband, Bro. Mike, and children: Sis. Rebekah (Jon) Wagenbach, Sis. Sarah (Bro. Shawn) Lennington, Michael (Elizabeth) Meister, and Abigail Meister and nine grandchildren as they grieve the loss of their wife and mother and grandmother.

We also express our sympathy to Aaron and Jen Zuercher in the loss of her grandmother, Mary

McCarty of Washington, IL and to Bro. Bruce and Sis. Loretta Schafer in the loss of their sister-in-law, Sis. Jeanie Haerr, Ft. Myers, FL.

We gathered once again to lay to rest our dear friend, Fred Endress. We continue to pray for his wife, Ruth Endress, who is living at Restmor in Morton, and their children: Mike (Kris), Tom (Diane), Esther, and Rosie (Ed) Litwiller. Fred and Ruth attended our congregation for many years and we miss their love and cheerfulness!

We welcomed two little girls to our congregation this month, what a blessing! Congratulations to Bro. William and Sis. Brittany Beutel, new parents of Savannah Grace. Grandparents are Bro. Fred and Sis. Jeannette Beutel, and Bro. Earl and Sis. Marsha Koch. Kiowa Mercy is the new little daughter of Bro. Levi and Sis. Echo Kaiser; happy first time grandparents are Bro. Tim and Sis. Ruth Kaiser and Bro. John and Sis. Misty Sauder.

We extend our best wishes to Sis. Brooke Bolliger and Bro. Nathaniel Kaiser (Morton, IL) as their engagement was announced. Their parents are Bro. Dean and Sis. Trudy Bolliger and Bro. Mike and Sis. Joyce Kaiser, Morton. Several of our congregation traveled to Georgia for the wedding of Nic Sauder (Bro. Gregg and Sis. Cindy) and Charlotte Yoder. We trust she will feel a warm welcome to Tremont!

We appreciate that the true word of God is spoken over our

pulpit. This month we enjoyed the visits of Bro. Scott Wegman (Sis. Dawn, Taylor, MO) and Bro. Glen Steiner (Sis. Rachel, Winthrop, MN.) May God richly bless you in your service to Him!

Joy to the World the Lord has come! Our Sunday School children told us the story so very well. Christ is Born! All Hail the Power of Jesus Name! May God richly bless you with His love, Joy and Peace in this season, and as we enter into another new year!

Illinois, Washington

Kendra Funk, Patricia Knapp

We rejoice with Bro. Ben and Sis. Lexy Ginzl, along with siblings, Daniel and Kaitlyn, as they welcomed Jacob Benjamin into their family on November 21. Grandparents are Bro. Dave and Sis. Mary Ginzl (Peoria, IL) and Bro. Daryl and Sis. Lucy Blunier (Goodfield, IL). Harrison Max was born on December 7 to Bro. Daniel and Sis. Wendi Leman and big brother, Henry. Thankful grandparents are Bro. Max and Sis. Mary Pfaffmann and Dennis and Sis. Karen Leman (Roanoke, IL).

We are thankful to have had visiting ministers with us this month and thank each of them for their service. They are Bro. Dean Messner (Sis. Wanda; Winthrop, MN) and Bro. Daren Metz (Sis. Rita; Gridley, IL).

We are prayerful for those in our congregation that have recently lost loved ones. Debbie Schrock's (Dan) mother, Maxine Durham, passed away this month

and Sis. Donna Hangartner (Bro. Dan) lost her brother, Dennis Knapp (Congerville, IL). We pray that each of these families will feel an extra measure of God's peace and presence at this time.

Bro. Jacob Wyss (Bro. Ed and Sis. Kathy) has relocated to Burlington, IA for work. He will be greatly missed in our congregation, but we wish him God's blessings and trust that he will be a blessing to the Burlington church.

Indiana, Bluffton

Suzie Fiechter, Liana Reinhard, Olivia Moser

"The love of God is greater far, than tongue or pen can ever tell. It goes beyond the highest star and reaches to the lowest hell. The guilty pair bowed down with care, God gave His son to win, His erring child, He reconciled and pardoned from his sin."

Hymns of Zion #289

Greetings! Once again this past month our church has experienced both moments of joy and times of sorrow. To begin with the joys, our Bro. Kyle Isch (Bro. Jeff and Sis. Karen) was united in marriage to Sis. Lindsey Kieser (Bro. Tim and Sis. Denise) in our Princeville church. We rejoice with them in this new stage of life! Bro. John and Sis. Trudy Eisenmann welcome a new son-in-law into their family with the marriage of daughter Danielle to Tochukwu Onyke.

On the weekend of December 3 and 4, we were able to witness

the baptism of four dear souls. What a joy it is to welcome Sis. Reesa Grube (Bro. Jay and Sis. Ronda), Sis. Megan Fiechter (Elder Bro. Lynn and Sis. Ronda), and Bro. Ben and Sis. McKenna Fiechter (Elder Bro. Lynn and Sis. Ronda and Bro. Ron and Sis. Lanae Macklin). It was particularly a special weekend for the Fiechter family, as Elder Bro. Lynn was able to baptize two of his children, plus a daughter-in-law. We are thankful that Elder Bro. John and Sis. Marcia Laukhuf (Latty, OH) were with us for the baptism weekend, and also appreciate the support of Elder Bro. Steve Ringger (Sis. Myra, Bluffton North).

Our college-aged singles were blessed with the opportunity to host visitors for College Weekend this past month. It is always neat to connect with brothers and sisters from away! The theme for this special weekend, based in 1 John 4, was "There is No Fear in Love".

Our prayers continue to be with many who have recently lost loved ones as the holiday season is upon us. Loretta Smith is finally at Home after her long battle with cancer. We extend sympathy to her husband, Dave, her son, Bro. Austin (Sis. Rachel) Smith, and the rest of the family. We are thankful that Bro. Jack (Sis. Diane) Schwartz's surgery was successful and pray for his continued recovery. Our prayers are with Sis. Jenny Frauhiger since the passing of her husband, Bro. Lynn. We are comforted to

know that he no longer suffers from his brain tumor. We also lift up their children Bro. Jim (Sis. Amy), Bro. John (Sis. Emily), Sis. Lisa (Bro. Joe) Leman, and Luke in prayer. Our church continues to remember Bro. Ted (Sis. Rose) Pfister as he struggles with ongoing health problems.

New life is always cherished in the midst of life lost. Little Indie Dawn was born to Bro. Clint and Sis. Amy Gerber. She joins siblings: Hudson, Cline, Sunny, and Wren. Proud grandparents are Bro. Don and Sis. Suzie Fiechter and Bro. Keith and Sis. Kay Gerber.

This month we have also been privileged to hear from the heart of ministering Bro. Tim Hohulin (Sis. Cathy, Roanoke, IL). Bro. Seth Gerber (Magdalena, MX) has been home visiting for the past few weeks. We've been blessed by God's Word spoken through him, and send him back with love and prayers.

To sum things up, life always continues to happen whether we like it or not. There is joy, but also heartache. The one thing that remains the same through it all is the glorious love of God. A love so huge and wondrous that God sent his only Son to be born on this earth and to die as the atonement for our sins. This great love enables us to have no fear. Cradled in the mighty love of God, we don't have to fear what the new year may bring. We can face 2017 with the confidence and joy of knowing our ultimate destination despite

the circumstances we may face until then.

*"Oh, love of God, how rich and pure, how measureless and strong. It shall forevermore endure, the saints and angel's song."
Hymns of Zion #289*

Indiana, Bluffton North

Corinne Stettner, Amy Moser

To the world you may just be one person, but to one person you may be the world.

Winter has finally come to Indiana. The high temperature today will only be seven degrees, and the ground is dressed in white. These last few days, my boys have spent hours outside, building an igloo of sorts and sledding down our small hill. I secretly wish I could see the world through their young eyes, thankful for the excitement of snow and the new adventures it holds. I, however, tend to grumble and silently count down the days until the hours of sunlight lengthen. In spite of the weather, this time of year is filled with reminders to be thankful, generous, and willing to share God's love with those around us and those far away.

In the last few years, our congregation has participated in Orphan Sunday. This is a day where we focus on the vulnerable children around the world and those in our own community. This year, some simple ways were presented to support the parents in our church who are fostering or who have adopted. There are many opportunities to help, from

preparing meals, to babysitting and transportation needs. As believers, we all have a role to play, and we are excited to share in this relevant ministry.

The IPFW Young Group held this year's College Weekend. Saturday's activities took place in Leo, IN, and the guests attended Bluffton North on Sunday morning and Bluffton Country in the afternoon. We are so thankful that our young adults have the support of one another and a desire to stay rooted in their faith as disciples of Christ on their college campuses.

Our Sunday School Christmas Program was this past Sunday. It is always a blessing to hear our children sing of Christ's birth. We are so thankful to our Sunday School teachers and wives for their efforts. Following the program, the congregation was further blessed by the singing of the "Hallelujah Chorus" by those who had chosen to practice a few weeks prior to the program. It was a beautiful day of worship and fellowship as we Christmas caroled as a church that evening and shared a meal together.

We were encouraged, as Bro. Seth Gerber (Magdalena, MX) delivered a midweek message while he was home this month. Also, Elder Bro. Steve Ringger (Sis. Myra) and Elder Bro. Lynn Fiechter (Sis. Rhonda) shared the Memorandum recently. This was a beneficial time of reflecting on biblical decision-making and Christian love in light of differences of conscience.

Let's remember to continuing praying for Bro. Daniel Shorb as he undergoes follow-up facial surgery.

Indiana, Francesville

Jacki Huber, Mildred Clauss

"Of all the choices we make in life, few affect us more powerfully than our choice between gratitude and grumbling." -J. Yoder

"And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful." Col. 3:15

As we begin this new year, let's be intentional about maintaining a Thankful Spirit!!

We were inspired by the Christmas Program presented by our Sunday School Students. The central theme seemed to be "it is more blessed to give than to receive"! This is a very good reminder for all of us.

Bro. Nate Lehman (Sis. Yvonne, Denver, CO) was a visiting minister. We thank the Lord for his visit.

Sis. Mary Ann Gutwein passed away on December 12. She will be missed in our congregation. We extend sympathy to her husband, Bro. Glen and to their children: Beth (Edward) Russell of Lafayette and Sis. Glenda (Bro. Brian) Allinder of West Lafayette.

Our sympathy is also extended to Bro. Randy and Sis. Becky Gudeman at the death of her father, Bro. Vernon Schwab and to Bro. Jeff and Sis. Gina Tanner at the death of his father, Ralph Tanner.

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." Ps.116:15

Indiana, Indianapolis

Becky Ringger, Nancy Pfeifer

Praise be to God.

Our Thanksgiving program on November 20 was presented by adults and young people and included The Covenant Chamber Choir who blessed us with their gift of singing.

As we approach the celebration of the birth of Jesus, we mentally and physically come with bended knee amazed at what God has done in providing a perfect sacrifice for our salvation. At what a cost He did this! Could you sacrifice your child? I have difficulty imagining doing something even close to that. The only reason I could react positively when my son had a serious accident was because it caused him to give his life to God. But before the accident, I don't know if I would have chosen for him to have that accident without knowing of the happy ending. When we make that commitment to follow and live by His direction, we are part of the happy ending of God's awesome plan which came with that baby's birth.

Our Christmas program put on by the Sunday School children December 11 reminded us of this true story. The efforts of the teachers to find a theme, the children who memorized their verses, and the children who read very difficult parts were appreciated by all. Many grandparents were

there, including Bro. Scott Schafer (Sis. Gigi, South Bend, IN) who served us from the pulpit in the morning. They were also able to check up on their new grandson born to Bro. Luke and Sis.

Andria Schafer. Vincent Maurice was welcomed by his brothers and sister: Noah, Adrian, Jude, Christian, Willem, and Gisella, on November 20. His other grandparents are Bro. Ed and Sis. Annette Bahler of West Lafayette.

The church also participated in a prison ministry on December 4, giving gifts and cards to 800 women. We had made a special collection so we could provide simple gifts of some snacks and personal care items such as toothbrushes and paste, shampoo, lotion, and socks. Those are things which the women would have to purchase with their limited allowances. It's such a blessing to talk to those women and especially when they have come to recognize God's love.

Wednesday evening December 14, Elder Brothers Wayne Banwart (Late Sis. Charlen, Champaign, IL), Curt Frank (Sis. Lyla, LaCrosse, IN) and Steve Ringger (Sis. Myra, Bluffton North, IN) presented us with guidelines for searching for God's will in our hearts as we contemplate electing an elder. Please pray with us.

Indiana, LaCrosse

Meagan Frank, Julie Rocke

"Joy to the World, the Lord is come!" We celebrated the Christmas story in song and word

at our Sunday School Christmas program on December 11. From our preschoolers to our high schoolers and young group, we appreciated the efforts of students, parents and teachers to learn their verses and songs! That evening, we enjoyed the opportunity to go Christmas caroling. As much as we enjoyed the time of praising God together, we hope that we were able to spread the joy of Christmas to each person with whom we visited and sang.

We appreciate the service of ministering Bros. Chris Wuethrich (Sis. Carla, Chicago, IL) and Jim Butikofer (Sis. Diana, Iowa City, IA) when they and their families were here to visit.

We rejoice that Megan Heinold (Bro. Glen and Sis. Sandy) was announced for peace. We pray God's blessings on her as she looks forward to giving her testimony in January.

Our hearts go out to the family of Bro. Gene Sinn upon his passing this month. His wife, Cecilia, and children: Patricia, Carol, Marge and Cheryl with their families have our sympathy and prayers. We share the joy of knowing that Bro. Gene gave his heart to the Lord and passed from this life to the next with the living hope of eternal life.

Indiana, Leo

Kirby Reutter

"Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem." Matthew 2:1

In many Spanish-speaking countries, they celebrate Christmas for two entire months. This year I decided that this is probably a good pattern to follow. One of the major Christmas holidays in Hispanic countries, called Three Kings Day, takes place in January and commemorates the journey of the Wise Men. (This tradition also seems more biblical to me than the American doctrine of Santa Clause, elves, and reindeer.) Anyway, we probably aren't very kingly here in Leo, but I couldn't help thinking of some of the journeys that we have been on as well!

Here is one recent journey: "Sis. Heidi Carter officially started last Wednesday as our LARC Coordinator! Her children are Laiken (17), Sicely (15), Draven (13), and Amaree (12). They are planning a school change and hope to find housing in the local area soon. Transition like this can be challenging for a family, so please make them feel at home and look for ways to encourage them with the kind of community we have become known for here. Your continued prayers are appreciated as we seek God for discernment and direction."

And then I thought of this journey which transpired several months ago, as documented by a beloved Gateway employee: "As most of you know, our oldest son, Bro. Nathan Mueller, is in Papua New Guinea with his family. Their trade language training is finally complete, and this month is the time for them to gather firsthand

information about several tribes. Below is a blog entry about the journey.”

Blog entry: “Tomorrow David and Nathan leave on their first official survey to an unreached people group. We cannot believe we are finally at this stage! They will fly out to an airstrip in a village called Wanakipa. From Wanakipa they will then hike an intense 10 hours, descending and ascending numerous mountains, in order to reach their final destination of Mali. They will be passing through three other villages, all with different languages, and will more than likely overnight in at least one of them before they reach their destination. The men will be gone a total of 10 days to accomplish this survey. Mali could potentially be the place that we end up spending the next 15-20 years of our lives in order to see these people liberated from their sins and to be transferred from the domain of darkness to the Kingdom of Jesus Christ! Pray for the men on the hike. This hike will be one of the most grueling hikes they have ever done. This place is known to be rigorous in regard to the overall landscape that they will have to traverse. Pray for their bodies to be energized and fueled properly, and for perseverance to make it there and back and not fall victim to injury or illness. They are forging ahead without knowing the food, water, or living situation of these people—but will be depending on the Lord to provide along the way.”

And then I remembered that

not all journeys take place in a jungle. Here is a series of various texts and email updates regarding our beloved Abby Kaufman: “At this time, Abby is being kept sedated as they monitor her brain pressures. Until further notice, visits should be limited to close family and clergy. Please continue to pray for her. Joel and Sally are making plans to come back from Japan to be with Abby. Please be prayerful for their travels. (For those of you who don’t know Abby, she is a niece to Bro. Tim and Sis. Jenny Sauder. Her parents, Joel and Sally, are missionaries in Japan.)”

More updates: “Abby is still in ICU, had a good night, resting well. May start feeding today by introducing a feeding tube. Still under sedation so keeping visitors at a minimum but thankful for each one’s prayers around the world. The Lord is great and greatly to be praised! Abby had a calm night on Thursday. They are taking ‘neuro-protective measures’ to try to keep stimulation down to a minimum, to allow Abby’s brain to heal as much as possible. In the future, they will reduce the sedation to see how she does. Abby’s mother, Sally, will be arriving tonight. Her father, Joel, will be arriving tomorrow. Please pray for their safety and travels. We are so humbled by the prayers and support that we have received! We serve a mighty Creator and nothing is impossible for Him! Please continue to pray for her brain swelling to decrease and

for her body to heal. Abby has not yet been able to speak—she mouthed the words, ‘I love you’—so please pray for her to be able to verbalize things she is thinking or feeling. She still needs a lot of rest, calm, and limited stimuli. The twinkle in her eyes has not yet returned. Please pray for peace and continued healing in her mind, spirit, and body.”

And then we received these final updates about dear Abby: “Thanks for praying for Abby Kaufman! She has successfully made the transition from the hospital to the in-patient rehabilitation center in Indianapolis. She is working hard, and the therapy is very intense. Thank you for continuing to pray for her healing process!”

This is what I learned this month: Sometimes we are called to journey from Bluffton to Leo. Sometimes we are called to journey from Leo to the jungle. Sometimes we are called to journey from overseas missions back to the most important mission of all: our own families. And sometimes we are simply called to journey through circumstances that we would never have asked for ourselves—or for others!

That first Christmas story was also so full of journeys. Mary and Joseph journeyed from Nazareth. The shepherds journeyed from the fields. The wise men journeyed from the East. But the greatest journey of all happened when our Savior left ivory palaces to be born

in a feeding trough...and then headed to Calvary to die for your sins and mine! What journey have you been on this year? I can't wait for the new journey in 2017!

Indiana, Milford

Minnie Beer, Pat Mikel

On the first Sunday in December, many from our church went Christmas caroling for senior citizens in our community. It is a blessing for old and young to come together in song to celebrate our Savior's birth. That Sunday was also the Christmas program. What an encouragement to see our youth display a love for Jesus and the Christmas story.

This past month, Bro. Marvin Hartzler (Sis. Sue, Rittman, OH) and Bro. Daron Price (Sis. Monica, Athens, AL) shared the Word. We appreciate those who come and give of themselves.

Our sympathy goes to Bro. Alvin and Sis. Carol Haab in the loss of his sister, Sis. Mary Ann Gutwein, Francesville, IN.

Congratulations go to Bro. Jeff and Sis. Heidi Beer on the birth of their daughter, Sydney Jean on December 18. She is welcomed home by a brother, Tyler. Maternal grandmother is Sis. Mary Krueger from Elgin, IL. Paternal grandparents are Bro. Fred and Sis. Pat Beer, Milford, IN.

As we enter this new year, my thoughts turn to Paul's words, "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching

forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Phil. 3: 13-14

Indiana, Remington

Jenni Honegger, Marcella Tyler

We are thankful to report that Gabe Isabell (Brandy) officially adopted Jazlyn Noel on November 17. We rejoice with grandparents Bro. Phil and Sis. Diane and the whole Isabell family that the loving relationship they have shared with Jazlyn for several years is now permanent!

Bro. Harold Waibel (Sis. Arleta) was a hospital patient this month. He is doing well since his surgery. We ask for you to pray for his continued recovery.

Bro. John Kilgus and his wife, Sis. Shirley Kilgus (Gridley, IL), both passed away within two and a half weeks of each other this past month. Bro. John was the brother of our Bro. Earl Kilgus who currently resides in Parkview Haven. We are thankful that Bro. Earl was able to spend some time with his brother before his death. Please be prayerful for the whole family during this time.

This past weekend was our annual Christmas program and caroling. We were blessed to hear the Sunday School children tell us the story of Christ's birth through their songs and recitations and also to have the opportunity to bring good cheer to some older folks in our community.

By the time this article is published the hustle and bustle of

the holidays will be over, but the warmth of God's love for us in sending His Son will never fade!

Indiana, South Bend

Joshua Martinez

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

On November 20, Bro. Scott and Sis. Gigi Schafer welcomed a grandson, Vincent Maurice, into their family. We rejoice with Vincent's parents, Bro. Luke and Sis. Andria Schafer (Indianapolis, IN) and siblings: Noah, Adrian, Jude, Christian, Willem and Gisella.

We also celebrate the return of Bro. Bob and Sis. Sue Beebe after serving the Lord at Hospital Lumiere in Haiti.

We thank outgoing head trustee, Bro. Josh Steffen (Sis. Janelle), and all who helped oversee the physical and spiritual needs of our church. We appreciate the willingness of all who will continue or assume those responsibilities this coming year.

Our prayers are with Arlene Kaehr, who has had respiratory ailments, for God's healing and comfort. We thank Bro. Rob Parker who visited us and shared an update about Gateway Woods' LARC (Linking to Attain Responsibility and Community) program.

On Saturday December 10, we enjoyed Christmas caroling followed by a chili supper. Our children enjoyed the traditional Christmas ride in the White Cloud (Bro. Rich and Sis. Samantha Gramm's white

school bus). News of the White Cloud's hard-earned retirement were received with sadness and thankfulness for its many years of faithful service.

We thank the Lord for the bountiful spiritual and physical provision for this past year. May the God who upholds the universe by the word of His power be near unto you in the new year.

"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end." Jer. 29:11

Indiana, Valparaiso

Sherry Meiss

A Child is born!

By the time you read this, Christmas will have passed and we will be just a few days into the New Year. We hope you all have enjoyed the holiday season with fellowship and the love of family.

As in *1 Corinthians 13:13*, *"And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."* Let us keep our focus on what Paul deemed most important of all...love. That is what's really important, not only during the holiday season, but through all the seasons of life.

Many members gathered for our annual Christmas caroling event where we go to different family homes and to Life Care, one of the nursing homes in Valparaiso. The residents of the homes couldn't thank us enough for singing to them. It was quite a blessing for all.

Another gathering was for our Christmas dinner, which this year

was at our home (Dale and Sis. Sherry Meiss). There was singing of Christmas carols, a devotional service given by Bro. Jon Pratt, a meal which was then followed with fellowship and well wishes. Words cannot express how blessed we felt to have everyone come in and fellowship with us. May God bless you for your outpouring of love to us.

Thanks be to our Heavenly Father, for sending His Son, Jesus, on that starry night in Bethlehem. How it amazes me, the great love He has for us. May we never lose sight of the true meaning of Christmas, but celebrate Jesus' birth with joy! May He help us to give as He gave...with love.

Please pray for Dave Kotzer and a speedy recovery from knee surgery, our loved Bro. Bob and Sis. Marguerite Hoerr as they continue in age and for one another.

If you ever find yourself in our area, stop in and worship with us, we are just south of HWY US30 on HWY IN49.

Indiana, West Lafayette

Libby Wahl

The door is ajar, exposing the threshold of the year of our Lord 2017. Having finished 2016 with the remembrance of Jesus' helpless entrance as a baby into this broken world, we peek through the crack into the exposed, soft light of expectations and longings. Our thoughts collide on top of each other. And, then we recall, Jesus went on to complete all of Scripture with ultimate love.

The only real security is leaving our hand - or putting our hand back as the case may be - in the hand of the One whose love is all encompassing and so much broader than our scope.

On November 22, Alyena Melane arrived to mightily bless the home of Bro. Matt and Sis. Tamara Widmer. Also, to the wonder of Bro. Kurt and Sis. Annie Bahler, Easten David made his entrance into their hearts on December 16.

We rejoice with Kendall Walder (Bro. Russ & Sis. Darlene) in his engagement to Olivia Smith (Joe & Maria Smith, Hoopeston, IL).

Sis. Merri Schieler is experiencing significant health concerns and would appreciate ongoing prayer. Thank you, Bro. Les Kaeb (Sis. Christine, Francesville) for sharing with us while home on leave from Haiti. We would have enjoyed learning so much more.

Our love goes to those experiencing loss during the holiday season: Bro. Nick and Sis. Suzanne Gutwein and Bro. Jon and Sis. Wendy Schwab and their families laid their dear father, Bro. Vernon Schwab (Sis. Arlene, Wolcott), to rest. Thoughts and prayers also go to Bro. Brian and Glenda Gutwein and their family on the unexpected passing of their special mother, Sis. Mary Ann Gutwein (Bro. Glenn, Francesville).

May God's light and power be palpable to us all in 2017 as we

commune with Him and rejoice in the moving of His Holy Spirit among men.

Indiana, Wolcott

Beckie Lehman, Erica Blume

Our church is in full swing with events celebrating Christmas! Our children are preparing for the Christmas program, the Young Group has given up a day to babysit little ones, and we are planning to carol to shut-ins this weekend. Though the season will be past when this reaches your mailbox, we hope that each of you has found some quiet moments to give thanks for the birth of the Savior!

On that same vein, Bro. Fred Witzig (Sis. Nancy, Washington) exhorted us on thankfulness during our Thanksgiving Day service. We thank him for giving of himself.

There are many who can benefit from our prayers, both within our congregation and without. Locally, Cort Cochran, infant son of Cole and Samantha Cochran, was hospitalized for a few days, but has now returned home. Bro. Lowell Bahler (Sis. Karla) has faced challenges with his health for some time and currently is receiving medical care.

We were excited to hear about the engagement of Sis. Adrienne Lehman (Elder Bro. Greg and Sis. Mary Beth) to Bro. Seth Waibel (Bro. Brian and Sis. Wendy), of Champaign, IL. May God be with them as they plan for a life together!

The earthly life of Bro. Vernon

Schwab (Sis. Arlene) has come to an end; but what a blessing to have a hope of eternal life through Christ! Surviving, along with his wife, are his children: Sis. Yvonne (Bro. Nate, Denver, CO), Bro. Jon (Sis. Wendy, West Lafayette, IN), Bro. Tim (Sis. Rachel), Bro. Mark (Sis. Shari), Sis. Suzanne (Elder Bro. Nick, West Lafayette, IN), and Sis. Becky (Bro. Randy, Francesville, IN). Bro. Vernon is also missed by his extended family.

Iowa, Bloomfield

Teresa Schock

Bro. Chad and Sis. Heather Heiniger from Elgin, IL spent a weekend with us. He gave a presentation on Gateway Woods. The stories he told of some of the residents' lives certainly made us appreciate our up-bringing. We are really blessed and need to pray for them.

May God be with all those in our congregation who have met with accident, and have afflictions and trials.

We need to renew license plates every year. We renew this and we renew that. How often do we need to renew our knowledge of God? (taken from a recent sermon) May it be renewed again and again in this New Year.

Iowa, Elgin

Maria Rocke

*"Tell me the story of Jesus,
write my heart every word;
Tell me the story most precious,
Sweetest that ever was heard..."*
Tabernacle Hymns #197

The Sunday school Christmas program was the evening of December 14. We always enjoy seeing the eager, shining faces as they share the story of Jesus. Our elder Bro. Wayne Grimm (Sis. Rose, West Bend, IA) was able to be with us that evening and shared some closing comments.

Prayers for healing and strength ascend for Alex Callahan as he recovers from surgery.

Iowa, Garden Grove

Laura Funk

We enjoyed having Bro. Kevin Banwart (West Bend, IA) and Bro. Jim Butikofer share the Word this month.

We also enjoyed hearing "the story that never grows old" through verse and song by the Sunday School students. Some of the students have been in Sunday School for several years, but their faces still light up when they tell of the Savior's birth.

As the older generation of the church, does our face shine when we tell of the Savior?

We are experiencing very cold temperatures and snowy, icy conditions this week. We gathered at church for Christmas caroling over the phone. We then delivered care packages to those elderly folks. They enjoyed the singing and not having to stand in the cold to listen.

*God Knew Our Greatest Need
"If our greatest need had been
information,
God would have sent us an
educator."*

*If our greatest need had been technology,
 God would have sent us a scientist.
 If our greatest need had been money,
 God would have sent us an economist.
 If our greatest need had been pleasure,
 God would have sent us an entertainer.
 But our greatest need was forgiveness,
 so God sent us a Savior."*

This Christmas may you see and know anew just how great His love is toward you.

Iowa, Iowa City

Diana Butikofer

We enjoyed hearing the testimony of God's willingness to yet again show mercy and grace to a humbled soul during the testimony of Sis. Anelyse Gerst (Bro. Tim and Sis. Melisa) on December 3. We heard her public commitment to serve Him at her baptism the next day. We wish her grace and continued peace in her walk with the Lord. Our visiting ministers that weekend were Elder Bro. Jon Schmidgall (Sis. Julie, Mediapolis, IA), Bro. Aaron Frank (Sis. Sharla, Elgin, IA), Bro. Jon Pratt (Sis. Sharon, Valparaiso, IN), and Bro. Joel Troxel (Sis. Amy, LaCrosse, IN). Bro. Kent Getz (Sis. Betty, Elgin, IA) was able to be with us for Saturday evening. We appreciate each brother's support and effort.

Our Sunday School children presented their Christmas

program December 11. We were asked to imagine what that special event was like for each person involved. One of the songs they sang was "I Wonder as I Wander":

*"I wonder as I wander out under the sky
 Why Jesus the Savior did come for to die
 For poor lowly people like you and like I.
 I wonder as I wander out under the sky."*

We thank the children and teachers for all their work in preparing for this day and for reminding us to ponder the significance of those events to people back then and to us today.

Iowa, Lester

Audrey Metzger, Joyce Moser

The end of a year is always a powerful time for reflection... It seems that looking back on the passage of time in increments helps put the brevity of life into a fresh perspective. May we recognize that we are each here for just a season, and strive daily to bring glory to our Heavenly Father.

Our Elder Brother Steve Sauder (Sis. Mary, Tremont, IL) came to assist Bro. Rod in a wonderful weekend of testimonies and baptisms on December 3-4, when four souls shared the work that God had accomplished in their lives. Our newest Brother-in-faith is Ken Knobloch (Bro. Lynn & Sis. Joni) and our new Sisters in the Lord are: Sis. Mary Fagerness (Chris), Sis. Kinzi Blomgren (Bro. Jon & Sis. Tricia), and Sis. Tarah

Meyer (Bro. Dean & Sis Linda). How amazing it is to have our own faith story reaffirmed when we are privileged to witness the hand of God working in the lives of those around us.

We were also blessed by several other visiting ministers who shared our pulpit this past month. They included Bro. Mitch Fehr (Sis. Abbie, Morris, MN), Bro. Kevin Wulf (Sis. Annie, Morris, MN), Bro. Roger Aberle (Sis. Lavonne, Sabetha, KS), Bro. Kevin Fehr (Sis. Lonnie, West Bend, IA), Bro. Mark Roth (Sis. Tammy, Congerville, IL), and Bro. Clint Schmidt (Sis. Magdalena, Winthrop, MN). We thank them for bringing the inspired Living Word to us in its truth.

We welcome back to the Lester area Harlan Knobloch, who was born and raised here (late Bro. Orville & Sis. Loretta Knobloch), and has recently surrendered his life to God's direction. Harlan is facing serious health challenges, and we offer our prayers for both his physical and spiritual well-being.

At this time of year, we think of that miraculous birth so long ago. We know that each new little one is a blessing from God, and a miracle to be adored. Two new babies were born in our congregation. A little girl, Frances Diana, was born November 29, to Gregg and Jessica Metzger. Thankful grandparents from Lester are Bro. Mark & Sis Audrey Metzger. On December 8, Miles Leon joined the family of Brad and Paula Bergman. His happy

grandparents are Bro. Tony and Sis. Pam Bosch.

Amanda Metzger (Bro. Bruce & Sis. Harriet) became engaged to Jason Geringer. We wish them God's nearness as they plan for the lives they will share after their wedding in July 2017.

Spending time in the hospital this past month were: Sis. Esther (Bro. Joseph) Barber, Brayden Meyer (Bro. Alvie & Sis. Alice), Noah Rinkenberger (Bro. Isaac & Sis. Melissa), Bro. Dale Metzger (Sis. Christine), and Elder Bro. Rod (Sis. Sue) Bajema. We pray for God's healing touch and restored good health when possible, and for His grace and strength to see us through challenging times.

Our precious fellowship provides a support in both times of rejoicing and in times of despair. Several in our congregation have endured loss of loved ones, and our heartfelt sympathy is extended to them all. Bro. Edwin Banwart (Sis. Ada, Oakville-Mediapolis, IA) left this life on December 2. His younger surviving sisters from Lester are Sis. Alice Metzger and Sis. Estellyn Metzger, and many nieces and nephews from here have fond memories as well. We hold Bro. Kevin & Sis. Cari Knapp and their children: Nathan, Tara, Angie, Erica and Logan, close at heart and lift them up in prayer in the loss of Bro. Kevin's father, Dennis Knapp, (Sis. Gay, Congerville, IL) on December 3. Sis. Joyce Metzger (Bro. Glen) and Sis. Marie Knobloch (Bro. Ezra) are mourning the sudden loss of their

sister, Sis. Jeannette Graham (Bro. Dick, Princeville, IL) on December 8. Many from Sis. Jeannette's extended family also live in the Lester area, and our sympathy goes out to them as well.

Our Sunday School Christmas program is always anticipated and performed with much joy! We had to delay it to due extreme weather this year, and at this writing, we plan for it to be held on Wednesday, December 21. May we never tire of hearing the story of how God's perfect plan was put into action so many years ago. A recent sermon included the thought that "All through the Scriptures, God says 'Come'...because He had a plan" and that GRACE is first mentioned in the Bible way back in Genesis 6:8. In the very beginning, God had a plan, and all these years later, we can still be part of His plan. His grace is our free gift. His Son was freely given to save us from our sin. Our God is an awesome God.

Iowa, Oakville-Mediapolis Kelsey Banwart, Tami Lanz

Family get-togethers for the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays have brought several visiting ministers to our church this past month. We are thankful to these brothers for sharing the word: Bro. Greg Fehr (Sis. Denise, West Bend, IA), Bro. Darin Massner (Sis. Twila, West Bend, IA), and Bro. Dallas Massner (Sis. Christy, Burlington, IA).

Our Bro. Edwin Banwart passed quietly away on December 2. We will miss his quiet, gentle

spirit, but are thankful he could go on to his reward. Surviving him are his wife, Sis. Ada; children: Lynn and Tim Skopec (Iowa City, IA), Jon and Mary Jo Banwart (Ames, IA), and Steven and Jane Banwart (Sheffield, England); and seven grandchildren.

We rejoice with Bro. Mark and Sis. Rosemary Larson on the wedding of their son, Luke, to Ashley Dymesich. We wish them God's blessings as they establish a home together in West Des Moines, IA.

We wish to congratulate our college graduates this semester. They are Bro. Billy Massner (Bro. Chuck and Sis. Lois), Bro. Jordan Wagenbach (Bro. Jeff and Sis. Monti), Sis. Vienna Lanz (Bro. Monte and Sis. Kelly), and Rose Schmidgall (Bro. Aaron and Sis. Luann). May they all feel God's guidance and direction in their lives.

We had our Sunday School Christmas program on the evening of Sunday, December 11. This is such a special part of the Christmas season. Hearing the message from the children brings everything into focus on what is most important during this time of year. It is not the ribbons and bows, presents, lights, and decorations, but our Savior who came quietly into this world so long ago to save us from our sins. We appreciated so much the heartfelt message in word and song, and hope we can all keep the true meaning of Christmas in our hearts all year long.

Iowa, West Bend

Becky Virkler, Jenny Banwart

Our hearts are thankful for Bro. Ryan Schock (Sis. Melanie, Bloomfield, IA), Bro. Aaron Frank (Sis. Sharla, Elgin, IA) and Elder Bro. Wayne Banwart (Champaign, IL) who shared God's Living Word with our congregation. May God bless their hearts as well as their inspired words.

The passing of Bro. Edwin Banwart (Sis. Ada, Oakville/Mediapolis) has touched the hearts of many in our area. Special thoughts and prayers are extended to his sister, Sis. Lela Banwart; his brother, Paul Jr. (Emmy); and sisters-in-law, Sis. Madeline Banwart and Betty Banwart; and a host of relatives.

Hospitalized this past month were Carolyn Banwart (Ron), Bro. Chuck Wirtz (Sis. Trela), Erica Nohl, and Julie Banwart (Brad). May God's direction and healing Hand be with each of these dear ones.

*Another year is dawning...
"The grace of our Lord Jesus
Christ be with you all. Amen." 2
Thessalonians 3:18*

Japan, Tokyo

Anna Inoue, Marie Inoue

December is always a busy month with family gatherings, programs, Christmas caroling, and end-of-the-year parties. Our challenge is to keep Jesus at the center of our lives, in the midst of the busy schedules. Our church group sang Christmas carols to the residents of two nursing homes.

At our monthly ladies' meeting, Bro. Akihiro Ito shared about the Christmas story from Luke 2. He mentioned that in World War 1 in 1914 on Christmas Eve was bitter fighting in Europe. As the soldiers were in their foxholes with guns ready for action, a soldier rose from his foxhole and sang the beautiful hymn Silent Night. The guns were put down and that was the end of the battle. No one felt like shooting. It was mentioned that this happened among soldiers who were taught of the true meaning of Christmas. The ladies who attended mentioned that they wondered and doubted if this would happen in Japan.

Before the program, our Sunday school students always gather to practice their parts for the program and to decorate Christmas cookies. We look forward to our Christmas program on Christmas Day this year. A full church is always a thrill. We pray that the message of Jesus will continue to be preached with clarity and love.

Kansas, Bern

Tiffany Menold, Jill Meyer

*"Good Christian men, REJOICE
with heart and song and voice"
Hymns of Christmas #13*

We have just come through the season of Thanksgiving and Christmas. Our hearts have been reminded again to be thankful and to rejoice. But, I would lay it to heart that we don't let this thankfulness and rejoicing end,

even in the midst of deep burdens and heartache. Jesus said *"These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."* John 16:33 My question for you is this... when man looks upon your face, do they see the peace of God or do they see fear of the unknown? Do they see thankfulness and rejoicing or do they see a downcast spirit? For those of you who are experiencing great heartache in your life, **we pray for you.** May God wrap His loving arms around you, and bring you peace and rejoicing.

Our congregation was blessed to be able to listen to our Sunday School children rejoice in the birth of Jesus during their Christmas program. Small voices must surely be a delight to our Lord! We were also blessed to have Bro. Klint Beyer (Sis. Kara, Sabetha) bring us God's Word on that same afternoon. Through God's Spirit, Bro. Klint asked the question, "What will we do with the Gift of Life?" May it be our desire to show the world the Gift of Life, by means of our heart and song and voice.

Kansas, Ft. Scott

Karen Kellenberger

The Sunday school performed a Christmas program on Wednesday, December 14. It warmed our hearts to listen to our youth proclaim the story of Jesus' birth.

Earlier in the month, the Fort Scott group joined Lamar, MO

to Christmas carol to various places. A hot meal was served at the Lamar Fellowship Center following the caroling.

New Years Message

*"I asked the New Year for some message sweet,
Some rule of life with which to guide my feet;
I asked, and paused: it answered soft and low, 'God's will to know.'
'Will knowledge then suffice, New Year?' Aloud I cried.
And, ere the question into silence died,
The answer came, 'Nay but remember, too,
God's will to do.'
Once more I asked, 'Is there no more to tell?'
And once again the answer sweetly fell,
'Yes! This thing, all other things above:
God's will to love.'"
Guidewords: An Anthology*

Kansas, Kiowa

Janice Bahr, Millie Frieden

Isaiah 9:6 "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called WONDERFUL, COUNSELLOR, THE MIGHTY GOD, THE EVERLASTING FATHER, THE PRINCE OF PEACE."

Let us reflect on the greatest gift ever given and that is the GIFT of JESUS whom came into this world to SAVE the world."

We were privileged this month to have a very special

group of young people come to Kiowa to share in our Celebration of Christ's Birth. They caroled with us, traveled to Cherokee, OK to package meals at Kids Against Hunger, joined us for our Christmas Program, and sang a couple of beautiful songs to end the program. The fellowship was wonderful, and we truly appreciate the effort they made to travel all those miles to give us a joy-filled weekend. May God bless each of them!

Our Sunday School children presented the annual Christmas Program depicting the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. The singing and recitations were straight from the hearts of our youth... wonderful testimony to us older ones in the congregation!

Our thanks are extended to Bro. Dale Frank (Sis. Christine, Mediapolis, IA). The Holy Spirit's presence was felt as the Word of Life was brought forth once again. Thank you, dear ones, for visiting our small congregation!

Kansas, Lamont-Gridley

Dorene Metzger

We have just passed Thanksgiving season. When we enjoyed the special meal and time together, were we able to share events in our lives of the great things Christ has done for us? Did we pray for the outgoing president and for the incoming president as well as America in the days ahead? Is our attitude of gratitude on-going each day or only on Thanksgiving Day? When our vacation plans are halted because of

illness--when our flight is cancelled because of bad weather--when big car repairs wreck the budget--and we don't have the money for a want or fun activity---can we find thankfulness in being at home and not on the trip with illness or when the car breaks down? At least it's warm at the airport and we can eat. Sometimes it's hard to find gratefulness in the midst of trials. May we ask God to give us a grateful heart and mind even when we don't have those feelings.

We extend sympathy to Tony (Sis. Dora) Hines in the loss of his grandfather, Dale Hines. Sympathy is also extended to Sis. Dorothy (Bro. Steve, deceased) Schrader in the passing of her brother, Bro. Vernon Schwab of Wolcott, IN.

December 4, our Sunday School students presented a thoughtful Christmas Program. Following church, they caroled to us older church family members and friends. Bro. Ron and Sis. Jane Isch opened their home for a baked potato bar and singing of carols.

December 11, the church caroled at each of 4 nursing home or assisted living facilities in Emporia. A soup supper followed for all of us at the home of Bro. Albert and Sis. Mara Jean Edelman.

These are wonderful times of fellowship.

Christmas Day is only a few days away. Being a mother, I have often thought of Mary, a young pregnant woman away from her mother as she travels with her

beloved to fulfill the command to be taxed in their own city. With the impending birth NOW and seeking shelter, the unlikely birth room is found in a stable. Were Joseph and Mary anxious and fearful? Or did they find comfort in knowing that this Baby, the Son of God, would be just as miraculously taken care of as all the events of the past months were as prophesied? The following lyrics struck a chord in my heart and mind and maybe it will resonate with you.

Labor of Love

*"It was not a silent night.
There was blood on the ground.
You could hear a woman cry
In the alleyways that night
On the streets of David's town.
And the stable was not clean,
And the cobblestones were cold
And little Mary full of grace
With the tears upon her face
Had no mother's hand to hold.
It was a Labor of Pain.
It was a cold sky above.
But for the girl on the ground in
the dark
With every beat of her beautiful heart
It was a Labor of Love.
Noble Joseph at her side
Callused hands and weary eyes,
There were no midwives to be found
On the streets of David's town
In the middle of the night.
So he held her and he prayed
Shafts of moonlight on his face
For the Baby in her womb,
He was the maker of the moon
He was the author of faith
That could make the
mountains move.
It was a Labor of Pain,*

*It was a cold sky above.
But for the girl on the ground in
the dark,
With every beat of her
beautiful heart,
It was a Labor of Love.
For little Mary, full of grace,
With the tears upon her face,
It was a Labor of Love.
It was not a silent night
On the streets of David's town."
-by Andrew Petterson*

May your Christmas be filled with joy and peace, knowing Our Heavenly Father is aware of all events in our lives. May we all hold fast to this knowledge and find comfort in this fact as we enter 2017. May God's rich blessings rest on you all.

Kansas, Sabetha

Crystal Hartter, Brenda Nenadov

*"At Home, 'tis well! There shall
the pilgrim tarry, when tired and
worn by sorrow, grief, and strife;
in heav'n when the hard race of
earthly life is run, the long-borne
load no more he'll carry."
Zion's Harp #170.*

Bro. Harvey Wenger passed from this life into eternity on November 27. We extend our sympathy and prayers to his children: Sis. Mary Kay, Sis. Julie (Frank) Krogmann, Bro. Wayne (Sis. Jean), Janice (Roger) Young, Valerie (Curtis) Keim, Dan, and Lana (Eldon) Kaster.

We are thankful for our visiting ministers this month. They include Bro. Scott Aberle (Sis. Dorine, Washington, IL), Bro. John Baumgartner (Sis. Lori,

Bern, KS), Bro. Dale Zeltwanger (Sis. Rachel, Morris North, MN) and Elder Bro. Wayne Grimm (Sis. Rose, West Bend, IA). May God richly bless them as they continue to share God's Word.

On December 11, we had our church caroling and soup supper. The following Sunday the Sunday School students presented their Christmas program, singing and telling of the wondrous birth of our Lord and Savior. What a joyful and uplifting time of year it is, as we remember our Savior's humble birth.

We are always thankful when we have converts announced for peace. Our prayers are with Emma Edelman (Darin & Sis. Karen) and Rachel Hartter (Bro. James and Sis. Sandy) as they profess having peace with God and man and we look forward to their baptism in the future.

Note of Thanks:

Our hearts overflow with thankfulness for the many deeds of kindness shown to our Dad, Bro. Harvey Wenger, while he was at the nursing home with your visits, prayers, singing hymns or reading the Word. He was always so appreciative of everything done for him. We likewise are thankful for all the prayers, cards and food shared with our family since he went to his heavenly home. May God bless each one.

Sis. Mary Kay Wenger, Sis. Julie (Frank) Krogmann, Bro. Wayne (Sis. Jean) Wenger, Janice (Roger) Young, Valerie (Curtis) Keim, Dan Wenger, & Lana (Eldon) Kaster.

Mexico, Ixtlán

Ruth Gerber

"But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."
Jude 20-21

We were once again privileged to have our Elder Bro. Mike Leman and Sis. Deb visit us in November. It's always a blessing to have them with us and to be served through the Word and through their practical living of it. One of the thoughts Bro. Mike shared was that as we build our lives on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ being the chief Cornerstone, each practical application of Scripture in our lives is like a stone that we add to the "wall". Even as God's people of old saw the importance of the wall around the city, we too need to be diligent in protecting ourselves from the enemy. We're thankful for the Word and for the privilege of building together with the brothers and sisters here in Ixtlán.

We're seeing a lot of new faces in our youth group these days. It's neat to see our young people bringing their neighbors, cousins or friends from school. Pray with us that the seed will fall on good soil and that many lives will be brought into the kingdom of God.

México, Magdalena

Alisha Ramirez

"O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good; for his

mercy endureth forever." 1
Chronicles 16:34

We were blessed to hear the word brought to us by our visiting minister this month. We thank Elder Bro. Tom Klotzle (Sis. Jody, Altadena, CA) for sharing with us.

We are thankful for the fellowship of those who were here on Thanksgiving work team in November. This work team was made up of a conglomeration of churches; Altadena, CA, Denver CO, Elgin, IL, Remington & Wolcott, IN, Minneapolis & Morris, MN. We thank you for your hard work and dedication during the weeklong trip to Casa Vida y Esperanza (CVE). This team prepared a grand Thanksgiving meal for the staff at CVE and those of the surrounding community in Magdalena. Our Thanksgiving meal was held in the fellowship hall on November 24 and fed over 500 people.

"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." Prov. 22:6

We have many faithful brothers and sisters serving in our Sunday school this term and would ask for special prayers for them. Our Sunday school superintendent is Bro. Joel Leman, ages 3-5; Sis. Carissa Schlipf, Sis. Marce Salceda, & Sis. Laura Cervantes, ages 6-7; Sis. Jarrin Rabe & Sis. Jenna Leman, ages 8-9; Sis. Melody Cervantes & Sis. Kaite Slagel, ages 10-11; Bro. Adam Leman & Bro. Julian Núñez, ages 12 & up; Bro. Todd Stoller & Bro. Denver

Slagel. There is also a nursery class rotation shared by Sis. Ann Wulf, Sis. Bere Aupperle, Sis. Jodi Beer, Sis. Belinda Frank, Sis. Joan Schick, Sis. Kathy Kupferschmid, & Sis. Kendra Neihouser. We appreciate your willingness to let God use you as His servants to help train up our children.

We are thankful that young souls are still hearing the call to repentance. We rejoice with Nere Arcoverde and Kenya Ruvalcaba as they turn their lives over to Christ. We lift them up in prayer and wish them much grace during their repentance.

A special thank you to Bro. Julian Núñez for hosting the December all-church singing at his home in Magdalena on Saturday December 3. We were blessed to lift our voices together in praising our Lord.

We would also request special prayers for those who have spent time in the hospital this month. Laura Yaquelin Cervantes, daughter of Sis. Laura Cervantes, sustained a serious head injury this past month. She spent some time in the hospital, but is now at home recovering well. Also this month Bro. Jason Grassi has suffered from a broken finger and will be in a cast until December 28.

As the holidays are upon us, it is a special blessing to see friends and family. We appreciate the many visitors we have had this month.

Michigan, Alto

Renee Steffen, Heidi Kaeb

*"In the stillness of the deep forest
where fresh snow blankets the
ground,*

*It is there that you can hear
God speak without a sound. ibG.res"*

*"Be still and know that I am
God..." Psalm 46:10*

With unspeakable joy that we share that Rudy Schutte has heard and surrendered to that still small voice calling him to repentance. The angels in heaven aren't the only ones rejoicing. We pray that Rudy will know the guidance and strength needed to continue walking this new road ahead.

With the hustle and bustle of getting ready for our Christmas celebrations, we are not forgetful to pray for those who are lonely, grieving, or suffering from illness and pain. Bro. Paul Jackson was in a car accident. We pray God will grant him healing and a swift recovery.

Excitement in the air as the Sunday school program approaches this weekend. The children and teachers are all practicing hard to make sure it goes off without a hitch. As a former teacher, I can say you are just thankful for it to go, whether there is a hitch or not.

Bro. Dennis Kaufmann (Sis. Bonnie, Bloomington, IL) plans to be with us for the Sunday of the program. We are certainly looking forward to having another visiting minister this month. The other visiting ministers were Bro. Matthew Steffen (Princeville, IL),

and Bro. Myron Knobloch (Lester, IA). We want to thank these brothers for their willing teaching and preaching of God's Holy Word and Truth.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Sis. Joan Schrenk (Bro. Tom) as her sister, Linda Ritter, passed away. May the Schrenk and Ritter families feel the prayers being lifted on their behalf and may they know the comfort of the Holy Spirit in their time of grief and sorrow.

Recently a dear sister shared a precious story with me that she had heard from an elderly neighbor lady. As a young mother with a small daughter, this elderly lady had a very unique way of teaching her daughter the story of the journey Mary and Joseph took before reaching Bethlehem. This mother took Mary and Joseph from their manger scene and put them in the back room of the house. Each day she would move Mary and Joseph closer to the front room where the stable was. On Christmas morning, she put Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus in the stable for her daughter to find when she woke up. It wasn't long before the little girl came running to exclaim to her mommy, "Oh, we have a baby!" This story really touched me and made me wonder how often do we share that excitement of Christ's birth each year as we celebrate Christmas? May we never lose sight of the awesome gift that God gave us so many years ago.

As we enter into the New Year, may we have a thankful

heart in each area of our lives and focus on what we have been given, even though we of ourselves deserve nothing.

God's richest blessings to each of you.

Michigan, Detroit

Manuela Denes

*"And he said, The things which
are impossible with men are possible
with God." Luke 18:27*

Can it be possible that another year has gone by so quickly? I find it hard to believe that I'm already writing for January 2017! There's a lot more snow on the ground this December than there was last year at this time. I went for a walk on a beautiful sunny day, clear and crisp with my boots crunching on the snow and ice. I got to thinking about the possibilities that God gives us. How many times do we actually act on those possibilities? Do we spend too much time worrying that they may not be easy to achieve? I find myself doing that a lot and forgetting the above scripture from Luke. Rather than making resolutions, I want to look for those possibilities and not worry about the "what if's". I want to focus on God making all things possible through Him in 2017!

We were blessed with visiting ministers this past Thanksgiving weekend. Thank you to Bro. Steve Stieglitz (Sis. Jane, Leo, IN) and Bro. Justin Koch (Sis. Marcia, Washington, IL). Bro. Matt Manz was at Woodhaven last month. He shared the compassion Jesus had for the woman at the well.

He reminded us that we all make poor choices at times and need others to be compassionate with us. Making the trip from Toledo, OH with Bro. Matt was his wife, Sis. Deanna, and their five children. As always we appreciate the time and effort that is made by all who come to visit, no matter the occasion.

The month of December has almost come to an end and we're glad for the opportunities that we are given to come together and enjoy special Christmas activities. Caroling, making Christmas baskets, then delivering them, and the Sunday School program to name just a few. All gave us moments to fellowship and remember and rejoice in the birth of our blessed Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

"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

Minnesota, Minneapolis **Betty Lindwall, Brenda Messner**

We will miss our Sis. Leah Knobloch (Bro. Daryl and Sis. Deb, Bradford) who completed her masters degree in education at the University of MN and is moving back to IL. Our prayers are with Sis. Leah as she starts her new career.

Dan and Lola Deragisch are proud grandparents again as Ethan was born to Bruce and Christa

Grandits and big sister, Savannah. May the Lord keep this little one and family in His loving care.

Our church planned a Christmas party in our fellowship room with wonderful food and fellowship. An auction of items brought by everyone took place with the proceeds going to the Haiti Relief Fund.

Our youth presented a wonderful Christmas story with a theme of reporters relaying the wonderful events of long ago in Bethlehem, the story again at the time of the Civil War, and how Christ is such a part of our lives today. The students wrote the script themselves and truly blessed us with their efforts.

Note of Thanks:

We thank you for the prayers, love, and support that have been extended to us since the loss of our wife and mother, Tammy. Cory, Anna, & Cole Bergstrom

Minnesota, Morris

Ashley Knobloch, Heidi Pfaffmann

We were blessed to have Elder Bros. Rod Bajema (Sis. Sue, Lester, IA) and Jay Luthi (Sis. Jane, Lamont-Gridley, KS), along with ministering Bros. Dale Zeltwanger (Sis. Rachel) and Damon Knobloch (Sis. Steph) from Morris North, MN visit us this past month for the testimony and baptism of Sis. Callie Koehl (Bro. Eric & Sis. Kim).

We continue to think of those with health trials. Sis. Linda Schmidgall (Bro. Neil), Sis. Dorothy Schmidgall (Bro.

Wayne), Jon Moser (Lori) and Bro. Howard Goll (Edna) appreciate prayers for comfort and healing.

We are thankful for the birth of little Jace Daniel. He is welcomed home by Bro. Nate and Sis. Ashley Knobloch and big sister, Raegan. Grandparents are Bro. Gary & Sis. Sandy Fehr and Bro. Dan and Sis. ReJean Knobloch (Lester, IA).

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." James 1:17

Minnesota, Morris North

Please pray for Bro. Doug and Sis. Dawn Moser. Sis. Dawn is dealing with severe health issues.

Minnesota, Winthrop

Lindsay Schmidt, Becky Braulick

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

1 Corinthians 12:1

We want to thank our brothers and sisters for fulfilling their terms and responsibilities within our church body. Sis. Joleen Elder (Bro. John) completed her term as Kitchen Coordinator and Sis. Lindsay Schmidt as Silver Lining Correspondent. We would like to express our support for Trustee to Bro. David Messner (Sis. Bethany) as he is succeeding his previous term. Sis. Dixie Messner has been elected as the Kitchen Coordinator and Sis. Julie Schmidt (Bro. Nick) as Silver Lining Correspondent.

Bro. Jerry Messner has also been given support for Usher/Recorder. May God bless each of them for gladly doing their part.

*"Good Christian men, rejoice
With heart and soul and voice;
Give ye heed to what we say:
News! News! Jesus Christ is born
today:
Ox and ass before Him bow,
And He is in the manger now.
Christ is born today. Christ is
born today."*

Hymns of Christmas #13 vs 1

We had our annual Church Christmas Caroling to local nursing homes and assisted living centers on December 4. Afterward, we gathered for a potluck meal. It is a blessing to be able to spend this time together and share the good news of the Savior's birth through song during this season.

We also were privileged to listen as our Sunday School children brought forth the story of Christ's birth with Bible readings and through songs. They also shared reasons why they are thankful for Christmas.

Our heartfelt sympathy and condolences to Sis. Marilyn Messner (Bro. Bill) with the passing of her brother. We pray they feel God's love and presence in their time of sorrow.

Our hospital patients this month are Kenadee Isaacson (Jerry and Melissa) as she was treated for pneumonia, Bro. Darrel Schmidt (Darlene) as he is recovering from a stroke, Sis. Wanda Messner (Bro. Dean) and Harlan Jerabek (Patty)

who have had surgical procedures done. We pray for God's healing hands on each one.

Missouri, Kansas City

Julie Webel

This past month we enjoyed listening to our Sunday School students present the Christmas story. It is always a joy to hear them sing and praise God for His wonderful gift to all mankind, our Savior, Jesus Christ. After the program and services we went caroling and then returned to church for a chili supper. It was truly a blessed day for the Kansas City congregation.

There were several opportunities to help out in our community and serve those in need this past several weeks. One evening of Christmas Shoe Box packing was enjoyed by many of our families. We also participated in an annual Adopt-A-Child program in which we provide Christmas gifts to foster children. This is always a blessing to be able to bring joy to these children.

We were thankful to hear that our dear Sis. Eileen Braker (Bro. Don) is recuperating from cancer treatment and is doing well and has been able to worship with us again. May God continue to bless her and give her strength and good health for the future.

Missouri, Lamar

Venetta Banwart

As we think about this Christmas season, may we think back to why we celebrate

Christmas. May we reflect on the reason why Christ came as a baby and then grew up to a man and died on the cross for our sins. One of our precious hymns that we sing reminds us of this: The Babe of Bethlehem.

We were blessed to go Christmas Caroling to those in the nursing home and hospital. Thanks to those from our Ft. Scott, KS church for coming and helping us and enjoying a meal at the fellowship hall.

Our visiting ministers this month were: Bro. John Bradle (Sis. Jill, Roanoke, IL) Bro. Matthew Rassi (Sis. Bridgett, Chicago, IL), Bro. Nathan Rassi (Sis. Michelle, St. Louis, MO), Bro. Barry Dietz (Sis. Rachel, Bradford, IL), Bro. Jonathan Hodel (Sis. Megan, Roanoke, IL). We would like to thank each one and those that came with them to spend the weekend. What a blessing it is to have faithful visitors come and worship with us.

Missouri, St. Louis

Sarah Fehr

We had a busy month (as many of you probably did) in preparation for the Christmas season.

On December 4, we enjoyed the Christmas program put on by our Sunday school students. We were encouraged to not only look at the manger, but at the cross. Thanks to Bro. Doug and Sis. Kary Mangers for organizing it and practicing! Also, thanks to parents for reinforcing the songs and verses at home.

After the program, we enjoyed caroling at an area elder-care facility, with a soup supper at church following.

We are so thankful to have two new converts in the last month: Clint (Lori) Schambach and Hannah Walker. Thanks so much for the prayers to grow our church – we are seeing direct results!

Our visiting ministers this month were Bro. Tim Lehman (Sis. Amber, Taylor, MO), our elder Bro. Kent Heimer (Sis. Jan, Taylor, MO), Bro. Bob Dotterer (Sis. Laura, Sardis, OH) and Bro. David Eisenmann (Sis. Jackie, Champaign, IL). We appreciate your willing service!

Missouri, Taylor

Kathy Eberhardt, Eleanor Yackley

Sis. Jeanie (Moser) Haerr, formerly of Taylor, MO, and Bloomington-Normal, IL, died in Fort Myers, FL, on November 29, 2016. Her funeral service was held at Taylor, MO, on December 5 with Bro. Dennis Kaufmann (Sis. Bonnie, Bloomington-Normal) and Bro. Brad Funk (Sis. Laura, Garden Grove) participating. Bro. Raymond and their four children and seven grandchildren survive: Sis. Heidi Haerr and Sis. Heather (Bro. Randy) Knapp, Ian, Sean, and Emily of Chicago; Nelson (Mary), Morgan, and Madison Haerr of North Wales; and Rudy (Michelle), Jonathan, and Chloe Haerr of Colorado Springs. We also extend sympathy to Bro. Robert & Sis. Marvel (Moser) Knobloch and Bro. Bruce &

Sis. Laurretta (Haerr) Schafer of Tremont, Bro. Norman & Sis. Sally Haerr of Taylor, and Bro. Lennie & Sis. Charlotte (Haerr) Meyer of Chicago.

Bro. Daren Metz (Sis. Rita, Gridley, IL) was in Taylor on December 7, 2016, to share a Bible Study about Covenants. He shared many passages about covenants beginning with Noah and the rainbow and continuing throughout the Bible. He pointed out an interesting thought: a covenant has two people involved; a promise is made by only one person.

As a new year dawns, there will be many changes, but our Hope in God will never change. It is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Let us resolve to trust and serve God faithfully in the coming days.

New York, Croghan/ Naumburg

Hope Graves

Our hearts were full and overflowing on Thanksgiving weekend as we listened to the testimonies and witnessed the baptisms of our Bro. Peter and Sis. Kathleen Banning. Elder Bro. Gerry Hertzell (Sis. Ellen) joined us from Sabetha, KS for this work. We appreciated the many brethren that joined us for this special weekend and those from Akron, OH that came to provide and serve the meals for us. May the Lord richly bless each one.

“Baptized, I feel His grace, my sinful mind subduing, and look

in all distress, to God my faith renewing. Thou art the central force, help me to manifest, what true baptism means, and what it should attest. O grant me now Thy grace, that I, with true devotion, may ever by Thee stand, though stormy be life’s ocean. And with Thy blessing Lord, may I in faith remain, and to that kingdom come, where peace shall ever reign.” Zion’s Harp #43, vs 3,4

Crystal and Ben Oles were thankful for the safe and healthy arrival of Haddie Mae on November 25. She joins big siblings: Lemuel, Case and Charlie Adah at home.

This Christmas season we have enjoyed several occasions to go caroling. On December 3, we joined Sis. Rachel Snyder and other residents of Meadowbrook Terrace, December 11 was at Lewis County Residential Healthcare Facility with Bro. Lowell and Sis. Celia Virkler. December 18 we joined the residents of Steepleview where our Bro. Fred and Sis. Barb Ebersol reside. Our Sunday School Christmas Program was also on December 18. Cookies and chocolate milk were enjoyed by all afterward.

December 12 we put together cheer baskets for several families. We always enjoy doing this and hope they are a blessing and expression of Christ’s love to those that receive them.

Our prayers go out to the family of Joyce Rowsam after her passing on December 14.

"And when our days here are complete, as brethren we our Lord shall meet and be transformed before His sight, to glory and celestial light. Hallelujah! Zion's Harp #7, vs. 5.

Ohio, Akron

Carla Miller

Sympathy and prayers are extended to Mike Carder (Sheila) in the passing of his mother, Jean Yockey, and to Bro. Jeran Stoller (Sis. Esther) in the passing of his grandfather, Bro. Everett Stoller (Sis. Marge, Rittman, OH).

Our thoughts and prayers are with those who have been in the hospital this month: Bro. Don Steidl (Sis. Nan), Sis. Jan Graf, Bro. Leon Graf, and Orin Graf (Bro. Todd and Sis. Lydia).

Ohio, Junction

Elizabeth Manz

We are thankful that Bro. Dave Manz (Sis. Kathy) has had a successful heart surgery and is now recovering at home. We pray that God would continue to heal his body.

Bro. Ken and Sis. Gwen Manz were blessed with another grandson, Jubal Matthias, born to Larry and Cheree Manz (Paulding, OH) on November 25. Children are a wonderful blessing from the Lord!

Our Sunday School children and many others had the privilege of Christmas Caroling to several neighbors and local nursing homes on December 4. It was a blessing to go and share the joy that we

have with others.

We were blessed this month with many visitors joining us, especially for the holidays. Several ministers also joined us: Bros. Duane Reutter (Sis. Kay, Rockville, CT), John Steiner (Sis. Carol, Oakville-Mediapolis, IA), Matt Feucht (Sis. Jennifer, Roanoke, IL), Matt Manz (Sis. Deanna, Toledo, OH), and Chet Manz (Sis. Jenny, Toledo, OH). I also failed to mention last month that Bro. Fred Domka (Sis. Connie, Mansfield, OH) was with us as well.

Ohio, Latty

Carmen Stoller, Mindy Stoller

Glory to God in the highest! Praying you had a joyous Christmas season!

We are thankful for our visiting ministers this month including Bro. Justin Koch (Sis. Marcia, Washington, IL), Bro. Steve Stieglitz (Sis. Jane, Leo, IN), and Bro. Randy Gasser (Sis. Sue, Detroit, MI). Thank you for serving us!

Our prayers are with our hospital and surgery patients this month: Sis. Sally Stoller, Bro. Roger (Sis. Kay) Miller, and Sis. Marilyn (Bro. Ephraim) Kipfer.

Having finished his fight of faith, Bro. Tom Laukhuf was laid to rest. We pray the Holy Spirit will comfort his siblings: Bro. Bruce (Sis. Vickie) of Latty, Sis. Carol Koehl (Bro. Ron) of Sarasota, FL, and Valerie Klima (Mike) of Columbus Grove, OH, along with several nieces and nephews. We

especially want to thank Bro. Tom's nephew, Bro. Matt Koehl (Sis. Emily, Sarasota, FL), for assisting with the funeral service.

Ohio, Mansfield

Elizabeth Walter

We extend heartfelt sympathy and prayers to Sis. Luci Baumann (Bro. Dave) and her family in the recent loss of her father, Oscar Wirtz, of Argentina. May God's comforting Spirit be with each one during this difficult time.

A special thank you goes out to our visiting ministers. We appreciated the willingness of Bro. Bob Riggensbach (Sis. Lorie, Rittman, OH) and Bro. Matt Manz (Sis. Deanna, Toledo, OH) to bring us inspiration from the Word. May God richly bless each one!

We would like to thank all those who served the church in various positions this past year. Our annual Business Meeting was held at the beginning of the month. We are thankful for each one who was willing to take on new responsibilities: Bro. Doug Boliantz (Trustee), Bro. Chip Hill (Assist. Treasurer), Bro. Roger Miller (Secretary), Bro. Wesley Beer (Usher), Bro. Nathaniel Ramsey (Sunday School Superintendent), Bro. Dave Baumann (Assist. Superintendent), Sis. Abbey Keever (Kitchen Comm.), and Sis. Tami Griffey (HarvestCall).

The Sunday School Christmas Program was an enjoyable evening of songs and recitations about the

birth of our Savior. The innocence and enthusiasm of the children is heart-warming. We appreciate the efforts of both the students and the teachers.

Two evenings of Christmas caroling gave us a special opportunity to spread the cheer and message of the season to those who are shut-in. Thank you to each one who was able to support this worthy effort!

Ohio, Rittman

Julie Steiner, Maria Beery

"Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."
St. Luke 15:10

We rejoice with Cindy Dotterer (Bro. Gary and Sis. Sandy) as she begins her repentance. We will continue to pray for her!

Our sympathy and prayers go to Sis. Marge Stoller in the passing of her husband, Bro. Everett. Bro. Everett will be missed by his children: Bro. Dave (Sis. Jan), Bro. Eric (Sis. Melanie), Bro. Steve (Sis. Mary Lynn), and Bro. Scott (Sis. Charlene, Smithville); his siblings: Bro. Robert (Sis. Eileen, Smithville), Bro. Dale, Bro. Andrew (Smithville), Bro. Fred, Sis. Carolyn (Smithville), and Sis. Elma (Smithville); and his grandchildren and great grandchildren. We were saddened to hear of the passing of Jim Leonhard, the brother of Tom (Sis. Holly) and trust God will be near their family during this time.

Congratulations and God's

Blessings to Bro. David Kipfer (Bro. Jon and Sis. Suzanne) and Sis. Roxanne Gerber (Bro. Joe and Sis. Ann) as they were united in marriage on December 11.

Frank and Ginny Hilty were blessed with another grandson, Jacob Daniel. He is welcomed by his parents, Daniel and Ashley, and sisters Leah, Becca, and Anna. Emma June was born to Bro. Josh and Sis. Megan Riggensbach (Smithville). Emma joins Isaac, Aubrey, and Paige. Grandparents are Bro. Bob and Sis. Lorie Riggensbach and Bro. Mark and Sis. Sue Steiner (Smithville). We are thankful for their safe arrival.

Sis. Margaret Calame and Sis. Kim Hanzie (Tim) spent time in the hospital this month. We trust they will continue to heal.

We appreciate the ministers who have visited us this month. Thanks to Bro. Fred Witzig (Sis. Nancy, Washington), Bro. Bill Brake (Sis. Miriam, Sardis), Bro. Adrian Strahm (Sis. Harriet, Bern), Bro. Randy Gasser (Sis. Sue, Detroit), Bro. Todd Stoller (Sis. Pam, Latty), and Bro. Chris Laukhuf (Sis. Rachel, Latty) for serving us.

Ohio, Sardis

Faith Beard, Joy Indermuhle

It is always a blessing to gather with our families and church families over the weeks that we remember Thanksgiving and Christmas. Often these holidays bring visiting family to our area. We appreciate Bro. Tyler (Sis. Tonya) Joos, Bradford, IL, for

being with us on Thanksgiving Day and bringing the Word of Truth with thanksgiving.

Our annual Christmas Program was presented by our dear Sunday school children on the evening of December 4. It always warms our hearts to hear them sing, recite poems, and read the gospel accounts of Jesus' birth, according to Matthew and Luke. Following the program, we enjoyed a pizza snack together. We thank those that prepared and served the snack after the program.

*"Our song of praise to God ascend,
And there with angels' voices
blend. The day of gladness now
is here; sing hallelujah with good
cheer. Hallelujah."* Zion's Harp #7

The next weekend, we caroled at several nursing homes immediately following second service. Divided into two groups to sing, we then gathered back together at our fellowship hall for our annual spaghetti supper. As two families volunteer to make up this supper, they sacrifice by not caroling and we thank them for lovingly serving us a delicious meal and giving of themselves to do so.

Ohio, Smithville

Kara Stoller, Millie Stoller

*"Joy to the world! The Lord is
come; Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him
room, And heav'n and nature
sing."* Gospel Hymns #842 vs. 1

As the Sunday school children raised their voices in praise to the King at our annual Christmas program, they ended the evening

by singing *Joy to the World*. The youth sang the first two verses and were joined by the single group and finally, the congregation until the whole church rang out the last verse of the song.

"He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove. The glories of his righteousness, and wonders of His love." vs. 4

I had to ask myself as I thought about the *Wonders of His love*, from His birth, His death and resurrection to the gift of the indwelling of His Holy Spirit, am I filled with wonder and awe?

"Let every heart prepare Him room."

We're thankful that many years ago a dear brother made room in his heart for the Savior and has now gained his eternal reward. We extend our sympathy to Bro. Scott (Sis. Charlene) as his father, Bro. Everett Stoller (Sis. Marge, Rittman, OH) has passed from this life into eternity. Also feeling the loss are his brothers, Bro. Bob Stoller (Sis. Eileen) and Bro. Andy Stoller (Sis. Roberta, dec.); sisters, Sis. Carolyn Stoller and Sis. Elma Stoller and sister-in-law Sis. Luella Stoller (Bro. Harold, dec.).

"Repeat the sounding joy!"

We want to thank the many ministers who came this month to *Repeat the sounding joy*. Among them were Elder Bro. Marvin Dotterer (Sis. Nancy, Forrest, IL), Bro. Wayne Hartzler (Sis. Camille, Rittman, OH), Bro. Bob Riggensbach (Sis. Lori, Rittman,

OH), Bro. Marvin Hartzler (Sis. Sue, Rittman, OH), Bro. Dana Indermuhle (Sis. Joy, Sardis, OH), Bro. Fred Domka (Sis. Connie, Mansfield, OH), and Bro. Jason Dotterer (Sis. Lynn, Forrest, OH). Bro. Todd Stoller (Sis. Pam, Latty, OH) came on a Wednesday evening to gently remind us of the importance of forgiveness.

"Nor thorns infest the ground."

Sis. Betty Dotterer (Bro. John, dec.) and Boyd Nieman (Teri) have spent some time in the hospital this past month. We keep them and all those who are hurting in our prayers and remember that while here on earth, *thorns infest the grounds*. Yet someday, there will be no pain.

"He comes to make His blessings flow."

November 20, 2016, was the wedding day of Sis. Haley Dotterer (Bro. Steve and Sis. Amy) to Bro. Joel Stoller (Bro. Eric and Sis. Melanie, Rittman, OH). We wish them God's richest blessings as *He comes to make his blessings flow* in their lives. We warmly welcome them to our Smithville congregation.

"And wonders of His love!"

Bro. Josh and Sis. Meagan, Isaac, Aubrey, and Paige Riggensbach welcomed home little Emma June on December 5. Thankful grandparents are Bro. Mark and Sis. Sue Steiner and Bro. Bob and Sis. Lori Riggensbach (Rittman, OH). Also, feeling the blessings *and wonders of his love*, are Bro. Ken and Sis. Jane Hartzler when their new

granddaughter Oaklyn Grace was born to Jerry and Cassie Hartzler and big brother Lincoln on October 31.

May we keep the *Wonder of His love* in our hearts all through the year!

Ohio, Toledo

Deanna Manz, Whitney Masters

Snow has made its entrance here in Northwest Ohio. As we see the pureness of it, we are reminded of the pureness of Christ and His birth many years ago.

The Toledo church had the opportunity to sing about Jesus as we caroled to a few of our brothers and sisters. That next weekend, we were able to hear of Jesus' birth through the innocence of our little children as they presented the Christmas program. Bro. Bill and Sis. Emily Schlatter (Junction, OH) were with us that Sunday. As always, we appreciate their many efforts on our behalf in bringing forth the Word.

Ontario, Kitchener

Johanna Fortenbacher

"Behold, bless ye the LORD, all ye servants of the LORD, which by night stand in the house of the LORD. Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and bless the LORD. The LORD that hath made heaven and earth bless thee out of Zion." Ps. 134

We have wonderful news! Steve and Shannon Varga along with their children, Sofia and Wade, now have a third child, Ellie Mae, born November 14. We are all so happy for this family.

With thankfulness in our hearts we welcomed some ministers this month: Bro. Todd Stoller (Sis. Pam, Latty OH), Bro. Alan Schambach (Sis. Sarah, Remington IN), and Bro. Adam Luginbuhl from Philadelphia PA. We wish you God's blessings.

Our Sunday school along with the help of others performed Christmas songs and read the story of Jesus' birth.

Oregon, Portland

Louisa Gallup

Our thoughts and prayers go out to dear Sis. Pearl Miller (Bro. Bob, dec.) as she is dealing with the aftermath of a bout with pneumonia. She was hospitalized briefly and at the time of this writing. She is still very weak, but holding steady. May God bless her. We miss her presence and friendly smile at church.

Our six Sunday School students presented a shortened version of the Christmas Program to Sis. Pearl in the care facility where she is recuperating. On December 11 we enjoyed listening to them as they sang, and recited scripture to the rest of our church.

Visiting ministers this past month were Elder Bro. John Wiegand (Sis. Jane), Bro. Harvey Kuenzi (Sis. Jennifer) and Bro. Ron Jones (Sis. Liz), all from Silverton, OR. The minister and song leader support are truly appreciated.

Oregon, Silverton

Kelsey Walder, Ann Kuenzi

We enjoyed the weekend of

November 19 in being able to hear the testimonies of three souls.

We now welcome Bro. Dakota Koenig, Sis. Janelle Kuenzi (Bro. Harvey and Sis. Jennifer) and Sis. Andrea (Annie) Walter (Bro. Chad and Sis. Megan). Elder Bro. Marvin Dotterer (Sis. Nancy, Forrest, IL) was here to help Bro. John Wiegand. Also here for the weekend was Bro. Curt Walter (Sis. Elizabeth, Mansfield, OH).

There is a saying that we in Oregon know well, "when it rains, it pours". Right now we feel that way as we have had several people injured, having surgery or ill. Our prayers are with Bro. Chuck Walter (Sis. Karen) as he is recovering from a brain aneurysm, and the procedure that corrected it. Also needing prayers for healing are: Sis. Tresa Zollinger (Bro. Jim), Sis. Carol Wackerle (Bro. Greg), Bro. Richard Kraft (Sis. Marianne), Sis. Megan Walter (Bro. Chad), Logan Kuenzi (Bro. Harvey and Sis. Jennifer) and Andrew Roth (Bro. Jim and Sis. Deb).

We are excited to hear that Shane Kuenzi (Bro. Art and Sis. MaryBeth) is engaged to be married to Kelly Crowley. There are planning a December wedding in 2017.

Our all-church Christmas Caroling was held Sunday, December 3. We split up into approximately 6 different groups and went one to two places each. Following the caroling, was a potluck supper.

The Sunday School children presented the Christmas story

in verse and song December 11. It was so fun to watch their enthusiasm, nervousness and then their relief when they were finished. We all came away feeling blessed by the evening.

Our sympathies are with Bro. Sam, Sis. Lily, Ryan and Jordan Bence in the loss of Bro. Sam's father Paljo Bence (Ana dec.). It seems like parents should always be with us, and when they are taken we often feel very empty, alone and saddened. Our prayer is that they will feel our love and support.

Pennsylvania, Philadelphia

Laura Isch

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised..." Luke 4:18

This Christmas season, it is good to stop and reflect on the reasons for Christ's coming to the earth. Here in Luke, Christ Himself gives us His purpose in coming to this world to live and die as a man. It is good to remember that even in this happy time of Christmas, there are the brokenhearted, the poor, and the blind around us. So many around us are in desperate need of Christ! May we be willing vessels to be used by God to share Christ's love to those around us.

Bro. Daryl Luginbuhl (Sis. Norma) and Bro. Bob Allen (Sis.

Rika) both spent some time in the hospital recently. We are thankful they are doing better.

The church enjoyed our annual Christmas program on December 11. It is always such a blessing to hear our children raise their voices in praise! May God bless each one of them for their willing efforts and may He bless each one of us with His love this Christmas!

Tennessee, Nashville

Mike Fritz

We are humbled and thankful that some ministers have been willing to travel to Nashville on a regular basis. This past month, we were blessed by the ministry of Bro. John Hartman (Sis. Rosemary, Fairbury) when they visited us again. We have also been encouraged by the fellowship of visitors from Peoria, IL; Francesville, IN; Toledo, OH; and Philadelphia, PA.

We are thankful that Micah Stoller (Bro. Jeff & Sis. Cynde) and Sis. Monica Fritz (Bro. Mike) are each recovering well after recent surgeries.

If you are traveling to or through the Nashville area, please plan to worship with us. We meet for worship every Sunday and the first and third Wednesday evenings of the month. Please contact us ahead of time to confirm our schedule. Contacts are Bro. Jeff & Sis. Cynde Stoller, 309.530.5760, cyndelynnstoller@gmail.com; or Bro. Mike & Sis. Monica Fritz, 615.866.5543,

fritzmb.family@gmail.com.

Texas, Austin

Candy Meiss

Sending our Love and Greetings from Austin!

Thankful for this quiet time to write; the fire is flickering, warming our hearts and our home as night falls and so soon another day comes to a close. Is it really almost Christmas again? The days are swiftly passing. How are we using this precious time that we have been given? As we come to the end of another year, we are looking forward to new beginnings, a new zeal to be more fervent in our daily Bible study and prayer, a new zeal to be more disciplined with what goes in our heart, mind, and body as we seek to learn more of Him and how we should live? Each minute is a gift; how will we fill the minutes of 2017? What will we say next Christmas about our desire to more diligently seek Him? Trying to do better isn't a solution, only grace that changes the heart can rescue us. Luke 15:1-10.

We were blessed to have the following visiting ministers this past month: Bro. Jay Steffen (Sis. Melinda, Congerville, IL), Bro. Matt Feucht (Sis. Jennifer, Roanoke, IL), and Bro. Matthew Kaufman and children, Aria and Garrison (Bloomington-Normal).

We enjoyed a Christmas program with our Sunday School, including good participation from Stoney Point, telling us the story of Christ's birth in song and verse.

We are so thankful for our visitors and encourage everyone passing through to stop and worship with us! We appreciate your continued prayers for our converts, our outreach to the Stoney Point families, and for those who have recently moved to the Bastrop area.

Please refer to our minister's directory for directions and contacts.

Texas, Dallas-Ft. Worth

Services are generally being held the second Sunday of each month at the Holiday Inn Express, 4450 W. John Carpenter Freeway, Irving, TX. There are several singles and couples who gather and enjoy visitors. Please call ahead to verify. Bros. Wayne Banwart (217-493-2383), Leland Plattner (956-265-0351), or Dennis Rassi (512-321-2345).

Texas, McAllen

Kristi Plattner

We are thankful for Bro. Marvin Dotterer (Sis. Nancy, Forrest, IL) and Bro. Dave Graf (Sis. Barb, Akron, OH) for their willingness to minister to us this past month.

We welcome anyone coming to South Texas. If interested in housing on South Padre Island or in McAllen while visiting the McAllen area, please contact us for further details.

Occasionally there is a schedule change, so if you plan to be with us on Sunday, please verify the date by calling the Plattner's at

956-607-8329 or you may access www.harvestcall.org and view the updated minister rotation schedule.

Sunday services are held at 10:30 and 12:30 at the Smart iStay Hotel, 1921 South 10th St. Please note that the name of the hotel is no longer Holiday Inn Express.

Take the 10th Street Exit off I-83 and go 1½ blocks south. Please see the ministers' directory for local contact information.

Texas, Zapata

Mary Plattner

We are anticipating visitors over the Christmas and New Year holidays as families come to visit during the school break. We have so very much to be thankful for and appreciate their efforts to travel south, whether for a winter vacation or for getting away from the cold weather for a while. We will have our Christmas dinner at church again this year.

Several of the brethren spent two days at one of our local elementary schools helping to distribute clothing to the needy. The school was very appreciative saying it was a blessing for them to participate.

"Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will toward men." Luke 2:14

Vermont, Clarendon

Nathan Reutter

Watership Down is quite a tale in which courage, bravery, and camaraderie are experienced as a group of rabbits leave home in search of a better one. Through

many difficulties the ragtag band comes together to beat the odds to form a new community where peace becomes a priority. Several of the rabbits in this story have unique gifts they willingly share to help the group at much expense to themselves. Hazel, the leader of the group, spends much of his time and talent winning the loyalty of the members. Fiver, Hazel's younger brother, has some prophetic ability. He shares his visions and they lead the group out of numerous situations. A third rabbit, named Bigwig, is the largest and best fighter among the group. His bravery in the face of dire necessity saved the group in more than one confrontation.

Are we as Christian communities able to learn to function together like this group? Do we have among us leaders, prophets, and soldiers? Do we appreciate and encourage the use of gifts bestowed on us by God and through the working of the Holy Spirit as emphasized in Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4, and 1 Peter 4? Do we, a motley group of men and women banded together through Christ's blood and the experiences of life, learn to stick together and help one another? Are we searching for a better land of peace? Are we willing to give up the comfortable life so that God's kingdom can be furthered at our expense?

Three Rockville ministers came to share the pulpit ministry with our own Bro. Mark Hoffman: Bro. Jeff (Sis. Carole)

Gerber, Bro. Brent (Sis. Naomi) Walder, and Bro. Duane (Sis. Kay) Reutter. They encouraged our small, tired band toward higher ground, just as Hazel rallied his group as they wearily traveled.

Bro. Duane and Sis. Kay came to see their grandchildren in the annual Christmas Program. The children recited verses and sang Christmas hymns. In so doing, they reminded us of the beautiful time of year this is. We were reminded of the many places in Exodus where allusions to the object of Christ's advent are found. They also recited verses from the New Testament that express the same purposes. Hopefully we did not miss the point that the Bible everywhere explains the reasons of Christ's coming.

We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Spirit-filled new year.

2 Chronicles 7:14

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

News & Notices

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Write AC Central on your check memo or choose it when making an online donation at harvestcall.org

Psalm 71:16-18

I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD: I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only. O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works.



Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel...

Is God calling you to live, love and serve His Kingdom? Perhaps you have heard that God doesn't call the equipped, but he equips the called. We believe there is a third part to this idea: ***those who are called then equip those who are hurting and have lost hope.*** Our home based workers live out the gospel by working for and with some of the most vulnerable families and individuals in our community.

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2017 APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN CHURCH SERVICES CLYDE PARK, MONTANA

Saturday June 24th
Clyde Park Community Center
3:00 to 5:00 pm Registration and Fellowship
5:00 Evening Meal
Hymn Singing in Evening

Sunday June 25th
Clyde Park Community Center
Church Services
10:15 am and 12:30 pm

For further information or to provide a count of those planning to attend by June 10th 2017, please contact one of the following Bros.

From Lester

Wes Moser	712-478-4622	wesmoser58@gmail.com
	or 712-395-2025	
Eugene Metzger	712-472-2187	gdmetzger@premieronline.net
Bob Metzger	712-478-4647	bobcmet@alliancecom.net
	or 612-963-0089	

From Silverton

Greg Wackerle	503-873-7463	gregwackerle@msn.com
	or 503-779-9803	

Accommodations available in or near Livingston, MT

Comfort Inn (406-222-4400) will have a block of rooms available under Apostolic Christian or Bob Metzger

There are a number of campgrounds and rental homes in the area.

It is helpful if those attending can bring their own; Bibles, Zion's Harps, and Hymn's of Zion
Free will donations serve to cover meal costs and facility expenses
A day tour of the area may be organized for those interested on Friday June 23th

Matthew 25:40

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

Bible Distribution: Sharing His Word in Love

Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people. Psalm 96:3

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651 E. Peoria Street, Goodfield, IL 61742
Phone: 309-965-2141 Email: bibledistribution@acpublications.org

HarvestCall Work Team INFORMATION

Haiti, Les Cayes Work Teams

Project	Year 2017	Coordinator	Capacity
Les Cayes	Jan 2-9	Ron Palitto	12
MEBSH/Ohio		330-336-5373	
Construction		Ronp@palittoconsulting.com	
Les Cayes	Jan 6 - 13	Luke Fischer	4
HWA		309-242-7020	
Haiti Water Aid		lukenal@live.com	
Les Cayes	Jan 27-Feb 3	Richard Kraft	12
MEBSH/Silverton		503-364-3103	
Construction		richard@kraftmasonryinc.com	
Les Cayes	Feb 10-17	Larry Kaufmann	12
SEED		815-716-6018	
Haiti Ag		ljkaufmann@juno.com	
Les Cayes	Feb 10 - 17	Jonathan Hodel	12
MEBSH/Roanoke		309-361-5031	
Construction		jonathan.hodel@gmail.com	
Les Cayes	Feb 24- Mar 3	Steve Leuthold	12
MEBSH/Peoria		309-645-2208	
Construction		sleuth@speerbank.com	
Les Cayes	March 3 - 10	Andy Getz	4
Haiti Trade Schools		574-870-5046	
Vocational School		andy@getzitdone.com	
Les Cayes	March 3 - 10	Luke Fischer	4
HWA		309-242-7020	
Haiti Water Aid		lukenal@live.com	
Les Cayes	Apr 19 - 24	Jon Zeller	ACWR-CC
MEBSH		309-266-9009	
Haiti Support		jczeller1972@gmail.com	
Les Cayes	April 24 - May 1	Jon Zeller	12
MEBSH		309-266-9009	
Maintenance		jczeller1972@gmail.com	



Mexico Work Teams

Location	Year 2017	Coordinator
Reynosa	Jan 2 - 8	Aaron Herrmann
Construction		U of I 309-635-7769 herrmann.aaron1994@gmail.com
Magdalena	Jan 14 - 21	Bruce Frank
Construction		217-375-4346 bfrank@ksconveyors.com
Magdalena	Feb 4 - 11	Troy Lanz
Construction		217-202-5959 troy@lanzinc.com
Magdalena	Feb 11 - 18	Doug Hodel
Construction		309-261-7291 doughodel79@gmail.com
Magdalena	Mar 11 - 18	Denton Knobloch
Construction		West Bend/Winthrop Bible Classes 515-320-2403 dentrose@hotmail.com
Reynosa	Mar 11 - 18	Zach Jones
Construction		ISU 309-360-4927 isuyounggroup@gmail.com
Reynosa	Mar 25 - Apr 1	Toby Steffen
Construction		Bluffton/BN Senior Class 317-997-5096 tsteffen@bfsengr.com
Magdalena	Mar 25 - Apr 1	Brad Rocke
Construction		Lacrosse Bible Class 219-508-3955 brocke@csinet.net
Magdalena	May 27 - Jun 3	Marshall Witzig
Construction		Phoenix Bible Class 602-918-0088 mwitzig@edgeconstruct.com
Magdalena	Jun 10 - 17	Mike Zobrist
Construction		Congerville 309-660-7004 zobfam@gmail.com
Magdalena	Jun 17 - 24	Dave Roberts
Construction		Indianapolis Bible Class 317-225-6112 daveroberts5594@gmail.com
Magdalena	Nov 18 - 25	Rod Schmidt
Construction		303-718-1432 rod.schmidt@watershedfoods.com
Questions?		Contact Mike Fiechter mfiechter@onlyinternet.net 260-307-0001

Haiti, Bonne Fin Work Teams

The Hospital Lumiere renovation program continues to restore and improve the facility to an environment that honors God and provides an atmosphere that contributes to the wellbeing of the hospital staff, our patients and their families.

Hospital Lumiere has an ongoing need for maintenance and/or construction teams and especially for skilled electricians. Rather than listing predetermined dates and asking people to fit into them, if a team, or individual, is interested in coming, they should contact the Facilities Director Bro. David Zimmerman to discuss possible dates and available projects.

Contact: David Zimmerman

Phone: 011-509-344-62800

Email: dlzimm4@hotmail.com

Haiti Awareness Tours

If you'd like to see the ministry of Hospital Lumiere and other Haiti projects in person, but do not have the time or desire to participate in a week-long work team, please consider our new Awareness Tours. These are quick trips that give you the opportunity to meet our missionary families, learn more about the hospital, see the completed renovations and work in process, and visit some of the other HarvestCall projects in southern Haiti. These trips are scheduled, as needed, based upon demand.

2017 Haiti Awareness Tours:

Spring 2017 – March 4-8

Fall 2017 – September 23-27

To learn more, contact:

Rich Bertschi at 309.467.2351 or
hospitallumiere@harvestcall.org
or Rick Wuethrich at 219.863.4163 or
rick@wuethrichfarms.com

Haiti Medical Work Teams to Hospital Lumiere

Project	Year 2017	Coordinator	Capacity
Bonne Finn, Haiti	Jan 7 - 14	Lydia Bertschi	8
Hospital Lumiere		309-253-0402	
Cancer Screening		lydiabertschi@yahoo.com	
Bonne Finn, Haiti	Feb 11 - 18	Lydia Bertschi	8
Hospital Lumiere		309-253-0402	
Dental Team		lydiabertschi@yahoo.com	
Bonne Finn, Haiti	Mar 11 - 18	Lydia Bertschi	8
Hospital Lumiere		309-253-0402	
Eye Specialty		lydiabertschi@yahoo.com	
Bonne Finn, Haiti	Apr 8 - 15	Lydia Bertschi	8
Hospital Lumiere		309-253-0402	
Pediatric School Visit		lydiabertschi@yahoo.com	
Bonne Finn, Haiti	May 13 - 20	Lydia Bertschi	8
Hospital Lumiere		309-253-0402	
Cancer Screening		lydiabertschi@yahoo.com	
Bonne Finn, Haiti	Jun 10 - 17	Lydia Bertschi	8
Hospital Lumiere		309-253-0402	
Inventory Team		lydiabertschi@yahoo.com	
Bonne Finn, Haiti	Jul 8 - 15	Lydia Bertschi	
Hospital Lumiere		309-253-0402	
General Medical		lydiabertschi@yahoo.com	
Bonne Finn, Haiti	Aug 12 - 19	Lydia Bertschi	
Hospital Lumiere		309-253-0402	
Open		lydiabertschi@yahoo.com	
Bonne Finn, Haiti	Sep 9 - 16	Lydia Bertschi	
Hospital Lumiere		309-253-0402	
Cancer Screening		lydiabertschi@yahoo.com	
Bonne Finn, Haiti	Oct 7 - 14	Lydia Bertschi	
Hospital Lumiere		309-253-0402	
Nursing Proficiencies		lydiabertschi@yahoo.com	
Bonne Finn, Haiti	Nov 4 - 11	Lydia Bertschi	
Hospital Lumiere		309-253-0402	
Dental		lydiabertschi@yahoo.com	
Bonne Finn, Haiti	Dec 9 - 16	Lydia Bertschi	
Hospital Lumiere		309-253-0402	
Medical Inventory		lydiabertschi@yahoo.com	

Jamaica Work Teams

Project	Year 2017	Coordinator	Capacity
Jamaica Deaf Village	Jun 9 - 17	Mark Lindberg	40
CCCC		815-641-9065	
		Mark.Lindberg@Hyatt.com	

MEDICAL DIRECTOR OPENING *at Hospital Lumiere, Haiti*

Seeking a licensed physician to fill this full-time position at Hospital Lumiere in Haiti. Qualifications include a U.S. medical license, Board-Certification in some aspect of medicine or surgery, be a Believer in Jesus Christ, have experience in leadership and management, be capable of learning the Creole language, and be willing to reside with your family on the Hospital Lumiere campus for three to five years. The position involves leading a team of excellent Haitian physicians and surgeons, and oversight of the nursing, laboratory, radiology and pharmacy departments of this 120-bed full-service hospital and out-patient facility.

Terms of Service

- Full time residing in Haiti
- Housing provided adjacent to other brethren and missionaries
- Initial year of service requires a significant period of time studying Haitian Creole and assimilating into the Haitian culture.
- Training will be provided prior to placement in the field.

Candidate selection, preparation, training, sending and supporting will be conducted using HarvestCall's established Outreach Policies and Procedures.



For more information on Hospital Lumiere positions, contact:
Robert Beebe. Email: robert.beebe1@gmail.com, or Phone: 574-276-6748



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Short Term Physician, Surgeon and Specialty Physician Opportunities at Hospital Lumiere

Any board-certified physician, surgeon or specialist who has a desire to serve at Hospital Lumiere in Haiti is encouraged to contact us. Terms of service are very flexible, ranging from 1-2 weeks to several months. The mission at Hospital Lumiere has many opportunities to serve on both a short and long term basis. If you are led to the mission field but your skill set and qualifications are not a good match for any of the listed positions, please contact us. While the above positions are needed, there is flexibility on requirements listed as well as job description(s). Many times, the role that is filled can be developed to fit the gifts of the applicant.



For more information on Hospital Lumiere positions, contact:
Robert Beebe. Email: robert.beebe1@gmail.com, or Phone: 574-276-6748



APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN
HarvestCall

Medical Department Intern at Hospital Lumiere, Haiti

Seeking an energetic, self-motivated, responsible Believer to fill the position of Medical Department Intern at Hospital Lumiere in Haiti for a term of 6 months. Responsibilities include helping the Medical Director with staff scheduling, communications between departments (Nursing, Pharmacy, Radiology, Lab), monitoring inventories and medical supplies and various other responsibilities. Lodging, food and living expenses are provided. A medical background is not required, but is helpful.

If you are seeking an exciting opportunity to serve God and others, have a servant's heart, appreciate new horizons and challenges and have six months to devote to furthering the Lord's work in Haiti, please contact Bro. Robert Beebe, Executive Director, Hospital Lumiere for a complete job description and details of the internship.



**For more information on Hospital Lumiere positions, contact:
Robert Beebe. Email: robert.beebe1@gmail.com, or Phone: 574-276-6748**



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"Light from the Word
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1987 to current).*

Renters still needed for St. Louis Home near Church

Within the St. Louis congregation, they are still praying that God will lead a family, couple or single(s) to relocate to the area and become part of their church family. A newly renovated, 3-bedroom home, that is located across the parking lot from the church, is available to rent immediately.

Expressing Interest

Anyone who is interested is encouraged to contact Ministering Bro. Loren Schrenk at 314.994.1944 or seeclear@swbell.net.

Psalm 71:16-18

*I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD: I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only.
O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works.*

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Those in the child sponsorship program have several things in common. They are very poor, they desire to learn, and they have an undying soul.

The goal of this program is to provide an education so these children can learn life skills to enable them to become more productive adults. In addition, its purpose is to present a spiritual opportunity to be exposed to the gospel message and eventually be called to serve our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children.

ISAIAH 54:13



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Cell Ph _____

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☐ Haiti School ☐ Guatemala
☐ Mexico ☐ Zambia
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- ☐ Boy - Age _____
☐ Girl - Age _____
☐ No Preference

Send to:

HarvestCall Child Sponsorship
PO Box 36
Morton, IL 61550

Phone: 309-266-6080

Fax: 309-266-5281

Email: childsponsorship@harvestcall.org



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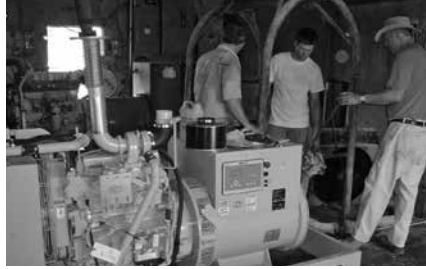
Openings at Cite Lumiere, Les Cayes, Haiti

Mechanic, Construction Department Assistant

The HarvestCall Caribbean Committee is seeking to fill several missionary positions based at the Cite Lumiere compound in Les Cayes, Haiti. The specific job description may vary depending on the applicant's interests and skills. Help is specifically needed in the following areas:

Equipment mechanic

An equipment mechanic is needed in the Construction Department in Haiti to maintain the vehicles, generators, and construction equipment at Cite Lumiere and Bonne Finn, Haiti and order, purchase, and maintain inventory of parts to support the HarvestCall programs in southern Haiti. This position would also involve training and mentoring a Haitian assistant to provide future mechanical maintenance. The equipment mechanic would reside in the Cite Lumiere compound in Les Cayes and report to the Construction Operations Facilitator. The applicant should be experienced in mechanical maintenance.



All applicants must be a member in good standing of the Apostolic Christian Church, willing to learn Creole and relocate to Haiti for a minimum of 3 years, and have a heart to serve the Haitian people.

If you feel led to serve or have questions, contact:

Bro. Jon Zeller
309-208-0639
Jczeller1972@gmail.com

Construction Dept. Assistant

An assistant is needed in the Construction Department at Cite Lumiere as the work has expanded for the program and related ministries. This applicant could be a single brother or couple. Skills that would be valuable in the ministry include:

- Carpentry
- Mechanical experience



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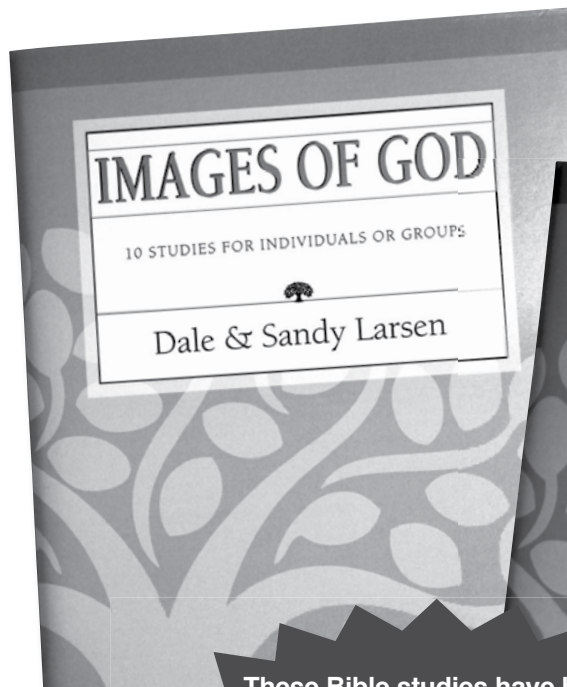
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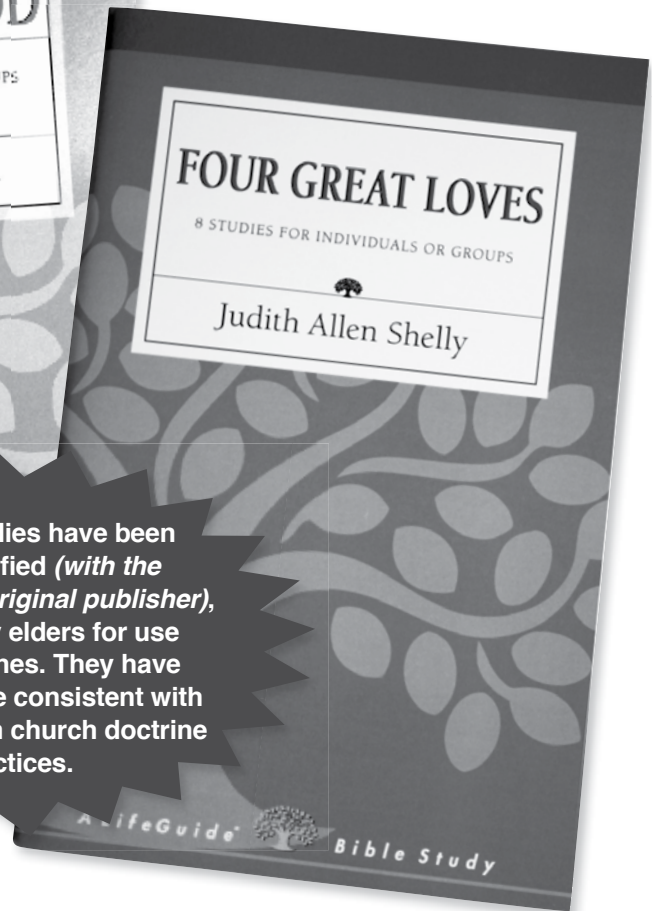
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[1609]

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Four Great Loves [1603]

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Continued Articles

Biblical Approach to Conflict - Part 1

— Continued from pg. 3

Forbearance

At times, a brother, friend, or neighbor may fail to exercise discretion, and we experience the early symptoms of emotional pain or anger in response to the offense. In such cases, our next line of defense against an escalation of conflict is to forbear with our brother.⁶ To forbear with someone is to overlook and tolerate things that would have the potential to be offensive if we were unwilling to tolerate them. Forbearance is an expression of graciousness toward others, demonstrating an awareness of just how gracious God has been with us. If we are mindful of the depth of God's patience and mercy toward us, then we cannot help but be patient, understanding, and tolerant of others. Even then it can be a challenge to *feel* tolerant and we must instead choose to *be* tolerant.

How is it possible to overlook offensive behavior? Perhaps the first question should be, "Why do I feel hurt by the words or actions that I perceive to be offensive? Is there perhaps some element of truth to the words? Do I know all the facts about the perceived action? Have I ever done or said

something similar and been misunderstood? Asking the right questions can often lead us to a point of understanding that our perception was incorrect. Forbearance gives us the opportunity to examine our role in the conflict honestly.

Self-examination

Why is this such a crucial step? The Lord teaches us the folly of thinking we can see clearly to address issues in our brother if we have obstructed vision ourselves.⁷ How can one honestly examine oneself? It is critical to see ourselves as God sees us. That cannot happen if we do not pray for wisdom and clarity of vision. It can't happen if we are proud and unwilling to acknowledge that perhaps we played some role in the offense. In addition, we ought to ask ourselves whether perhaps some previous offense or hurt is being brought back to memory because of this current event. All too often, past hurts amplify minor events and the effect is compounded in our current perception.

According to the Jewish Law, parents who had an incorrigible rebellious son were to bring him before the council of the village elders as a key step in resolving the conflict. Perhaps the purpose in this step was to impel the parents to examine themselves before

asking the elders to get involved. Certainly, a wise elder would have inquired about the parents' role in provoking the rebellion. If the parents were not wise enough to examine themselves, it would have fallen to the elders to hold them accountable to examine their own role in the rebellion. Similarly, we are taught by Jesus that we should examine ourselves before any attempt to confront or correct an offense against us.

The Apostle Peter teaches us that charity covers a multitude of sins.⁸ By the grace of God, these steps of charity—prevention, forbearance, and self-examination—will eliminate or diminish most sources of conflict. In the second part of this series, we will look at the biblical steps to take when our best efforts to prevent and forbear are insufficient to keep conflict from disturbing brotherly love.

(Footnotes)

¹ 1 Peter 4:8

² Rom. 12:18

³ John 18:38

⁴ Lev. 19:15-18

⁵ Prov. 18:5-8

⁶ Col. 3:13, Eph. 4:2

⁷ Matt. 7:3-5

⁸ 1 Peter 4:8

Monthly Sermon, continued

— *Continued from pg. 5*

And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it.” (v.5-7) So today the good seed is being sown. Not because it’s me, not because it’s going to be one of these brothers who’s going to stand. The good seed’s the Word of God.

We have to decide in our instance here. We can look at all three categories here. If something falls by the wayside, there are things we can put on the ground. There are things that we can do to keep the elements of this world from taking that seed away. There can be thorns that come along. We can put on herbicides that will restrict the weeds that will come up, but we have to put forth the effort. We’re the ones that have to do things so that these things don’t happen.

We’re also the ones that can allow things to happen in our life. Christ talked about it, He said, this is the way that they hear — *“then cometh the devil and taketh away the word.” (v.12)* We walked in the door today. As we walked in, I’ll assure you, Satan walked right in with us. You wonder what he’s doing today. What is he saying to a soul? He might be saying that man who’s speaking to you doesn’t know what he’s talking about. He’s just being hard-hearted. That’s not the case. This is the Word of God, but

Satan’s right there. He walked right in with us.

How many times has he tried to get our mind to think about what took place this past week or what’s going to take place this coming week? How many times has he tried to convince us that today is not the day to repent but maybe tomorrow or the next day? I have things that are going to take place in my life. The cares of this world are encumbered about me. You just don’t understand what’s taking place in my life. No, I don’t, but God does. He’s kindly and gently calling souls.

I have no idea how long the world is going to last before Christ comes, but my prayer is He comes soon, rather than later. I think of the state and the condition of the world that we live in. It’s dismal. We have to wonder if we all had a choice — if we could live in a place that’s paved with pure gold, there’s no more sin, there’s no more shame, there’s no more suffering, and there’s no more disease or to stay here. We all know we’re eventually going to die. There’s going to be cancer, and there are going to be various things that are going to happen. Really, what would we choose? Of course, we would choose the way of heaven.

We as mankind are really kind of nervous about what’s ahead of us. As we read in this scripture,

and Christ was talking to them, He said, *“Where is your faith?” (v.25)*. We think about that. How strong is our faith? Oft times we look into the scripture. We can go into Hebrews chapter 11. Read about those men sometime. They name a lot of them. They name Moses. They name Noah. They name Samson. They name Rahab.

I want you to think about this with every one of those that they name in those scriptures. Every single one of them, God never told them when they went through the trials and the persecutions in their life. I will just give you an example. Take Samson. Did God ever tell Samson that when you get your eyes poked out, when they come to cut off your hair and I take away your strength, you’re there by the grinding in the mill and when they are making sport of you, did God ever say I’m going to take care of you then? Nobody ever said that. Not one of them. You think about Daniel in the lion’s den. When they put him down in that lion’s den, did Daniel say, but God’s going to shut their mouth? He had faith! It’s just like an Almighty God. When He was standing there upon the waters and the storms of life came, even Jesus Himself said, ‘Peace be still’, and the waters were calm (St. Mark 4:39).

So we have to ask ourselves, where is the faith in our life? Do we put the faith in our life on the things of this world? Are we going to be choked out? Is that seed going to be choked out by the things of this world? The world is really busy. We get consumed with the various things the world offers that we think we have to have this in life.

I often think when they come out with a new piece of technology how mankind clamors toward it because they have to have it because it's something new. They are coming out with things that are constantly changing, trying to keep up with technology. What's out there? What can I learn about? I don't know if this actually going to happen, but they tell me now you can get a computer that's in your glasses and you can read things without even taking off your glasses. Do we need these things? Aren't they going to encumber us with the things of this life? It takes away from the good seed that is sown. The good seed that falls on good ground that's an honest and good report, good heart, *"having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit..."* (v.15)

Then I don't know if you picked up on that word when we read it — it says bring forth fruit with patience. I don't know about

you, but I wish everyone around me, including myself, would have just a little more patience. Just a little more tolerance. If mankind would have patience with Jesus Christ, they would have understood how much He loved them and wanted to take care of them.

It talked about the lesson of the candle. It says, *"No man, when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth it under a bed; but setteth it on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light."* (v.16) Around us today, I doubt many of us think about it, but you know there's a very valuable thing taking place right now. We all have light in this sanctuary. I don't know how many chandeliers there are in here. There are not making any noise, are they, but they're doing their job, quietly and purposely. If we would shut off all those lights, we would notice it immediately, wouldn't we? So think of the responsibility as brothers and sisters that we have — letting our light shine in this dark world. It's a great responsibility. We might have those we call ministers and elders. We're called upon to speak and sound forth the warnings, but every single one of you here are ministers in your own way.

It says, *"Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever*

hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have." (v.18) Did you think about that when we read that — what you seem to have? What do we all seem to have today? I suppose we could line everyone up and do a financial statement. That would be a pretty good indication of what we have, but that's not important. That's all going to pass away. You watch people as they die. Those things are not important in this world; they realize there's a better place coming. So what do we seem to have? We're a peculiar people — that means a special people. That's what God has called us too. We sang that song, A Blessed Man (Zion's Harp #169). We truly are a blessed people.

Then it talks about Jesus calming the storm. I've read this scripture many times. I've had storms in my own life just as well as you've had storms in your life. You read about in the scriptures. The disciples many times, when they were in storms and those that were in the boat, you can read about it in Jonah, they prayed for the day. They prayed for the light of the day to come. Now why would that be? They wanted the light to come so they could see what was going on and what was happening.

Many times that's how it is when we have storms in our life — maybe

—**Please turn to pg. 64**

Monthly Sermon, continued

— *Continued from pg. 63*

afflictions of the flesh and maybe a loved one that has passed on. Those storms seem so great. Isn't it wonderful when we have those storms in our life, if we truly are children of God and we truly are converted, we can stand before that storm and we can smile at that storm because there's no storm in this life that can overtake an Almighty God.

That's what Satan's been trying to do for years and years and years and years and years. Really, the sad part for Satan is he already knows where he is going. He already knows where he and his angels are going to go. They are going to be forever in eternal damnation. This will tell you just a little bit about what Satan is like — he wants to take more and more and more with him. Is it because he dislikes you or because he likes you? No, that's not why! It's because he wants to put no victory on the shed blood of Jesus Christ.

The very reason why we're here today is the shed blood of Jesus Christ that has offered each one of us salvation. We have the right to look back on our life. Are we going to be like David was when he looked back on his life, and he might have lamented if this wouldn't have happened this would have been better in his life?

If you don't think he had laments in his life, read the Psalms. To me, it's just a beautiful, beautiful book in the Bible. Oft times when we read the Psalms we can feel how David felt. When Saul was coming after him and he didn't understand why all these things had taken place, even when his life was trying to be taken, he could still glorify an Almighty God. That's how it is in our lives when the storms come and the rains beat vehemently. We're built upon the solid rock of Jesus Christ.

It says Jesus *"said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake. And they launched forth..."* and He fell asleep. He was tired. His disciples awoke Him and they were alarmed just like any one of us would be. (v.22-23) We hear it from time to time that there are ships out there, and they rock to and fro, they become alarmed, and are pretty much at the mercy of the sea. He said *"he arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm"* (v.24).

It's always interesting. Seems like at home over the last years we've had a fair amount of tragedies. Maybe a young one getting taken in life sooner than what we've believed they should have been taken. We go there. We see the crying, the wailing, and the weeping going on. I

believe many of us have been there. Then we say, 'Let's have a prayer together.' It just brings a calm over everyone when we can commit everything in our life to an Almighty God. That's what God wants each one of us to do is to commit our lives to Him.

"And he said unto them, Where is your faith? And they being afraid wondered, saying one to another, What manner of man is this! for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him" (v.25). We can ask ourselves that today. We're going to see two souls being joined together. It took a great amount of faith because it truly was a marriage where two souls really didn't know each other. But, they have put their trust in an Almighty God that they will be equally yoked together because they have one common goal that to help each other get to heaven. They believe in the Word of God.

That's how each one of us can be. We can have our faith that we can trust in an Almighty God. We can ask ourselves what manner of man is Jesus Christ for even the winds and waters obey Him. So may it be that each one of us would obey what God has asked each one of us to do.

Remembering Our Spiritual Heritage

— *Continued from pg. 66*

When we can read of such precious words here of the natural state of man and the state of grace in which we have come into, it should bow and humble us, one and all, and drive us unto more love and obedience to our God and Creator.

It is inscribed here (by grace are ye saved) and such shall we

fully realize. It is not through any good deed that any of us have done. I believe we all feel that way, not so, dear Brethren in the Lord. The Apostle said, *“And hath raised us together, and made us to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”* Today is afforded us this opportunity again, where we can come together, from far and near, where we can rejoice in one mind and in one spirit and sit in a heavenly place — where the word of the Lord is spoken, only in great

weakness, dear ones. God has promised to impart unto us those blessings from on high, where there are many in store in His rich chambers above.

It is a only a foretaste of greater joy, of what will once be in all eternity, for each and every one of who has been redeemed from their former sins and who can remain faithful and true and loyal to our God and Creator until we close our eyes in death.

-by Perry Klopfenstein

What the Bible says about Marriage

Mark 10:9	<i>What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.</i>
1 Corinthians 7:12	<i>If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away.</i>
1 Corinthians 7:13	<i>And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him.</i>
Reference	Characteristic
Genesis 2:18-24	Marriage is God's idea.
Genesis 24:58-60	Commitment is essential to a successful marriage.
Genesis 29:10-11	Romance is important.
Jeremiah 7:34	Marriage holds times of great joy.
Malachi 2:14-15	Marriage creates the best environment for raising children.
Matthew 5:32	Unfaithfulness breaks the bond of trust, the foundation of all relationships.
Matthew 19:6	Marriage is permanent.
Romans 7:2-3	Ideally, only death should dissolve marriage.
Ephesians 5:21-33	Marriage is based on the principled practice of love, not on feelings.
Ephesians 5:23-32	Marriage is a living symbol of Christ and the church.
Hebrews 13:4	Marriage is good and honorable.



Remembering Our Spiritual Heritage

Miscellaneous data taken from the multitude of files developed during the research and writing of Marching To Zion in 1984 and from the second edition published in 2008.

Satan's Hook

The hook of sin, with which Satan catches pitiful people and leads them captive, is a barbed hook. It goes in easily, but it is hard to pull out. And, if a person would pull it out, it tears the heart with bitter pain. That is why it is so difficult from a person to be converted from the power of Satan to the living God.

-S. H. Froehlich

Sermon Excerpts by Elder Joe Klopfenstein

[A file copy of a sermon by Elder Joe M. Klopfenstein, Gridley, IL, was found although a date was not recorded. During his tenure as Elder, which began in 1947, shorthand was used to record sermons, and typed transcripts became available. Excerpts are taken from one of his sermons the text is Ephesians 2.]

In this chapter we note the Apostle Paul sought to remind these Ephesians of the natural state of man, also the state of grace in which man lives — that man was made for good works. It is a chapter which is fitting for us one and all, is it not beloved hearers, in this time in which we are living.

We think of God in His great love and tender mercy did call us out of a world of sin and darkness to his marvelous way and Light in the acceptable year of the Lord and in the day of Grace. It is humiliating, is it not dear brethren in the Lord, to note the great love that God, the Heavenly Father, did have for us in the time when we served the god of this world — the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.

When we once lived in the same light and spirit as those who are now living in sin and transgression

in this particular time, we were also of those who in time past...and can be reminded how He quickened us who were dead in trespasses and sin.

We must acknowledge, must we not, dear ones, that it was not that we were worthy of such that God called us out of a world of sin and darkness to His marvelous way and Light — but it is His endless love and tender mercy which He still bestows upon all humanity. The Lord Jesus who is seated at his Father's right hand in Heaven looks down upon the children of men in this day and age as He did in the time when you and I lived in sin and transgression.

We were reminded: *"Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience."* We also were amongst those, were we not, and feel that we have great and many reasons to be grateful to the Heavenly Father that He did not deal with us according to our past life, but according to His endless Love and tender mercy. If we stop and think of that time — why should He call upon us when we were not living for Him but serving the god of this world?

But such was God's Love toward mankind that He so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son into this world for the sins of all humanity — and that includes us all, does it not?

Therefore it should move each and every one of us (to have thanksgiving)...so long as we have to live here upon this earth in this wicked and sinful generation, in a world of turmoil and many cares, and I believe all of our hearts exist oft and many times facing great discouragement,or is it only me?

"Among whom also we had our conversation in times past in the lusts of the flesh...and by nature we were the children of wrath, even as others." In such a state we were, one and all, as the Apostle wrote to the Ephesians and reminded them in this passage of scripture.

—Please turn to pg. 65



The Light of Hope

This Year?

Will Christ return this year? He said, *"Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."* Matthew 24:44. *"And the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout."* 1 Thessalonians 4:16. This year may be the year for Christ's return. Are we ready?

When I was a young believer, I lived in Alabama and taught Bible classes in the homes of the poor people who lived in the country side. As I drove my old 1936 Chevrolet to the Bible classes, I sang whatever words came to mind. One evening I sang the following words: "I want to meet my Savior smiling, I want to meet my Lord with joy; I want to do my best for Jesus, I want to do my best for Him.

If we will do our best for Jesus, if we will do our best for Him; then we can meet our Savior smiling, then we can meet our Lord with joy."

Another hymn which I made up as I sang, is as follows: "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 Savior and His way. So tell them of our Savior, while traveling on the King's highway." If Christ returns this year, I hope we can meet Him smiling and that He will find us traveling on the King's highway.

Will we die this year? There are funerals for people of all ages. Yes, we may die this year. What should we do before we die? Jesus began His ministry with these words, *"Repent ye, and believe the gospel."* Mark 1:15. If we have already repented and are living the life of a true believer, what should we do? Christ commands all true believers with these words, *"Abide in me, and I in you."* John 15:4. How do we abide in Christ? It is very helpful if we

pray every day, read the Bible every day, and have spiritual conversations with others.

The new year lies before us as a clean slate. We have the opportunity to fill it with many good deeds.

Also, let us pray for the leaders of our country, and for the leaders of our church, that God's will be done, and that all will be to His honor and glory. May God give us courage, and joy, and thankfulness, as we face the new year.

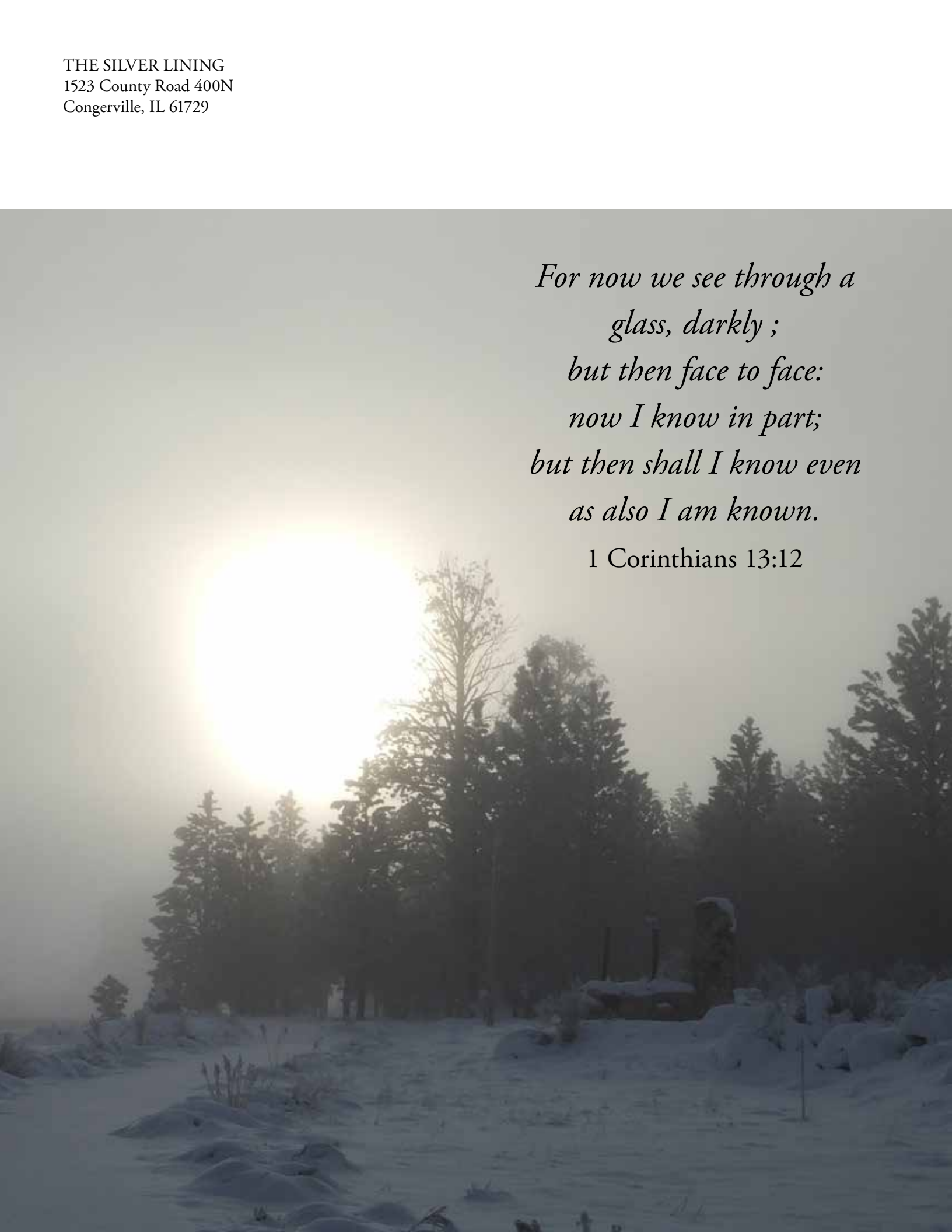
Will our beloved country return unto the Lord this year? It is written in Hosea 14:1, *"O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God."* Will there be a revival this year, in our church and in America? That is our prayer. Let us all pray to that end. 2 Chronicles 7:14 reads, *"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."*

When we arise in the morning and look at the magnificence of the rising sun, may we be overwhelmed with the presence of our Heavenly Father, the almighty God. May we trust Him to take care of us no matter what comes in the new year. The apostle Paul wrote, *"For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."* In Christ, even death is wonderful. God made us for self-preservation and we try our best to avoid death, yet the Bible teaches that to die is gain for the believer.

In the new year, let's remember what the Apostle James teaches us in 4:15, *"If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that."* We have no promise for tomorrow, so may God help us to live today well. It has been said, "Today well-lived makes every yesterday a dream of happiness and every tomorrow, a vision of hope." Have a wonderful new year, serving the Lord.

-by Willis Ehnle

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*For now we see through a
glass, darkly ;
but then face to face:
now I know in part;
but then shall I know even
as also I am known.*

1 Corinthians 13:12