I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

John 15:5
A New Year, A New Life,

As we enter a New Year, there are many opportunities and challenges that await us. Will you approach these as a new creature in Christ? If we approach the New Year with a new life in Him, we can expect joy, peace and contentment in the midst of trials and tests. Joyful living is centered around a relationship with our Savior Jesus Christ. As we walk with Him, He will carry us and guide each step we take. A few questions to ponder: Have I repented of my sin and confessed that I need Jesus Christ as my savior? If I have been walking with Him already, has my main focus been on earthly concerns? Am I living the abundant life in Him? Thankfully, we have opportunity today to make the wise choice for all of these questions. His arms are open…waiting for us to come and serve in this beautiful New Year.

Speaking of opportunities and challenges. We have a new topic for reader submitted articles. It is “Adjusting to Life as an Empty Nester.” How has parenting changed with the kids out of the house? We would love to hear from many of you who have experienced this. Please send your contributions answering that question to editor@acsilverlining.org by February 20.

In Christian love,
Jeff Grimm, along with Rick Plattner, counseling elders
Love One Another: 
The Great Commandment

Editor's Note: The Bible uses the term “one another” multiple times and it is clear God is very interested in our relationships. Jesus taught that the second greatest commandment is to love our neighbor as ourselves. In 2018, we will look at several of the “one anothers” in the Bible.

“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another”

Most of us are familiar with the second greatest commandment that Jesus and the Apostles taught us, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” This familiar scripture is quoted directly from an Old Testament passage; however, in the New Testament Jesus raises His expectation of our degree of love with His commandment: “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.”

Jesus demonstrated His love towards us by His tremendous sacrifice on the cross in our stead. By this we understand that our Lord expects us to not only love one another as ourselves, but also to achieve the higher plane of a sacrificial love. Sacrificial love, is a form of charity, and is defined in more detail in the familiar Love chapter, “Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil.” This level of love “never fails.” It is to be unconditional and enduring regardless of the circumstances around us.

The Bible contains many relevant examples of the application of this level of love. Joseph was able to freely forgive his brothers under what were nearly incomprehensible circumstances. Though having been terribly mistreated by his brothers for years, he freely forgave them even when it was finally within his power to punish them. “Moreover he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them: and after that his brethren talked with him.”

Moses truly loved the people of Israel and made many sacrifices on their behalf during their journey through the wilderness of Sinai. One of the more notable occurred when he interceded for the people after they sinned by convincing Aaron to make the golden calf. God had told Moses that He would destroy the people and make a great nation of Moses’ seed. Moses’ humble and sincere intercession touched the heart of God; “And Moses besought the LORD his God, and said, LORD, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand? Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written.”

Jonathan, the son of King Saul, was a wonderful example of sacrificial love. When David killed Goliath, Jonathan could easily have been envious of the attention given David. Instead, his nobility and self-sacrificing friendship were revealed, “Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle.” Later, when he knew that David was to be made king instead of him, Jonathan was willing to put his own ambitions aside and even risked his own life to intercede for that of David’s.

Jesus’ account of the Good Samaritan illustrates several principles of love. For one thing, the injured man was a Jew, and as a Samaritan he could easily have felt some level of prejudice against the other man since the “Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.” Nevertheless, he had compassion on the unfortunate man and went to great effort and expense to help him. “And went to him, and bound...”
Greetings! We’re asking God to be with us, that He will provide a blessing for each of us. If we have a desire to know His will, He’s more than willing to share it with us.

I’ve opened up to the book of Job. It’s a book we often look to and realize that when struggles are happening, even God’s people have troubles. It’s not necessarily because they’ve lived evil lives; it’s because God wants to either test us or wants to let a light shine in a dark world. We’re not always sure which it is, but as we examine our lives and we look at it, can we come as Job?

I’ve often thought about how when they came and said, you’ve lost all your cattle and you’ve lost all your camels and you’ve lost your sheep. Those are physical things. But what about when they came and said your children are all gone. That would be a heartache! That would be very hard, and yet Job said, “…the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.” (Job 1:21). May it be in our thoughts as we consider that Job really didn’t understand what was happening.

His three friends came and really were not too encouraging, were they? They kept looking at Job and saying there has to be something really seriously wrong in your life or this wouldn’t be happening. Sometimes we fall into that trap of thinking evil things happen just because we’ve done wrong things, but that’s not really how God always works. I’m reminded of a Psalm. I just recently referenced it at a funeral. In the 73rd Psalm, David saw the people who were evil were still prospering, but he said, ‘Then I came into the sanctuary of God and then I knew. I understood it’s not about what’s happening here upon this earth.’

As we read this chapter (Acts 15) we understand that even the early brethren struggled with certain things. Here was a struggle, and they had to decide how are we going to handle these differences of opinions and differences of ideas?

We know the letter was sent out. There was rejoicing among the people because there was some direction given to them. At times, perhaps, we as adults struggle a little bit with the idea that we need some direction. We’re so used to making decisions that we forget in a spiritual sense we are children. We are not adults in a spiritual sense. Therefore we need some direction just like our children do. As we get older in the faith, we begin to realize that even though we know more than we did when we started, we really don’t know a whole lot when we start comparing it to all that God has for us to know and the wisdom of God.

So the question came up, and we can understand this. The question came up about circumcision. We don’t discuss circumcision anymore, but we have those same kinds of issues perhaps that we sometimes struggle with. We wonder how are we going to handle this and what are we going to do? Therefore they came together because they were trying to decide if they needed to go ahead and do circumcision or not. The Gentiles, of course, were not circumcised. The Jewish people had been circumcised when they were young children so the decision then had to be made. Are we going to hold on to this?

As they looked at these things, Paul and Barnabas went to Jerusalem to gather together with the apostles and try to decide. The point I think this makes here is we still today need direction. We need to understand that these directions help us to make wise decisions. They help us to stay close to the Lord.

Why did they pick these four issues? I don’t know. Are they the most important things that ever came across? I don’t know. But the thing that
was important was they chose these four things in order to give some kind of clarity to the people of how many of these things out of the law they were going to bring forward, how many of these things are necessary for them to live by because now Paul was preaching to them about faith. You and I have not been brought up underneath the law. We don’t understand, perhaps, the struggle they were going through because for years they heard all these teachings about how they needed to do this and this and this. There was structure given, and it was very rigid. There was not any mercy in it.

But here, Paul was bringing them a new message. God, through Jesus Christ, was bringing to you and to me, not just to the Jewish people, a message of if you will come in faith and go to Calvary I will forgive you because of your faith, not because of some great work that you’ve accomplished, not because you have a set of rules and you’ve lived by them all and you’ve fulfilled them all. That isn’t how God was looking at it now. He understood that we can’t keep all those rules. That’s impossible for us as humans to do. We are so weak in the flesh, and we find ourselves not being able to go forward in that, so He gave them direction.

Circumcision, as they were looking at it, was a fleshly thing. God is looking at a circumcision, but it’s not a fleshly one. Paul addressed that to the Romans, and when he spoke about it that we are spiritually circumcised, that’s far more important (Romans 2:25-29). All these things that are in the Old Testament and in the law were really bringing us to a point to understand this new plan that God had. These people were going through this transition, and they were struggling with it. You and I can look back. We have 20/20 vision of what God’s plan was with Jesus, but they didn’t have that. So they were struggling trying to understand how they were going to mesh these two things together.

Now, there’s a thought out there that as long as I have faith, that’s all it takes. As long as I just have some faith in Jesus, I can do whatever I want to. That’s not what Paul had in mind. That’s not what these apostles had in mind. They understood that there also has to be the other side of the equation because the Word tell us that you’re going to be judged by your works (Romans 2:6, 2 Corinthians 11:15, Revelation 20:13). We’re going to be judged by our works, but we’re not saved by our works, are we? So where do the works come into play? Where does this idea of this circumcision and all these things they could do underneath the law come into play in your and my life today?

Only by faith and only by the blood of Jesus Christ can we find salvation. There’s no question about that. The Word is very, very clear. But It also says that because of what God has done for us there needs to be an outpouring of compassion and love for our fellow man (St. John 15:9), not because it gives me salvation, but because it’s the result of love. It’s the result of understanding that what God has done for me is far beyond what I can ever, ever repay to Him. But He’s just asking that I would do those little things.

We don’t have to go to the far corners of the world in order to fulfill that part. It might be our next door neighbor just needs somebody to talk to, or maybe they need somebody to babysit. Maybe they need somebody to take them somewhere. It’s the little things of life. That doesn’t mean when God teaches us to go to other places that we’re not supposed to do it, but I’m just saying what God’s looking for in your life and in mine are not always the same. He wants a willing heart, one that says, ‘I will follow!’ Not because it should puff us up, not to bring pride into our life, because when we look at our lives in the light of the Word, we understand how weak we are

— Please turn to pg. 66
Ministry Program Updates

Just Another Work Night  
Distribution Committee

Making the Connection
On the way to work, the news reports a natural disaster in some part of the world and ongoing hurricane relief efforts in the States. A familiar thought comes. “Is there a way that I could help?” During the workday, paths cross with a family in a nearby neighborhood and their needs are evident. These situations evoke in us empathy and a desire to help circumstances that seem almost beyond our reach.

That evening, there is a work night at the local HarvestCall Center and a decision needs to be made. Is it worth the effort to go? It’s “just another work night” and they are “just doing more of the same projects.”

Then, a connection is made between the conversations of the day and the opportunity in the evening. Products assembled and packaged during work nights end up in that natural disaster area in another country, at the local soup kitchen that helps a family nearby, and also support the ongoing hurricane relief efforts in the States. Helping is not beyond our reach, but is made possible through HarvestCall, whose purpose is to enable the brotherhood to proclaim Christ and serve others beyond the capacity of the local church. It takes brethren willingly volunteering and organizing the projects and it takes those willing to help at the work nights. Then God gives His increase.

Philippians 4:16 For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity.

Some needs are reoccurring. One example is the ongoing support of various areas and projects in Haiti where our missionaries are working. Recently, a request came for twenty pallets of product for Child Sponsorship. Because of previous work nights, ten pallets were already sitting in the warehouse, ready to be shipped. The rest were completed during future work nights.

Acts 11:28-29 And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. Then the

Simone Orphanage Expands into Second Facility in Les Cayes, Haiti  
Caribbean Committee

When entering the Simone Orphanage, visitors are greeted with a line-up of neatly dressed young girls, who readily give an affectionate embrace to all those who express love. The facility is home to approximately 32 children. They receive education, are well fed and cared for, and most importantly, are taught the gospel message.

A group of elementary school children from the Simone Orphanage moved to a new home north of Les Cayes this summer, as a second facility for the children was completed. This facility has been under construction for several years and the children are happy to be settled in at their new facility. Michaele, one of the operators at Simone orphanage, moved to the facility with the new residents.

The older students remained in Simone at the original facility. These students need to be closer to activities, work locations, and schools of higher education. In addition, the elementary school at the Simone Orphanage is used by neighborhood children. Gerta has remained as the operator of the original facility.

The Simone Orphanage is located just down the road from the Citi Lumiere compound with guesthouse
disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea:

Sometimes needs arise when circumstances change in an area. After the September hurricanes, the Bluffton Distribution Center planned some additional work nights during which they packed 5,568 disaster relief boxes. Each box had 19 items, including food, toiletries, snacks, and a Bible. Also, at the Rittman Distribution Center, additional meat was canned for ongoing hurricane relief.

1 Corinthians 12:14 For the body is not one member, but many.

The brotherhood functions as a body and HarvestCall is one example. When each does their small part, the end result has more positive impact than any individual's efforts could have done on their own. When a load of items is shipped, the contents are usually not from one Center or one work night, but are a combination of the labors of love of many hands. For example, when a semi-load is shipped to the Navajo Indian Reservation in New Mexico, it often contains clothes from the Fairbury Center, soap from the Wolcott Center, beans from the Bay City Center, canned meat from the Rittman Center, soup packed by some of our congregations that don't live near a Center, etc.

What is the goal?
In each of these examples, HarvestCall is fulfilling its purpose to enable the brotherhood to proclaim Christ and serve others beyond the capacity of the local church. If you live near a Distribution Center and are interested in making a difference, you can contact the coordinator to learn about work nights or other opportunities to help. Even if you don't live near a Center, there are still ways for your congregation to participate, such as making kits, sewing projects, packing soup, etc. Regardless of your location or involvement with work nights, HarvestCall relies on the support of the brotherhood for finances. More importantly, HarvestCall needs the prayers from the brotherhood for the individuals that we strive to help, as we desire God's will for them, as described in Titus 2:4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

– by Kendra Ramsier

Happy faces greet those who visit the Simone Orphanage.

and missionary residences. The orphanage has been supported by HarvestCall and the Francesville Church for approximately 10 years. The elementary school was added several years ago to give these children a chance at an education and exposure to the gospel in their curriculum. As the number of residents grew, a second home was needed. Thanks to the Francesville church and HarvestCall support, the Simone Orphanage has continued to be a place where Jesus is taught and young lives develop in his love. Some of the former students have gone on to medical, legal, agricultural, and other higher education careers. Please pray for the work at both homes.

– by Rod Wieland
Understanding Seasonal Depression


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

It is key to understand that “being a Christian” and “being depressed” are not mutually exclusive. The belief that “good Christians don’t get depressed” can lead to unnecessary feelings of guilt, shame, and confusion when people experience one of the many forms of depression. Even as believers, we are human beings with human bodies and minds. David and Elijah of the Bible both provide us with two examples of God’s people who likely struggled with symptoms of depression.

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

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

The Importance of Light
The decrease in the amount of sunlight is a major factor for the wintertime blues. Other factors such as decreased activity level, holiday stress, and changes in our regular routine may also contribute to the problem. The best and most reliable treatment for S.A.D. is to get more exposure to sunlight. Morning sunlight is especially beneficial. Research has shown that therapeutic light boxes are also very helpful for S.A.D. Therapeutic light is considered to be about 10,000 lux for 15 to 30 minutes (lux is a measure of light intensity). Light boxes with 10,000 lux are available through retailers such as Amazon.com for around $50. In addition, open your window shades to let in as much natural light as possible, especially in the morning.

Interventions to Help Ward off the Wintertime Blues

Spiritual: Maintaining a personal and intimate relationship with Christ is very important. However, sometimes when we most need to be connected with Christ and with a body of believers, we have the most difficulty doing it. We need to make efforts to immerse ourselves in a Christ-centered environment. We can post encouraging Bible verses on our refrigerators, car dashboards, bathroom mirrors, or other places we pass by often. We can take time to
memorize Scripture verses which can help us during times we feel blue or are facing temptation. Finally, we can push ourselves to get out of the house and to church to help us to be fed by hearing the Word of God and interacting with others.

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

**Biological:** When striving to ward off the wintertime blues, we must not forget to take care of our bodies. We honor our body because it is the temple of God (1 Corinthians 3:16, “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?”). Even though it can be especially difficult in the winter months, getting regular exercise, rest, and proper nutrition is very important. Setting aside time from our busy schedules to exercise regularly not only will help us to feel better physically, but it can also help to improve mood and energy levels.

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

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

Seasonal Affective Disorder (S.A.D.) is a common and treatable problem. Please reach out for support if you are feeling depressed. You don’t have to go through it alone. Contact ACCFS for additional information.

ACCFS has numerous resources to assist someone who is going through a wide range of mental health issues. Each resource, either created or reviewed by ACCFS staff, is meant to help others live overcoming lives in the Lord. These resources can be found on our website at www.accounseling.org/mentalhealth. If you have questions or would like more information, please call our office at 309-263-5536.
**Congregation Updates**

**Apostolic Christian LifePoints**

www.aclifepeints.org

“He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.” Psalm 147:3

The parents and guardians of our residents are an integral part of who we are and what we do, and they represent a significant piece of our mission here at LifePoints. If you have seen our presentations, you have heard a mother say that the desire of every parent of someone with special needs is to “live just one day longer than their child”. Many families turn to us when they reach a point in their life that they realize this may not be possible. It is a heart-wrenching, difficult realization and decision for them to place their loved ones in our care. Over and over we witness God’s work with them, helping them realize when it is the right time for their family to consider our services.

We were vividly reminded again of this part of our mission in the past couple months as four of our LifePoints residents had a parent pass away. It is not easy for anyone to lose a parent, but it presents unique challenges for individuals with intellectual disabilities. One of the ladies who lost her father has dementia in addition to Down’s syndrome. She was able to attend her father’s visitation and funeral, and seemed to understand some of what was going on. She processed the loss and the grief that accompanies it much like you or I would, although it takes her a little longer. She is not through grieving, but will tell you that Dad is in heaven. Another lady with a profound disability visited her father in the hospital the day before he died. She was very agitated when she returned home, but struggled to express herself with staff and resorted to screaming and striking out. After her father passed away, she seemed to calm and has done better. It may be that the stress of seeing her father suffer was more difficult than having him gone, or she may not be able to understand that he is really gone. It is difficult to know because she is unable to express that to us. So staff support her, and help her, and when her grief becomes visible, they will comfort her as best they can.

These experiences reinforce to us the reasons why we exist. We are here to serve adults with disabilities and their families at every point in their life. Whatever point they are at, our staff are there for them. Often we experience the emotions of the situation right along with our residents. We are continually thankful for our loving staff, and for each of you who pray for and support our mission.

We also mourn the loss of Bro. Bob Knobloch who passed away on December 5, 2017. Bob was the first administrator here, serving from the beginning of the agency in 1971 until his retirement in 1994. He worked diligently to help our residents obtain dignity, rights, loving care, and opportunities that many of them had not known before. He was greatly loved, and we rejoice that he has gone home to his heavenly reward.

**Gateway Woods Apostolic Christian Children’s Home**

**Kristy Kaeb — LARC Coordinator**

As we embark on a new year, the LARC Initiative is excited by the every day potential to fill new roles and tackle new opportunities! In November, Julie Maibach as well as I, Kristy Kaeb, joined the LARC team, both serving as part-time LARC Coordinators. For anyone who may not be familiar with this department, LARC stands for Linking to Attain Responsibility and Community. There are currently 18 individuals enrolled in the program, and we are passionate about being an advocate for them! Our goal is to cultivate relationships, prayerfully connect them to mentors, implement leads for employment, link them to housing...
opportunities, and help them to build a supportive community.

“We strive to make their world smaller.” Rob Parker.

When an individual leaves the residential program here at Gateway Woods, life can feel overwhelming. Without a crucial support system, they often don’t know where to begin. The world seems WAY too big and FAR too encompassing. It’s easy for them to just give up or settle for mediocrity. The LARC Initiative is here to help “make their world smaller”, and inspire them to be God’s masterpiece. Over the past two years, we have provided support and encouragement, and given HOPE to many who have felt alone, desperate and hopeless.

My husband and I were houseparents years ago, and at times residents were terrified to graduate the program, and leave the comfort and stability of Gateway – especially those who were transitioning into living independently. They would wonder, “Who will I turn to?” “What if I fail?” “How will I make it on my own?” These are all valid questions. So, it is with joy and a thankful heart that I now get to join in what God is doing through the LARC Initiative! To be an advocate for these individuals, to offer HOPE, and to be a part of a team that shares a passion to support the vulnerable, and “defend the poor and fatherless” (Psalm 82:3); that is life-changing.

**News:**

We are thankful for a great year in 2017 as we look to see what God does through Gateway Woods in 2018.


We have many job opportunities at Gateway Woods: a Counselor, Home Based Worker, Assistant Houseparent, Houseparent Couple, Foster Care Program Manager, and Part-Time Adoption Case Manager. For more information, please see our ad in this issue or visit the Careers page on our website 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’.

We are searching for a Summer Volunteer Coordinator for 2018. Please contact Bro. Jeff Waibel at jeff.waibel@gatewaywoods.org for more information. This is a great opportunity to impact the lives of the children on our campus!

You are an important advocate to help us spread the word about God’s work at Gateway Woods. Please continue to lift us up in prayer, check our website gatewaywoods.org and our Facebook page at facebook.com/gatewaywoods often for updates, and make sure that you are on our mailing list. If you would like be added to our mailing list, please contact us at 888.443.4283 or send an email to info@gatewaywoods.org. Finally, if you would like to receive a monthly email detailing how
dispensation seems to be the only one that has the Spirit indwelling every believer, and He reveals God the Father and the Son. He is the Helper, possibly the personification of Grace. He dispenses spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12:4-27) and He is the gift that is given to believers (Acts 3:28).

When He indwells a person, is it possible for him to leave? The Shekinah Glory filled the temple, and when Israel turned away from God, it left. (Eze. 8:67, 11:23-25). An unclean spirit can leave a person and return again (Luke 11:24-26). Is that then also true of the Holy Spirit, possibly when we grieve Him (Eph. 4:30)?

I need to do a great deal of study before I am at all qualified to write about it. At the same time, I am not certain study is the way to know Him so well as to be able to describe or explain Him to someone who has not experienced Him. Rather, it must be an experiential knowledge. I have had the Spirit indwelling me for decades. I should be familiar with Him, and I am, but how He works and why and where is a mystery to me, and just not something I can articulate or even fully comprehend.

As parents, we tend to see ourselves in our children. Our spirit is partially passed along to them and it is alternatively gratifying and terrifying, or at least disappointing. When God sees His Spirit in His children, it can only be gratifying because there is nothing undesirable.

Also, mark your calendars! The Athens church will again be hosting the Tennessee Fellowship Area Memorial Day Weekend May 26-27. We hope you will join us! More details to come.

Arizona, Phoenix
Marge Lindenbaum
“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” Rom 8:14

Over the past few months, I have been “encountering” the Holy Spirit in many of my Bible readings and conversations. I’ve felt led to consider and seek more knowledge of Him. I must confess a sense of being overwhelmed by the topic, as I am so limited in what I am able to understand or articulate about Him. I have been asked, “How does one get the Holy Spirit?” Is it necessary to understand or at least be aware of Him, or to have the laying on of hands? An entire church had believed on and been baptized in Jesus’ name and knew nothing of the Holy Spirit, and another had been baptized with John’ baptism only and had not even heard of Jesus. Not until the apostles prayed for them to receive the Holy Ghost and laid hands on them did they receive Him (Acts 8:14-17, 19:1-6). They seemed to feel it was somewhat urgent to get to those believers and be sure the Spirit was given to them. How is His function distinguished in the various dispensations – the OT, the NT and the Tribulation? Our present dispensation seems to be the only one that has the Spirit indwelling every believer, and He reveals God the Father and the Son.
in Him. What a wonderfully satisfying promise is found in Romans 8, which is nearly all about the Spirit. One of my favorite promises to consider is, “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.” Rom. 8:16-17

We enjoyed a lovely Sunday School Christmas program as our young folks told the greatest story ever told through song and verse. It was a beautiful evening.

Christmas caroling is always one of my favorite activities. We are thankful we were able to participate and pray the music was a blessing to those we visited. As we open up the New Year, let us spend time every day praising God for His unspeakable gift, and worshiping in the Spirit.

Many thanks to God for His Holy Word and the brothers who delivered it. Visiting Phoenix and serving in our pulpit were Elder Bro. Steve Ringger (Sis. Myra, Bluffton North), and Bro. Mark Schmidgall (Sis. Sally, Mediapolis).

**Arizona, Prescott**

**Autumn Rokey**

Around the holidays many of us travel to see family. As wonderful as those visits are, it is always good to come home. However, it’s easy to forget that this world is not our home. Heaven is a far better place where we will be in complete communion with God. No distances to travel. No sin to separate us. Reflecting back on this year, there have been so many wonderful blessings, even in the difficult times. It is hard to understand some of the trials, but looking forward to heaven brings it all into focus. Looking at the end of the Bible in Revelations, those in heaven will be “before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.” Revelations 7:15-17

We are thankful to Elder Bro. Herbie (Sis. Laurie) Knochel for worshiping with us this past month.

**Arizona, Tucson**

**Dean and Jackie Knobloch**

Greetings to all. We were thankful to have Elder Bro. Ben Wiegang (Philadelphia) here with us to continue our Bible study on supporting small churches. It is always a blessing to have him share the pulpit here in Tucson.

The Sunday School children told us the Christmas story in the program they presented to the church. We thank the students and the teachers for their efforts.

It is so good to have Bro. Gene Denick and his wife, Karen, assembling with us again. We pray continued good health for them both.

**Special Prayer Request:**

In the Word it encourages us to make our requests known to God and to come boldly to the throne of grace (Heb. 4:16). We know God can and will provide all that we need. That being said, we have a need in our Tucson Church and wish to convey this need to our fellow brothers, sisters and friends. We currently have 21 members who attend our church. It includes couples who are over retirement age, a widowed sister, a single sister and single brother, some middle-aged couples and two young families who have a total of 5 children. In addition, we have been blessed to be a witness to about 30 homeless men and women from two local shelters, who regularly attend our worship service.

Through prayer, we do feel that our church would be blessed with some additional young couples with children to help us in our church’s effort. This includes:

a. Supporting our Sunday School environment (teachers and students).

b. Supporting our ministry with our homeless visitors as well as other visitors.

c. Encouraging and nurturing our fellow Tucson members and friends, including helping with the assembly singing in praising the Lord.

We ask for your prayers for the Tucson Church and that you might seek the Lord’s direction if
He is calling you to help in this ministry. We know that God will provide all that we need if we answer His call (Heb. 13:20-21).

We welcome you to come and spend a weekend with us if you feel moved. If you have questions please contact Bro. Dean Knobloch (309-231-8428). Also there is a 2-bedroom furnished townhouse available if you would like to visit the Tucson area. Contact Bro. Dean Knobloch for information.

California, Los Angeles/Altadena
Kali Sauder
As the New Year begins, one that holds hope and also unknown, we find comfort and grace in the description of our God found in James 1:17. “…The Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”

As I write this, it is the final night of Hanukkah, the festival of lights when the people of Israel celebrate the miracles God performed those “silent” years between our Old and New Testaments. They were able to rededicate the Temple after it had been desecrated by their enemies. When they went to light the Menorah, the candelabra which always remained lit to represent the presence of God, there was only enough oil for one day. They decided to light it anyway, at risk of seeing that beautiful picture of the presence of God with them, extinguish into darkness. Miraculously, the Menorah burned brightly for 8 days, enough time to purify more oil. Their step of faith was met by a glorious reminder that God was with them, the Father of lights!

Through Jesus, the Messiah, we know the Light of the World! Like we just celebrated with the Christmas season, and as James says in the first part of that verse, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights…” If God, the Father of lights, is so good, and has already given us the best gift: Jesus, the Light of the World, we can have confidence as we face the many varied experiences sure to come our way in 2018. Praise God!

It is with this confidence that we send our dear Sis. Kailey Wuethrich on into the plans God has for her as she pursues Him in mission work. She graduated from Biola University last month.

As always, we immensely enjoyed the Sunday School’s presentation of the gospel story through the Christmas program. This year’s theme was “Did you Know?” From the question, “Mary, did you know that your baby boy is Lord of all Creation?” to a resounding answer: “This is that great thing I know; This delights and stirs me so; Faith in Him who died to save, Him who triumphed o’er the grave, Jesus, God of majesty!” Zions Harp #225

Colorado, Denver
Naomi Wiegand, Tess Leman
Christian Greetings from Colorado!

Bro. Jared Stoller (Bro. Ed and Sis. Boni) and Sis. Rebekah Herrmann (Chicago, IL), daughter of Bro. Roger and Sis. Darlene (Princeville, IL), were married at the beginning of December. Several from the Denver church were able to attend their wedding and witness their vows. We are thankful that Colorado is the setting God has chosen as the first chapter unfolds in their lives together.

We rejoice with the Andrej family as Victor has shared that he is at peace with God and man, and desires baptism. We look forward to hearing his testimony in the next few months.

Our family was privileged to share our home on and off for the past 4 years with my two great nephews (ages 5 and 8). With much sadness we bid them farewell as they move to Baltimore with their mom, stepdad and little sister. Our house feels pretty empty without them, as they always seemed to have an abundance of youthful energy. Please join us in praying for them and their parents as they transition from the familiar into the unknown.

“Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God.” - Corrie Ten Boom

Connecticut, Rockville
Marcy Bahler, Amanda Virkler
“And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.” St. Luke 2:10

We recently bid farewell to Sis. Janelle Gottier as she will be living for a time in Illinois and
assembling with the Tremont, IL congregation. She will be missed in Rockville, but we wish her God’s blessings in her journeys.

Little Emmeline Elise was born to Courtney Wheeler and William Vitale.

Bro. Duane Reutter announced to the church on Thanksgiving Day that he is retiring from the ministry. We are thankful to him and Sis. Kay for the years that they have been willing to serve us in the ministry and wish them God’s blessings.

We were thankful to have Bro. Tyler Joos (Sis. Tonya, Bradford, IL) and Bro. Todd Sinn (Sis. Janet, Latty, OH) this past month to preach the Word.

We want to keep Bro. Walt Limberger (Sis. Charlotte) in our thoughts and prayers in the passing of his grandson, Derek Somers.

We rejoice that a Heavenly victory has been won for Bro. Ed Hoffman (late Sis. Elsa). We extend our prayers and sympathy to his many family members, including his sons: Bro. Mark (Sis. Luella, Clarendon, VT), Bro. Steve (Sis. Joan), Bro. Mike (Luann), and Bro. Arlo (Sis. Lynn).

**District of Columbia, Washington**

**Henrietta Meyer**

During the holidays we have not had caretakers. During the winters our weather is often milder than the mid-west. If we do get snow, it usually doesn’t stay for more than a couple of days.

Sis. Doreen reports the calendar is filling up for 2018. 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. Nathan Wiegand (Goodfield, IL), Bro. Tom Bahler (Sis. Lanae, Rockville, CT), and Bro. Randy Beer (Sis. Deb, Milford, IN). The last couple of months several of the ministers have used their weekend in DC as “Dad & Kid” time. We are glad to get to know the next generation.

If you are planning to visit Washington, D.C. area for vacation or business, please contact Sis. Henrietta Meyer at 703 904-8301 or hmeyer2831@gmail.com for assistance and to let us know how many to expect for Sunday services.

**Florida, Ft. Lauderdale**

**Renee Mangold**

We are grateful that we had several visiting ministers this past month. Visiting were Bro. Tom Bahler (Sis. Lanae, Rockville, CT); Elder Bro. Kevin Ryan (Sis. Cheryl, Rockville, CT); Bro. Paul Kilgus (Sis. Carmen, Fairbury, IL) and Bro. Jeff Leman (Sis. Val, Bluffton North, IN). We pray that our Lord will bless them for their efforts.

We had our annual Christmas caroling December 10 at a local nursing home. It’s our hope that we bring a small bit of Christmas spirit and joy to the residents.

In January we will begin having services on Wednesday evenings with singing starting at 7:15pm.

May all who read this have had a blessed Christmas.

**Florida, Sarasota**

**Mary & Vera Martin**

Another new year is upon us and a new year to begin new challenges and new opportunities in serving our Lord. We are looking forward to the opportunity to assemble at our church with a new facelift as our remodeling has been completed. We are ready to enjoy another year of visitors from the north to enjoy the beautiful warm weather in Florida and another winter of fellowship.

We enjoyed our Sunday School program. Our hearts were warmed as the students gave us a Christmas version of the alphabet.

Our church family spent an evening Christmas Caroling to the older folks in our church. We want to thank Bro. Fred Domka (Sis. Connie, Mansfield), Bro. Lynn Fiechter (Sis. Ronda, Bluffton) and Bro. Myron Knobloch (Lester) who shared their time to minister to us. We appreciate their labors of love.

**Georgia, Peachtree City/Atlanta**

**Lex Knapp**

This time of year is always one of pondering. For me this year, I have been struck by the beauty...
of the Christmas story and how it all points back to the gospel. I have also been humbled by how little I can be awed by this story. I have heard it for years, but am I truly struck by the miracle of what Christmas, the birth of Christ, truly means? This story is not simply about a baby in a manger, but about the Creator of the universe becoming flesh. It is about God choosing to reveal Himself to the lowest of the low to the highest kings. It is the story of the unfathomable love of God, of how He sent His Son to earth to eventually give His life for US, for OUR sins.

We were blessed to be reminded of these truths and more during our Christmas program. From the littlest 3-year-olds with their tiny voices to the high schoolers and their beautiful harmony, we were reminded of the gift of Christ. What a blessing to be able to praise Him!

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
Rick and Komari Aberle

It is our hope that God’s Spirit be present with each one as we rejoice in the Christmas season.

Here in Bonne Fin, we are thankful to remember with those we serve that Christ and His sacrifice is the price paid for the sins of the world. And that God’s love is present, which brings to mind the children’s Sunday School song “Jezi renmen tout timoun yo” (“Jesus loves the little children” translated from Haitian Creole). How thankful we can be that God’s love reaches even us in the United States.

We are thankful for the opportunity to take a break from our individual work. God’s word describes many times when His servants took time to retreat from the daily work God had given them. In like manner, HarvestCall missionaries here in Haiti had opportunity to participate in our annual missionary retreat. We were served by many of the US-based support personnel, as well as volunteers from the brotherhood in seminars and activities for our children. Bro. Randy and Sis. Evie Mogler, (Washington, IL) served us at the retreat and in ministering the word. Bro. Jon Zeller (Morton, IL) also served in the ministry.

We were again blessed with the services of an orthopedic team from South Carolina. This team was able to do more than 25 surgeries for patients in need during their week here, including some emergencies that were unexpected. We’re thankful that God has blessed the ministry at the hospital with resources and ability to make it possible for our visiting teams to be efficient and effective in their service.

In early December, a team from various churches came to Bonne Fin and operated a Cervical Cancer Screening clinic. This clinic served several surrounding communities with remote clinics as well as patients at the hospital. Early detection of this treatable disease has been a very effective service for the hospital and surrounding community.

As the year 2017 closes and we approach 2018, often we think of renewal. May our mutual prayer for each other be reflective of Isaiah 40:31, “But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.”

Haiti, Les Cayes
Mike & Susie Walder

There’s wideness in God’s mercy like the wideness of the sea. There is mercy with the Savior, there is healing in His blood. Aren’t you thankful to serve a God who is kind and merciful? We sure depend upon this mercy every day.

On Mt. Sinai the Lord proclaimed to Moses that part of His unchanging nature is His mercy.

“And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.” Exodus 34:6-7
In contrast, by nature we are not automatically merciful. But as a result of the great mercy we received at the Cross, this gift of mercy should be alive and active in our lives. In Matthew 5 Jesus taught us, “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy,” and then He gave us the parable of the man who was forgiven a great debt, but could not extend the same mercy to another who owed him only a very small amount. 

Lord, help us to have your heart of mercy, especially with our enemies or with those who are difficult.

As we serve in needy areas of the globe, we constantly pray for a heart of mercy so we never get desensitized to the needs everywhere around us. A construction team from Bluffton and Silverton came to put new roofs on a church and school buildings at the same location. They brought hope and mercy to that thankful community!

Two excited pastors just left the office on motorcycles with several boxes of shoes strapped on the back of each. These shoes were promised to a school we visited over three years ago and this past summer a VBS group collected them for us. Another pastor observed this and came in my office to ask if there were any shoes for his school? Lord, help us to take the time to express mercy to everyone we meet as you did.

This past month a HarvestCall support group, as well as Bro. Randy & Sis. Evie Mogler (Washington, IL) came to teach and encourage us at our annual retreat. Sisters Leah Dreste and Dona Fehr from Champaign also came to help with the younger children. This retreat is a real gift from HarvestCall and we want to thank all involved. Lord, bless the many deeds of love and mercy extended through HarvestCall here and everywhere.

Little Kalvin Steiner (Bro. Isaac & Sis. Brit) recently spent some time at Hospital Lumiere recovering from an infection. One missionary encouraged them to come up to the hospital late at night for treatment and another was willing to drive them at that hour. The missionaries there ministered to their needs during their stay. Lord, bless the merciful with your mercy.

Many enjoyed our annual Christmas caroling at the Azile Dorcus nursing home and the local clinic. Afterward, we were invited to a meal and fellowship at the home of Bro. Ed & Sis. Julie Sanders. We also plan to share a Christmas Day meal and fellowship at the Gutwein’s home.

As another year dawns, time on earth continues as yet one more demonstration of God’s great mercy. Since the Lord is not willing that any should perish He has not returned yet! May God bless each of you through 2018. “But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children’s children; To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them.” Psalm 103:17-18

Illinois, Belvidere  
Krista Anliker, Amy Hanson

Our hearts have been deeply saddened at the sudden passing of our dear Elaiah Steffen at the young age of seven years old. She was the precious, beautiful daughter of Bro. Jordan and Sis. Shayla Steffen and the granddaughter of Bro. Dean and Sis. Carol Steffen all of Belvidere. Also grieving are grandparents, Bro. Dean and Sis. Wanda Messner of Winthrop, MN, and her great grandma, Sis. Kay Steffen of Morton, IL. Elaiah was also a dear friend, niece and cousin and will be sorely missed. We are thankful that she is now in Heaven, safe in the arms of Jesus. We want to uphold her dear family in our prayers as we walk through this dark valley together. It hurts to lose part of the body, but we know that, Our Father knows what’s best for us; His ways are not our own. When our pathway grows dim, and we just don’t see Him, may we remember we’re never alone….Our God is too wise to be mistaken and too good to be unkind. Although we don’t understand and may not see His plan, may we ever Trust His Heart.

Thanks to Bro. Tom Schambach (Sis. Connie, Elgin, IL) for being used of God to share His Words of comfort. We are thankful for the silver linings behind the dark cloud. Coby Steffen (son of Bro.
Dean and Sis. Carol) and Derek Anliker (son of Bro. Brian and Sis. Peg) have surrendered hearts to the Lord in repentance. May they each feel God’s grace day by day as they deny self, take up the cross and follow Jesus Christ.

We thank Elder Bros. Wayne Banwart (Champaign, IL) and Duane Rocke for spending time with us. Thanks to each one who has been praying for our church.

Illinois, Bloomington-Normal

Jenae Herrmann, Megan Kaeb

“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 church family was challenged to look for, long for and laud Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior this advent season. From Thanksgiving to Christmas we were blessed with many activities and events to help us do that, bringing our focus back to the true reason for the season.

One highlight of the month was our annual Sunday School Christmas program. We were reminded to seek God throughout the season and were so encouraged through the songs the children of our church presented.

Another annual highlight was the Church Choir evening program, joined by a special youth choir. The gospel was preached through song and was a blessing to many.

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 cannot. What a blessing to hear voices, young and old share the Christmas story with us this season.

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.

Finally, we welcomed two visiting ministers to our congregation over the past month. Bro. Tim Hohulin (Sis. Cathy) from Roanoke, IL and Bro. Jeremiah Psinas from Morton, IL joined us for a Sunday of fellowship. We are thankful for their willingness to serve.

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

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16

On Sunday evening, December 17, our Sunday School children shared the Christmas story. We heard of God’s love for mankind and the gift of His Son. We will receive no greater gift this Christmas than God’s gift, His Son. We can give no greater gift than the one God desires, our heart.

On December 3 our church family sang Christmas carols for our neighbors and residents at several nursing homes. We then gathered together in the evening for lunch and fellowship.

“Lo, children are a heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.” Psalm 127:3

A sweet little baby girl, Ayla Marie, was born on December 12 to Bro. Brandon and Sis. Melissa Baer. She was welcomed by her brothers, Tristan and Nolan. Grandparents are Bro. Donn and Sis. Tracy Ehnle and Ron Baer.

We were grateful to have Bro. Ned Stoller (Sis. Heidi, Alto, MI) as a visiting minister. We appreciate it when they come to Bradford to visit family.

Illinois, Champaign

Brent Young

Abraham had Isaac. Isaac he had Jacob. Jacob he had Judah and his kin. . .

Our Sunday school students presented a Christmas program with an emphasis on the surprising, unexpected elements of the Christmas story, including the somewhat ‘checkered’ human lineage of our Lord. As is our custom, we followed the program with caroling and a chili supper.

We extend special thanks to our visiting ministers this month,
Bro. Jeff Wiegand (Goodfield) and Bro. Karl Steidinger (Fort Myers).

Many of our church family attended the wedding of Bro. Caleb Plattner (Bro. Darren & Sis. Sue) and Sis. Kristin Fehr (Dave & Sis. Linda) in Washington and those that remained in Champaign listened to the service via livestream.

We welcomed two new additions this month! Simeon Douglas was born to Sis. Heidi & Bro. Joe Gerber, joining siblings: Owen, Markus, Emmeline, and Willow. Elliot Martin was born to Sis. Jeana & Bro. Kirk Steidinger, and big sister Emerson.

**Illinois, Chicago**

*Diana Eisenmann*

New Year greetings from Chicago! We were blessed with several visiting ministers this past month. We extend thanks to Elder Bro. John Wiegand (Sis. Jane, Silverton, OR), Bro. Loren Schrenk (Sis. Betsy, St. Louis, MO), and Bro. Kevin Fehr (Sis. Lonnie, West Bend, IA) for visiting and sharing the Word at our Thanksgiving service.

We are grateful that our urban location provides a convenient venue for meetings. We especially enjoy when that brings extra visitors our way. We appreciated having the following elders visit and worship with us midweek: Bro. Tim Funk (Peoria, IL), Bro. Trent Meiss (Eureka, IL), Bro. Kevin Ryan (Rockville, CT), Bro. Ted Steffen (Alto, MI), and Bro. Ben Wiegand (Philadelphia, PA).

We bid farewell to Sis. Rebekah Herrmann as she married Bro. Jared Stoller in Princeville on December 3. We will miss having Rebekah as part of our church family, but we wish them God’s richest blessings as they begin their life together in Jared’s home church of Denver.

In December we held our annual caroling, chili supper, and Christmas program. The Sunday School children shared the message of “The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown.”

Sis. Margaret Calame (Rittman, OH) passed away in November. She was the grandmother of our Sis. Jami Calame. We pray for God’s comfort for the family as they mourn her loss, especially in this holiday season.

**Illinois, Cissna Park**

*Amber Stuckel, Pam Walder*

December is here and we have enjoyed our annual church Christmas caroling. What a joy to sing praises of our Savior together.

Our prayers are with Bro. Dan and Sis. Pam Walder as he has been given the responsibility of ministering the Word of God. May God always be near them and bless them and their family in the labor that lies ahead. We thank Elder Bros. Rick Plattner (Fairbury, IL) and Marvin Dotterer (Forrest, IL) who were with us to assist in this work. We also appreciated the encouragement these brothers shared with the church.

We also would like to thank Bro. Sid and Sis. Sandy Kaufmann as they retire from the ministry. God bless them for their labors in sharing God’s Word for many years.

Several in our congregation have endured hospital stays and/or health concerns. We pray our Father can comfort those in pain and provide healing where it’s in His will. These individuals include: Sis. Delores Knapp, Bro. Roland Young, and Sis. Sharon Eisenmann. May each one feel our love and prayers.

With thankful hearts, Bro. Joe and Sis. Amber Stuckel and big sister, Corryn, welcome a little boy, Miles Kramer, born November 21, 2017. Grandparents are Bro. Todd and Sis. Valerie Kaeb and Matt Stuckel (Bloomington, IL) and Jayne Jessen (Plainfield, IL).

We extend our sympathy to Sis. Lucille Knapp, Sis. Marilyn Knapp, Wes and Judy Knapp, and Norman and Elinor Knapp in the death of their sister, Marguriette Knapp Beckman, of Arizona. Our prayers are also with Sis. Rosie Martin in the death of her sister, Shirley Kasper, of New Jersey. May these individuals feel the nearness of Jesus in this time of loss.

Our Sunday School students shared the message of the birth of Christ with our congregation during our Christmas Program. May God bless these students for sharing with us from their hearts.

We wish each of you a blessed Christmas.
Illinois, Congerville
Mary Knapp, Erica Steffen

Bros. David Hartter (Sis. Beth, Sabetha), John Bradle (Sis. Jill, Roanoke), Tom Lanz (Sis. Mary, Mediapolis), and Jeremiah Psinas (Morton) visited our church this month. We are thankful for the way the Spirit used them to bring forth the Word. We wish them God’s nearness and blessing as they labor on!

This month, the oldest brother in our church passed on into Eternal rest. Bro. Roy Schrock passed away on November 26 at the age of 93. It was mentioned at his funeral of his efforts to free our Christian brethren in Eastern Europe who were imprisoned and harshly treated for their faith during Communist rule—even hand-delivering a letter to a high ranking Communist Party official. Following the delivery of this letter, many of our brethren were freed. He had a tremendous care and concern for our brethren in Eastern Europe, and expressed it often in his prayers. He will be missed, but we rejoice that his race has been won!

Lord willing, we look forward to witnessing the testimonies and baptisms of Ross Wettstein (Larry and Marilyn Wettstein of Eureka), and Doug and Michelle Schmidgall (Bro. Mike and Sis. Dianne Schmidgall of Eureka and Bro. Fred and Sis. Maryellen Zimmerman of Congerville) on February 3 and 4. We are thankful that they have expressed that they have found the peace that can only be found through a humble repentance and a turning from sin. Please continue to uplift them in prayer as they await the opportunity to share how the Lord has worked in their lives.

The anticipation of Christmas has been a joyous time for us as a church body, with caroling and our Sunday School Christmas program. To be reminded again of the story of Christ’s miraculous birth, is always a blessing, and our children’s voices singing adds an extra special feeling of enjoyment. Yet we remember that even though the story of Christ’s birth brings us feelings of joy, it is the cross and the resurrection that brings eternal peace with our Savior. We must go “Beyond the Birth,” as our 7th and 8th graders reminded us through their Christmas program verses, to truly find lasting joy and peace that goes beyond the Christmas season.

“And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.”
2 Thessalonians 3:5

Illinois, Elgin
Amy Gasser

We thank Bro. Brian Huber (Sis. Jacki, Francesville, IN), Elder Bro. Jay Luthi (Sis. Jane, Lamont-Gridley, KS), and Bro. Stan Schambach (Sis. Norma, Prescott, AZ), who ministered to us on Wednesday evening, November 29, after a HarvestCall meeting. We also appreciated the services of Elder Bro. Brad Eisenmann (Sis. Cindy, Chicago, IL), Bro. Brad Gudeman (Sis. Teresa) and Bro. Barry Dietz (Sis Rachel, both of Bradford, IL), Bro. Earl Beery (Sis. Suzy, Rittman, OH), Bro. Dale Frank (Sis. Christine, Mediapolis, IA), and Bro. Nathan Walder (Sis. Denise, Cissna Park, IL).

Bro. Gary (Sis. Lois) Steffen was recently injured in a fall on the ice and underwent surgery. We pray for his continued recovery.

We extend sympathy to Sis. Libbie Ann Moser (the late Bro. Gene) and her family in the passing of her sister, Sis. Lila (Bro. Howard) Watson. Her funeral was on December 9 in Morris, MN.

Our family Christmas Caroling was held on Sunday, December 10, followed by a chili supper at the Fellowship Center.

The Sunday School students presented the Christmas program on Sunday, December 17.

“The blessed story of the Christ, The babe of Bethlehem, Is worthy of our song and praise, And stirs the hearts of men. The fullness of God’s love divine, surrounds the Christ so mild Alas how many only know The Saviour as a child. Our saving hope is all in vain, If here our love should cease, For in the man of Galilee, We find the gift of peace. ‘Tis not the babe, but Christ, the man Who walked in Galilee; ‘Tis not the manger, but the cross, That sets the spirit free. Be not content this babe to know, Nor stay at Bethlehem, But go with Christ to Calvary’s brow, Beyond Jerusalem. ‘Tis there men learn to know the
Christ, For there He bore man’s sin.  
Then open wide the door of heart,  
And let the Saviour in.”  
The Babe of Bethlehem,  
Hymns of Zion #36

Illinois, Eureka  
Debra Blunier, Linda Rocke  
“Peace and good will to all nations!  
Ye, the heirs of His salvation. Far  
and near, O sons of men, Praise the  
Lord with glad refrain!  
joyously sound ye His praises! Men,  
Whom to His choice He raises,  
Triumph! To a high estate! We are  
bought by love so great! Hallelujah!  
Zion’s Harp #9

By the time you receive this,  
the Christmas celebrations will be  
over, decorations put away, and  
a New Year will be upon us. As  
a lot of Christmas cards remind  
us to keep the true meaning of  
Christmas in our hearts all year  
long, let’s continue to thank God  
for the priceless gift of His Son,  
and pray that doing His will may  
be our focus in the year ahead.

We rejoiced with two new souls  
who were added to the fold. Sis.  
Malea Cottrell (Bro. Brent and Sis.  
Darla) and Sis. Lena Zimmerman  
(Bro. Matt and Sis. Sara) shared their  
testimonies and were baptized. Elder  
Bro. Bruce Endress (Sis. Elizabeth,  
Bradford, IL) assisted Bro. Trent on  
that weekend.

Other visiting ministers we  
have had this month include  
Bro. Jay Steffen (Sis. Melinda,  
Congerville, IL), Bro. Ken  
Eisenmann (Sis. Sharon, Cissna  
Park, IL), Bro. Don Manz (Sis.  
Connie, Junction, OH), Bro.  
Tony Manz (Sis. Denise, Junction,  
OH), and Bro. Arlen Leman (Sis.  
Denise, Forrest, IL).

A special thank you to the  
Sunday School children and their  
teachers for telling us the story  
of Jesus’s birth. They maybe do  
not realize how we are blessed  
as a congregation when we see  
their joyful faces and hear their  
enthusiastic singing.

Congratulations to Sis. Sharon  
Martin (Bro. Alan, dec.) on the birth  
of her new granddaughter, Violet  
Joy, born on December 8. Violet’s  
parents are Brent and Jessica Crouch  
of Secor. She was welcomed home by  
Walker, Vada, Winston, and Willow.  
Maternal grandparents are Dennis  
and Joy Crouch of Eureka.

Sis. Jean Knapp is recovering  
from a shoulder injury. We pray  
she will continue to heal and be  
able to worship with us again in  
the near future.

Illinois, Fairbury  
Janelle Stoller, Trish Steidinger  
“And now abideth faith, hope,  
charity, these three; but the greatest  
of these is charity.” 1 Cor. 13:13

We wish God’s blessings  
to Bro. Gideon Moser (Bro.  
Kevin and Sis. Kara) and Sis.  
Harmony Slagel (Dennis and  
Lorene) of Gridley on their recent  
engagement. Our prayers are also  
with Bro. Ross Steidinger (Bro.  
Martin and Sis. Trish) and Sis.  
Julie Rufener (Bro. John and Sis.  
Janice, Smithville, OH) as they  
make plans for their life together.

“I say unto you, that likewise joy  
shall be in heaven over one sinner  
that repenteth, more than over  
ninety and nine just persons, which  
need no repentance.” Luke 15:7

Our prayers are with Luke  
Kaisner (Bro. Matthew and Sis.  
Jodi) as he acknowledges his need  
of a Savior and makes a beginning  
in repentance.

On December 10, our Sunday  
School children did a beautiful  
job in reminding us of the reason  
we celebrate Christmas. May God  
bless the students and teachers  
for their efforts in providing us a  
blessed evening!

We are thankful Sis.  
Carol Bazzell (Bro. Donnie) is  
back among us after her knee  
replacement. Bro. Neil Kaisner (Sis.  
Kay) has also been in our prayers as  
he recuperates from a fall.

It was a blessing to have Bro.  
Jerry Wagenbach (Sis. Bonnie,  
Mediapolis, IA), Bro. Dennis  
Rassi (Sis. Diane, Austin/Bastrop,  
TX) and Bro. James Fehr (Sis.  
Brenda, Tremont, IL) minister  
God’s word. We always appreciate  
when they come ‘home!’

Illinois, Forrest  
Carissa Knapp, Marsha Lanz  
“Jesus answered, Verily, verily,  
I say unto Thee, Except a man be  
born of water and of the Spirit, he  
cannot enter into the kingdom of  
God.” John 3:5

We are so thankful and rejoice  
with our new Bro. Shannon  
Gudeman (Sis. Brianna), who  
was baptized the weekend of  
December 2 and 3. We thank our  
Elder Bros. Bruce Endress (Sis.  
Elizabeth, Bradford, IL) and Rick
Plattner (Sis. Mary, Fairbury, IL) for assisting Bro. Marvin.

Also ministering to us the baptism weekend were: Bros. Chuck Kellenberger (Sis. Debbie) and Dan Moser (Sis. Anne), both from Elgin, IL; Bros. Brad Gudeman (Sis. Teresa), Barry Dietz (Sis. Rachel), and Tyler Joos (Sis. Tonya), all from Bradford, IL.

On Thanksgiving morning, we were thankful and blessed to have Elder Bro. John Wiegand (Sis. Jane, Silverton, OR), Bros. Darren Fehr (Sis. Nora, West Bend, IA), Michael Schneider (Sis. Jodi, Junction, OH), and Brian Waibel (Sis. Wendy, Champaign, IL).

A special thanks to Elder Bros. Doug Schock (Sis. Clara, Bloomfield, IA) and Rick Plattner for assisting Bro. Marvin with the Memorandum. It was a blessing this year to host the Fairbury congregation. We are always thankful for the times of worship and fellowship together.

We appreciated having Bro. Dan Koch (Sis. Julie, Tremont, IL) on a Wednesday evening and want to thank him for sharing a topical presentation, “Resisting Temptation.”

Our prayers continue for sweet little Molly Brown (Bro. Brad and Sis. Shannon), who continues to wait in a Chicago hospital for a heart transplant.

“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

Lord willing, by the time this issue arrives, Christmas will be past and the New Year will be upon us. We certainly do not know what the New Year holds for each one of us, but we can rejoice and be thankful that we can look to Him, and put our full trust in Him, as the New Year unfolds.

**Illinois, Goodfield**

**Judy Knapp, Melissa Rokey**

“For this child I prayed;…” 1 Samuel 1:27

Brooks Allen Bauman was born to Drew and Katherine Bauman on December 14. He has a sister Zailey and brother Beckham who are excited to have a sibling to play with. Brook’s grandparents are Bro. Dan and Sis. Holly Bauman.

“I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you.” John 14:18

We want to be prayerful for Sis. Mildred Heinold who spent time in the hospital, and for Sis. Molly Davis (Bro. Noel) as she continues her recovery from back surgery.

Our prayers for comfort are extended to Sis. Dawn (Randy) Maloney at the passing of her mother, Sis. Carroll Zobrist (Eureka, IL).

“Come children, join in singing, sweet praises to our Lord, who blest us with salvation through faith in His good word.” Zion’s Harp #136

Our church family gathered for an evening of Christmas Caroling followed by a meal together on December 8. Our Sunday School Christmas program was held Sunday, December 10. We were able to hear the account of the birth of Christ told through our youth.

We are thankful for the time we will have with Sis. Erin and her daughter, Neiah, while they are on furlough from their mission in Jamaica. We are anticipating Bro. Erik and Sis. Carrie Rocke and their children returning from their years serving in Zambia, and are prayerful for that transition to be as smooth as possible. We also extend our love and prayers to Bro. Kurt and Sis. Joan Plattner’s family in Haiti where they are serving.

**Illinois, Gridley**

**Perry Klopfenstein**

An old year has passed, and a new one has arrived; a new year and a new beginning! To make a start in any endeavor is often invigorating. Every new day is a new beginning, and hopefully the Holy Spirit provides power to energize us to do better and walk,
by His grace, to please Him more. As brethren, we comprise the salt of the earth, and the church is the ground and pillar of truth.

Our annual Sunday School program was held on Sunday, December 9, in our afternoon assembly. A wide array of students gave verbal presentations to a sanctuary full of attendees. The recitations and singing were a blessing. Relatives and grandparents, and everyone, were inspired and especially so when the entire Sunday School sang, “Joy To The World.”

Bro. Fred Witzig, Washington, spoke on a Wednesday evening on “The Struggles of the Reformation”. It was an interesting evening as Bro. Fred chronicled pertinent aspects of church history, and touched on crucial historical factors dealing with the Anabaptists, and their tendency to suffer for the Lord’s sake. It was beneficial to hear as our Bible-based church model is similar, in some ways, to the Anabaptists of the early 1500s, although we have no direct connection. (Bro. Samuel Froehlich’s labors commenced approximately 300 years later.)

Bro. David Prevo, Bloomington, was also a visiting minister here this month on December 3.

Bro. John Kaupp had successful surgery for bladder cancer. He is doing well and is back at home.

Sis. Harmony Slagel was announced to be married to Bro. Gideon Moser, Fairbury. She is the daughter of Dennis and Lorene Slagel, Fairbury. He is the son of Bro. Kevin and Sis. Kara Moser, also of Fairbury. We wish this young couple the grace of God and much happiness as time unfolds.

As we face the New Year, the words of Jesus in Luke 16:13 give us wise counsel, “No man can serve two masters; For either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”

**Illinois, Morton**

*Annette Tanner, Julie Bahr*

This month has been one of joy and sadness in our congregation.

On November 18, we were excited to hear the engagement announcement of our Sis. Michelle Heinold, daughter of Bro. Mike and Sis. Pam Heinold, to Bro. George Palanacki, Apostolic Christian Church Nazarene Windsor, Ontario. His parents are Bro. Brian and Sis. Florence Palanacki. We wish this dear couple God’s blessings as they make plans for their wedding day and life together.

As we continue to celebrate the Christmas season, many enjoyed an evening of caroling followed by a chili supper and fellowship.

December 6, our Elder Bro. Ted Witzig, Sr. spoke at our Family Worship Night on the topic “Little Baby Jesus”. We were reminded that the purpose of Jesus’ birth is to save people from their sins.

2 Corinthians 9:15, “Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.” Many have said farewell to their loved ones in recent weeks.

Scott Koehl of Summerville, SC passed away. He is the brother of our Sis. Valerie (Bro. Jim) Steffen.

On November 26, Bro. Roy Schrock, Congerville, IL, entered his heavenly home. Surviving from our Morton church are his brother, Bro. Don (Sis. Lorna) Schrock; and son-in-law, Bro. Mark Wuthrich (late Sis. Cheryl).

Sis. Kathryn (Todd) Grimm said goodbye to her step-mom, Manda Lee Parker. Likewise Sis. Shirley (Bro. Milt) Grimm lost her sister, Louise Picl.

Our Sis. Julie (Bro. Brian) Bahr’s mother, Liseten Strahm, Lamont-Gridley, KS passed shortly before her 99th birthday.

December 9 was the funeral for our dear Bro. Robert “Bob” Knobloch. He is survived by his wife, Sis. Marvel; son, Kent Knobloch; and daughters: Sis. Kay (Bro. Scott) Sinn, Carla (Tom) Schafer and Chris Aberle. We thank Elder Bro. Ron Messner (Sis. Pam, Washington, IL) for sharing in the service for Bro. Bob.

Sis. Arlene Esslinger, Bern, KS passed away. She is the mother of our Bro. Denny (Sis. Gerty) Esslinger and Sis. Marlene Esslinger.

We extend our sympathy to these dear families and wish them God’s comfort and peace in the days ahead.

December 10 was our Sunday School Christmas program, “Journey to Bethlehem”. We were told the story of all who went on this journey. Joseph and Mary, the Wise Men, and the Shepherds
went to Bethlehem for the birth and to worship see the baby Jesus. Then we were asked, “Are you going to Bethlehem?” Wise men still seek him! As we close out 2017 and go into the New Year, may Jesus be the focus and center of our lives.

“Be not content this babe to know, Nor stay at Bethlehem, But go with Christ to Calvary’s brow, Beyond Jerusalem.

“Tis there men learn to know the Christ,
For there He bore man’s sin.
Then open wide the door of heart. And let the Savior in.”
The Babe of Bethlehem,
Hymns of Zion #36

Illinois, Peoria
Crystal Klopfenstein, Bonnie Bach

We know the winter season is upon us when it is time for packing food baskets for shut-in’s, Christmas caroling, the annual Bible Class Christmas play for the Sunday School and LifePoints, our special Wednesday night Christmas service, and the Sunday School Christmas program. How wonderful to gather together to celebrate the birth of our Savior!

Our congregation was so blessed to learn of Bro. Mike Kaisner’s calling to the pulpit ministry. We are very thankful for the peaceful revealing of God’s will and pray the Spirit will be near to him, Sis. Mindy, and their daughters: Anna, Mazie, and Elsie as they take on this new responsibility. Special thanks to Elder Bro. Jeff Grimm (Sis. Ruth, Goodfield, IL) who assisted the evening Bro. Mike was installed.

We welcome Bro. Caleb & Sis. Kristen Plattner from Champaign, IL who have recently moved to Peoria, as well as Sis. Kelsey Knobloch from Morris North, MN. We are thankful to have them in our congregation!

Bro. Alex Funk and Sis. Michaela Strahm joyfully celebrated their winter wedding in Bern, KS. Parents are our Elder Bro. Tim and Sis. Debi Funk and Bro. Mike and Sis. Diane Strahm (Bern, KS). We pray for many years of God’s blessings on this couple!

Our sympathy and prayers go out to those who have had loved ones pass away recently. Sis. Jackie Stickling (Bro. Craig) lost her mother, Sis. Caroll Zobrist (Eureka, IL). Sis. Kayla Kummer (Bro. Joseph) lost her grandmother, Karen VanGulik. Bro. Jeremy Calame (Sis. Elizabeth) lost his grandmother, Sis. Margaret Calame (Rittman, OH). Bro. Lee Esslinger (Sis. Patsy) lost his mother, Sis. Arlene Esslinger (Bern, KS). Even though we mourn here on earth, we can rejoice over the hope of heaven for those that love and serve Him!

Illinois, Princeville
Renee Herrmann, Melinda Christ

We are thankful for the many ministers that visited us this month. They are Elder Bro. Brad Eisenmann (Sis. Cindy, Chicago, IL), Elder Bro. Mike Leman (Sis. Deb, Denver, CO), Bro. Gregg Rumbold (Sis. Heather, Peoria, IL), Bro. Frank Sauder (Sis. Kathy, Roanoke, IL), Bro. Nate Hodel (Sis. Jamie, Roanoke, IL), Bro. Ed Stoller (Sis. Boni, Denver, CO), Bro. Rick Kaisner (Sis. Michelle, Chicago, IL), Bro. Brian Waibel (Sis. Wendy, Champaign, IL) and Bro. Dan Leman (Sis. Tess, Denver, CO).

The daughters of Bro. Roger and Sis. Darlene Herrmann were both married this month. Larissa married Rob Burroughs (Rob & Penny, Metamora, IL) on November 18. Sis. Rebekah and Bro. Jared Stoller (Bro. Ed. & Sis. Boni, Denver, CO) were united in marriage on December 3. We pray that God will bless these couples as they walk in His guidance.

We have had multiple people who have needed hospital care this month. They are Bro. Chris Steidinger (Sis. Carol), Bro. Matt Steffen (Sis. Deanna), Sis. Betty Wagenbach (Bro. Ray), Sis. Donna Gehrig (Bro. Kenneth) and Job Feucht (Mark & Sis. Paula). We pray God’s healing touch will be on each one of them according to His will.

Bro. Al and Sis. Vicki Hartzler welcomed a new grandson on November 13. Easton Benjamin was born to Mitch and Lindsey Hartzler. Easton’s maternal grandparents are Joe and Cheryl Hirsch of Frankfort. We pray God’s wisdom as these first-time parents guide their son in our ever-changing world.

Our thoughts of sympathy go to Sis. Lillian Elsasser and Sis. Helen Knobloch at the passing of their brother/brother-
in-law Bro. Robert Knobloch (Sis. Marvel) of Morton, IL. May God comfort them with His Spirit during this time.

Our Sunday school children brought the message of Jesus’ birth to us in verse and song. We enjoyed the many visitors that attended and are thankful for the effort that the young people put in to their program. We are also looking forward to sharing time as a church family at our annual Christmas caroling and chili supper.

By the time this update reaches your home we will have begun another year. May each of you reflect on your lives and diligently seek God’s direction in the coming year as He has promised, “And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.” Jeremiah 29:13

Illinois, Roanoke
Barb Schwind, Judy Sauder

Philippians 3:13,14 “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.”

These verses are a wonderful challenge to us in the new year!

Sis. Shirley Hohulin (Bro. Mel) passed away on November 17. Her children are Bro. Joe (Sis. Lorraine) of Bay City, MI, Bro. Doug (Sis. Sharolyn) Hohulin of Denver, CO, Lynne Martin of Peoria, IL and Sis. Ann (Bro. Ken) Stoller of Roanoke; and two granddaughters. Sis. Shirley loved the beauty of the mountains, and she enjoyed reading and playing the piano. Sis. Ida Mae Barth passed away on December 8. Her children are Bro. Bob (Sis. Jeanie) of Morton, IL, Bro. Jim (Sis. Julie) of Metamora, IL, Joe (Terri) of Congerville, IL, Bro. Mike (Sis. Joyce) Barth of Roanoke; Sis. Sandy (Bro. Lee) Beer of Milford, IN and Sis. Carol (Bro. Randy) Feucht of Roanoke, 18 grandchildren and 27 great grandchildren; a brother, Bro. Gene (Sis. Evie) Hangartner (Roanoke) & a sister, Sis. Mary Ellen (Bro. Steve) Wiegand (Goodfield, IL). Sis. Ida Mae was an encourager, who loved flower gardening, making beautiful crafts, and baking cookies for others. Both Sis. Shirley and Sis. Ida Mae were devoted mothers and grandmothers, who loved their family and church family.

Our church praised the Lord at a Thanksgiving singing on November 19 at the fellowship hall. We thank our visiting ministers. Elder Bro. Craig Martin (Sis. Terri, Princeville, IL) joined Bro. Tom Hoffman for the Memorandum on November 29. On November 26, Bro. Matt Oesch (Sis. Shelli, Alto, MI) ministered. On December 10, Bro. Dan Beer (Sis. Deb, Milford, IN) shared the Word.

On December 3, our church went caroling and shared supper at the fellowship hall. It was a blessed time of fellowship sharing the good news about Jesus.

December 6 was the business meeting. Our new church trustee is Bro. Jim (Sis. Marge) Braker. The new fellowship hall trustee is Bro. Jason (Sis. Ali) Knepp. The new A.C. Nursing Home trustee is Bro. Bob (Sis. Jan) Sauder. We appreciate these brothers taking these responsibilities for our church and thank those brothers who have completed those jobs in the past year.

December 10 was our Sunday School Christmas program. What a joy it is to hear our 3 year-olds through high school seniors proclaim the birth of Jesus!

We continue to pray for Bro. Jim Wiegand and Bro. Jeff Sauder, who face health challenges.

This quote from “A Layman Looks at the Lord’s Prayer” by Phillip Keller touched my heart. “Father, Your reputation is at stake in me today. May I live in such a way as to do Your person great credit. Because of my behavior, may men see You in me, and so honor Your name because of it.”

May this be a daily prayer as we begin a new year.

Illinois, Tremont
Debbie Aberle, Janice Sauder

“Oh, Son of God, to Thee we sing! Unto Thy throne of grace we bring Our song in chorus, full and clear; incline to us Thy heart and ear. To Thee we sing! We give Thee thanks, Oh Lamb of God, That on the cross beam Thou hast bought For us salvation, peace and
grace with Thee in heaven's resting place! We give Thee thanks!"
Zions Harp #199 vs. 1, 2

We appreciated the visits and ministry of Bro. Tim Wiegand (Sis. Christa, Leo, IN) and Bro. Nathan Wiegand (Sis. Laura, Goodfield, IL) on Thanksgiving. Bro. Tim reminded us that every week should be one of Thanks-living. Thanks also to Bro. Scott Wegman (Sis. Dawn, Taylor, MO) and Bro. Jedd Rocke (Sis. Marsha, Goodfield, IL) who shared the pulpit another Sunday.

We rejoiced to hear the engagement of Bro. Paul Baer (Tom & Martha Baer, Tremont, IL) and Sis. Victoria Steiner (Bro. Todd & Sis. Val Steiner.) May God richly bless them as they continue to look to Him as they prepare for their special day, and uniting of their hearts and minds.

Our prayers have been with Bro. Elmon Koch (Sis. Janice) and Bro. Marvin Frank (Sis. Donna) as they both submitted to surgery. Also, Bro. Elmer Kaeb spent some time in the hospital. We wish these brothers God’s blessing of healing.

Bro. Brad & Sis. Sarah Huette and Rosie welcomed Katherine Emily into their family. Thankful grandparents are Bro. David & Sis. Susan Huette and Bro. Doug & Sis. Cheri Frank. Little Kate is blessed to have several great-grandparents in our Tremont church, Sis. Alma Bolliger, Bro. Bill Huette, Sis. Kay Davis and Bro. Marvin & Sis. Donna Frank.

“God be with you till we meet again; By His counsels guide, uphold you, With His sheep securely fold you; God be with you till we meet again…Till we meet at Jesus’ feet.”
Hymns of Zion #216

This hymn was sung at the graveside of Bro. Ernie Aberle as we laid him to rest. As a family we’re so thankful he could pass from this life in peace and lay aside his frail body which had served him well for so many years. We all look forward to when we too can have a new body, sing a new song, and spend the eternal ages with the One who redeemed us with His blood! Rejoicing in his victory are Sis. Frieda, Bro. Pete & Sis. Debbie, Bro. Tim & Sis. Candi, Andy, Chris, and Bro. Dean & Sis. Heidi Sinn (Silverton, OR.) Our prayers and love in sympathy go once again to Chris Aberle in the death of her father, Bro. Bob Knobloch (Sis. Marvel, Morton, IL). Our hearts sorrowed with Bro. Jeremy and Sis. Charity Oswald at the sudden death of her niece, Elaiah Steffen of Belvidere, IL. What a blessed hope we have in Jesus that we will see our loved ones again.

We were blessed as the Sunday School children presented us with their Christmas program.

“O come all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant, O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem; Come and behold Him, born the King of angels. O come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord!” Hymns of Zion #41.

We wish you all God’s nearness and blessings as we enter 2018. “Know Ye The Son?”

Note of Thanks:
I want to express my sincere thank you to each of you who remembered my 90th birthday with a beautiful card, gift or loving thought. It made my day very special! May God bless each one. Sis. Eunice Beutel

Illinois, Washington
Kendra Funk, Patricia Knapp

“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.” John 1:14

We had our annual Christmas program and were blessed to hear the Sunday school sing and tell of the birth of Christ. We also had the opportunity, as a church, to sing Christmas carols to others this month.

Our Sis. Rachel Witzig has moved to Magdalena, MX to serve at CVE. We pray that the time she is there will be a blessing to her and to those she serves. Her parents are our ministering Bro. Fred and Sis. Nancy Witzig.

We rejoice with Sis. Kristin Fehr and Bro. Caleb Plattner as they were united in the Lord on November 19. We wish God’s blessings on their marriage. Their parents are Dave and Sis. Linda Fehr and ministering Bro. Darren and Sis. Sue Plattner (Champaign, IL). We thank Bro. Darren for sharing the Word and assisting in the wedding service.

We were blessed to have other visiting ministers with us this month as well, and we are grateful for their
service. They were Bro. Dean Steffen (Sis. Carol; Belvidere, IL), Bro. Fred Funk (Sis. Diane; Morton, IL), and Bro. Harvey Kaeb (Sis. Judy; Gridley, IL).

We rejoice with Bro. Jake Wyss (Burlington, IA) as he is engaged to Sis. Rachel Wagenbach (Mediapolis, IA). Bro. Jake’s parents are our Bro. Ed and Sis. Kathy Wyss. Rachel’s parents are Bro. David and Sis. Charlene (Mediapolis, IA).

We extend prayers of comfort to those who have lost loved ones recently. Sis. Marcia Koch’s (ministering Bro. Justin) mother, Sis. Emma Stieglitz, passed away, and Bro. Jim Barth (Sis. Julie) lost his mother, Sis. Ida Barth.

Bro. Wayne and Sis. Gloria Laubscher have moved from Cissna Park and are making Washington their home church, as they have daughters and grandchildren here. We are thankful to have them become a part of our congregation and we pray that they feel welcome!

Bro. Lloyd Schumacher was hospitalized this month and we pray for God’s strength and healing for him.

We continue to pray for sweet baby Witt Leman (Bro. Jeremy and Sis. Nancy) as he recovers from heart surgery and that God will continue to grant them all strength and peace for the journey ahead!

Indiana, Bluffton
Suzie Fiechter, Liana Reinhard, Olivia Moser

Emmanuel - God with us! God with us! God with US! What an amazing thought: that the Creator of all would willingly become a single cell in the womb of a virgin! That He would leave the glories of Heaven to dwell with man. That He would give up the privileges of deity and take on the experiences of mankind. And why??? Because of His great love for us that would ultimately lead Him to the cross. It is good for us to celebrate Christmas with great joy – for without Christmas, there can be no Easter! We are in the midst of that celebration, and have just enjoyed hearing our Bluffton choir sing the Hallelujah chorus and our Sunday School students present His story in song.

We have several dear brothers and sisters celebrating their first Christmas in Heaven. Sis. Violet Steffen passed away on November 23. She is survived by a brother, Bro. Ralph Steffen; a sister, Sis. Vergene Reinhard; and many nieces and nephews. Sis. Mildred Schladenhauffen passed into eternity on December 6. She is survived by sisters-in-law, Sis. Sally Schwartz and Sis. Elizabeth Schwartz, along with several nieces and nephews. Sis. Gladys Maller also walks those streets of gold. Mourning their loss are Larry and Gwen Maller, Bro. Rod and Sis. Pat Maller, Steve and Cindy Maller, Bro. Joe and Sis. Denise Maller, Bro. Bob and Sis. Kim Maller, and Bro. Gary and Sis. Barb Schwartz. She also leaves many grandchildren and great-grandchildren and 2 brothers, Bro. Alvin (Sis. Bernice) Fiechter and Bro. Wayne (Sis. Dorothy) Fiechter. Our prayers have been with Bro. Eric and Sis. Rhonda Tonner and Bro. Steve and Sis. Carol Stucky with the death of their sister, Harriet Thompson. Also, our love and sympathy have been with Sis. Anita (Bro. Godfrey, dec.) Bertsch on the passing of her son, Bob Bertsch. Bob also leaves sisters, Sis. Becky (Bro. Denny) Caffee, Sis. Rhonda (Bro. Eric) Tonner, and Sis. Roxanne (Bro. Jeff) Roop, of our congregation.

Experiencing their first Christmas on earth are new babies, Quentin Max Smith, Joanna Marie Gerber and Simeon Douglas Gerber. Quentin is the son of Bro. Austin and Sis. Rachel Smith and grandson of Bro. Larry and Sis. Deb Reinhard and Dave (Loretta, dec.) Smith. Bro. Doug and Sis. Ruby Gerber are the loving grandparents of little Simeon, son of Bro. Joe and Sis. Heidi Gerber of Champaign, IL. Also rejoicing with their new granddaughter are Bro. Dean and Sis. Jaci Gerber. Joanna Marie was given to Austin and Rachel Gerber.

God has joined together Bro. Joel Reinhard (Bro. John and Sis. Pam) and Sis. Amy Goulett. He has also called Bro. Jonny Weil (Bro. Doyle Weil and Lisa Jolloff) and Sis. Abby Frauhiger (Bro. Chris and Sis. Sarah) to marriage. We pray both these couples will glorify Him as they serve Him together!

We’ve appreciated our visiting ministers: Bro. Jim Meiss (Sis. Candy, Austin/
Bastrop, TX), Bro. Tim Bucher (Sis. Julie, Valpraiso, IN),
Bro. Kevin Wulf (Sis. Annie, Morris, MN), Bro. Tim Drayer (Sis. Gwen, Bluffton North),
Bro. Seth Gerber (Magdalena, MX), Bro. Kirk Plattner (Sis. Carrie, West Lafayette, IN), and
Elder Bro. Nick Gutwein (Sis. Suzanne, West Lafayette, IN).

Thank you, dear brothers, for being willing to be used by the Spirit. Please come again!

Our prayers continue for Bro. Jeremy Valentine, as he has been hospitalized since September.
We’re thankful to see Bro. Dick Reimschisel back in church after his surgery.

We welcome into our fellowship Bro. Andy and Sis. Jenae Schmit and Bro. Joe, Sis. Donna and Bro. Tim Hollopeter.
Their testimonies and baptism were a real blessing to us!

Sis. Lena Kaehr (Bro. Keith and Sis. LuAnn) and Bro. Morgan Stoller of Leo (Bro. Kirk and Sis. Ilean, Latty, OH) have felt God’s direction to marriage.
May God guide them during this engagement time!

After spending eight weeks in Magdalena this past summer, our Sis. Lydia Steffen (Bro. Wayne and Sis. Jeanne) has felt called to return for twelve months. We will miss Sis. Lydia but are confident that the Holy Spirit will use her mightily for Him.

As we gaze into an unknown new year, our comfort, our hope, our joy is in Emmanuel. God is with us!!

Indiana, Bluffton North

Corinne Stettner, Amy Moser

God’s gift to mankind is that He became mankind.

Christmas is approaching once again, and the older I grow, the quicker the holiday comes.
I am thankful for God’s gift to mankind, His promise of salvation through Jesus that never changes, in spite of changes in our lives.

It was a blessing to have Bro. Adam and Sis. Jenna Leman (Magdalena, MX) and their sweet baby girls home on furlough for two weeks over Thanksgiving.

Elder Bros. Steve Ringger and Lynn Fiechter presented a church-wide Q & A meeting held at the Fellowship Hall on November 20, to discuss current issues confronting our churches. This meeting was informative and well-received.

Once again, we were able to, as a church, enjoy Christmas caroling at local nursing homes. After singing together, we returned to church for a chili and potluck supper.

Christian Care Retirement Center recently hosted a dedication and open house of its new Therapy Center, Skilled Nursing rooms, and Independent/Assisted Living apartments. It’s a blessing to see Christian Care expanding to serve the needs in our community.

We mourn with those who have recently lost loved ones during this season. Our dear Sis. Wanda Gerber passed into eternity with her husband, Bro. Wendell, at her side. They were a few days short of celebrating 72 years of marriage together. What a beautiful testimony of love and faithfulness. Along with her husband, Sis. Wanda is survived by her six daughters: Sis. Melanie Gerber, Melissa Netherland, Sis. Mona (Bro. Mike) Craighead, Margo Haiflich, Sis. Marsha (Bro. Mark) Nicholas and Sis. Maureen (Bro. Roger) Reinhard.

Note of Thanks:

Sis. Bonnie Gerber wishes to thank everyone for the love and support shown to her during her time of hospitalization due to a fall.

Indiana, Francesville

Mildred Clauss, Jacki Huber

“Remembering God’s faithfulness and forgetting past mistakes will make entering the new year a time of joyous anticipation” -De Haan

“Forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead”

Philippians 3:13

Our congregation has enjoyed the usual Christmas activities: the Sunday School Children presented an inspiring program telling the wonderful account of Jesus’ birth. We also enjoyed an evening of caroling and a chili supper together after the carols.

It was a joyous time for the church to hear the testimonies of Elijah Waibel (son of Bro. Nick & Sis. Sandra); Clayton Pelsy (Bro. Roger & Sis. Lily) and Haley Luzadder (daughter of Brian & Sarah). Assisting with the testimonies and baptisms
was Elder Bro. Ken Wuethrich (Sis. Lyn, Indianapolis). Bro. Jeff Neihouser (Sis. Sue, Morton, IL) was also a visiting minister. Blessings to all of our ministers who serve us so faithfully!

Chance and Ashley Wuethrich are blessed to have a baby boy, Jett Randy born November 19. He has a brother, Jagger. His grandparents are Bro. Rick & Sis. Judy Wuethrich and Randy & Suzanne Sizemore. Austin & Stacy Metzger, along with Colton, Logan, Kinsley, and Noah, welcome their new daughter/sister, Gracelyn Ann (who is 1½ years old) from China. They brought her home on Thanksgiving Day! Grandparents are Danny and Kris Johns, and Bro. Dave and Sis. Arlene Metzger.

Sis. E. Joan Gutwein (Bro. Harvey, dec.) has spent time in the hospital. Wayne Bogart (son of Sis. Eleanor) has been dismissed after a week in the hospital.

Finally, we are all blessed because of the Lord’s mercies which are new every morning!!

Indiana, Indianapolis

Becky Ringer, Nancy Pfeifer

The weekend of November 18 & 19 we had testimonies and baptisms for four young souls: Sis. Chloe Sprunger, Bro. Tatton Strassheim, Bro. Drew Klopfenstein and Bro. Caleb Klopfenstein. We wish them much grace in their Christian walk.

The Thanksgiving program was a reflection on how to have a heart full of thankfulness every day. Life’s not always easy, and holidays aren’t always perfect or peaceful, but we can be thankful for what God has given us.

Christmas behind bars at the women’s prison was December 3. Thank you to all who went. Pray that these women will hear God’s word and be touched by His love.

The Christmas program on December 10 was an inspiration to keep us focused on Jesus. The holiday season is full of hustle and bustle, so let’s choose to walk in peace, love and grace all year.


We rejoice with Bro. Jonathan and Sis. Melanie Wales as they welcome Finn to their family. His big brother is Xander. Grandparents are Bro. Roger and Sis. Sue Levy (Denver, CO) and Sis. Carol Wales (Kansas City, KS) and Donald Wales (Overland Park, KS).

Visiting ministers this month were Elder Bro. Wayne Banwart (Champaign, IL), Bro. Jesse Bedolla (Sis. Bonnie, Detroit, MI), Bro. Jeff Neihouser (Sis. Sue, Morton, IL), Bro. Mike Grimm (Sis. Amber, Goodfield, IL), Bro. Tim Wiegand (Sis. Christa, Leo, IN) and Bro. Kevin Knapp (Sis. Dixie, Bloomington, IL). We were blessed by each one.

Indiana, LaCrosse

Julie Rocke, Meagan Frank

“Jesus is the Reason for the Season.” We see this posted all around this time of year – on wall hangings, ornaments, cards, greeting cards and more. But do we really stop and remember that? Oh, we know it! We’ve learned it. We’ve heard it. I dare say we believe it. But, do we really stop long enough in the hustle and bustle to remember it and take a moment to breathe in the essence of what the focus of the Christmas season really is supposed to be? I recently found myself in a stew about all of the obligations facing me. It was amazing to me how all of that slowed to a stop when I paused to think of Jesus and real meaning of this season.

The junior high and high school students along with some of the young group enjoyed an evening of Angel Tree shopping, then dinner together. It’s always a good reminder to each one who is involved of the joy in giving as well as the reminder to be thankful for what we have.

Our Sunday school children and Young Group did a wonderful job reminding us of this very idea at our Christmas program. From the youngest to the oldest, the message of Christ’s birth and gift of salvation for mankind rang out loud and clear.

Later that evening, we enjoyed our annual evening of Christmas caroling. One group headed to a couple of retirement homes and the other headed to the highways
and by-ways around LaCrosse and nearby communities bringing Christmas cheer to a number of homes. It’s always a special evening and so good to sing those carols, then come back to church for dinner together.

We had a couple of visiting ministers this month and we wish to thank each of them for their gifts of time and service on our behalf. Bros. Joe Gerst (Sis. Connie, Iowa City, IA) and Dean Messner (Sis. Wanda, Winthrop, MN) each spent a Sunday and served us from the Word.

Several of our loved ones are undergoing illness or difficulties with health. Our prayers are with Sis. Connie Knobloch and Bro. Don Gudeman (Sis. Mary). Our hearts ache with Bro. Brendon and Sis. Sharla Messner and their family with the sudden passing of their young niece, Elaiah Steffen (Bro. Jordan and Sis. Shayla). Our thoughts and prayers will continue to be with all of the family as well as the Belvidere church.

May God be with each of you, granting grace and peace, and helping you grow in Him throughout the New Year.

Indiana, Milford
Carol Haab, Pat Mikel

We want to thank Bro. Daron Price (Sis. Monica, Athens, AL) and Bro. Steve Frauhiger (Sis. Irene, Bluffton North, IN) for ministering this month. We appreciate their service on our behalf.

The Sunday school children presented an uplifting and inspiring Christmas program. They reminded us we should be careful to not get caught up in the busyness of the holiday season, but to focus on the true meaning – the birth of our Savior.

Please keep Sis. Mary Ann Beer in your prayers as she spent a short time in the hospital recently and is now residing in our local nursing home. Little Tyler Beer (Bro. Jeff and Sis. Heidi) broke his leg and will have a cast on for several weeks. May God’s healing powers surround both of these loved ones.

We extend our love and sympathy to Bro. Lee and Sis. Sandy Beer and their family in the passing of her mother, Sis. Ida Mae Barth. We are thankful she is now safe in the arms of Jesus, but know she will be missed. May God bless those she left behind.

As we end one year and begin a new one, our prayer is that 2018 will be filled with God’s love and guidance for all of you.

“A new year is upon us
Let us look to God above
And thank Him for His blessings
As He looks down with love
For if we trust Him daily
And obey Him without fear
He’ll help us through each hour
Every day of this new year.”

-Anonymous

Indiana, Remington
Jenni Honegger, Marcella Tyler

Bro. Ryan Schock (Sis. Melanie, Bloomfield, IA) and Bro. Todd Graf (Sis. Lydia, Akron, OH) were visiting ministers this month. We are thankful for each one’s time and fellowship and for bringing us the Word.

We are rejoicing with the angels over another sinner who has come to the Lord in repentance! Kenny Graf (Bro. Todd and Sis. Lydia, Akron, OH) has realized his need for a Savior and come to the foot of the Cross to seek his soul’s salvation. Please be prayerful for Kenny as he begins this new path of life.

Rustin Schambach (Bro. Alan and Sis. Sarah) has recently spent some time at Riley Hospital in Indianapolis. Please pray for his health and recovery.

Sis. Arleta Waibel (Bro. Harold) is grieving the death of her brother, Bro. Alphia Strahm, Jr. (Sis. Mamie, deceased – Bern, KS). Although they are thankful for his testimony of faith and have hope that he is now with his Savior, those who are left behind still feel a sorrow. Please be prayerful for Sis. Arleta and her family during this time.

We recently enjoyed our annual Christmas program from the Sunday School students as well as our traditional Christmas caroling to various homes in Remington. What a blessing to hear our young people remind us of the story of the Babe of Bethlehem and to sing carols of praise to Him as we bring good cheer to our community!

We pray that the spirit of peace that Christ brought to earth
can reign in our hearts and in our land as we look forward to the new year of 2018.

Indiana, South Bend
Joshua Martinez

"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." Philippians 3:13-14

We thank the Lord for the love and friendship we share as a church family. On Saturday, December 9, we enjoyed Christmas caroling followed by a chili supper at Bro. Rich and Sis. Samantha Gramm’s Headsight building. The next day, our Sunday School children shared the amazing gift of Christ’s birth through song and verse. The joyful efforts of the teachers and students were appreciated by all.

On December 13 we enjoyed our annual organizational meeting. We thank our Elder Bro. Curt Frank (Sis. Lyla, LaCrosse, IN) for sharing the evening with us. We also appreciate the labors of the trustees and all others who help with the physical maintenance and spiritual needs of our church.

We continue to pray for Sis. Arlene Kaehr who is struggling with persistent health issues and for Bro. Michael Lehman’s brother, Jon Lehman, who was recently injured in a family grain elevator accident.

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

“The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.” Numbers 6:24-26

Indiana, Valparaiso
Sherry Meiss

It touches our hearts and minds with gratefulness to all ministers who take the time to visit and serve on our pulpit. We thank Bro. Chad Huber (Sis. Pam, Francesville, IN) for stepping in and welcome him to return to be with us again.

We sincerely appreciate all our visitors throughout the month who gave of themselves to be with us in fellowship. You have blessed us, filled us with joy and filled our pews in song.

Our Christmas dinner was at Gwen Bucher’s residence this year. Many of the congregation gathered in fellowship with one another enjoying a meal and the singing of Christmas songs.

After Church last Sunday, a group got together for our annual Christmas caroling. We go to different homes in the area and visit a few of the nursing homes. As we walk through their halls in song, many of the residents come to their doors to listen. It seems to be enjoyed by all and really puts the spirit of giving in your heart.

We are rejoicing with Bro. Jon, Sis. Sharon and Silas Pratt for another son was born. We welcome Paul Vincent Pratt as he came into the world on December 17, 2017. God’s blessings are upon you.

As you focus on God during this season, may you know He is always calling us to Him and that the Holy Spirit walks among us.

He has the power of life and our best interest at heart.


If you find yourself in our area, come worship and fellowship with us. We are just south of Hwy US30 on Hwy IN49.

Indiana, West Lafayette
Libby Wahl

To commune is to be in intimate communication. We were so grateful to be able to commune in Spirit with our Lord during Holy Communion November 18. To have this opportunity and reminder twice a year is a powerful defense in our time.

Following Communion were testimonies and baptisms for Bro. Avery Pritts (Bro. Nathan & Sis. Kelli) and Sis. Sarah Leman (Bro. Randy & Sis. Mara). As directed in Ecclesiastes 12:1, we are encouraged they chose to remember their Creator in the days of their youth. Thank you
elder Bros. Curt Frank (Sis. Lyla, LaCrosse, IN) and Dan Kilgus (Sis. Jenna, Remington, IN) for your love and care.

Once again, a variety of year end festivities and traditions are manifesting worldwide. Taking this time to reflect on the paramount birth for mankind, through songs of praise, fervent prayer, ongoing evangelism and thoughtful giving seems an appropriate response for Jesus’ followers to the beginning of another year.

We bid farewell and Godspeed to Bro. Tyler Barth as he has relocated to his home area of central Illinois. We likewise bid the same to our mid-term college graduates as they start the next book in their life series: Sis. Heather Gerber and Sierra Steffen (both of Bluffton, IN) and Bros. Ben Pfister (Bluffton) and Ryan Schlipf (Milford, IN). It was a joy to have you here.

Catching my eye was this thought posted on a church sign: Life here on this earth offers us a multitude of choices. Eternity only offers us two.

**Indiana, Wolcott**

**Erica Blume, Teresa Earney**

“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” Hebrews 4:16

This has been a busy month for our congregation. Sis. Marjorie Hofstetter went to be with the Lord on November 16. She had been living in a nursing facility and many enjoyed visiting her. She was preceded in death by her husband, Donald Lechleidner in 1958; a daughter, Sharon Jacobsma in 1981; a husband, Andrew Hofstetter in 1993; and a sister, Wanda Robinson. Surviving relatives are her sister, Lona Helvie of Pittsburg, IN; and her grandson, Scott Jacobsma of Monon, IN.

On November 19, Sis. Leandra Bahler (Bro. Mike and Sis. Jody) and Bro. Kevin Dotterer from Rittman, OH (Bro. Gary and Sis. Sandy) were united in marriage. We rejoice with them and pray God will bless their union in Him. Our church was full that weekend. There were many visiting ministers that were either used on the pulpit or in helping teach Sunday School. The ministers that were present include: Bro. Ron Isch (Sis. Jane) and Bro. Justin Isch (Sis. Liz) both from Lamont-Gridley, KS; Bro. Earl Beery (Sis. Susanne) and Bro. Brett Lanz (Sis. Renee) both from Rittman, OH; Bro. Matthew Feucht (Sis. Jennifer, Roanoke, IL); and Bro. Nate Ramsey (Sis. April, Mansfield, OH). Thank you for your willingness to serve.

Our dear Bro. Lowell Bahler passed away on November 24 from a chronic pulmonary illness with his wife, Sis. Karla, by his side. He is survived by his eight children, many grandchildren and some great grandchildren. His children include: Bro. Jeff (Sis. Heidi, Wolcott, IN), Patsy Blades (Anthony, Unionville, MO), Melinda Rufener (Lee, Athens, WI), Sis. Sandy Hartter (James, Sabetha, KS), Bro. Mike (Sis. Jody, Wolcott, IN), Marcy Graf (Mark, Creston, OH), Sis. Sherice Reinhard (Bro. Mike, Wolcott, IN) and Don (Jill, Remington, IN). Bro. Lowell was still an active part of our church family and will be missed by all of us.

Our hearts go out to Sis. Heidi Bahler (Bro. Jeff) in the loss of her sister, Carmen Ukele, and niece, Marlee Ukele, in a tragic car accident in Kansas. We’re thankful that they had safe travels to and from Kansas for the funeral. The weekend of the funeral was a slim Sunday in Wolcott. Thank you to Bro. Dan Kilgus (Sis. Debra, Remington, IN) for coming to help with the pulpit ministry.

We are thrilled that Thadd Edelman (Bro. Kip and Sis. Donita) and Hunter Kyburz (Bro. Phillip and Sis. Sasha) began their repentance. Our prayers are with them as they go through their conversion process and strengthen their relationship with God.

On December 9, we were able to listen to the testimonies of Angie Furrer (Bro. Troy and Sis. Lisa) and Trenton Kyburz (Bro. Phillip and Sis. Sasha). It was so good to hear their testimonies and be reminded of how powerful our God is. Many were present to witness their baptism on Sunday, December 10. Bro. Earl Ringger (Sis. Dixie, Gridley, IL) and Bro. Dan Kilgus (Sis. Jenna, Remington, IN) were here to help with the testimonies. Bro. Dan came again on Sunday to help with the baptisms.
The Sunday School students blessed us with a wonderful Christmas program on Friday, December 15. They took us on the journey to Bethlehem and the birth of our Savior through songs and recitations.

We are looking forward to Christmas caroling through Wolcott as a church family Sunday, December 17.

As we end 2017 and begin 2018, I am reminded of a sermon that I heard years ago. The minister said to think of the new year as a clean white sheet of paper that nothing has been written on. He encouraged us as followers of Christ, to strive to keep our year pure.

Note of Thanks:
The family of Lowell Bahler wishes to express a deep appreciation for the many deeds of love and kindness shown to us over the passing of our dear husband, father and grandfather. The outpouring of love, thoughts and prayers has comforted and touched our hearts. Thank you!

Iowa, Burlington
Elaine Eisenmann, Ivy Steiner
“I love to tell the story of unseen things above,
Of Jesus and his glory, of Jesus and His love.
I love to tell the story because I know it is true,
It satisfies my longings as nothing else can do.”
Tabernacle Hymns #142
It was a blessing for all ages to listen to the wonderful story of Jesus and His love at our Christmas program. We appreciated Elder Bro. John Schmidgall and Bro. Dale Frank (Mediapolis) ministering that day.

The annual Christmas caroling and chili supper was a special time of fellowship, praise, and remembrance of Jesus coming to earth to save us from our sins.

Iowa, Elgin
Maria Rocke
“Ye messengers of peace shall bring
The glorious gospel of the King
To man in accents truthful.
How great your blest reward shall be
When Jesus Christ, the Lord, will see
That ye were true and faithful!
Every brother

Who such mission
And position
Has been granted,
Shall be to the end undaunted.”
Zion’s Harp #210, verse 2

After serving our Elgin congregation for 47 years, Bro. Dale Moore retired from the ministry on Sunday, December 3. We wish to express our sincere appreciation to Bro. Dale and his wife, Sis. Cheryl, for their many years of service and sacrifice.

Elder Bro. Wayne Grimm (Sis. Rose, West Bend, IA) came to share the day. We also thank him for his labors.

Lon and Sis. Sandy Butikofer welcomed a little granddaughter, Reagan Joy, on December 11. Reagan’s parents are Aaron and Andrea Butikofer. We wish them all the Lord’s blessings.

During this Christmas season, our congregation has gathered a number of times to carol to those who are shut in around the community. We also put together encouragement baskets for those who’ve experienced hardship in 2017. On December 13, our Sunday school children shared verses and songs in their Christmas program. Their efforts in memorizing and practicing brought a blessing to each of us there.

Iowa, Garden Grove
Laura Funk
We enjoyed visiting ministers Bro. Bruce Frank (Cissna Park, IL) and Bro. Jerry Wagenbach (Mediapolis, IA). Bro. Bruce gave a presentation on Spiritual
Gifts. A thought-provoking questionnaire was given out. What spiritual gifts have you been given and what gifts are you sharing?

The Sunday School children shared the Christmas story in song and verse. Jesus’s love shone on their faces.

We received a Christmas card with this verse: “He came to pay a debt He didn't owe because we owed a debt we couldn't pay.”

“Glory to God!” the sounding skies
Loud with their anthems ring-
“Peace to the earth, good will to men,
From heav’n’s eternal King!”
*Gospel Hymns #854 vs 5*

**Iowa, Iowa City**

**Diana Butikofer**

Ron and Sis. Audrey Landherr have been blessed with another grandson. Caleb Landen was born November 24 to Josh and Heidi Hydeman and siblings: Addie, Britta, Colton, Andrew and Noelle.

We were blessed by our Sunday School children’s program on Sunday, December 10. They reminded us of our Lord’s birth and death through Scripture and hymns. May they be blessed for their simple faith and trust in our almighty God.

**Iowa, Lester**

**Audrey Metzger, Joyce Moser**

Visiting ministers are always so appreciated! We enjoyed having Bro. Arlan Miller (Sis. Katie, Gridley, IL) and Bro. Bruce Frank (Sis. Bonita, Cissna Park, IL) with us for Thanksgiving. May they realize that their efforts to bring us God’s Word are met with thanksgiving also!

We assembled in our Fellowship Hall for Thanksgiving services, and again the following Sunday, to allow for clean-up from smoke and fumes filling the assembly on the previous Sunday afternoon just after we had all left the church. How thankful we can be that damage was limited due to quick response from local fire crews, and was relatively quickly resolved by cleaning services and many volunteers. This makes us appreciate so many things that we so easily take for granted!

“These souls betrothed before Thee stand; Thy blessing we implore; Unite Thou them in heart and hand, and guide them evermore.”
*Hymns of Zion #286*

The marriage of Bro. Neil Metzger (Bro. Rodney & Sis. Polly) and Sis. Mattie Knobloch (Bro. Dan & Sis. ReJeanne) took place on Sunday, December 3. We pray that God will truly bless this young couple as they establish their lives as one in the Lord. Bro. Damon Knobloch (Sis. Stephanie, Morris North, MN) shared the pulpit for that day, and we thank him.

Also on that day, Sis. Mattie’s twin brother, Bro. Nash Knobloch, became engaged to Sis. Tarah Meyer (Bro. Dean & Sis. Linda). We ask God to bless them as they plan for their January 14 wedding.

We are thankful to share the news that Brad Klostergaard (Sis. Linda) has found the peace that God promises to those who believe on Him. Brad & Sis. Linda have faithfully endured through the health challenges that Brad is facing. We are so thankful for him to feel at peace with God and man. We rejoice with him and pray for God’s continuing grace in his conversion.

Sara Leuthold (Bro. Doug and Charlene) was also announced as having found peace. Sara’s beaming face spoke volumes in such a simple statement when she said “It’s such a good feeling!”

Hospitalized from our congregation this past month were Sis. Florence Knoblock and Sis. Wilma (Bro. Melvin) Knobloch. Our hope for each one is restored good health and God’s help on their way to recovery.

A new little daughter, Portia Rose, became part of our church family this past month, when she was born to Bro. Preston and Sis. Kyla Klopfenstein on November 28. Welcoming her into their family also are big brother, Pierson. Grandparents from Lester are Bro. Stan and Sis. Dawn Knobloch. We wish God’s blessings upon all as they welcome this precious little one!

Carolyn (Ron) Banwart, passed away on December 3 after struggling with brain cancer. We have appreciated having Ron & Carolyn in our fellowship since they moved to our area from West Bend, along with their son, Alex. Our prayers for Ron, Alex, and all their family are for God’s comfort and peace as they adjust to life without Carolyn. We extend sincere sympathy to them all.
On the evening of December 17, our Sunday School’s Christmas program brought the “sweet story of old” into our hearts and minds. It is always so beautiful to hear the blended voices of our young people relate the amazing story of Christ’s birth. “O Holy Night!” Perhaps this is a small taste of what the shepherds heard when that angelic choir exalted His coming over 2000 years ago….

May the New Year of 2018 find each of us drawing nearer to Christ, and striving to live in such a way that can bring glory to His name!

**Iowa, Mediapolis**

*Kelsey Banwart, Tami Lanz*

We were happy to hear the announcement that our Sis. Rachel Wagenbach (Bro. David and Sis. Charlene) is engaged to Bro. Jacob Wyss from Burlington, IA (Bro. Ed and Sis. Kathy, Washington, IL). We wish them God’s blessings throughout their engagement.

We wish to thank our visiting ministers this past month for being willing servants. They were Bro. Michael Wagenbach (Sis. Erica, Wolcott, IN), Bro. Dallas Massner (Sis. Christy, Burlington, IA), Bro. Greg Fehr (Sis. Denise, West Bend, IA), and Bro. Mark Roth (Sis. Tammy, Congerville, IL).

As 2017 drew to a close, we were blessed to hear the sweet voices of the children singing and praising God at our annual Sunday School Christmas program. It is a special way to bring us all back to how the Savior came so long ago and to be reminded that He is still working in hearts today.

**Iowa, West Bend**

*Becky Virkler, Jenny Banwart*

“One by one their seats were emptied, one by one they went away” *Hymns of Zion* #222.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to Ron Banwart in the loss of his wife, Carolyn. Ron and Carolyn assembled with us for many years before they and their son, Alex, relocated to Sioux Falls, SD. May Ron and his children: Eric (Jen), Jody (Adam) Tomjack, and Alex, be comforted in their loss. Ron’s siblings are Sis. Patricia Banwart, Rich (Marlene), Mike (Marilyn), and Dennis (Allene). Our sympathy is extended to this family circle.

Sympathy, love and prayers are also extended to Bro. Art (Sis. Eula) Mogler in the passing of Bro. Art’s sister, Sis. Arlene Esslinger, from Bern, KS. Sis. Arlene was also a sister-in-law to Sis. Adele (Bro. Harvey) Bruellman. We pray God’s nearness will abide in each relatives heart.

We are thankful Lori Wirtz Jones has been spending time in our area. Currently she is recovering from surgery and is hopeful to have another surgery soon. May God’s healing hand rest over her. Lou (Kurt) Metzger also had surgery and is now on the mend. May God continue to provide for each need, as only He can.

**Kansas, Bern**

*Sheri Edelman, Tiffany Menold*

“Silent Night, Holy Night, Son of God, love’s pure light.” *Hymns of Zion* #42

When Jesus was born, the night was dark and silent...until suddenly, the sky was filled with a bright light and the beautiful
voices of countless angels. I think of this in our own lives, how we were living in sin (the darkness) and then with a repentant heart, the Light comes bursting into the darkness, driving it away with the beautiful voice of Jesus saying, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Matthew 11:28

The past month has held joys and sorrows for our congregation. Our church and community was devastated to hear of the tragic death of Carmen (Baumgartner) Uklele and her daughter, Marlee. Carmen was a daughter to our Bro. Leonard Baumgarter and a sister to Bro. Jeff (Sis. Kim) Baumgarter, Holly (Duane) Meyer, Jay (Heidi) Baumgartner, and Sis. Heidi (Bro. Jeff) Bahler. Carmen’s husband, Lee Ukele, still remains hospitalized and we send many prayers his way. We also pray for the families of Bro. Alphia Strahm and Sis. Arlene Esslinger, as they too have gone on to their eternal home. Bro. Alphia has four sons who worship with us in Bern: Bro. Kyle (Sis. Peggy), Bro. Ed (Sis. Ramona), Elder Bro. Brad (Sis. Michelle), and Bro. Mike (Sis. Diane). Sis. Arlene has one daughter who worships with us in Bern: Sis. Linda.

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 thank all of the Sunday School teachers for giving of themselves for our children.

We rejoice with Bro. Alex and Sis. Michaela (Strahm) Funk, as they were joined in holy matrimony on December 17. Michaela is the daughter of Bro. Mike and Sis. Diane Strahm. We pray the Lord will bless them as they begin their life together.

Visiting ministers to Bern this month were: Elder Bro. Greg Lehman (Sis. Mary Beth, Wolcott, IN), Elder Bro. Tim Funk (Sis. Debra, Peoria, IL), Bro. Fred Funk (Sis. Diane, Morton, IL), and Bro. Loren Schrenk (Sis. Betsy, St. Louis, MO). We thank these brothers for preaching of the gospel.

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 comfort.

“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

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, COUNSELOR, THE MIGHTY GOD, THE EVERLASTING FATHER, THE PRINCE OF PEACE.”

Let us reflect upon the greatest gift ever given and that is the GIFT of JESUS who 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. We truly appreciate the effort they made to travel all those miles to give us a joy-filled weekend. May God richly 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!

Shawn and Sis. Lynne Johnson are grandparents again as their daughter, Sarah, and husband, Peter, had another little girl. May God direct them in raising their sweet little family!

Sis. Millie Frieden was a hospital patient this month in Wichita Heart Hospital for a heart issue.

There have been so many sad and heart-wrenching incidents in our locality and in the news. Our hearts go out to all people everywhere who have lost loved ones in recent weeks. It is hard to part with our loved ones anytime, but seems like the holidays are especially hard. May God wrap His arms around all who are bereaved.
and give them Peace and Comfort.

As one of your reporters, I have been asked several times if the story I wrote about in November Silver Lining was a true story...the story of Jace and his newborn foal that he had prayed for so earnestly when it seemed “impossible” that this could occur. So I reply with a hearty YES! Indeed it was a true story! It happened to a family that I know quite well, in fact. The poetry, prose, and accounts that I submit are all true and factual... and often written in a literary text, inspired by Almighty God. In humble submission, your least correspondent, Millie Frieden.

Kansas, Lamont-Gridley
Dorene Metzger

Bro. Brandon Emch (Sis. Maria. Kansas City, MO) was here for our Thanksgiving Service. Bro. Cory Metzger (Sis. Jodi, Wichita, KS) was here the following Sunday. We thank both of these brothers for serving our fellowship with encouragement.

Sis. Liseten Strahm won the victory as she passed away on November 30. She had been in church 1 1/2 week before and told several of her family that was her last Sunday in church. Her husband, Bro. Loren Strahm, passed away in 2000. Her service was conducted by two grandsons, Bros. Cory Metzger & Bro. Shawn Metzger & Bro. Jay Luthi. She leaves 9 of her 11 children: Sis. Dorene Metzger, Jake Strahm, Sis. Mara Jean Edelman, Kerry Beyer, Rose Schiesser, Sis. Julie Bahr, Philemon Strahm, Scott Strahm, and Sis. Tina Schumacher.

Our congregation will certainly miss her spiritual encouragement.

A Prayer for My Family
When the roll is called up yonder
And my life has passed away;
When the Book of Life is opened,
And the trumpet starts to play;
Let my family stand together,
Everyone down to the last;
Our hearts will sing with joy
As we listen to our past.
Then we’ll walk into the mansion
Prepared by loving hands...
The family of Jesus, into the Promised Land.

Bro. Ron Isch held the service for Laura Louise Young on December 5. She had been in a care home for 77 years of her 88 years of life. She leaves two sisters, one is Sis. Ann Warner of Wichita, and two sisters-in-law.

Our Sunday School presented a very nice program on December 10 followed by caroling and then supper at the home of Bro. Ron & Sis. Jane Isch.

Once again our congregation purchased gifts, wrapped them and delivered them to Hartford, Inc. group homes for challenged individuals. The 80 residents love Christmas carols as well as their gifts.

Several were at the Mennonite Distribution Center in Newton, KS on December 16 for work day, a blessing for all who help.

On December 17, all-church Caroling was held at four assisted living/nursing homes. It’s a joy to see lips join in singing the age-old carols that herald our Savior’s birth. A soup supper followed caroling at Bro. Albert and Sis. Jeannie Edelman’s.

May God’s richest blessings and His mercy and grace be yours in the coming year 2018.

Kansas, Sabetha
Crystal Hartter, Brenda Nenadov

We were privileged and thankful for the visiting ministers we had this month. They include Bros. Adam Zeltwanger (Sis. Christy, Morris North, MN), Ron Isch (Sis. Jane, Lamont-Gridley, KS), and Kevin Banwart (Sis. Sandy, West Bend, IA). May God richly bless them as they continue to share God’s Word.

“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.” Revelation 21:4

Sis. Sandy Hartter (Bro. James) lost her father, Bro. Lowell Bahler of Wolcott, IN this past month. Also, Sis. Ada Plattner (Bro. Don) said an earthly farewell to her father, Bro. Alphia Strahm of Bern, KS. We offer our heartfelt sympathy and prayers to both of these families during this time of loss. What a comfort we have in the blessed hope of Heaven through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Bro. Rod and Sis. Arlene Grimm are thankful for the arrival of their grandson, Maverick William, on December 6.
Amanda Grimm of Morris, MN.

Rejoicing in the birth of their first child are our converts Ted and Miranda Grimm. Ella Sue entered this world on December 13. Also welcoming her are grandparents Doug and Jeryl Grimm of Sabetha and Bro. Jeff and Sis. Kim Baumgartner of Bern, KS.

As a church family we enjoyed our annual Christmas caroling and soup supper on the evening of December 3. What a blessing it is to worship our Lord in song and enjoy the fellowship together.

We thank our Sunday School students and teachers for the beautiful Christmas program held on December 17. We always enjoy the enthusiasm from the younger students and the story of Christ’s birth brought forth in word and song.

Kansas, Wichita
Max Reimschisel

Our church family enjoyed a beautiful Christmas dinner with friends and family. The Sunday school children expressed their love for Jesus by their excitement in their Christmas program. From the little girl singing “Away in the Manger” to the older boys singing “We three Kings,” a joyful spirit was shared by all. We were thankful to hear again the account of Jesus’ birth and to give heed to the true meaning of Christmas.

We want to share our love and prayers of support to Bro. Cory Metzger in the passing of his Grandmother, Sis. Liseten Straham and to Bro. Josh Johnson in the passing of his grandmother in Alabama.

Our visiting ministers for this month were Bro. Darin Massner (Sis. Twila, West Bend, IA) and Bro. Sam Schlatter (Sis. Linda, Junction, OH). We are thankful for our ministers who bring us the word of God each Sunday.

“Remember them which have the rule over you, who has spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.” Heb. 13:7

What a blessing it is to go and sing Christmas carols to the older brethren and special friends of the church.

Our young people were excited to participate in the packing of meat at the Mennonite Central Committee at Newton, KS.

We would welcome anyone traveling to stop in and worship with us. We love to have company to fellowship with.

México, Barra Vieja
Alisha Ramirez

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

This month our Sunday school children are busy preparing for their Christmas program. This will be the first year our church has a program. We are excited to see how it all comes together and pray that many relatives, parents, and friends will join us on Sunday, December 24, to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Prayers are appreciated for our church, the children, and their families that seeds of hope can be planted in their lives during this Christmas season.

It is rare here that a family comes to worship together. Normally the father is at work or the family just sends the children by themselves. We have a new family at church this month and it is very encouraging to see them all attend together. Giovanni, Laura, and their two children, Diana and Kai, have attended many services this month. We pray they continue to attend as a family and follow the call of the Lord in their lives.

We continue lift up our Sis. Virginia (Kike) Angelito in prayer. This month she underwent her fourth round of chemotherapy. She is doing exceptionally well, and we know it is the Lord providing her with continued strength.

We are excited and looking forward to the visitors coming over the next couple of months. We appreciate the visits we receive from our fellow brothers and sisters. They encourage us and help establish a sense of the church family here. Please consider visiting to support us. For details on arranging a visit, email alisha.ramirez@hotmail.com.

“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.” Matthew 28:18-20
Mexico, Ixtlán
Ruth Gerber

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.” Galatians 5:22-23

Isn’t this the fruit that we would all like to have gracing our holiday gatherings and sustaining us through the busyness of the Christmas season? It’s easy to understand that this fruit comes from the Spirit, but not quite so easy for us to consistently walk in the Spirit. Bro. Marshall Heinold (Washington, IL) shared this passage this month and reminded us of the need to Walk in the Spirit and fight against the desires of the flesh. We were thankful for the days Bro. Marshall and Sis. Jan were with us—thankful to be served from God’s Word, to reconnect with them, to hear them share experiences of God’s faithfulness, and to see them in health. We had many reasons to rejoice with them here!

The church school also gives us reasons to rejoice as we see the Truth being shared with many children and their families. Recently the 3rd graders received Bible story books through Child Sponsorship. It was gratifying to see their excitement. One boy looked through his book and said, “Hey, this is the story we learned in Bible class!” To say that they are pleased with the books is an understatement. Thank you to all who give to this ministry. We ended the month of December with wonderful Christmas programs in both the grade school and middle school. Through songs, verses, poems and plays, Christ was proclaimed, and we trust that many will one day come to Know the Son. “Yea, He is known, the Most Exalted, God’s own Son!”

Hymns of Zion #249

México, Magdalena
Laura Ricketts

We were blessed with the fellowship of many visitors over Thanksgiving and thank Bro. Fred Witzig (Sis. Nancy, Washington, IL) and Bro. Tom Klotzle (Sis. Jody, Altadena, CA) for preaching God’s Word that week. Elder Bro. Mark Bahr (Sis. Bev, Detroit, MI) also visited us this month. May God bless each of them for their willingness to share!

Our youth choir sang for us on November 26 and reminded us of God’s power and goodness with the song, Sovereign Over Us (Aaron Keyes), “Even what the enemy means for evil, You’ll turn it for our good, You’ll turn it for our good and for Your glory…” May we allow Him to work through us for His glory!

The Sunday School presented their Christmas program to us this month as well. We give thanks to God for sending His Son out of heaven’s glories to experience life as a man and pay the ransom for our sins! Wishing each one a blessed New Year!

Michigan, Alto
Renee Steffen, Heidi Kaeb

It’s cold and blustery outside and winter is here in full force. As I reflect on how blessed I am to have food, clothing and shelter during this time of year, I am also reminded that there are many who are doing without. This thought then takes me to the manger scene where our Savior was born in the lowliest and most humble surroundings. I suspect none of us can begin to imagine the setting as it truly was that night. Speaking to myself first, may we share of the blessings that we’ve been given! This is not only the material things, but more importantly the gifts of love, grace, mercy, compassion and forgiveness.

I mention the gifts above not only because it is commanded that we do so, but also because here in Alto we witnessed these gifts lived out in a very special person. Our hearts are grieving with Bro. Tom and Sis. Joan Schrenk as their son, Robert Schrenk, was so quickly taken from this life last week. Robert was that ‘special person’. Our thoughts and prayers are with not only his parents, but his children: Maggie Johnson (Eric) of Chicago IL, Joshua Schrenk (Sara and grandson Lincoln) of Benson, IL, Ashley Schrenk of Bismarck, ND and Christopher Schrenk of Mandan, ND. We include in our prayers his siblings: Laura Pardo, Chuck Schrenk, Dennis (Jamie) Schrenk, and Joel (Donna) Schrenk, as well as aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews and many more who loved him so much.

We extend our condolences to Sis. Kristen Plattner (Bro. Howard)
in the loss of her aunt, Sis. Liseten Strahm from Gridley, KS.

Our thoughts and prayers have also been with Bro. Vern Meyer (Sis. Carole and their family) as he has been in the hospital for some time. We miss seeing him at church and enjoying the stories he shares. May God watch over them and provide strength and encouragement for each new day. Sis. Julie Blough (Bro. Jim) had surgery and we are thankful to our Father for His healing touch.

Our snow birds are starting to head south which often results in slim numbers on Sundays. More than just numbers, we miss their presence and fellowship. We pray their sunny winters bring warmth of heart and happiness of spirit while they enjoy time away from this chill and snow.

We were so blessed by the Christmas program brought by the children and young adults. The theme this year was ‘Gifts’: the greatest gift given being our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. As the whole Sunday school and young adult choir sang ‘Go Light Your World’, the youngest children passed out ‘gifts’ given to us and we were encouraged to share with others the gift we had been given. This was a beautiful message for all of us. Although I was not there in person, I could feel the Holy Spirit moving through the message these children brought to us.

Over the last month, shoe box gifts have been sent out, carolers have brought the spirit of Christmas through song and food, and clothing has been collected for the needy. The beautiful truth of the reason for the season of Christmas has been brought to many. May we continue to share this truth every day of the New Year.

As 2018 approaches rather quickly and I look back on our last year in Alto, there have been so many reasons to praise God for the gifts He has blessed us with. Six baptisms!, 8 new precious babies, beauty beyond our imagination in the creation of new growth in the spring and a wonderful fall harvest, a dear family of five moving to Alto, the start of building our ‘soup packing’ facility, the freedom of worship and praise to our Creator and Lord God Almighty, engagements, healing for the sick, weddings, and our first sendoff of missionaries to Haiti. We’ve also experienced great grief and sorrow when dear ones moved far away, but more so in the many loved ones we said our final goodbye’s to. For all that has happened in this past year, we give all honor and glory to our Father in Heaven. May we continue to give thanks in all things. May we use the gifts given us and ‘take your candle, go light the world’.

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**Michigan, Detroit**

**Carrie Ramseyer**

Thirty jars of applesauce in your cart draws attention at the grocery store. I could see the questions play out on the faces of the onlookers. A few times I was asked, “Now, what are you making?” I’m not sure which was more surprising to them – the fact that the cart was full of applesauce, or that I was not planning on keeping any of it. Once again, the Detroit congregation was filling Christmas baskets to take to those in the community. In addition to various food items for the basket,
one of the church classrooms was filled with coats, gloves, and various other snow gear for God’s Storehouse in downtown Detroit. The donation collections concluded on December 10, the annual Christmas Program. Dressed in reds, metallics, and other festive colors, Sunday School children shared the story of the infant Savior and sang praises in celebration of the holiday.

Graduation caps and gowns were donned by Bro. Caleb (Sis. Autumn) Ramseyer and Colby Williams for their college graduation ceremonies. We celebrate this momentous achievement with them!

Sorrow did appear amidst the joy of the Christmas season. Soon after Thanksgiving, Sis. Sue (Bro. Randy) Gasser’s mother, Sis. Emma Jean Stieglitz, passed away. In mid-December, Bro. Nate (Sis. Ann) Smith’s grandmother, Sis. Arlene Esslinger, also passed from this life to the next. Our prayers continue to be with these families as they grieve these losses during Christmas and the beginning of the New Year.

Ongoing prayers are requested for Sis. Maja Mojic as she continues to heal.

**Minnesota, Minneapolis**

*Brenda Messner, Renee Messner*

As the new year begins, we think back with grateful hearts, and are thankful for all that our heavenly Father has done for us. He made us to adore and worship Him, not our “selfies”, but Him!

It was very refreshing to watch our Sunday School, present their Christmas Program, titled “Come Let us Worship and Adore,” on December 17. The children, with their sweet voices in song and praise, reading scripture and saying their verses, were referring to Psalm 95:6, “O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker.” The innocence of young hearts, and the humble birth of Jesus, reminds us how precious our Father’s love is. May we share their excitement in telling others about God’s perfect love, those who are round about us in our daily life. Thank you to the dear parents and teachers as their time and efforts helped make such a blessed afternoon possible.

**Minnesota, Morris**

*Amanda Feuchtenberger, Wanda Gramm, Lois Schmidgall*

“To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;” Ecclesiastes 3:1-2

Sis. Lila Watson (Bro. Ray) has passed from this life to eternity. Elder Bro. Rod Bajema (Sis. Sue, Lester, IA) and retired Elder Bro. Joe Braker (Morton, IL) were here for her funeral service. Our thoughts and prayers continue with her dear family.

The Christmas program is always a special time to reflect on who Christ is and what He has done for us. The children did a great job. It is so precious to hear the story from the mouths of babes!

Sis. Dianne Kellenberger is in our prayers as she has been hospitalized. We pray God’s healing hand upon her.

Sweet little Maverick William was born to Bro. Lyle & Sis. Amanda Grimm. Older siblings Halle, Drake & Brecken are so excited! Grandparents are Bro. Gary & Sis. Sandy Fehr and Bro. Rod & Sis. Arlene Grimm (Sabetha, KS).

**Minnesota, Morris North**

*Amanda Feuchtenberger, Wanda Gramm, Lois Schmidgall*

“T o every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;” Ecclesiastes 3:1-2

We thank Bro. Roger Aberle and his wife, from Sabetha, Kansas for visiting, his topical presentation on Grace, and for worshipping with us.

Congratulations to Don And Tonia Judkins on the birth of their baby boy. Gabriel Williams was born November 23 We’re excited to welcome another new little one in our church family!

Congratulations to Tristan and Jordana Feuchtenberger on the birth of their son Zephani Summit. He was born on November 30. Grandparents are Bro. DWayne and Sis. Kay Feuchtenberger.

Thanks to all the Sunday School children and their teachers
for the wonderful Christmas Program. May God bless each one of you for sharing the love of our Precious Savior Jesus Christ.

For all who lost loved ones this past year, please pray for peace and strength in Him in the New Year.  

Be prayerful for Don and Tonia Judkins new baby, Gabriel who is in the hospital with RSV.

Pray for continued grace and guidance for Sis. Kelsey Knobloch who recently moved to Morton.

Bro. Todd Moser was elected head song leader. We pray God guides him as we worship our Savior in song.

The testimony and baptism of Natalie Feuchtenberger will be the weekend of January 13-14. Please be prayerful and encourage Natalie in her walk with Jesus.

Pray for Isaac Feuchtenberger on his upcoming surgery on the 25th (Bro. Carter & Sis. Amanda).

Pray for all HarvestCall volunteers planning to work in Chester, SC in the rebuilding ministry January through March.

"And be said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" Mark 16:15

A New Year's Resolution - Let us take action in spreading the gospel.

**Note of Thanks:**

The Family of Bro. Dale Zeltwanger expresses their gratitude for the many acts of love and kindness shown at the time of Dale’s passing. We appreciated the calls, cards, gifts, flowers, food, prayers and expressions of sympathy. Love, Sis. Rachel and family.

**Minnesota, Winthrop**

**Becky Braulick, Julie Schmidt**

“What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.”  
*St. Mark 10:9*

We celebrated the wedding of Bro. Zach Sinn (Bro. Tim and Sis. Marlene, Latty, OH) and Sis. Claire Steiner (Bro. Glen and Sis. Rachel) on November 26. We pray they look to the Lord as they start their lives together. We had many visitors that weekend. Among them were ministers Bro. Warren Schlatter (Sis. Cindy, Junction, OH), Bro. Gary Sinn (Sis. Paulette, Latty, OH) and Bro. Kevin Fehr (Sis. Lonnie, West Bend, IA). We thank them for giving of themselves on our behalf.

We want to extend a warm welcome to Bro. Braden and Sis. McKenzie Knobloch and their young daughter, Kate, as they adjust to their new home in Winthrop, as well as welcome back our convert Noah Steiner (Bro. Glen and Sis. Rachel). We pray they feel the love and joy from us in coming back home.

"Joy to the World, the Lord has Come!"

Our hearts ache with Bro. Dean and Sis. Wanda Messner and their family in the sudden loss of their granddaughter, Elaiah Steffen, daughter of Bro. Jordan and Sis. Shayla Steffen (Belvidere, IL). May the entire family feel the prayers holding them up and the arms of the Father embracing them and may they feel His peace in due time.

**Missouri, Kansas City**

**Julie Webel**

Greetings in the name of Jesus!! As we look forward to Christmas, may we remember to think about those in need by serving with our time and talents.

Our congregation participated in shoe box packing and also shopping for Christmas gifts for foster families. It was a blessing to all who took part in these events.
We also enjoyed the annual Sunday School Christmas program this year with caroling and a chili supper afterward. We send our love to a Sis. Diane Smith whose mother, Sis. Arlene Esslinger, passed away this past month. May she be comforted by God’s grace and love.

Missouri, Lamar

Jayla Wettstein

At the beginning of December, we were blessed to gather for a cookie bake/exchange. We enjoyed icing cookies, making lots of different favorite Christmas candy/cookies/goodies, and fellowshiping with our church family.

The same weekend we were thankful to have the Fort Scott brethren join us for Christmas caroling and a soup supper! It was a blessing to sing the carols and remember the true reason for the season.

Our thoughts and prayers this month have been with our hospital patients: Arlene Marti and Schelli Marti. We are thankful to report that both are improving. Arlene has been able to return to Maple Senior Living.

We express our sympathy to Sis. Edith has her sister-in-law, Sis. Shirley Hohulin (Roanoke, IL), passed away. We also express our condolences to the Dale Marti family. Bro. Dale and Sis. Corrinne’s son, Fred, passed away on November 28, 2017. He had been living in the Hannibal area and battling cancer for some time. They are grateful he was able to be interned here at home in Lamar. We continue to lift up this family in prayer, as they honorably care for Sis. Corrinne, as she resides at Lockwood Manor, in Lockwood, MO.

“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” Hebrews 4:15

Our Lamar church is very thankful that one of our dear souls has turned her heart unto the Lord. May the Lord richly bless Jackie Wettstein as she begins her walk with Him.

Our visiting ministers this month were: Bro. Tom Schambach (Sis. Connie, Elgin, IL), Bro. Joel Troxel (Sis. Amy, LaCrosse, IN), Bro. Jeff Fischer (Sis. Gloria, Fort Scott, KS), Bro. James Fehr (Sis. Brenda, Tremont, IL), Bro. John Lehman (Wolcott, IN). A big thanks to the visitors who traveled with the ministers, we appreciate the fellowship!

Missouri, St. Louis

Sarah Fehr

We want to thank ministering Bro. Clint Schmidt (Sis. Magdalena, Winthrop, MN) and Bro. Greg Lehman (Sis. Mary Beth, Wolcott, IN) for their service on our behalf this past month.

We were treated to the “Good News” Sunday School Christmas Program in early December. We greatly appreciate the effort of the Sunday school teachers, students, and parents. After the program we caroled at a local senior living facility and enjoyed a soup supper to finish off the evening.

Although we know the story of Jesus goes far beyond Christmas, it remains that without this beginning there would be no story at all. So let’s celebrate!

Missouri, Taylor

Anneliese Lindberg, Rachel Reinbeck

Greetings!

We are grateful for the Christmas season and how it persuades us to refocus on the selflessness of our Savior. It is the season of giving gifts, a commemoration of the greatest gift given to us.

After church services on December 3, the congregation sang Christmas carols for the veterans at the Illinois Veterans Home in Quincy.

The same Sunday, our Sunday School prepared a soup supper for the carolers.

December 6 was our monthly Wednesday night Bible Study with a visiting minister, Bro. Dave Zehr. He spoke on six steps to discerning God’s will in your life. We were happy to have him speak and hope to see him again soon.

On December 10, the congregation enjoyed a Christmas program put on by the students and teachers of the Sunday School. The theme of the program was “Tell Me the Story of Jesus,” an encouragement to all generations to continue telling the story of Jesus’ birth and the real meaning of Christmas.
New York, Croghan/Naumburg

Karen Farney

“Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.” St. Matthew 5:4

The Lord has called three beautiful souls from this life here below. Each in different stages of life. A young soul, Crystal Farney was taken so suddenly from us. She is the daughter of Wayne and Penny Farney, also survived by a brother, Robert, and other siblings: Kevin, James, Shauna, Erica. Grandmother Sis. Bessie Farney.

Another young soul, Emily Virklker, beloved wife of Paul Virklker, mother of Nathan, daughter of Paul and Barbara Eschleman, sister of Erik and wife Karla, daughter-in-law of Bro. Ted and Sis. Mae Virklker.

A soul of many years, Sis. Norma Conde, leaves behind a son, Andrew; and his wife, Amanda; a daughter, Kimberly; and her husband, Karl Askins; grandchildren; a brother, Vincent; and his wife, Gladys Farney.

Our thoughts and prayers are with these families as they go through this time of separation from their loved ones.

Bro. Lowell Virklker had been hospitalized and now is back in his room at the extended care facility. Linda Hirschey had surgery and is now back home recovering.

As we go through these different things in our life, we’re thankful we have someone to turn to, which is our Lord and Savior.

“In sorrow and pain Thy trust do retain In Jesus the merciful Saviour.” The Best Refuge, Zions Harp #46 vs.1

As the Christmas season is upon us and we celebrate the birth of the Christ child, on December 10 we Christmas Caroled at the extended care facility and hospital. Then we had refreshments after. December 15, we caroled for the residents of Meadowbrook Terrace assisted living. December 17, the Sunday school children presented their Christmas program telling of the Savior’s birth. That evening we went to Steepleview and sang Christmas carols with the residents there, then we served refreshments.

It’s a wonderful time of year where we can gather with those who cannot get out, and share the good news of our Savior’s birth in song.

“Glory to God in the Highest! In remoteness and near by us Ruleth He with might and grace. Let us bring our thanks and praise! Peace and good will to all nations! Ye, the heirs of His salvation, Far and near, O sons of men, Praise the Lord with glad refrain! Joyously sound ye his praises! Men, whom to His choice He raises, Triumph To a high estate! We are bought by love so great!” Glory To God In The Highest, Zion’s Harp #9

Ohio, Akron

Carla Miller

We appreciated our visiting minister this month: Bro. Tom Bolliger (Sis. Jane, Tremont, IL).

We are grateful to share that Kenny Graf (Remington, IN), son of Bro. Todd and Sis. Lydia, has turned to the Lord in repentance.

Our sympathy and prayers are extended to Sis. Margi Gallagher (John), Sis. Audrey Graf (Bro. Art, dec.), and Sis. Jan Graf (Bro. John, dec.) in the passing of their brother and brother-in-law, Rudy Graf.

Ohio, Columbus

Nancy Banks

The time of the holidays is a very busy month, but we are thankful for the times we can gather together to commemorate Christ’s birth. Our children sang songs and read scriptures to celebrate the birth of the Christ child during our Sunday School Christmas program and several families met at one of our local nursing homes to sing carols to those who are not able to be home with their families.

Special thanks to our many visitors this past month, including visiting ministers: Bro. Ron Bollier (Sis. Edie, Indianapolis, IN), Bro. Brace Wieland, (Sis. Brenda, Leo, IN), Bro. Jessie Bedolla (Sis. Bonnie, Detroit, IN), Bro. Matthew Rassi, (Sis. Bridget, Chicago, IL) and Bro. David Maibach (Sis. Larissa, Smithville, OH).

We are praying that all may have the opportunity to experience the true peace from God’s grace within their souls, regardless of life’s situations. The Columbus church wishes all a Blessed New Year.
Ohio, Junction
Laura Manz

We were thankful to hear the testimony and witness the baptism of Sis. Katie Hurd (Shawn) this past month. We pray that God will continue to bless her and walk with her each day as she serves Him.

We rejoice with our Bro. Ben and Sis. Carolyn Manz as they welcome a new grandson to their family. Felix Russel Manz was born to Dan and Sis. Angie Manz (Rittman) on December 1.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to Chuck Lord (Sis. Linda) as he spends time in the hospital in the Columbus area. We pray that Chuck will feel God’s peace and nearness while he waits on healing.

We want to remember those in sorrow. Our hearts go out to Sis. Linda (Bro. Steve) Schrenk as she grieves the loss of her father, Ron Hodgin (New Haven, IN). Our love and prayers are with their family. May God comfort them in this time of parting.

We thank Bro. Matt Manz (Sis. Deanna, Toledo, OH) for sharing God’s Word this month. We pray that the Lord will richly bless Bro. Matt for his willingness to serve.

December 3, we had our annual Sunday School Christmas Caroling. Our church family enjoyed the opportunity to share many beautiful Christmas hymns with various ones in our community. This was truly a special time as we rejoice in the Perfect Gift of our Savior and share of the Hope of Salvation that we can find in Him.

Ohio, Latty
Carmen Stoller, Mindy Stoller

Greetings of love in our Savior’s name! We trust you had a blessed Christmas season.

We rejoice with Audrey Reichert (Taylor) as she has turned her heart to the Lord in repentance. May God grant her much grace and mercy and may she feel our love and prayers.

We were privileged to have Elder Bro. Randy Beer (Sis. Deb, Milford, IN) for our Thanksgiving Day service. Also ministering the word this month were: Bro. Matt Feucht (Sis. Jennifer, Roanoke, IL), Bro. Glen Steiner (Sis. Rachel, Winthrop, MN), and Bro. Michael Schneider (Sis. Jodi, Junction, OH). Thank you for serving us!

November 26 was the wedding day for Bro. Zach Sinn (Bro. Tim and Sis. Marlene) and Sis. Claire Steiner (Bro. Glen and Sis. Rachel) in Winthrop, MN. May God’s blessings be upon them as they begin their life together.

Sis. Emma Jean Stieglitz (Bro. Oliver, dec.) has finished her fight of faith on this earth. We pray for her children: Jerry (Amber), Sis. Sue (Bro. Randy) Gasser, Jeff (Betsy), Bro. Steve (Sis. Jane), Sis. Marcia (Bro. Justin) Koch, and Bro. Greg (Sis. Lisa). We also want to remember Sis. Marcia (Bro. John) Laukhuf in prayer regarding the death of her father, Lloyd Eddy. May the Holy Spirit comfort during this time.

Ohio, Mansfield
Elizabeth Walter

We are thankful to have had several visiting ministers this month. May God richly bless Bro. John Grimm (Sis. Julie, Columbus, OH), Bro. Ned Stoller (Sis. Heidi, Alto, MI), and Bro. Marvin Zollinger (Sis. Pam, Smithville, OH) for serving and proclaiming the gospel message.

Our heartfelt sympathy goes out to Bro. Archie and Sis. Amber Tucker, and their family. Sis. Amber’s grandfather, Gary Simon (Judy), recently passed away. May God comfort and provide for each one during this difficult time.

The annual business meeting was held at the beginning of the month. We sincerely thank each one who served the church in various roles throughout the last year. We are also thankful for the willingness of those elected into new responsibilities: Bro. Jared Keever (Trustee), Bro. Dave Baumann (Sunday School Superintendent), Bro. John Ramsey, Jr. (Assistant Superintendent), Bro. Greg Sabo (Fellowship Hall Trustee), Bro. Justin Miller (Usher), Sis. Traci Beer (Kitchen Comm.), and Sis. Dorina Miller (HarvestCall Comm.). May each one use their talents to glorify God.

It is with joyful hearts that we welcome Sis. Jean Myers, as a newly-baptized sister in Christ. May Sis. Jean find much grace and strength to face the future, and may God richly bless her in her walk of faith.
What a joy to hear the Christmas story as proclaimed through the sweetness and energy of our Sunday School students! We appreciate their efforts and willingness to share the story of our Savior’s humble beginning through song and verse. May we all keep the true meaning of Christmas close to our hearts.

We were thankful to enjoy an evening of all-church caroling. It is always a blessing to see how the familiar hymns bring joy and lift the spirits of those who hear them. Many thanks to each one who made the effort to support our loved ones, as many are unable to come and go as they please.

"Know therefore that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations.” Deuteronomy 7:9

Ohio, Rittman

**Julie Steiner, Maria Beery**

“For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.” Psalm 100:5

As the year comes to a close, we reflect on the goodness and mercy of God and marvel at His faithfulness. We are thankful for 3 new converts: Tori Ingold (Bro. Doug and Sis. Joanna), Megan Baltic (Bro. Milan and Sis. Amy), and Brystal Steiner (Bro. Eric and Sis. Tricia). It is our prayer that every soul can turn to God while there is time.

We rejoice with Bro. Jesse Stoller (Bro. Eric and Sis. Melanie) and Sis. Lydia Steiner (Bro. Matthew and Sis. Gail) as they were united in marriage on November 26.

Our sympathy and prayers are with the family of Sis. Margaret Calame as she took her last breath here on earth. She will be missed by her children: Bro. John, Jr. (Sis. Jody), Jim, and Paulette (Bobby Sr.) Cochran, her grandchildren, and many other friends and relatives.

On December 1, Dan and Sis. Angie Manz, welcomed baby Felix Russell to their family. Felix joins older siblings: Jacob, Dylan, Olivia, Alex, Noah, and Caroline. Bro. Don and Sis. Carol Powell added another grandchild with the birth of Joanna Marie Gerber (Austin and Rachel). Older siblings are Malachi, Aliza, Selah, and Lydia. On December 18, David Andrew Steiner was born to Ethan and Lisa to join Bethany, Joshua, and Ethan. Grandparents are Bro. Matthew and Sis. Gail.

Sis. Eileen Emch, Sis. Beth Pelfrey (Bro. Dale), Boyd Acker (Barb), Sis. Delores Bauman (Marion), Dan Steiner (Denise, son of Sis. Betty), and Ken Shane (Charles and Sis. Kathleen) spent time in the hospital this month. We want to remember them in our prayers.

Thanks to Elder Bro. Duane Farney (Sis. Karen, Croghan), Elder Bro. Dave Graf (Sis. Barb, Akron), and Bro. Mark Steiner (Sis. Sue, Smithville) for serving and ministering this month.

Ohio, Sardis

**Faith Beard, Joy Indermuhle**

“Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.” Psalm 100:4

We thank Bro. Matthew (Sis. Bridget, Chicago, IL) Rassi for bringing forth the Word on Thanksgiving Day. Our congregation is always blessed when they come ‘home’ to visit their Zollinger family. May God richly bless Bro. Matthew for willingly serving us from the pulpit.

We extend sympathy to Bro. Bob Indermuhle (Sis. Karen), Elder Bro. Ken Indermuhle (Sis. Linda), Sis. Doris Miller (Bro. Denny), Joyce Wiggins (Bart) and Bro. Allen Indermuhle (Sis. Janet) in the passing of their Aunt Dorothy Meyer.

With the Thanksgiving and Christmas season comes many activities. Sometimes it can be difficult to keep a cheerful heart through all the busyness the holidays bring. It seems that if we can just take a moment and ponder the wonder of Christ’s birth and the privilege it is to serve Him freely, we can be reminded of the many blessings we have and what we can share with others.

Throughout December we could count our blessings as we enjoyed a Christmas Program presented to us by our precious Sunday School children through word and song, opportunities to carol and our annual Spaghetti Supper after caroling at local nursing homes. We thank those
that served us this delicious meal. It is a special time we share together with our local congregation.

A few of our brethren took time from their busy lives to go to Haiti on a medical work team. We are thankful they could arrive home safely.

As a New Year dawns and we ponder the unknowns of the future, may we be reminded to place our trust and confidence in the One who holds us in His almighty hands.

"Another year is dawning, Dear Master, let it be, In working or in waiting, Another year with Thee. Another year of mercies, Of faithfulness and grace, Another year of gladness In the shining of Thy face. Another year of service, Of witness for Thy love; Another year of training For holier work above."

Hymns of Zion #150 vs. 1,2,4

Ohio, Smithville
Millie Stoller, Connie Maletich

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report."

Hebrews 11:1&2

By faith, Bro. Owen and Sis. Carissa Riggenbach were united as husband and wife on November 19. Their parents are Bro. Jeff and Sis. Millie Stoller and Bro. Bob and Sis. Lorie Riggenbach (Rittman, OH). We welcome Sis. Carissa to Smithville and hope she will soon feel at home here.

Also by faith, Sis. Julie Rufener and Bro. Ross Steidinger both of Fairbury, IL, were engaged to be married. Sis. Julie is the daughter of Bro. John and Sis. Janice Rufener. Bro. Ross is the son of Bro. Martin and Sis. Trish Steidinger (Fairbury, IL). May God shine His blessings upon them.

It was this faith that Bro. Bob Riggenbach (Sis. Lorie, Rittman, OH) preached to our congregation. Many thanks to Bro. Bob and all of our ministers who give so tirelessly of themselves to share the Gospel.

In faith, Zach Steiner (Bro. Kurt and Robin) chose to lay aside himself and follow the Lord in humble repentance. The angels join us in rejoicing with him.

And faith in our great God leads us to pray for those who are sick and afflicted. We are thankful for His healing hand on Sis. Elaine Marty (Bro. Ed), Bro. George Schuster (Sis. Carol) and Sis. Florence Hartzler as they spent time in the hospital.

Ohio, Toledo
Whitney Masters, Alisia Schlatter

Several of our Toledo congregation had the privilege of Christmas caroling the beginning of December. That same weekend, we had the opportunity to hear our little children bring the Christmas program. It is always a reminder to us of how innocent and loving they are toward Jesus, as we should be!

Sis. Beth Klopfenstein has relocated back to Bluffton, IN. We pray she will be blessed there and look forward to seeing her when she comes back to visit her family.

The weekend of December 9 and 10 was a blessing to our Toledo congregation as we had the ordination for our ordained deacon Bro. Matt Manz (Sis. Deanna). Visiting ministers for that weekend were Elder Bro. Ken Indermuhle (Sis. Linda, Sardis, OH), Elder Bro. Bill Schlatter (Sis. Emily, Junction, OH), Elder Bro. Art Ingold (Sis. Bonnie, Rittman, OH), Elder Bro. Mark Masters (Sis. Jeannine, Mansfield, OH), Bro. Curt Walter (Sis. Elizabeth, Mansfield, OH), and Bro. Tony Manz (Sis. Denise, Junction, OH). We are appreciative of the time and travel that these brothers put in as this work was carried out. We continue to lift Bro. Matt and Sis. Deanna up in prayer as they serve our congregation in a new capacity.

We have quite a few who are battling health difficulties. Sis. Clara Beard and Sis. Emily Harmon (Bro. Howard) have been hospitalized this month. Kurt Rager (Bro. Walt and Sis. Sharon) is in rehab and we pray for his continued progress. We also lift Heidi Kipfer (Sis. Janet Kipfer) up in prayer as she struggles with her health as well. May the prayers of many be their comfort and help during these difficult times.

Ontario, Kitchener
Johanna Fortenbacher

We are so thankful for a few ministers who came to Kitchener this month: Bros. Brad Gudeman
(Sis. Teresa, Bradford IL), John Hodel (Sis. Megan, Roanoke IL) and Todd Stoller (Sis. Pam, Latty OH). We wish you God’s blessings for doing this extra work.

We are so happy to have a new baby in our church. Vernon was born on December 9. His parents are Phillip and Ines McKeen. Their other children are Sophie and Victor.

Just so everyone knows, your children under 18 only need a birth certificate to cross into Canada by land. Children are welcome to travel without their parents, but need a birth certificate as well as note of parental permission. "For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; an there is none else” Isaiah 45:18

Oregon, Silverton
Kelsey Walder, Ann Kuenzi

Bro. Dale & Sis. Becky Wulf (Lester, IA) joined us for Thanksgiving and ministered to us. Also here this month visiting our pulpit was Bro. Mike Leman (Sis. Lisa, Portland, OR). We appreciate having visiting ministers come to Silverton.

Chad & Elisheba Kerr express that they are at peace with God and man. We rejoice with them and look forward to when they give their testimonies and are baptized.

Bro. Jeremy, Sis. Kristy, Micah, Drew, Kate, Russ, Angela, Maria and Curt Kuenzi are thankful to welcome Tara Joy into their family. She was born November 23, Thanksgiving Day. Grandparents are Jim and Joan Dietrich and Bro. Terry and Sis. Ann Kuenzi.

Our hearts are with Bro. Dean, Sis. Heidi, Jonathan (Michelle), Bro. Jordan (Sis. Kendra), Sis. Erika, Savannah, Samantha and Ashley Sinn in the loss of Heidi’s father Bro. Ernie Aberle (Sis. Frieda, Tremont, IL).

There have been a number of activities this month. We enjoyed a Thanksgiving potluck and singing. The Sunday school children have been practicing for their program and collecting toys to be given out. Bro. Evan and Sis. Kristin Sinn’s Oregon wedding reception was held Sunday November 26.

Another activity December 3 was our all-church caroling and potluck, which was enjoyed by everyone. December 10 we received a blessing from the children’s labors of practicing as they presented the Christmas story.

We welcome two new married couples. December 9 was the wedding of Shane Kuenzi and Kelly Crowley. Shane is Bro. Art and Sis. Mary Beth’s son. Jordan Bence and Tiffany Ray’s wedding was December 16. Jordan is Bro. Sam and Sis. Lilly’s son. We rejoice with all of them and wish them many happy years of marriage.

Bro. Ben Bolliger’s (Sis. Carolyn) sister, Sis. Mary Ifft (Gilbert, Fairbury, IL) recently passed away. Our thoughts and prayers go out to them and their family.

We will be missing Vance and Sis. Liz Snook for the winter as they head to Phoenix, AZ. It will be nice to welcome them back home next spring.

After writing Silverton’s Silver Lining articles for a number of years, we are ready to let some others have the opportunity. Sis. Teresa Tribbett and Sis. Lorraine Kuenzi will be the new writers of Silverton’s news. We look forward to their contributions.

Oregon, Portland
Louisa Gallup

Sunday, December 10 was the wedding day of Shane Gallup (Bro. Mark & Sis. Louisa) and McKayla Phillips of Sandy, OR. May the Lord bless their union and grant them a long and happy marriage. They make their home in Newberg, OR.

We have had the support this past month of the following ministers from Silverton, OR: Bro. Harvey Kuenzi (Sis. Jennifer), Bro. Chris Kuenzi (Sis. Mary) and Bro. Ron Jones (Sis. Liz). We are grateful to all of these families, including the song leaders from Silverton, who also blessed us with their help and fellowship.

Pennsylvania, Philadelphia
Laura Isch

"Jesus Christ, as King elected, All things are to Him subjected. All things God lays at His feet! Ev’ry tongue shall make confession That Christ is the Lord accepted,
In whom all things are complete.”
Adoration, Zion’s Harp, #190

While we typically remember Christ as a baby this time of year, we can also remember His victory over death and sin. Although He came to earth as a humble baby, Jesus now reigns in heaven at the right hand of God. Let each of us remember to give Christ honor and praise as He reigns in each of our hearts this Christmas season.

On December 10, the Sunday School students presented their Christmas program. It is always encouraging to hear the future church share the love of God by singing the Christmas story to us. May God bless each one with a special measure of His love and nearness this Christmas season.

Texas, Austin/Bastrop
Candy Meiss

We are so thankful for the sweet fellowship that we have with our many families and loves ones in our growing Austin/Bastrop church!

Do you believe there is more? These lyrics touched my heart as we experienced joy along with sorrow this month.

“Lord, it’s so plain to see, You have been good to me, I have been given so much I can’t even begin to thank you and still I believe there is more. Open my hands to receive all that your love has in store. Lord, I believe. Everything I have done, All that I’ve said and sung, Lifting your story, giving you glory, That’s just the beginning. Father, I know there is more, Power to heal and restore, Miracles, wonders, blessing unnumbered, love never-ending”.

We were thankful for a Spirit-filled evening as Elder Bro. Wayne Banwart, Elder Bro. John Lehman and Ordained Deacon Bro. Lee Plattner presented the Memorandum. Bro. Wayne announced that Bro. Jim Meiss has support from our local congregation and will serve as the lead minister in the Austin/Bastrop church.

We were thankful for wonderful participation by the Sunday School and our congregation at our Christmas program. We so appreciated the memorized poem by Bro. Scott and Sis. Rachel Hartzler called “One Solitary Life”. We are thankful for Spanish speaking members who can communicate with our neighbors and for the opportunity to hear songs in Spanish along with the English versions.

We had a large group for Christmas caroling. It was a special joy to sing for Evie (Traub) Saal, who now lives in Bastrop. Thankful to Sis. Leah, Sis. Shella, Sis. Janelle, and Sis. Rachel for providing a delicious dinner with candlelight after caroling! It was a very special evening enjoyed by all.

We are all mourning with Sis. Darcy Steffen and her family during this difficult time at the unexpected loss of her niece, Eliah Steffen. We will continue to lift them up in prayer, knowing that our Savior cares and hears our prayers.

We are thankful for the following visiting ministers for their willingness to serve our church this past month. Elder Bro. Brad Eisenmann and his wife, Sis. Cindy from Chicago, IL and Bro. Chad Gerber and his wife, Sis. Jami, are visiting from Bluffton, IN.

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 outreach to the Stoney Point families and for those who have recently moved to the Bastrop area.

“Exceeding abundantly, more than our minds can imagine, Love overflowing, You are bestowing, Day after day after day. Lord, I believe there is more so open our hands to receive all that your love has in store.”

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 appreciate those willing to serve us this past month: Bro. Marvin Dotterer (Sis. Nancy, Forrest, IL) and Bro. Jim Zollinger (Sis. Tresa, Silverton, OR).

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. 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*

Our winter season has arrived and we appreciate all those who have come to South Texas for a visit. We will be having Christmas services followed by our traditional meal. We are anticipating several families that will be coming to visit their grandparents over the holidays.

Any one coming to South Texas is most welcome to visit and worship with us.

**Vermont, Clarendon**

*Nathan Reutter*

Several months ago I wrote an article defining primarily for myself several theological terms I had often heard in church, but did not really deeply understand or consider in a larger context of how they were interconnected. I left one word conspicuously absent from that monologue: justification. This week I had finally got a much deeper understanding of what it is and how it plays out in my life.

So, what is theological justification? The dictionary states, “The action of declaring or making righteous in the sight of God.” How does this justification happen, i.e. how do we become righteous before God? It certainly is not by our own righteousnesses, for they are as filthy rags Is. 64: 6. Rather, it comes through our faith in the redemptive work of Jesus Christ’s shed blood. This is needed in my life because I have not lived perfectly before God. I have sinned.

Simple as this is for those of us who have gone to church most of our lives, I had never until now realized the practical outcome of this simple act. It allows me to be free from the bondage of forever trying to be perfect and always failing at it. For most of my life I have been at this miserable rat race and feeling pretty poorly at how it was going. Now, if I have a less than perfect day, I still know Jesus loves me, the Father still cares for me, and the Holy Spirit is still interested in convicting and comforting me. Now I can simply rest in God. I need but confess my faults to those I love, ask forgiveness of them and move on. For the first time in my life I am beginning to realize what joy means. I have been converted for 22 years. How this can be, I do not know, but I am really thankful that I am today past that awful treadmill. Please rejoice with me! This is the finest Christmas present I have received in many years.

We as a church were amply reminded of the Christ child’s birth in Bethlehem, the greatest Christmas present the world
ever received. We thank the Sunday school teachers for their hard work in getting the children prepared. Parents and grandparents alike enjoyed the hymns and Scripture recitals. The children did really well.

We also this month appreciated the ministry of Bro. Jeff Gerber and Bro. Brad Wiegand. We were thankful their wives and families came up with them and supported us that day. Both ministers are from Rockville, CT.

Prayers Requested for Lamar Bolstering

“Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.”

Jeremiah 33:3

As we begin the New Year, continued prayers are requested for the bolstering efforts in the Lamar, MO congregation. Recently, e-mail and pulpit announcements were made to the brotherhood that the Holy Spirit would move in the hearts of families, couples and singles to physically move and become part of the Lamar church family. Sunday School teachers and song leaders are also needed. Further, the congregation is working on outreach into the community and asks for prayers in knowing how best to reach those who are hurting, unsaved and in need of Jesus’ love and compassion.

Approximately 30 worship in the congregation today, including singles, families and children. If you feel God calling you to answer the prayers of those in the Lamar congregation (and the brotherhood) to relocate, OR you would like more information, inquire at CEC@harvestcallorg. You will be directed to the appropriate people to assist. Also, consider visiting this congregation as you plan vacation schedules this year.

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Take time to be holy, speak oft with thy Lord; Abide in Him always, and feed on His Word. Make friends of God’s children, help those who are weak, Forgetting in nothing His blessing to seek.

Take time to be holy, the world rushes on; Spend much time in secret, with Jesus alone. By looking to Jesus, like Him thou shalt be; Thy friends in thy conduct His likeness shall see.

Take time to be holy, let Him be thy Guide; And run not before Him, whatever betide. In joy or in sorrow, still follow the Lord, And, looking to Jesus, still trust in His Word.

Take time to be holy, be calm in thy soul, Each thought and each motive beneath His control. Thus led by His Spirit to fountains of love, Thou soon shalt be fitted for service above.

-William D. Longstaff
News & Notices

AC Central is More than Just Sermons

It’s a hub of Apostolic Christian content:

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

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Apostolic Christian Church Bible Distribution  
651 E. Peoria Street, Goodfield, IL 61742  
Phone: 309-965-2141  Email: bibledistribution@acpublications.org
Mark your Calendar for 2018 Tennessee Fellowship Area
Memorial Day Weekend

Plans are already in motion for an uplifting and exciting 2018 Memorial Day Weekend scheduled May 26-27 at the Tennessee Fellowship Area. We hope you will mark your calendar and make plans to attend. This year’s weekend will be centered around the scripture verse from Isaiah 61:3, “To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified.”

Look for more communication about the weekend topics, speakers and a new format in future Silver Lining articles, e-mails, pulpit announcements and the TFA Facebook site (www.facebook.com/TennesseeFellowshipArea/).

The Board of Directors sincerely thanks everyone who attended and supported the 2017 event and looks forward to seeing you again this year!

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**2018**

**APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN CHURCH SERVICES**  
**Clyde Park, Montana**

Saturday June 23rd  
Clyde Park Community Center  
3:00 to 5:00 pm Registration and Fellowship  
5:00 Evening Meal  
Hymn Singing in Evening

For further information or to provide a count of those planning to attend by June 10th 2018, please contact one of the following Bros.

**From Lester**

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

**From Silvertone**

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 22th

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**Used Bible, Bible Story Book, and Song Book Distribution**

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**Director of Nursing - Apostolic Christian Skylines**

Apostolic Christian Skylines, a retirement community in Peoria, is seeking a registered nurse to fill the Director of Nursing position that is currently available. Qualifications include a registered nurse license from Illinois and a heart to serve the elderly. Experience in a nursing supervisory role is preferred. General duties include directing and implementing nursing services for the entire campus along with supervising our nursing team of caregivers. If you have a heart to make a difference in the lives of the elderly within a Christian ministry then please contact:

Dean Thomas, Administrator  
7023 NE Skyline Drive, Peoria, IL 61614  
Phone: 309-683-2502  Email: dthomas@acskylines.org  
For more information about the community visit us at www.acskylines.org.

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**Christian Guesthouse and Worship Services in Rochester, MN**

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1. Guesthouse - Three bedrooms with private baths, laundry, kitchen and family room area.  
2. Near St. Mary’s Hospital - two-bedroom apartment within a 12 unit building.

**Guesthouse Accommodations:**
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Bro. Randy and Sis. Brittaney Lehman  
4733 Birdie Lane NW, Rochester, MN 55901  
Phone: (507) 288-0072

**Mid-week Services:**
(3rd Wednesday in Rochester area)  
For information, contact:
Bro. Jim and Sis. Deb Tilbury  
Phone: (507) 281-2875

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54  SILVER LINING  January 2018
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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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  □ Haiti School   □ Guatemala
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**Haiti Medical / Dental Teams**

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**FOR ALL HAITI MEDICAL TEAMS:**

Komari Aberle  Email: komarick@sbcglobal.net | Phone: 785.284.2950

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**Haiti Teams**

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<td>MEBSH/Ohio/Const.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Ron Palitto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Les Cayes</td>
<td>Phone: 330-336-5373</td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:ronp@palittoconsulting.com">ronp@palittoconsulting.com</a></td>
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<td>Jan 12-19</td>
<td>AWA / Water Aid</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Luke Fischer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Les Cayes</td>
<td>Phone: 309-242-7020</td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:lukenal@live.com">lukenal@live.com</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 12-19</td>
<td>Haiti Trade School</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Andy Getz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Les Cayes</td>
<td>Phone: 574-870-5046</td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:andy@getzitdone.com">andy@getzitdone.com</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 12-19</td>
<td>Lifeline / Const-Concrete</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Neil Bahler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dumay</td>
<td>Phone: 815-848-3861</td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:nbahler@gmail.com">nbahler@gmail.com</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 19-26</td>
<td>Lifeline / Const-Concrete</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Darren Fehr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dumay</td>
<td>Phone: 815-848-2173</td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:dkfehr@maxwire.net">dkfehr@maxwire.net</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 26 - Feb 2</td>
<td>Lifeline / Const-Concrete</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Paul Zimmerman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dumay</td>
<td>Phone: 815-674-9363</td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:pallan2@frontier.com">pallan2@frontier.com</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 2-9</td>
<td>MEBSH/Silverton/Const.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Harvey Kuenzi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Les Cayes</td>
<td>Phone: 503-932-3128</td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:hkloanoak@msn.com">hkloanoak@msn.com</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 2-9</td>
<td>Lifeline / Construction</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Reuben Stork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dumay</td>
<td>Phone: 217-898-3436</td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:rdstork_85@yahoo.com">rdstork_85@yahoo.com</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 9-16</td>
<td>Lifeline / Construction</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Matt Kinsinger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dumay</td>
<td>Phone: 847-774-4015</td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:steffenstrahm@comcast.net">steffenstrahm@comcast.net</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 16-23</td>
<td>MEBSH/Roanoke/Const.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Jonathan Hodel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Les Cayes</td>
<td>Phone: 309-361-5031</td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:jonathan.hodel@gmail.com">jonathan.hodel@gmail.com</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 23-Mar 2</td>
<td>Agricultural (SEED/HDP)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Larry Kaufmann</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Les Cayes</td>
<td>Phone: 815-716-6018</td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:ljkaufmann@juno.com">ljkaufmann@juno.com</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 2-9</td>
<td>MEBSH/Peoria/Const.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Steve Leuthold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Les Cayes</td>
<td>Phone: 309-645-2208</td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:sleuth@speerbank.com">sleuth@speerbank.com</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 9-16</td>
<td>Haiti Trade School</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Andy Getz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Les Cayes</td>
<td>Phone: 574-870-5046</td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:andy@getzitdone.com">andy@getzitdone.com</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 9-16</td>
<td>AWA / Water Aid</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Luke Fischer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Les Cayes</td>
<td>Phone: 309-242-7020</td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:lukenal@live.com">lukenal@live.com</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 18-23</td>
<td>MEBSH/Haiti Support</td>
<td>ACHC-CC</td>
<td>Jon Zeller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Les Cayes</td>
<td>Phone: 309-266-9009</td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:jczeller1972@gmail.com">jczeller1972@gmail.com</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 23-30</td>
<td>MEBSH/Maintenance</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Jon Zeller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Les Cayes</td>
<td>Phone: 309-266-9009</td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:jczeller1972@gmail.com">jczeller1972@gmail.com</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Haiti, Bonne Fin Construction 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 Hospital Administrator to discuss possible dates and available projects.

Hospital Administrator Bro. Rick Aberle  Phone: 011-509-4222-1004 or  Email: komarick@sbcglobal.net

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**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.

The 2018 Awareness Tour dates are **March 24-28 and September 22-26**. To learn more, contact:

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

If you would like to meet the missionaries and see the ministries of CCCD, Deaf Can! Coffee and En Gedi House in person, but do not have the desire to participate on a short-term team, please consider our new Awareness Tour. This is a quick trip that gives interested parties the opportunity to meet our missionary families, learn more about our Jamaica ministry as well as other outreach supported by HarvestCall. These trips are scheduled, as needed, based upon demand.

To learn more, contact:
- Loren Dettwyler Phone: 503-580-962 Email: lmdettwyler@gmail.com

### Mexico Teams

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR 2018</th>
<th>PROJECT</th>
<th>COORDINATOR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 5 - 12</td>
<td>Magdalena</td>
<td>Bruce Frank / Cissna Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>Phone: 217-375-4346</td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:bfrank@ksiconveyors.com">bfrank@ksiconveyors.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 2 - 9</td>
<td>Magdalena</td>
<td>Troy Lanz / Forrest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>Phone: 217-202-5959</td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:troy@lanzinc.com">troy@lanzinc.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 16 - 23</td>
<td>Magdalena</td>
<td>Jon Baner / Gridley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>Phone: 309-532-9435</td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:jbaner@gmail.com">jbaner@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 9 - 16</td>
<td>Magdalena</td>
<td>Trevor Putt / Purdue Young Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:tputt@purdue.edu">tputt@purdue.edu</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 10 - 16</td>
<td>Reynosa</td>
<td>Caleb Roecker / ISU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>Phone: 309-696-7435</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 23 - 30</td>
<td>Magdalena</td>
<td>Bill Carrico / Bluffton/BN Senior Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>Phone: 260-307-6082</td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:carricofamily@adamswells.com">carricofamily@adamswells.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 24-30</td>
<td>Reynosa</td>
<td>Chuck Koch / Tremont Bible Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>Phone: 309-925-3905</td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:cckoch1988@gmail.com">cckoch1988@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 8-15</td>
<td>Magdalena</td>
<td>Chad Massner / Taylor Bible Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>Phone: 217-440-9427</td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:cmassner@yahoo.com">cmassner@yahoo.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 15 - 22</td>
<td>Magdalena</td>
<td>Fred Sollberger / Chicago Bible Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>Phone: 309-231-6392</td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:fredsollberger@gmail.com">fredsollberger@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 23 - 29</td>
<td>Reynosa</td>
<td>Tristan Herrmann / Princeville Bible Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>Phone: 309-712-6902</td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:tristanherrmann@gmail.com">tristanherrmann@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 17 - 24</td>
<td>Magdalena</td>
<td>Rod Schmidt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>Phone: 303-718-1432</td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:rod.schmidt@watershedfoods.com">rod.schmidt@watershedfoods.com</a></td>
</tr>
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</table>

### QUESTIONS FOR MEXICO TEAMS:
- Reynosa: Kevin & Sadie Gerber Phone: 260-417-5272 Email: kevgerber@yahoo.com
- Magdalena: Daton Kuperschmid Email: Datonkup@gmail.com

### Mexico Medical / Dental Teams

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR 2018</th>
<th>PROJECT</th>
<th>CAPACITY</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mar 10-16</td>
<td>Juarez</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Todd &amp; Teresa Earney</td>
<td>260-273-9528</td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:tearney@adamswells.com">tearney@adamswells.com</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Jamaica Teams

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR 2018</th>
<th>PROJECT</th>
<th>CAPACITY</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 28 - Jun 2</td>
<td>Jamaica Deaf Village - CCCD</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark Lindberg</td>
<td>Phone: 815-641-9065</td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:lindbma@hotmail.com">lindbma@hotmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Medical / Dental Students and Professionals are Needed

#### Team Trip to Juarez, MX - March 10-16

Medical/Dental students and professionals are needed for an upcoming educational and aid trip to Juarez, MX on March 10-16. If you are interested or would like additional information please contact Todd & Teresa Earney:
- Phone: 260-273-9528 | Email: tearney@adamswells.com
Memories of World War II Now Available

On the weekend of June 5-6, 1999 (the 55th anniversary of D-Day), brethren from the Apostolic Christian Church of America who were involved in World War II came together at Latty, OH. On Saturday evening, a recording was made as some of these brothers shared their experiences of faith and courage during the war. Several of the brothers also submitted their experiences in written form, which have recently been compiled into a booklet. Both the recording and the booklet are available on AC Central under the Latty congregation by typing in the key words World War II. The booklet is a PDF attachment to the recording. May God be praised through these endeavors.

Attention All health care providers
(doctors, advance practice nurses, physicians’ assistants), dentists, nurses, physical therapists, and anyone else involved in health care)

Please consider coming to the AC Medical Fellowship biennial meeting planned for Saturday, April 14, 2018 in Bluffton, IN from 8:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.

This is a Save-the-Date announcement.

You will be receiving an email invitation sometime in late 2017 or early 2018 with the details.

You may also send an email to medical@harvestcall.org if you want additional information. Todd Drayer is the current Chair of the AC Medical Fellowship and will address these inquiries.

COMPUTER-SAVVY MUSICIANS NEEDED to Create MIDI Files of Hymns

The library of hymns available in AC Central is expanding.
Several new books have been added recently but most of them lack the “Play Tune” option.

Volunteers are needed to create digital files of our hymns in the MIDI format.

Interested in helping? Have files already created that you’d like to share? Please contact Bro. Phil Witzig (Morton) at pw@itv-3.com to learn more.
Are you looking for more purpose?

Consider working at Gateway Woods. A day will not pass where you will wonder if God is using you for His kingdom. There is a lot of brokeness in the world around us and we have realized that God uses our broken lives to help the broken lives of others.

We currently have openings in all six of our programs to serve. If you think it’s possible this could be your calling, please pray. Then contact us for more information.

For more information:
gatewaywoods.org/careers
888-443-4283
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

ASSISTANT FARM MANAGER NEEDED
HarvestCall Haiti Dairy Program (Good Vision Farm) Opening near Les Cayes, Haiti

The HarvestCall Haiti Dairy Program is growing! The farm is currently undergoing major construction projects as it prepares for additional cows to arrive this fall, with the goal of beginning milking operations in February 2018.

HarvestCall is seeking a full-time missionary to assist Bro. Les Kaeb in proclaiming Christ and serving others while working together with Haitians on the Good Vision Farm near Les Cayes, Haiti.

Skills that would be valuable in this ministry include:

• Agronomy
• Dairy Furd Health
• Teach the local Haitians of these agronomy and dairy practices for long-term sustainability

If you feel led to serve or have questions about this opportunity, contact: Bro. Brent Hodel at Phone: 309-231-7467 or Email: httf94@gmail.com or visit www.harvestcall.org/missionary-openings

For more information contact: Bro. Brent Hodel, 309-231-7467 or httf94@gmail.com or visit www.harvestcall.org/missionary-openings
DIRECTOR of OPERATIONS
OPENING at Hospital Lumiere, Haiti

Seeking to fill this full-time paid position at Hospital Lumiere in Haiti. Qualifications include: knowledge and understanding of business administration including financial control and accounting, general knowledge of human resource management, business work processes, ability to lead and manage people, be a believer in Jesus Christ, willing and capable of learning the Creole language and Haitian culture, willingness to reside in Haiti (with your spouse/family if applicable) for minimum of 3 years, willing to learn and manage other areas critical to a successful hospital — such as security, data systems and IT and labor law.

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 culture.
- Training will be provided prior to placement in the field. It is also desired that time will be allowed for a three month minimum transition period between the new Director of Operations and the existing, to allow for a successful transition in leadership.

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

PROFESSIONALS IN THE MEDICAL FIELD
Short Term Opportunities at Hospital Lumiere

Professionals with training, skills and experience in the medical field who have a desire to serve at Hospital Lumiere in Haiti are encouraged to contact us. Terms of service are very flexible, ranging from 1-2 weeks to several months. Current specific needs include: any board certified physician surgeon or specialist, ultrasound technician or anesthesia provider (Anesthesiologist and CRNA’s).

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.

Terms of service are very flexible, ranging from 1-2 weeks to several months.

For more information on Hospital Lumiere positions, contact:
Robert Beebe. Email: robert.beebe1@gmail.com, or Phone: 574-276-6748
Seeking caregivers, single or married, willing to provide a Christ-centered family-like home for children who have been removed from their biological families. A caregiver’s qualifications include: Member in good-standing; dedication and love for children and young people; good communication, teamwork and conflict management skills; openness to learn, self-motivation and flexibility; ability to speak or willingness to learn Spanish.

A caregiver’s responsibilities include: Providing spiritual leadership and training for the children; provide for the daily physical, social and emotional needs of the children; continual pursuit of personal emotional and spiritual growth; continual professional growth as a caregiver; administer discipline in love and using biblical principles in accordance with CVE policies; grow in cultural knowledge and sensitivity.

Terms of Service
- Live on the CVE campus in the homes of the children being cared for.
- Language, culture and caregiver training will be provided.

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

For more information on CVE positions, contact Keith Beyer. Email: CVEmexico@gmail.com, or Phone: 260-627-0525
COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR
OPENING at Casa Vida Y Esperanza; Magdalena, MX

Seeking a Communications Coordinator willing to support web development activities and to produce relevant and up-to-date material that can be shared with our church body and the public.

Communications coordinator qualifications include: Member in good-standing; experience writing articles for publications; experience with web development or supporting web development; have good communication, teamwork and conflict management skills; ability to speak or willingness to learn Spanish; willing to reside (with your spouse/family, if applicable) in MX for a minimum of 2 years.

Communications coordinator responsibilities include: Be the contact person in MX to support the development of an online platform for regular communication to the public; write and edit articles or other content that can be shared with the our church publications and the public; build relationships with the children and staff to be able to produce current and relevant material; support caregiving staff with errands, child supervision and/or mentoring.

Terms of Service
- Housing provided on/near CVE campus
- Language/culture training provided

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

For more information on CVE positions, contact: Keith Beyer. Email: CVEmexico@gmail.com, or Phone: 260-627-0525

SHORT-TERM MISSIONARY
OPENING at Casa Vida Y Esperanza; Magdalena, MX

Seeking short-term missionaries willing to live and serve at CVE for one year to support a variety of activities around campus.

Short-Term missionary qualifications include: Member in good-standing; dedication and love for children and young people; good communication, teamwork and conflict management skills; openness to learn, self-motivation and flexibility; ability to speak or willingness to learn Spanish.

The responsibilities could include: Support the caregiver in providing care for children; accounting support; drive church and/or school routes; prepare meals and support meal prep for work teams; work with livestock; teach work related skills to the children.

Terms of Service
- Housing provided on or near the CVE campus
- Language and culture training provided

Candidate selection, preparation, training, sending and supporting will be conducted using HarvestCall’s established Outreach Policies and Procedures and the CVE Short Term Missionary Procedures.

For more information on CVE positions, contact: Keith Beyer. Email: CVEmexico@gmail.com, or Phone: 260-627-0525
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.

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

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

Mentors Needed – The New Beginnings of Southwest Florida

TNB is currently looking for mentors. Want an opportunity to serve in your own backyard? We are looking for someone who is called by God to be involved with helping single mothers and their children. We are in need of a single sister or couple between the ages of 45-60 to assist us in helping bring God’s word into these young women’s lives. This person must be committed to sharing God’s unconditional and sacrificial love. If this resonates with you, please prayerfully give TNB a call for more information.

The New Beginnings,
4810 Marine Dr., Cape Coral FL, 33904   Phone: 239.541.4312 | admin@thenewbeginnings.org
Mary, the sister of Lazarus, loved her Savior dearly. She was willing to undergo great financial sacrifice to show this love even in the face of public criticism: “Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, which should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein. Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this. For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always.”

Giving financially to one another when an opportunity arises is another way we can show sincere love to one another. Showing love to one another provides many benefits to the church family. Showing love demonstrates a true conversion, “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.” Some other examples follow. Loving one another enough to admonish them, though difficult, not only brings the “peaceable fruit unto righteousness,” but it will increase love in the end: “rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee.” Fervent love enables the church to flourish and retain its purity, “And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.” Then our love one to another will show to the world that we are followers of Jesus, “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”. This will in turn fulfill the desire of Christ “that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.”

Christian love is the peak of spiritual growth as described by the Apostle Peter: “And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make ye that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

(Footnotes)

1 John 13:35
2 Mark 12:31
3 Lev. 19:18
4 1 Cor. 13:4-5
5 Gen. 45:15
6 Exod. 32:11, 32
7 1 Sam. 18:3-4
8 1 Sam. 20:27-34
9 John 4:9
11 Phil. 2:3
12 John 12:3-8
13 1 John 3:14
14 Heb. 12:11
15 Prov. 9:8
16 1 Peter 4:8
17 John 13:35
18 John 17:21
19 2 Peter 1:5-8
and how impossible it is for us to fulfill what God wants.

So we have to come to the realization that all these things that are happening in our life, are they what God wants? Then are we trying to take credit for it? We know we shouldn’t. Satan’s right there. He’s trying to say, ‘Yes, you did a good job. That was really nice of you.’ But, Beloved, we have to remember we’re only doing it to glorify God. We’re doing it to glorify Jesus Christ. That’s our mission!

The mission of Jesus Christ was to come and make it possible for you and me to have the kind of relationship with the Father that He has. When He did that, whenever people came to Him, what did He do? When they tried to heap praise upon Him, what did He do? He diverted the praise to God. He did not take credit for Himself, and He deserved it! He was living the perfect life. He was living the example. He fulfilled the law like God was hoping man would do. Therefore, He did everything that God had asked Him. He deserved the credit, but He didn’t take it. It’s an example for you and me that we’re not to take the credit. We’re to divert the credit to Christ and to God whenever these things happen in our lives.

So here they were. They were struggling with the idea of how much of this law they should take. See how God worked in their hearts? Here was a group of Jewish people that were very set on how they were living their lives. They were trying to understand. Over here were these Gentile people that had no clue of the law. God brought these men together, and through His Spirit He directed them to a plan. It was simple. It was easy.

He said there are four things I don’t want you to do. It didn’t mean that we can go out and do all the other things, murder and all those other things. No! They weren’t trying to say the Ten Commandments weren’t important. They were just saying these are additional things that you need to remember, and they need to be a part of your life in order that there might be peace among us and between us and God.

As we read in the Scripture we see that God said what you bind on earth will be bound in heaven and what you loosed in earth will be loosed in heaven (St. Matthew 18:18). He gave a certain amount of ability to the leadership to make some decisions, and now it’s up to us to uphold them. It isn’t in our place to try to change them just because we don’t like them. God’s given us this position to live in.

As we think about what God’s asking of me and of you, He’s telling us to go and live our life in a way that we are showing together the love that Jesus showed to us. That means we’re going to show compassion. Jesus put us on a different level, didn’t He? He didn’t say go and live a moral life and do everything just right. He went a step farther and He said I want you to love your enemies. I want you to love those people that hate you. I want you to love those people and pray for them that are despitefully using you. (St. Matthew 5:44) That’s a difficult thing. In the flesh, it’s an impossible thing.

Yet He said I want you to do that. I want you to forgive people when they do things against you so that God will forgive you. Do we look at it and say, ‘I don’t think that person deserves forgiveness.’ That’s the natural part of us. Or we’re looking for justice. We live in a country where we say we’re looking for justice. Are we looking for justice before God? I don’t think so. Because justice means that I have no chance of going to heaven. Justice means you don’t have a chance to go to heaven. We’re looking for mercy. We’re looking for compassion. That’s the same thing God wants to see in us, those same kinds of attributes that show the love of Jesus Christ.
As we see here, we’re reminded of how Peter went to Cornelius. He saw all these Gentile people there, but God had showed Him when He let down that sheet from heaven and all those unclean animals were there. He said, ‘Rise and eat,’ and Peter said, ‘Oh no! I would never do that.’ Yet God said, ‘What I have cleansed, call not thou common.’ (Acts 10:9-15). God was teaching Paul it’s not in our position to say that person doesn’t deserve salvation. That’s God’s decision.

He wants everyone to come, and so we have to come to that position where we rejoice when we hear of those who have come to the knowledge of the truth, that we rejoice no matter how much and how far they got on the road. Matter of the fact, we should rejoice more if they’ve gone a long ways down the road that they could find their way back to God and to Their Father because the farther we go, the harder it is to come back. The road looks long. Satan’s got all kinds of reasons for us why we shouldn’t. Yet, if we will let Him, He will show us the way.

So Peter told them about his experience there with Cornelius and how he saw the Spirit of God come down upon them. The Holy Ghost came into them. No different than the Jewish people. The Jewish people were a privileged people for many, many years. Unfortunately, they didn’t understand it, and they didn’t appreciate it. Think about what it would have been like if they would have really stood for what God wanted them to have.

Number 1, they wouldn’t have had a king. He saw what was going to happen. How many of those kings were actually good for them? Not very many. Most of them led them away from the true God. That was not in God’s plan, but they were so determined they wanted to be like everyone else. Why would you want to be like everyone else? Think about what Job had to say here. He talked about the fact that the wicked prospered, and it seemed that everything went well with them. Their cows calved, and their calves didn’t die (v.10). And their children were healthy. All these things were happening and they said they didn’t need God in their lives because everything is going just fine in our lives. That’s what happened with the children of Israel when everything was going fine. They forgot about what God really wanted from them.

I always marveled. Think of this! When Moses was up in the mountain when they were on the way to the Promised Land, they came to Aaron and said make us a calf. They were there worshipping this calf. How could it be that the people who had been taken out by such a great miracle could start worshipping a calf and give the calf the glory of it? It’s because they’re human. Because you and I are just as human, we can fall into the same trap to forget where the blessings come from, forget what God has done, forget the tremendous miracles He performed in our lives, and we can go free from the burden of sin and

— Please turn to pg. 68
read in 1 Corinthians 13 of all the great things man can do, but none of them without love of God really accomplish anything. They are not going to be what God wants. If obedience and a trust and a love for Him aren’t in our lives, all those things don’t really matter because those things are the things that we do. As soon as we start thinking those are going to bring us close to God, we have lost it. Obedience and a love for God is what He wants from us.

We just pray that God will help us to recognize that if we are willing, He will bless us. He will keep us close to Him.

As we think about how they came to this conclusion and how they said we should “…abstain from pollutions of idols…” (v.20) Certainly an important thing. Idols are not just graven images. Someone challenged me once and said an idol is a graven image. No it’s not! A graven image is an idol, but all idols are not graven images. It’s the reason Jesus said to them you have to be willing to leave your father, your mother, your

house. You have to be able to leave everything for Him because as soon as one of them becomes more important to us than God, they become an idol.

He says “…and from fornication…” (v.20) Certainly we live in a society today that doesn’t even begin to understand the need to do that, not only a physical fornication, but what about a spiritual one? That’s what hurt the Lord the most.

“(…and from things strangled…) Things that have yet their blood within them. “…and from blood…” (v.20) Blood is life. We need to stay away from it. If we think about it even in physical terms, it often carries those diseases and things that can be detrimental to us. He was looking out for them. He said these are the four things we’re going to ask of you. Go and tell the churches. Teach them of the things they need to abstain from that they might stay close to their God. Today He’s still doing that. He’s still teaching us. He’s still helping us to try to understand what needs to be done that we can be close to Him.
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Likewise, at Gridley, IL, the local citizenry was resentful about our brethren using the German language. One Saturday night, local ruffians scrawled on the church (in yellow paint) the message, “NO MORE GERMAN.” This was a startling occurrence. When brethren came to church the next morning, they were saddened and made fearful. This hastened the use of the English language.

Obstacles
Changing to the English language met two obstacles. Many brethren felt the Scriptures were “a little richer” in German (versus English). In this sense, the change was difficult for them to accept. Second, in many of the congregations, it was difficult to find brothers who could preach in English. This resulted in some younger brothers being placed into the ministry because of their ability to speak English. Elder Bro. Noah Schrock was an example of this trend.

A Prolonged Change
The evolvement to English was slow. The German language was not totally extricated until mid-century. Sometimes an English sermon would be preached followed by a German one. This was for the benefit of older grandfathers and grandmothers who understood German better than English.

A Parting
Some were strongly resistant to using the English language. They could not go along with it. Because of this, and other reasons, about 10% of the membership left to form the German Apostolic Christian Church in 1932. It was a sad time for our church. The parting became known as the “second split” or the “thirty-year split” (because it occurred approximately thirty years after the first split that occurred very early in the 1900s.

-By Perry Klopfenstein
What Satisfies?

The question has arisen as to what it takes to satisfy a human being. The Apostle Paul wrote, “For I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.” Phil. 4:11. He also wrote, “But godliness with contentment is great gain.” 1 Tim. 6:6. It sounds like he was satisfied.

In our youth we may think that we would be satisfied with good grades in school, or if we could excel in sports, or if we could be popular with the opposite sex. However, if these are attained, there still seems to be something missing, so we imagine if we can ever get married to some wonderful person, then we will be completely satisfied. Later when we are older, if we are so fortunate as to marry a wonderful person, we learn that the adjustment is not so easy and in the struggle we may forget to treat our spouse as someone wonderful and forget to say, “You are wonderful.” Problems may engulf us.

Somewhere along the way we are confronted with the questions, “What am I living for and where am I headed?” No amount of success or happiness can make us satisfied in our natural condition. Fortunate are we if we remember the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden.” Matt. 11:28.

John McLean (1705 – 1861) a U.S. Postmaster General and Justice of the U.S Supreme Court, wrote, “The price paid for our redemption shows the value of our immortal souls.” If Mr. McLean was right, and I believe he was, then it is our souls that need to be satisfied and not just our physical bodies.

In Isaiah 58:11 we read, “And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought.” Isaiah claims that if we want to be satisfied in our souls, we need the Lord.

The Psalms also tell us something about the Lord satisfying our souls. “My soul shall be satisfied with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips: When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches.” Psalm 63:5,6. It is during the night that we often think about the almighty God and our Savior, Jesus Christ. Our hearts cry out to know Him better.

I am told that human beings need to be appreciated and I believe that is true of me. Therefore we need to let others know that they are appreciated. It doesn’t have to be with a gift. Just a hearty “Thank you for all you do,” may suffice.

Since we like to be appreciated, I wonder about the Lord Jesus Christ. I should think that He likes to be appreciated, also. If I understand it correctly, He suffered hell for us on the cross so that we can go free. If we show no interest in what He has done for us, and no appreciation, He must be very disappointed in us. If we repent and put our faith in Christ in order to have salvation, but then spend all our time and effort in earthly pursuits, it also must be a great disappointment to Him. The question arises, “Is Christ satisfied with us?” We need to give Him our all.

Returning to the question, “What satisfies us?” Things and earthly status can never satisfy us. Therefore the question we need to ask is, “Who satisfies?” The answer is that the Lord Jesus Christ satisfies the human heart. Through Him we can be ready to meet God, the greatest need of the human race. Once we know Jesus Christ, the main dissatisfaction we have is with ourselves.

-by Willis Ehnle
Take time to be holy,
speak oft with thy Lord;
Abide in Him always,
and feed on His Word.
Make friends of God’s children,
help those who are weak...