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And the LORD shall be king over all the earth...
Zechariah 14:9
New Year

Ecclesiastes 3 starts off with “To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven.” As a new year has dawned, may we take time to look back at what has happened in our lives. We all have experienced joys, and losses.

In this past year, many of us have welcomed babies into the world, witnessed baptisms, celebrated weddings where a new family has begun, and grieved the loss of loved ones who have departed.

This is a pattern that continues … year after year. As the seasons come, and seasons go, may we all cherish the season we are in… as if it were a treasure that God has placed within our grasp for His kingdom purposes in mind. When we live with an eternal perspective, no day is wasted.

In Psalm 86:5 it says “For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.”

What a gift! These two characteristics modeled by our Savior are wonderful examples of how to live a life of peace in Him. As we look forward to the year 2020, may we embrace His gift of forgiveness and love, allowing His spirit to dwell in our hearts more fully. This will bring hope and joy in every season…. and every circumstance.

In Christian love,

Jeff Grimm, along with Greg Lehman, Counseling Elders
Loving as Jesus Loves

“A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”

These words uttered by Jesus as He shared a few final hours with His disciples are themselves a demonstration of Jesus’ remarkable love. Many men would have been self-pitying and self-absorbed, given the foreknowledge that Jesus had. He was about to go, reluctantly in the flesh, but willingly in the spirit, to the horrific death of the cross; and He knew it. Yet in those last few hours, He made the conscious choice to teach His disciples once more how to put the knowledge and experience gained over three years of living with Him into action. How was it even possible to pursue the wellbeing of others, knowing the horrors that awaited Him? Let’s think about what Jesus did – and what He did not do as He shared those last hours with the twelve.

Although they understood little of what was happening, He did not treat the disciples like children nor give them a last-minute lecture. Rather, He spoke to them gently, acknowledging that although they wouldn’t understand right then, the time was coming when they would understand. By respecting them despite their limitations, Jesus brought them up to His level. He also brought Himself down to their level. He demonstrated how to love by lowering Himself to the status of a servant. He knew none of the disciples would ask Him to serve them, but a significant aspect of love is that it motivates one to take the initiative to serve without being asked. Love does the dirty work without being asked – even when inconvenient.

He didn’t avoid reality but rather loved His disciples by speaking truth – even the difficult truth that one of them was a traitor. But He didn’t speak it to embarrass or shame Judas. He just acknowledged the truth. Love doesn’t cover up the hard and ugly parts of life. Nor does it ridicule, condemn, or shame them.

He loved by gently but fully condensing the purpose of their three years of learning into one new commandment. He did this with simple words and demonstrated action. “Love one another as I have loved you.”

They had seen Him demonstrate this love many times. The woman at the well, Nicodemus, Zacchaeus, the widow of Nain, and many others were recipients of Jesus’ profound selfless love. He had compassion on the hungry crowds – and did something about it. He loved little children and did something about it, welcoming their presence. He demonstrated awareness, patience, and gentleness, even with those who were skeptics. Love was His way of living, not just an occasional endeavor.

How can we attain this goal of loving as Jesus loved? Is it humanly possible? Not without Jesus. We are taught that without Him, we can do nothing. The Holy Spirit must first conceive new life in us, and we must continually live in the power of the Spirit, putting to death our selfish nature. We know this comes by faith in Jesus Christ and His shed blood, repentance, and surrender to Him as our savior. Jesus reminded His disciples in His last hours how to live this new life. First, we must know His commandments. Then, if we love Him, we will keep those commandments. If we keep His commandments and love Him, Jesus said, He will pray the Father, who will give us the Holy Spirit, and we will be comforted. Perhaps the greatest comfort of all is knowing that the Spirit is active within us because we have been empowered to love to the fullest, as Jesus did. As it is written, if we move toward God, God will move toward us.

What does it look like when love becomes who we are, not just...
Greetings in Christ and blessings. So glad to be here this afternoon. I pray for your prayers and rely upon the Spirit. The reason we can rely upon the Spirit is because he’s never failed us. This morning we were blessed; God will bless us this afternoon.

You know, there’s much confusion in our time. This confusion comes from a lack of a common foundation between men. We have such blessings in Christ because we have a common foundation. If that was not the case, we would not have communion. We would not be able to have sweet communion. Part of what we’re doing right now is to solidify that communion, to add to that common base, that common measurement.

When there is discord among the brethren, it is my impression that it comes from having different measures. Sometimes the measures are from group agreement, so that we are taught to judge others by measures other than what’s in the Bible, and from that, I think the disagreement among brothers comes. This can happen in many ways, but when we read the Bible together, and we agree on the meaning, we are likely to be in one accord. We can see this magnified in our society. Can two walk hand in hand unless they’re agreed? It’s not possible. The Word teaches us that. Our experience teaches us that. That’s why it’s so comforting to come into the fellowship of the saints. We don’t have to put up barriers between us.

This was brought home to me really well by my second son. He went to public school, (I’m not saying you shouldn’t go to public school; I went to public school.) and I remember that he felt his having a Christian point of view was assaulted. He felt acutely the conflict of measure of worldview, and this was his description: when he walked into school, he felt like he needed to brace himself for the assault that would come. We, at one point, sent him to a Christian school, and he felt he could walk in and not brace himself. An example of a physical manifestation of the difference was that in the public school there were locks on the lockers. In the Christian school, there were no locks. Did that mean that there were no problems because there were no locks? Satan’s everywhere. There were problems, though rarely, because there were no locks.

Let’s see what God’s word has for us, this common Word that we all agree is the basis of our faith, the basis of God’s will, and the basis of God’s direction. There’s a Psalm here from Moses, the man of God. Psalm 90.

Psalm 90 and Romans 12

How can the work of our hands be established if it isn’t according to God’s will? After Christ’s resurrection, when he was on the seashore with his disciples, Peter asked him, “What about my brother? What is he going to do?” What was Christ’s word to him? “Worry about yourself; don’t worry about your brother.” Does that mean we have no care for our brother or that we justify Cain’s statement? No. But what it means, is that God has a place for each of us. As we pray and meditate and take account of the talents he’s given to us, we can know where he’s willing to use us, where he desires to use us, and where he plans to use us.

What happens when you covet your brother’s or sister’s talents? You’re judging God. When you are jealous about the talents that God had given your brother or sister, you’re judging God that he’s made a mistake and saying, “he hasn’t given those things to me.” It’s best to be used where he’s put you, where he’s given you talent. It’s best not to try being used in the talents he’s given your brother. You’ll be frustrated. His purposes will be frustrated. The congregation will not be benefited, and you’ll be condemned. When you lie down you will not be satisfied, comforted, quieted. It’s good when you learn that when you’re young, and you can take into account honestly where God
has prepared you to be. There’s location to consider. There’s position we can have. It’s good to pray. It took me a while to learn it, but after some self-reflection, after I was in middle-age, I realized I was not an administrator. I was not interested in administration. There were some other things I was blessed with, and those are the things I applied myself to doing.

It says here, “Teach us to number our days…” (Psalm 90:12) Also, teach us to number or evaluate our position, so we can be a blessing to others. We can be a blessing in his work. He’s willing to use us all. He’s prepared us all for something. I remember there was a time when I was severely ill, and a sister would come in and play the piano for me. It was so moving. I thought, “In order for her to be used this way somebody has to be sick, somebody has to be in need.” Sometimes we are called to be in need. We should graciously accept the benefit of others. We should graciously not resist the position God has put them in, and acknowledge he’s put us in need.

“In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth.” (vs 6) When you’re 71 years old, you get the withering part. You understand that life is somewhat brief but adequate. You definitely understand that there’s more to life.

The hopelessness that many have that there is nothing beyond this life is tragic in several ways. One: they live without hope, and two: their hopelessness is complete in their death. Bro. Scott said this morning – briefly, one statement – about the ridicule that can happen to a believer. When someone ridicules us for believing, pray for them. I don’t know that we can talk them into salvation, but at least we can answer their questions. We can feel free to not hide, as we were encouraged. We can help them number their days and to get a vision for what happens after this life even though they reject it. Even though this brings condemnation to them, as we’re taught, it would bring condemnation to us if we avoid the position God places us in. It’s his to call, and ours to witness. May we be given the wisdom to evaluate our own lives and then to be able to give counsel to others.

Hymn 169 in the Zion’s Harp is very comforting. I’ll read the first verse.

It really is not difficult a blessed man to be;
We trust the Lord with good result, and live in Him so free.
Isn’t that what we’ve been talking about? Trusting in the Lord?

Let’s read from what’s opened in the book of Romans, chapter 12. I’ll begin at verse 1.

As I end the reading, I’m struck by the fact that the example of overcoming evil with good is given before the admonition, right? “Hey, how’s the overcoming evil with good?”

He’s giving food to his enemy who’s hungry and giving water to his enemy who is thirsty. Does that come into your head whenever someone opposes you? I have to admit that’s not the first thing that comes into my head when somebody treats me ill – “how can I bless him?” But if you want to get his attention, that’s the way to do it. He’s not going to be surprised if we retaliate; he’s going to be surprised if we don’t retaliate. He’s going to ask why we didn’t retaliate, and then we can confess Christ. It’s against our human flesh but not against God’s wisdom. The more heavenly-minded we are, the more likely we will be able to act as Christ would act. Is that Christ-like to bless those that despitefully use you?

“Forgive them; for they know not what they do.” (Luke 23:34) He died for those that abused him, died for us, even when we had no desire to serve him.

“Recompense to no man evil for evil.” (Romans 12:17) But it goes beyond that in this admonition. This commandment goes beyond being neutral; it says that we should be positive. I’m reminded of an example of this. I’m not familiar with the exact brother this happened to, but I had a good account from another

— Please turn to pg. 65
**A Thousand Tiny Giants**

*Distribution Committee*

There are many people mentioned in the Bible, some for ‘great’ things, and some for ‘small’ things. When we factor God into the equation though, even the smallest act can be magnified and multiplied into a miracle of blessings that has the potential to impact countless souls. One couple in particular worked together for the sake of the gospel. Priscilla and Aquila are noted several times in the New Testament and their names are always mentioned together, the two were tentmakers and friends of the Apostle Paul. As you read through their references in the Scripture, you might notice that nothing they are noted for is necessarily big or important sounding, and yet, they are repeatedly referenced.

The two were not only friends with Paul, but also shared in the same trade, they opened their home to be used for church gatherings, they helped Apollos to better understand the gospel, and they risked their lives for Paul. Somehow though, it’s doubtful that the couple would have considered themselves to be more than what they were, valuable when they were willing to be used.

In the same fashion, HarvestCall offers ample opportunities to do small and seemingly insignificant tasks. Standing in a soup line, slowly turning yellow as a result of manning the bullion spoon or mindlessly folding endless stacks of clothing to be separated and sent to needy children don’t appear to be very critical positions, but it takes so many people who are willing to do small things to make big things happen. If just one more willing soul shows up to volunteer their time, the outcomes are evident.

As a result of hundreds of small gifts of time, energy, and love, quilts are made, blankets are tied, soap is produced, bags of beans are filled, soup is packaged, meat is canned, school kits are filled, sea containers are sent, clothes are sorted, furniture is distributed, wells are dug, buckets are washed, and the list goes on and on.

**Strengthening Missionary Care**

*Missionary Support*

“And let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.” – Gal. 6:9-10

During the sending process, a new missionary and their home church look at a move to the field with a level of excitement and confidence in God’s call. Over time, the newness may wear off and a missionary can fall victim to the “out of sight, out of mind” mentality that can easily creep into a church. A missionary can wrestle through pain and disappointment, as their experience on the field ends up looking much differently than they originally expected. Realities such as team conflict, difficulty with language learning, natural disasters, spiritual challenges, and trauma begin to take their toll. Years later, as a missionary returns from the field, they may struggle to reintegrate into their old community while their family and local church may struggle to know what to say or how to support the individual.

Unfortunately, the experiences listed above are common to those who have served as missionaries. Because of these challenges, it is vitally important that
Consequently, as that list grows, the name of Jesus is spread farther and farther. As the hands and feet of our Savior, we have the unique opportunity to physically give of our time and talents so that glory is brought to his name. Every action is appreciated and the benefits don’t end there.

When there are multiple people giving of themselves, the opportunity to encourage our fellow believers is presented. God works through passing conversations just like he works through sermons and Scriptures. When we are willing, even the smallest vessel of oil can be poured out continuously until all the needs are met.

Another example, is the story of Anna Warner. In the mid 1800’s, Anna and her sister Susan were writing a book together. On one small page of the book, Anna contributed a 16 line poem which later, with the help of William Bradbury’s musical ability, became the timeless hymn, Jesus Loves Me. Since then, the song has become a favorite of both children and adults, the simplicity and innocence of the song reflecting the gospel message itself, both straightforward and powerful. What started out as a small opportunity for a woman to make herself useful blossomed into an easily remembered message of hope, strength, and peace.

In our lives, we rarely see all the ways our actions impact the world around us. We might see surface effects, but underneath that, where roots dig deep to find a source of nutrition and life, our ‘small’ efforts might be contributing to a field of flowers. Let’s not miss an opportunity to do something ‘small’ and ‘insignificant’. – by Kaitlin Maibach

The church come alongside to support our brothers and sisters in the field. “Missionary care” is the term used to describe the layers of spiritual, emotional, relational and practical care put in place to help individuals serving overseas. Each of us in the Body of Christ have opportunities to carry out Gal. 6:10, and take part in missionary care. Whether through prayer, financial means, visits to the field, hospitality, or the ministry of encouragement, there are dozens of ways we can support those serving.

In an effort to build out missionary care, HarvestCall recently hired Sis. Amber Miller to serve in a new role as Missionary Care Coordinator. Her primary focus will be in providing direct, cohesive care for active missionaries as well as candidates interested in serving on the field. Amber will also develop and administer new processes to provide clarity and strengthen communication with those in supportive roles to the missionaries (i.e. sending churches, mentors, etc.) Your prayers are appreciated as Amber leads this charge.

If you are interested in service at a HarvestCall mission or a church plant/ bolster, please contact Sis. Amber at amiller@harvestcall.org. – by Amber Miller
Five Ways to Beat Depression

Depression is a common mental health condition that impacts people of all ages. There are several types of depression and there are various causes. Both clinical counseling and antidepressant medication are commonly used to treat depression. While depression can be mild, moderate, or severe in degree, the pain it causes is real, and treatment should be sought. In addition to treatment, there are numerous practical lifestyle options available to help prevent or address depression.

1. Get Regular Physical Exercise
Regular exercise has well-documented benefits for lowering levels of depression, stress, and anxiety. Current exercise guideline for most adults is 150 minutes of moderate exercise per week. For example, that breaks down to 30 minutes of walking 5 times per week. Exercising with another person adds a beneficial social support element that can increase accountability to getting your exercise done and helps to pass the time. While the 150 minutes of moderate exercise guideline is usually associated with heart health, it can also help keep a healthy weight and boost your mood. Remember, pretty much anything that is good for your heart is also good for your brain and vice versa. For more information search ‘exercise’ on the American Heart Association’s website (www.heart.org).

2. Improve Your Diet
When depressed, some people lose their appetite and lose weight while others can’t seem to stop eating. People often experience a carbohydrate craving during periods of depression and short-term mood enhancement with food is common. Unfortunately, emotional eating leads to more mood swings and often leads to weight gain. Research in recent years has increasingly shown the impact on mood of the quality of one’s food intake. For example, the typical American diet has been shown to more likely lead to worse mental health in addition to obesity. Diets rich in vegetables, nuts, fish, lean protein, olive oil, and complex carbohydrates (food that is vitamin and mineral rich and has higher fiber and omega-3’s) lead to a lower risk of depression. For more information, do a web search on the ‘Mediterranean diet.’ Note this isn’t a commercial diet, but is more of a mindset and lifestyle.

3. Actively Cultivate Healthy Thinking
Depression is often characterized by negative thinking about the past, oneself, and the future. Thinking and mood are highly interconnected. Proverbs 23:7a says, “For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he.” Perfectionism and critical self-talk fill our minds with judgmental “shoulds, oughts, and musts.” Ultimately, our goal should be that, over time, our self-talk will sound more like the voice of Jesus as we develop the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16).

For example, consider this self-talk: “You’re a failure and everyone wishes you weren’t even around.” Does that sound like the voice of Jesus or the voice of the accuser, our adversary Satan? Remember even when the Holy Spirit convicts us of sin, His voice is from a holy God who loves us deeply and wants us to be close to him (Proverbs 3:11-12). To learn more about healthy self-talk, search the ACCFS website (www.accounseling.org) for ‘Truth Talk’ or the Learning To Tell Myself the Truth workbook.
4. Get Involved to Socially Connect
Depression is isolating. It can feel very difficult for individuals dealing with depression to be in social situations like church or getting together with friends. However, social support and interpersonal relationships are key to breaking the isolation. Often, individuals dealing with depression have a type of thinking distortion called “mind-reading” in which they imagine other people are judging them negatively. In addition, depression often interferes with an individual’s concentration and ability to keep up with conversations and leads them to feel “out of it” or easily overwhelmed. Therefore, it becomes easier to avoid social gatherings. Unfortunately, the more one stays away from social gatherings, the more one feels distant and like they aren’t wanted or loved by the people in the group. Remember it isn’t necessary for an individual who is depressed to share all their private struggles with everyone. However, having a key group of support people to rely on is a great benefit. For more information, search the ACCFS website for ‘Helping Someone with Depression.’

5. Spiritual Grounding
In times of depression, it is easy to start to view God through the lenses of depression instead of who He actually is. That is, we project onto God how we feel about ourselves in depression. So, if I feel unlovable and unworthy of kindness because I am depressed, then that is how God must see me. However, that projection is not true. God’s love for us is steady and constant through the ups and downs of life (Romans 8:38-39). We can also tend to view the promises of Scripture as applying only to others, but verses about judgement as applying only to us. To challenge this, think about someone in your life who you love. If he or she is sick or hurting in some way, how do you feel toward them? You love them! In fact, your heart hurts for them and your desire to help them goes up! However, depression tends to cloud our minds and we falsely believe that when we are struggling, people’s love for us will go down. Remember God’s love for us far exceeds the love we have for each other as human beings. For a helpful tool to help you focus on the promises of Scripture, search the ACCFS website for ‘Comforting Scriptures for Times of Depression and Struggle.’

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.aclifepoints.org
Ashlyn Gramm-Mission
Communication Coordinator

“Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.” 2 Corinthians 9:7

If you are on our email list or follow us on social media, you may remember all the buzz these past few months about a new bus we will soon be getting at LifePoints. We are excited about this new development, so we created a fundraiser for #GivingTuesday, a global movement of giving back during the holiday season. Our goal was to raise $30,000, which would cover the bulk of the parts that make a bus a working bus – wheels, windows, doors, AC, mirrors, and more! In just one week, God worked in the hearts of so many wonderful supporters who gave over $17,000 towards building our new bus!

That week, we saw 2 Corinthians 9:7 in action, and we are still overwhelmed by the generosity of our church body and of the LifePoints community! The chapter continues in verse 10, saying, “which causeth through us thanksgiving to God.” That is all we can do in response to this generosity – give thanks. Give thanks to those who gave. Give thanks to those who prayed for this fundraiser. Give thanks to those who shared about our project. And ultimately, we give thanks to God for His generosity, His mercy, and His work that He is doing at LifePoints.

We have been amazed by the love and support shown through our bus fundraiser that first week of December; however, we at LifePoints are constantly reminded of God’s love for His children whom we serve. We see the love our staff have for the residents as they walk through life with and care for them daily. We see the love of our families as they come and visit or call to check in and see how the day has been. We see the love of our Board members as they make decisions and plan for our future. We see the love that our residents have for each other as they talk and do activities together. We see God’s love in action through the love of His children. And we give thanks to God for those who so cheerfully give their love to LifePoints!

If interested in supporting our LifePoints bus fundraiser, you still can! Checks can be made out to Apostolic Christian LifePoints with “bus fundraiser” in the description, or donations can be made online with “bus fundraiser” included in the special notes section.

Gateway Woods Apostolic Christian Children’s Home

Kristy Kaeb — LARC Coordinator

When I met Najelis (pronounced Nigh-ah-lease), she was shy and quiet. She preferred speaking Spanish over English because of her family’s El Salvadorian heritage.

After coming to Gateway Woods and learning about the LARC mentorship program, she got excited at the thought of having a positive relationship like a mentor in her life! As her LARC Coordinator, I got to know her and learned what she wanted in a mentor: “Someone who likes nice things. Likes to do hair, nails, shop, stuff like that”.

Najelis’s family lives over an hour from Gateway and we had just trained a new mentor who lived close to them. Heidi had spent some time in Mexico and both she and her husband were fairly fluent in Spanish. “This is perfect!” I thought. But Heidi did NOT fit Najelis’s description. Their backgrounds and lifestyles couldn’t have been more opposite, plus Heidi is a dairy farmer’s wife – she likes to keep things simple and doesn’t necessarily enjoy “girly things”.

As I thought and prayed about possibly connecting them, I couldn’t help but feel Heidi was Najelis’s best option. She just needed someone to be there for
her with Christ’s love through the
highs and lows life would bring
– someone to be consistent. Our
mentors are sometimes the only
consistent thing in these young
peoples’ lives.

Despite my initial hesitations, I
felt like it was the right thing to do
so we set up a fun evening of pizza
and hanging out in the Gateway
gym. They connected over their
love for spicy Mexican food and all
other things “South of the Border”.
Najelis immediately fell in love with
Heidi’s two sweet kiddos. Later on,
eating dinner with Maple House
also helped Heidi catch a glimpse
of her life and world at Gateway.

Najelis soon moved back home
and their relationship continued.
The more time they spent together
– whether playing with the kids
or eating at their favorite (mostly)
authentic Mexican restaurant – their
friendship deepened and Najelis
grew to genuinely trust Heidi
through their weekly connections.

I soon got an email from Heidi:
“This is so outside my comfort
zone.” Excited for an opportunity
and knowing Najelis would be in
her element, she had signed the two
of them up to volunteer at a formal
event called “A Night to Shine”.
They both got all dressed up and
assisted young girls with their hair
and makeup. They had volunteered
to help these young girls “shine”,
but it was obvious that Najelis
herself was shining. I received a
picture later on that evening of the
two of them all dressed up, and my
eyes filled with tears! As I looked
at their picture, I saw hope. I saw
trust. I saw walls broken down, and
hearts opened up and willing to just
LOVE someone…even if they were
quite different from one another!

God took two completely
opposite people and has created
such a beautiful relationship!
Watching our mentor
relationships flourish is one of
the many things that blesses
me in this job. God turns the
ordinary into extraordinary! He
turns brokenness into beauty! He
takes the vulnerable and helps
them to trust! And even though
it hasn’t happened yet, MAYBE
someday, Najelis will step foot on
that dairy farm…

News:

January is National Mentoring
Month, if you would like to connect
with youth like Najelis, contact us
today: larc@gatewaywoods.org for
more information.

We currently have a need for
Houseparent Couples. For more
info, please see our ad in this
month’s edition of The Silver Lining
or visit the Careers page on our
website at gatewaywoods.org/careers.

We are searching for a
Summer Volunteer Coordinator
for 2020. Please contact Bro.
Keith Schambach at keith.
schambach@gatewaywoods.org for
more information. This is a great
opportunity to impact the lives of
the children on our campus!

We are also searching for our
Summer Education Intern. Please
contact Bro. Brock Williamson at
brock.williamson@gatewaywoods.
org for more information. This is a
great opportunity to gain experience
while impacting our residents!

We also have a summer
internship opportunity in Gateway
Farms. This is a great opportunity
to work directly with residents as
you plant and harvest bountiful
gifts from the garden. Please
contact Bro. Eric and Sis. Marissa
Bahler at gwfarms@gatewaywoods.
org for more information.

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 would like to receive
monthly inspiration in your inbox,
you can sign up for our e-newsletter,
Restoring Hope, at gatewaywoods.
org/newsletter or by emailing jon.
ringger@gatewaywoods.org.
Arizona, Phoenix

Marge Lindenbaum

“And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. …” Revelation 21:5

Another new year is upon us. It hardly seems possible that it is 2020. A new year is a wonderful thing. It is a time when we can leave behind the things that belong to the past, even recent past, and have a fresh start. It is a bit puzzling to me why the year begins in the middle of winter. It seems like it should begin in the spring, when much of creation begins to be reborn. It seems God thinks the same thing, as he changed the beginning of the year from mid-September to mid-March (approximately) Ex 12:2. It is my understanding the autumn celebration, Rosh Hashanah, is the cultural New Year and Passover is the spiritual New Year.

Immediately following Passover is the Feast of Unleavened Bread, signifying life without the leaven of sin. This makes sense to me, as “new” also equates to “clean”. A new year is a clean slate, in many respects. But it is never long until it is no longer clean. We fight a losing battle with dust in my house. It can be virtually gone - all wiped off and vacuumed up, and in as little as a day if the wind is strong or my dogs are active (we have a doggie door that allows a significant amount of dust into the house), it is right back in all its glory as if it had never left. Life and its muck can be the same way.

New Year Resolutions are quickly broken. It is widely accepted they are a set-up for failure more than a design for success, as we demonstrate our weakness and lack of ability to accomplish our goals. Without the Spirit of God to help us, we are unable to accomplish anything – we are worse than nothing – we are DUST! But we are redeemed dust, and we can begin now, with the help of the Spirit, to put on the new so we are prepared when that trumpet blows! We don’t have to wait for a particular day to do it; His newness is available every moment of every day if we will just ask, He will make us clean. What a blessing and honor He bestows on us, His children. I will plan to make this new year one of blessing His name and remembering His favor bestowed on us.

I hope you are looking forward with me to the final “New Year”, when time will no longer be marked - or even exist. I try to imagine what that will be like, but it is too much for my finite mind. In this cursed world of decay and deterioration, there are very few things that retain their newness very long. Things get marred, they become dusty, lose their luster and take their place on the long shelf of the previous years’ forgotten things, where they eventually wear out, become useless or even disappear. Even people, our mortal bodies, wear out. How wonderful to imagine everything being perfect and complete and free of any defect, for eternity! And we will have a new song to sing, praising our amazing Lord. What a day that will be!

“O sing unto the LORD a new song: sing unto the LORD, all the earth. Sing unto the LORD, bless his name; shew forth his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people. For the LORD is great, and greatly to be praised: he is to be feared above all gods.” Psalms 96:1-4

We enjoyed a beautiful program with our Sunday school presenting the Christmas story and the plan of salvation, with a strong reminder the Lord is rich in mercy! We enjoyed our annual caroling and continue to enjoy the return of our beloved winter visitors! The busy season is full upon us, as we look forward now to our annual Sunday school Pancake Breakfast and Silent Auction, as well as hosting the Mid-Winter Elder conference. The local relief committees continue to serve in various capacities, bringing sustenance to the physical and spiritual lives of those who are not as fortunate as we are. What a blessing to be able to serve the least of these in the name of Jesus! We invite anyone who is tired of the cold weather to visit us, and hope you enjoy a blessed New Year.

Arizona, Prescott

Autumn Rokey

“He that sat upon the throne said, ‘Behold, I make all things new.’ And he said unto me, ‘Write: for these words are true and faithful.’” Revelation 21:5
Just as children on Christmas morning wake with excitement for presents, do we wake with excitement each day? Each January as the holiday hustle dissipates and New Year’s resolutions get spoken, I wonder instead if we could hold onto the hope of heaven more closely. Can we lean into the promises of our Creator that all will be made new by Him? The worldly goals of wealth and health will burn away someday. God will be the one to make all things new. He didn’t tell that to just one person. Christ tells us, the Bible tells us so many times. When John wrote all he saw in the New Jerusalem in Revelation, it was written for you and I. This is a promise of God’s faithfulness, even when the world seems bleak this winter and heavy with sin. A promise that you can be made new by the wondrous gift of salvation by Christ! Each of us from Prescott pray for you and blessings from God in this New Year!

Arizona, Tucson
Dean and Jackie Knobloch

We are thankful for two visiting ministers this month: Bro. Dennis Rassi (Austin/Bastrop, TX) and Bro. Adam Zeltwanger (Morris North, MN). As always, it is a blessing to hear the Word of God.

We caroled at two local nursing homes and also had the Sunday school Christmas program. It is good to be reminded of our Savior’s humble birth.

Bro. Joe and Sis. Abbic Tabor and their children, Brennan, Natalie, Elliott and Oliver are moving back to Illinois for work. We will miss their presence in our little congregation. They served here as Trustee and Sunday school teacher and we surely do appreciate their willingness to be used while worshiping with our church family. We wish them God’s grace and care as they relocate.

May your new year be a year of true commitment to serving the Lord Jesus Christ.

If you would like to visit us in Tucson and need accommodations, please call Bro. Dean Knoboch as we have a 2 bedroom townhouse available for use. (309-231-8428)

California, Los Angeles/Altadena
Kali Sauder

Happy New Year! What better way to look into the unknown of the next year than walking in faith, choosing to trust the faithfulness of God. Lofty phrases for a simple truth: believing what God says in His Word. Believing what He says about Himself: “I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep” John 10:14. Believing what He says about us: “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.” John 10:28-29

These words were spoken as part of our Sunday school Christmas program by the youngest class. The message of the whole program was “Child of God”, how Jesus came as a child to make a way for us all to be called children of God! “Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God…” 1 John 3:1. This is the good news! And it is good news no matter what lies ahead in the year to come!

California, San Diego
Lillian Wagenbach

We welcome Bro. Jerry and Heidi Ludwig as they make their new home here in San Diego.

We also welcome our new sister Kathy Stokes. It was so nice to have some of her family here for a quiet afternoon baptism. We rejoice with her and continue to lift her up in prayer.

Trusting God’s leading in their lives, Sis Abby Fulop (Bro. Dennes and Sis. Joy) is engaged to Bro. Robin Karpati. Abby has been studying for the past several months in Budapest and Bro. Robin is from Baja Hungary and works in Budapest. We wish them God’s blessings.

Our church family enjoyed listening to the Sunday school classes recite God’s word and sing special songs for us about the meaning of Christmas. Thanks to them and our teachers for all the efforts and hard work to put the program together.

Starting Sunday, January 5, the San Diego church will have a new start time. 9:45 Song Service, 10:00 Service.

We are thankful every month for visiting ministers. They were
Bro. Jeff Wiegand (Sis. Janel, Goodfield, IL), Jim Koehl (Sis. Hilde, Morris, MN) and Bro. Don Steidle (Sis. Nan, Akron, OH).

Desert services are planned during the winter months. Call to verify.

**Colorado, Denver**

*Tess Leman*

One thing that brings me joy during this Christmas season, is hearing songs about our Savior being belted across speakers in secular stores and venues. A world that is usually resistant to Christianity hears Christmas hymns; some of which even talk about being saved from sin! I am so thankful that even amongst the confusion over the meaning of the season, somehow the message of salvation still makes its way to the ears of mankind.

This month we enjoyed the festivities that this time of year brings. Caroling at nursing homes brought just as much joy to us as it did the residents.

The Sunday school presented their annual program with an emphasis on perspective. Though there were many different people from many different walks of life in the Christmas story, they were all unified under a fulfilled promise. Their long wait was over, the Messiah was here, and they had good reason to rejoice.

**Connecticut, Rockville**

*Julie Bauman, Heidi Beutel*

“Glory to God! Glory to God! Glory to God in the highest!”

On December 15 we were blessed to enjoy our annual Christmas Program. Students from pre-K all the way through our seniors in Bible Class joyfully proclaimed the message through song and voice. It is always a wonderful blessing to listen to the smallest children sing about the good news as well as hear our Bible Class students read portions of scripture proclaiming our Saviors’ birth.

We were blessed to have a multitude of visiting ministers this past month. Elder Bro. Dan Kilgus (Sis. Jenna, Remington, IN) was here for a weekend visiting their son, daughter-in-law and granddaughter. Bro. Brad Gudeman (Sis. Teresa) and Bro. Tyler Joos (Sis. Tanya) were here from Bradford visiting their family members. Bro. Richard Manz (Sis. Audrey, Prescott, AZ) was here around the Thanksgiving holiday visiting her family.

We trust that God will bless you and keep you in this Christmas season. Let us each find some quiet time in the busyness to reflect on our Savior’s birth and all that He has so graciously poured upon us.

**District of Columbia, Washington**

*Henrietta Meyer*

We will not have caretakers during the winter months unless someone responds soon. Brethren have already spoken for the late winter, early spring months. There are still some months available in 2020. 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. Brad Gudeman (Sis. Theresa, Bradford, IL), Bro. Adam Luginbuhl (Sis. Jami, Philadelphia, PA), Bro. David Harter (Sis. Beth, Sabetha) and Bro. Doug Harmon (Sis. Lanna, Toledo, OH). Other visitors were from Rockville, CT and Bluffton, IN. We are thankful for visitors and for them letting us know they are coming.

This time of the year we remember all the blessings of the previous year. We appreciate all our caretakers, visitors, those who prayerfully considered moving here and all that pray for our small congregation.

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, Fort Lauderdale**

*Renee Mangold*

We were grateful to have several visiting ministers this past month. Visiting were Bro. Quinton Snyder (Sis. Heather, Taylor, MO), Bro. James Fehr (Sis. Brenda, Tremont, IL), Bro. Dan Beer (Sis. Deb, Milford, IN) and Bro. Joel Troxel (Sis. Amy, LaCrosse,
IN). We pray God will bless them for their efforts.

We completed our summer Bible Study on God’s Comfort. It was a wonderful time of growing and sharing God’s Word together.

We are so excited for the marriage of our dear friend Trishana Josephs to Oshane Sinclair on December 3 at the Ft. Lauderdale beach. We wish them God’s blessings in their future and hope they will keep the Lord as the cornerstone of their wedded life.

Our sympathies are with Bro. Mike and Sis. Faye Hohulin at the passing of his brother Keith. Keith died Friday, December 6 after a 9 year journey with cancer. We are saddened by this loss but thankful that through faith in Christ he has won the victory. Our love and prayers go out to the family.

We had our annual Christmas caroling and supper. It was a great time of worship, food and fellowship for those that could attend.

Winter season is here. We will be resuming our Wednesday evening services on January 15 through Easter.

Florida, Fort Myers
Mary Masters, Terri Young

We always look forward to this time of year as some of our seasonal families have begun to come down for the winter. There is sweet fellowship as we once again are reunited with loved ones.

Our Florida churches enjoyed a weekend away relaxing at the Lakewood retreat October 26 and 27. It was a wonderful time of fellowship and of course wonderful food!

Some of us enjoyed a tasty Thanksgiving potluck meal at the church on Thanksgiving Day. As always, it was delicious and accompanied with singing, fellowship and a special reading by Sis. Sue Hodel. A big thank you to those who organized the meal and those who brought the food. We certainly all have much to be thankful for!

We are thankful for answered prayers for Sis. Rhea Steffen who had knee replacement surgery and Sis. Maxine Hodel who had eye surgery. Both are recovering very well.

Every good and perfect gift comes from above. We were blessed to add one more soul to our church family as Bro. Collin and Sis. Lynelle Steidinger welcomed a healthy baby boy into their family. Beckett Ray was born on December 11, 2019, and joins one brother and three sisters.

The New Beginnings

As we look to a new year, it is full of hope and new beginnings. Here at The New Beginnings we are blessed to welcome another young mom, Araceli and her two precious children, Aleigha and Xaeden. We are excited to have them here as we all work together with teaching, encouragement, support, and most importantly introducing them to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

One of our moms, Lina, graduated the program and she and her dear young son, Aiden, will be leaving us in February. We wish her God’s blessings as they begin this new chapter in life. We hope and pray that the education and goals she accomplished while being here will help her to be successful in her career. More importantly, as always is the goal of TNB, we pray that the teaching of God’s Word and seeds of faith planted will bloom and grow, producing fruits that can only be brought on by the Holy Spirit.

We are truly excited to announce that yet another mom, Arzu, was accepted into the nursing program and is on her way to a career that will be a perfect fit for this kind and loving mom. We have watched positive qualities develop in her as she embraces change and more importantly, embraces faith.

We were also able to witness the pinning of a former TNB mom, Amber, as she graduated from the nursing program and is on her way to a promising career.

Most of these moms have come out of deep pain and trauma and this new way is not easy, but what a privilege to be able to come alongside them and observe the changes as they settle into a safe and structured environment. We are so grateful for the brothers and sisters in Fort Myers church as we see you interacting with these moms and children, helping them to feel welcome and a part of something that is more real than
anything most of them have ever experienced. We appreciate the love and prayers for this ministry as we rely on God’s strength, wisdom and grace because we know that He is the only source of true change. 

“It is of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is Thy faithfulness.” Lamentations 3:22-23

Praise God for His grace and mercy toward each one of us!

Florida, Sarasota
Sandra Kaeb

Our winter residents are slowly starting to return and it is a joy to rekindle friendships and worship together.

It’s always a blessing to have visiting ministers but it also spurs me on to thank God for those who minister to our church each week without special recognition. May God reward them as they serve us from our pulpit so willingly.

We are thankful to see Sis. DiAnne Brown and Bro. Ernie Buser back worshiping with us.

We were saddened to hear the passing of Bro. Dean Marty (Sis. Martha, Smithville, OH). We pray that his dear wife and family may feel our prayers during this difficult time. Bro. Dean and Sis. Martha were winter residents of Sarasota for many years.

What a beautiful time of year, as we just came through Thanksgiving and are approaching Christmas.

Our Sunday school children gave the Christmas program on December 8, titled "Sounds of Christmas." What a wonderful job they did sharing the birth of our Savior. After the program we enjoyed snacks and the children received gifts. Thanks to the Sunday school teachers and all those who labor to bring this special occasion together.

On December 14 we met at church and went Christmas caroling for the older ones and shut ins, such a beautiful evening to share God’s love in song. After caroling, we met back at the church for snacks.

CHRISTMAS =
C is for the Christ child, born upon this day. 
H for herald angles in the sky,
R means our redeemer, I means Israel,
S is for the star that shown so bright,
T is for three wise men, they who traveled far,
M is for the manger where He laid,
A is all He stands for, S means shepherds came.
And that is why there is a Christmas Day.

Haiti, Bonne Fin - Hospital Lumiere
Rick and Komari Aberle

The Christmas season in Haiti is a wonderful reminder of the fact that God’s church reaches beyond any border or boundary man creates. We praise Him for the unity of the body of Christ that we remember during this time as we have celebrated the Savior’s birth. Just as the Prince of Peace brought peace and good will to all men, we are grateful to have been experiencing a time of peace and calm again in Haiti.

During the months of November and December, Sis. Carrie Stoller, Bro. Brett Herrmann and Bro. Rick Aberle returned to the hospital to replace the missionaries serving there. As the months progressed, conditions returned to a level of calm nationwide. With improved conditions in the country, our team felt led to make plans for the Herrmann family and Aberle family to return to Haiti in December. Lord willing, we hope to have our entire team return over the next few weeks, to be reunited here at Bonne Fin shortly after the New Year. Praise God for His blessing in this matter.

Our team extends its thanks to the church for the prayers and words of encouragement during the past months as our team has dealt with family separations and other family medical issues. Lord willing, we hope to begin welcoming visitors and teams again in the month of January.

Haiti, Les Cayes
Mike and Susie Walder

“It is of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is thy faithfulness.” Lamentations 3:22-23.

As we begin a new year we are blessed to have a God who is rich in mercy and forever faithful, and
a Savior who always saves. God knows we need this wonderful sense of stability as we travel through this unstable world with a certain end. Let’s not remember the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father and the Prince of Peace only in December, but trust Him every month of the year!

We want to thank everyone for the ongoing prayers for the physical and spiritual work in Haiti. The violence and unrest have subsided, but the political situation remains unchanged and very unstable. Those of us serving here intend to march forward with God's grace and mercy through this new year. We are so thankful for each one of you and your wonderful support to us.

This month many of the local missionaries participated in singing Christmas carols at a local medical clinic and a home for the aged. This was followed by an enjoyable meal and evening out at the dairy farm which Bro. Daryl and Sis. Deb Knobloch and Bro. Eric and Sis. Melanie Stoller prepared.

**Illinois, Belvidere**

*Darcy Steffen*

December is many people’s favorite time of year as they love to gather with friends and family, reflect on blessings and joys of the past year, and look forward to a fresh start in the New Year. For others, it is very difficult. Some will be celebrating their first Christmas without a loved one. Others do not have family near or family at all. Some may feel disappointment with the past year, and do not have hope that next year will be any better. Hopefully we can all find people to reach out to who are neglected and alone this time of year!

The Sunday school children performed yet another delightful Christmas program for us all to enjoy. My favorite line of the entire program was from the 3-5 year olds who sang, “Welcome, welcome one and all, and although we’re rather small, we will sing it loud and clear. We are glad that you are here! We’re glad it’s Christmas, and that you’re here today.” What joy radiated from their little faces! We were encouraged by Bro. Art Mueller’s inspirational message about his favorite childhood Christmas gift: a dog named Tip. This dog made his life easier by helping with chores, saved his brother’s life from a raging bull, and mourned the loss of his little sister with the rest of the family. But Bro. Art reminded us that truly the best gift will always be the gift of Jesus Christ, Immanuel, God with us. After the Christmas program, we had the opportunity to rejoice in song as we sang Christmas carols at local nursing homes.

Earlier this month, we were given the blessing to rejoice with our Elder Bro. Duane and Sis. Bonnie Rocke in the engagement of their son, Bro. Adrian to Sis. Charity Fischer from Leo, IN. The two families met in Belvidere, and invited us to a dinner and singing at Bro. Art and Sis. Marlene’s barn. It was a beautiful evening of fellowship and glorifying our heavenly Father as we see the work He does in the lives of those who put their trust in Him.

We are always thankful to welcome new people to our congregation, and we are happy to have Gui with us from Haiti. He is a friend of Bro. Art’s, and we rejoice to report that Gui has given his life to God in repentance. Please pray for him in his new walk with the Lord.

As one spiritual life is born, another has passed from time into eternity. We mourn with Gary (Sis. Doreen) Moser in the loss of his sister, Sharilyn Seter. Please keep this dear family in your prayers.

We wish to congratulate Bro. Ted and Sis. Heidi Schock on their new grandson! Silas was born to Randall and Aubrey Vongvanith and joins his two older brothers, Theo and Kit.

As this year wraps up and a new one begins, may our number one New Year’s resolution be to follow God more faithfully in the coming year.

**Illinois, Bloomington-Normal**

*Sara Anliker, Wendy Zimmerman*

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

_A Another Year Is Dawning_, *Hymns of Zion,* #150

The Christmas season brings many opportunities to celebrate the birth of Jesus! In the past weeks, we have enjoyed Christmas caroling,
our church choir’s evening program entitled “O Come, Let Us Adore Him” and our Sunday school Christmas program. Another tradition, are the Thanksgiving and Christmas “adopt-a-family” baskets that we put together and pass out in our community.

We rejoice with Bro. John and Sis. Emily Maurer as they announced the engagement of their daughter, Sara, to Erik Ramsland of Naperville, IL.

We extend our sympathy and prayers to Bro. Tim Hohulin (Sis. Cathy) at the passing of his brother, Keith Hohulin, after a 10-year battle with cancer.

Let us be intentional as we begin the New Year, to give thanks for all that we have been given, especially for the gift of Jesus!

Illinois, Bradford
Becky Endress, Lana Wiegand

Our annual Christmas program is one of our pleasant traditions honoring the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. On a snowy Sunday evening, our Sunday school students and their teachers presented the story of the first Christmas in verse and song.

What is a tradition, anyway? My 1828 dictionary describes it as “that which is handed down from age to age by oral communication. Traditions may be good or bad, true or false.” In Matthew 15:2-9, Jesus rebuked men for devising traditions that neutralized God’s commands. Paul reminds, “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments (basic elements) of the world and not after Christ.” Col. 2:8. Jesus talked about this in Mark 7:6-7, “This people honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.”

Peter taught the Gentiles to be holy in all behavior, “forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation (behavior) received by tradition from your fathers.” I Peter 1:14-19. In 2 Thessalonians 2:15, after a discussion of how believers come to fall away, Paul exhorts, “Therefore brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.” We all live by a variety of traditions in most areas of our lives. Clearly, many traditions passed down help us live together in love and peace. May the Lord help us understand and keep the good traditions that help unify His body and thus, follow Christ.

Many of us attended the funeral in Princeville for our dear Sis. Eleanor Baer, age 101, mother of our Sis. Anna Marie (Bro. Steve) Stoller. Her joy in salvation, which she received after she was a grandma, was an encouragement and inspiration to many.

Thanks to Bro. Les (Sis. Christine) Kaeb, Francesville, IN (currently serving in Haiti) for visiting us and sharing God’s Word. It was a blessed day.

Illinois, Champaign
Brent Young

Elder Bro. Wayne L. Banwart, 71, of Champaign, IL passed away on December 13, 2019, surrounded by family after a courageous battle with cancer. He was born on January 9, 1948, to Bro. Albert and Sis. Betty (Zaugg) Banwart in West Bend, Iowa. He married Sis. Charlen Schrock on March 22, 1970 in Oakville, IA.

Bro. Wayne was preceded in death by his parents, his beloved wife of 46 years, and a granddaughter, Matea Stoller. He is survived by three children: Krista (Doug) Stoller of Omaha, Nebraska, Sis. Kara (Bro. Aaron) Klopfenstein, Indianapolis, Bro. Neil (Sis. Leann) Banwart, Indianapolis; 8 grandchildren, 2 brothers, and 4 sisters.

Bro. Wayne had a willing heart for Christian ministry, faithfully serving as an elder and minister for many years, investing countless hours sharing the good news of Jesus Christ locally, nationally, and internationally. Bro. Wayne loved serving because he loved people. He was quick to offer a helping hand and a word of encouragement to everyone who crossed his path.

He will be remembered for his gentle and humble spirit, positive attitude, wisdom, kindness, servant leadership, and undying love for his family and friends. He leaves a Godly legacy of generosity and love that will impact generations to come.
Illinois, Chicago
Diana Eisenmann

Our fall HarvestCall activity was held in November. We gathered together in small groups for corporate prayer, lifting up local needs, missionaries, and other national and local church prayer requests. It was a blessing to share our hearts in this way. We also put together school and medical kits to be distributed in Mexico. Often when we think of HarvestCall we think of the physical activities we do, but we realize that prayer to our all mighty Heavenly Father is of primary importance and accomplishes far beyond what we can do with our human hands.

Our Christmas program, “Hear the Angel Message,” was held in early December. We appreciated the Sunday school children sharing the beautiful Christmas story through accounts of the many angelic appearances during that time. After the program we had our annual Christmas caroling and chili dinner. What a blessing to worship and spend time together as a church family, spreading good will and God’s love to others while enriching our relationships with each other.

Bro. Rick Kaisner shared a Wednesday evening topical bible study on “Comparison of the Gospels.”

We have decided to move up the time for our Wednesday evening services. We will now gather at 7:15pm for song worship, and the sermon will begin at 7:30pm.

We thank Bro. George Foxe and Bro. Tony Cardenas who have agreed to serve terms as usher and trustee, respectively.

Illinois, Cissna Park
Joan Ruding, Amber Stuckel

With the Christmas season upon us, and the New Year approaching, we feel our great need for God’s guidance in our lives, and for His precious peace to enfold us again in the coming year. “O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker. For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.” Psalms 95:6-7. “...thy hand (shall) lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.” Psalms 139:10.

Christmas activities involved our Sunday school Christmas program, as well as all-church caroling in local homes and a nursing home. What a blessing to worship and spend time together as a church family, spreading good will and God’s love to others while enriching our relationships with each other.

Thank you to Elder Bro. Dan Moser (Sis. Anne, Elgin, IL) and Bro. Josh Walder (Sis. Tina, Congerville, IL), for sharing God’s word with us on Thanksgiving Day.

We wish congratulations and God’s blessings upon the marriage union of Reagan Walder (Bro. Steve and Sis. Kathy) and Beth Weston (Danville, IL).

Our sympathies go to the family of 95 year old Elizabeth Maul (mother-in law of Sis. Wanda Maul and mother of the late Bro. Bill Maul).

Bro. Gib Stock has been in the hospital. Our prayers and concern continue to reach out to him and his wife, Sis. Kathy.

Illinois, Congerville
Mary Knapp, Erica Steffen

We were blessed by several visiting ministers and their wives this month. Bro. Tyler Joos (Sis. Tonya, Bradford, IL), Bro. Brent Kellenberger (Sis. Beth, Kansas City, MO), Bro. Brent Walder (Sis. Naomi, Rockville, CT), Bro. Tom Lanz (Sis. Mary, Mediapolis, IA), and Elder Bro. Ron Messner (Sis. Pam, Washington, IL) shared the Word of Life with us and we ask God’s blessings on them for their love to our church.

“Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.” Hebrews 13:17

After much prayer and seeking the Lord’s will for our church, Bro. Zach Anderson has been selected by our congregation to serve as Ordained Deacon for the Congerville church. A special thank you to Elder Bros. Ron Messner (Sis. Pam, Washington, IL), Marvin Dotterer (Sis. Nancy, Forrest, IL), and Trent Meiss (Sis. Lucy, Eureka, IL) who have assisted Elder Bro. Rick Plattner with this work of seeking local leadership for our church. We pray for wisdom and guidance for Bro. Zach and Sis. Karla and peace for their family, as they will, Lord willing, step into this new leadership role pending ordination by the Elder Body in March. As we look back to where the Lord has brought us, we are so thankful for the
Lord’s provision for our church in raising up faithful brethren to serve. "Therefore rise all ye, His servants; For Elijah’s spirit pray! If as Lord ye would address Him, Faithfully ye must confess Him, And His holy will obey! Therefore rise all ye, His servants’ For Elijah’s spirit pray!"

The Watchman’s Call, Zion’s Harp, #112

Illinois, Elgin
Amy Gasser

We thank Bro. Earl Beery (Sis. Suzy, Rittman, OH) for sharing God’s Word with us recently.

We rejoice with Alyssa Moser (Elder Bro. Dan and Sis. Anne), who has begun her repentance.

Our Family Christmas Caroling was held on Sunday, December 8, followed by a chili/soup supper at the Fellowship Center. The Sunday school students presented the Christmas program on Sunday, December 15.

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” Isaiah 9:6

We extend sympathy to Sis. Jan (Bro. Otto) Klein in the passing of her brother-in-law, Ralph (Melanie) Bormann of West Bend, IA on November 27.

Our prayers have been with Bro. Jerry and Sis. Kay Cargill, who have both been hospitalized with serious health problems. Sis. Sarah Schambach (Bro. Jason and Sis. Karen) underwent shoulder surgery.

Congratulations to Bro. Anthony Eason and Sis. Kaysha Blomgren, who have announced their engagement. Their parents are Bro. George and Carole Eason and Bro. Jon and Sis. Tricia Blomgren (Lester, IA).

Illinois, Eureka
Debra Blunier, Linda Rocke

Christmas time comes so quickly, and before we know it, the New Year is upon us. We do an annual church caroling and chili supper, which is enjoyed by all. One of the people we sang to commented that this was “the best part of my Christmas so far.” We also enjoyed the Sunday school program, and hearing the children singing their Christmas songs, telling us that “old, old story” once again.

We are always so thankful for our visiting ministers, and this month they included Bro. Kevin Schrock (Sis. Rachel, Congerville, IL), Bro. Nathan Walder (Sis. Denise, Cissna Park, IL), Bro. Kent Getz (Sis. Betty, Elgin, IA), Elder Bro. Tony Manz (Sis. Denise, Junction, OH), Bro. Don Manz (Sis. Connie, Junction, OH), and Bro. Randy Mogler (Sis. Evie, Washington, IL).

Weddings are a joyful time, and we extend our congratulations to Dana Blunier (Bro. Kurt and Sis. Livy) and Sarah Kupferschmid (Rod and Cindy) in their recent marriage on December 14.

Kaitlin Kuenzi (Bro. Aden and Sis. Becky) of Silverton, OR, spent the past few years with our congregation while she attended nursing school. She graduated on Dec. 14, and is returning home to Oregon. Her cheerful spirit will be missed by all. We wish her God’s blessings as she begins her nursing career.

There are several who have recently had surgeries. Bro. Loren Zimmerman (Sis. Mary) is recovering from hip surgery, and Sis. Sue Zimmerman (Bro. Dale) is recovering from shoulder surgery. There are others, too, who are continuing to mend, and we pray they will all be feeling well soon.

Our dear Sis. Eleanor Baer (Otto, dec.) passed away on November 28. She was 101 years old, and we miss her. She resided at the Eureka Apostolic Nursing Home and attended church here for over 20 years, though her funeral was in Princeville. Our sympathy is extended to her son Bro. George, and to all of the family. Also our sympathy is extended to Sis. Eileen Blunier (Bro. Duane) in the loss of her brother Keith Hohulin who resided in Cummings, GA. May God comfort all who have lost loved ones in this past year.

Note of Thanks:

The family of Sis. Eleanor Baer would like to thank everyone for your many loving thoughts, prayers, visits, and kind deeds shown to our dear mother. May God bless you.
Illinois, Fairbury
*Kati Meiss, Trish Steidinger*

If what you have tomorrow is what you are thankful for today... what will you have? It’s a question worth pondering, especially with the Holidays approaching, but why not think about it more often? I encourage each of you to sit a moment and list the things you are thankful for. The list will quickly become endless! We are thankful for our church family and appreciate the efforts of our ministering brethren who visited us for Thanksgiving services. Bro. Alan Schambach (Sis. Sarah, Remington, IN) shared the pulpit with Bro. Dennis Russi (Sis. Diane, Austin/Bastrop, TX). Then on December 1, we were blessed again with more visitors which included Elder Bro. Jay Luthi (Sis. Jane, Lamont, KS), Bro. Aaron Luthi (Sis. Maria, Lamont, KS), Bro. Dennis Russi (Sis. Diane, Austin/Bastrop, TX), Bro. Jerry Wagenbach (Sis. Bonnie, Mediapolis, IA).

We are thankful we can pray to the Father on behalf of those we love. We remember in prayer our Sis. Cindy Herr and her children, in the passing of her mother, Sis. Eleanor Baer of Princeville. We also pray for those who will celebrate the holidays with an empty chair this year. It’s encouraging to know that those of us who have experienced loss in our families don’t walk alone, and our loved ones are remembered.

We also pray for our Bro. Duane Kilgus (Sis. Arlene) and Bro. Harve Schiefer (Sis. Jan) who have spent time in the hospital. God is the ultimate Healer and we trust Him to provide for their needs.

We enjoyed lifting our voices together with brethren multiple times this month for Christmas caroling. On December 15, our youth shared the Christmas story through song, pieces, and scripture. It brings joy to our hearts to watch them share with excitement how God’s salvation plan began to unfold on Earth.


**Note of thanks:**

My humble thanks to one and all for remembering me on my 95th birthday in any way. May God bless you each one. In Christ’s love, Lorene Boner

Illinois, Forrest
*Carissa Knapp, Marsha Lanz*

On Thanksgiving morning, we were thankful to have ministering Bro. Mark Klaus (Sis. Rebekah, Athens, AL) and Bro. Michael Schneider (Sis. Jodi, Junction, OH) with us. We thank Bro. Greg Schambach (Sis. Heather, Elgin, IL), who visited on a Wednesday evening and shared a topical on, “How to Study the Bible.” On November 18, we were invited to join the Fairbury congregation at the Fellowship Hall for a presentation on, “Way of Peace”, by Bro. Fred Witzig (Sis. Nancy, Washington, IL). May God bless each one for their labors in sharing the truth on our behalf. “For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.” *Hebrews 6:10*

Our Sunday school presented the annual Christmas Program on December 18. It was a joy and blessing to sit and listen to the account of Christ’s birth through our youth. May God bless the efforts of both the students and teachers.


We extend our sympathy and prayers to Bro. Dan Banwart (Sis. Kathy), in the passing of his brother, Elder Bro. Wayne Banwart (Champaign, IL).

We are prayerful for all those who have had health concerns this month and have spent time in the hospital: Sis. Roberta Broquard (Bro. Wayne), Sis. Gloria Drayer (Bro. Wayne), Keith Bachman (Sis. Tamra), and Sis. Alma Bolliger.

Illinois, Goodfield
*Amy Hinrichsen, Judy Knapp*

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given:” *Isaiah 9:6*
As we celebrate and remember Jesus being born as a newborn baby and the wonder that the Christmas story entails, we have four families in our congregation also celebrating the birth of a newborn baby.

We rejoice with Bro. Keith and Sis. Perri Grimm as they were blessed with a baby girl, Vivian Ruth on November 22. Welcoming her home is big sister, Violet. Thankful Grandparents are Elder Bro. Jeff and Sis. Ruth Grimm and Bro. Jim and Sis. Ree Hartman.

Luke and Rachel Lowery became first time parents as they were blessed with a baby girl, Leah Ann on November 26. Leah’s grandparents are Ken and Sis. Jaci Lowery (Goodfield, IL) and Mark and Kimberly Schmidgall.

Bro. Royce and Sis. Sarah Schieler are excited to welcome another baby boy. Chase Brian was born on December 7. He is warmly welcomed by his older siblings: Katelyn, Tyson, Alea, and Ambria. Grandparents are Brian and Teresa Schieler and Bro. Tom and Sis. Jane Bolliger (Tremont, IL).

Rhett Mason Gerber was also born on December 7. Bro. Mark and Sis. Kendahl are rejoicing as they welcome their first baby boy. Rhett’s grandparents are Jake and Shari Evans and Bro. Alan and Sis. Joli Gerber (Bluffton, IN).

Our Goodfield congregation was blessed to have Bro. Tim Wiegand (Sis. Christa, Leo, IN) have our Thanksgiving service. We have many things to be thankful for especially our risen Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

On December 1, we had Memorandum and were thankful to have Elder Bro. Bruce Endress (Sis. Elizabeth, Bradford, IL) helping to deliver the message.

Other visiting ministers this month included Bro. Rich Martin (Sis. Jackie, Gridley, IL) and Bro. Mark Zimmerman (Sis. Cheryl, Eureka, IL). We thank these dear brothers for sharing God’s word.

“Tis the season” for Christmas caroling and we enjoyed a night of all church caroling to people around the area.

“Oh come Let us adore Him…” was what the children joyously echoed at this year’s Christmas program on December 8! We enjoyed seeing all the enthusiasm as they sang about our Savior’s birth! May we always adore Jesus and keep that child-like faith!

It’s never easy to say goodbye and we are sorry for the loss of Bro. Jake (Sis. Mary) Wettstein’s mom, Loretta Wettstein. Our prayers are with them and their family including: Bro. Wade (Sis. Hallie) Wettstein, Loretta’s grandson.

We are prayerful for those who have been experiencing health problems. Our Sis. Joy Hohulin (Bro. Jim) recently spent some time in the hospital and is currently recovering at a nursing home. Our Sis. Connie Gerber (Bro. Rick) was recently diagnosed with cancer. Please be prayerful for her and Bro. Rick and their family as she seeks treatment. May the Lord be the source of strength and healing for both Sis. Joy and Sis. Connie.

We are thankful for Sis. Lynn Wiegand (Bro. Doug) that her recent surgery went well. She is home now and is recovering nicely. We will continue to pray for her and her family for complete healing.

Bro. Mike and Sis. Lila Wirtz are very thankful for their daughter, Katie Chen, and the clean results she recently received after her chemo treatments and surgery. Praise God for His healing hand.

As we end this year of 2019, it’s a time to reflect on all that has occurred. Whether the year went as planned or maybe not as planned, we can always remember that God is in control and that He is sovereign and is always there for us. We wish you all a happy and peaceful New Year as we begin 2020. May we all seek to love the Lord more and give Him all glory.

**Note of Thanks:**

Thank you all for the prayers, words of encouragement, and acts of kindness with the sudden passing of our dear husband, dad, and grandpa. We have felt the prayers from so many and continue to be grateful for them during this time. Love, Sis. Gerri Hinrichsen and family

**Illinois, Gridley**

**Perry Klopfenstein**

Elder Bro. Bruce Endress (Bradford, IL), was with us.
for Thanksgiving services on November 28. Bro. David Obergfel (Peoria, IL), spoke on Wednesday evening, December 11, on the topic of “Discipleship Today - Abiding in the Vine/ Fruitbearing.” We thank these brothers for their efforts.

Bro. Bernie Ferneau fell and broke three vertebrae along with some ribs. He was hospitalized briefly, and is at home recovering.

Bro. Robert J. Hock Jr., 76, passed away on December 8, 2019 at the Apostolic Christian Home of Roanoke. He is survived by his wife, Sis. Kay Hock. They were blessed with a long marriage of 53 years having been united on August 27, 1966. Also surviving are one son, Bro. Jeff Hock, Gridley; one daughter, Sarah (Kevin) Holstine, Towanda, Illinois; two sisters, two brothers, and two grandsons. Bro. Bob gave a nice presence in church, always having a favorable smile of happiness on meeting you.

Retired Elder Bro. Edwin Ringger, 97, passed away on December 3, 2019 at the Apostolic Christian Home of Roanoke. He is survived by his wife of 72 years, Sis. Geralene “Pat” Ringger, also of the home, where they resided together. Other survivors are three children, retired Elder Bro. Earl (Sis. Dixie) Ringger, Gridley; Sis. Brenda (Bro. Brace) Wieland, Leo, Indiana; and Bro. Gary (Sis. Marla) Ringger, Gridley; one sister, Sis. Lillian Ringger, Gridley; one brother, Bro. Raymond Ringger, Peoria; 10 grandchildren; 37 great-grandchildren; and three great-great grandchildren. Bro. Edwin served as a minister for 35 years, including 22 as elder. He was surely used for many years in preaching the gospel, and had a “ready mind” concerning spiritual matters. He devoted unselfish energies for the Savior, and for the church he loved.

Illinois, Morton

**Julie Bahr, Annette Tanner**

Happy New Year from our Morton congregation.

We have been blessed the past month with visiting ministers teaching us from God’s Word. We thank Elder Bro. Scott Schafer (Sis. Gigi, South Bend, IN) and Bro. Loren Schrenk (Sis. Betsy, St. Louis, MO) for their labors on our behalf.

Our December Family Worship Night was led by our Bro. Fred Funk (Sis. Diane). His topic was “Let Every Heart Prepare Him Room”.

**Have you any room for Jesus,**

*He who bore your load of sin? As He knocks and asks admission, Sinner, will you let him in? Room for Jesus, King of glory! Hasten now His word obey; Swing the heart’s door widely open, Bid Him enter while you may.**

*Have You Any Room for Jesus?, Hymns of Zion/ Tabernacle Hymns #193*

We extend our sympathy to Missy (Tracy) Grimm and her family on the passing of her mother Shirley Byler of Bourbonnais, IL.

The theme for this year’s Christmas program on December 8 was “Heaven Came Down”. We were inspired and richly blessed by the enthusiasm of our Sunday school students, LifePoints class and Benefit Dinner Choir as they shared the story of Jesus’s birth through verse and song.

Also on December 8 many were able to gather to go Christmas caroling at our nursing homes and for some local shut-ins. A delicious chili supper followed at the church.

As we begin a New Year, let us remember the reason Jesus came to earth and “Make Room for Jesus” in our hearts and in our lives and accept His saving grace to lead, guide and direct us throughout the days ahead. May God be with us all in 2020!

**“O what a wonderful, wonderful day--Day I will never forget; After I’d wandered in darkness away, Jesus my Savior I met. O what a tender, compassionate friend--He met the need of my heart; Shadows dispelling, With joy I am telling; He made all the darkness depart! Heaven came down and glory filled my soul, when at the cross the Savior made me whole; My sins were washed away and my night was turned to day--Heaven came down and glory filled my soul”!**

*Heaven Came Down and Glory Filled My Soul, Country and Western Gospel Hymnal #46*

Illinois, Peoria

**Bonnie Bach, Crystal Wettstein**

Christmas activities abound as we celebrate Jesus, the Reason
for the Season. The Sunday School Christmas program showcased the children’s excitement for the birth of Jesus. All-church caroling included visiting shut-in’s, our nursing home Skylines, and a local women’s shelter. A special service titled "Birthday of a King" included many musical numbers by various groups, poems, and was a wonderful tribute to the baby who became King.

Sis. Linda Miller passed away. We mourn with her family, including her mother, Sis. Betty (late Bro. Bob) and praise God she is now free from the many health struggles she had in this life.

Many others have had health or personal issues lately. We lift them up in prayer for the Almighty to comfort them. They include Sis. Lisa Jackson, Mark Baker (infant son of Ross and Rosie (Nelson)), Sis. Margaret Getz, Allison Stickling, Bro Max and Sis. Katy Hoer, Sis. Linda Leathers, Chris Stickling, Sis. Maria Graham, Mary Funk, Bro. Kent Steffen, Bro. Fedi Davidovics.

“Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.” Mark 9:23.

We appreciate visiting minister Bro. Rick Kaisner (Sis. Michelle, Chicago, IL).

Illinois, Princeville

Melinda Christ, Cherie White

“O now, my Saviour, do Thou take, My heart and make it Thine…”
The Covenant of Grace, Zion’s Harp, #163.

We rejoice with our new lambs of the flock, Bro. Tagen Steidinger (Bro. Chris and Sis. Carol) and Sis. Kami Stahl (Bro. Rod and Sis. Cathy). Assisting our Elder Bro. Craig Martin (Sis. Terri) was Elder Bro. Ron Messner (Sis. Pam, Washington, IL). Also sharing the pulpit was Bro. Barry Dietz (Sis. Rachel, Bradford, IL) and Bro. Gregg Rumbold (Sis. Heather, Peoria, IL).

We are so joyful that two young men have started their walk with Jesus. We rejoice with Alec Wagenbach (Bro. Tim and Sis. Tricia) and Austin Herrmann (Bro. Ben and Sis. Ann). May God gently lead them along as they commit their life to Him.

On Thanksgiving Day, Bro. John Grimm (Sis. Julie, Columbus, OH) brought forth the message. We are such a blessed people, may God be praised for His goodness and grace He shares unto us!

We shared the blessings of the Christmas season as we caroled to nursing home residents and individual homes on December 1. Sharing a chili supper and lifting our voices in song was such an encouraging way to spend a Sunday evening together.

“And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age.” Genesis 15:15.

Our dear Sis. Eleanor Baer passed from this life on Thursday, November 28 reaching the high age of 101. We both rejoice and sorrow with her children, Sis. Anna Marie Stoller (Bro. Steve) of Bradford, Delores Baer of Eureka, Sis. Linda Joos (Bro. Rolland) of Princeville, Bro. George Baer of Eureka, Ed Baer (Connie) of Philadelphia, PA, Larry Baer (Vera) of Edelstein, Terry Baer of Peoria, Sis. Cynthia Herr of Fairbury, and Nita Grimm (Kevin) of Morrill, KS and many extended family. Bro. Ned Stoller (Sis. Heidi, Alto, MI) conducted the funeral service for his dear grandmother. Roger Rumbold passed away on December 4. Our sympathy extends to his brothers, Raymond (Joann) and Bro. Ronald (Sis. Jackie). May God comfort these dear families in the loss of their loved ones.

“…For this cause shall a man leave father and mother…” Matthew 19:5.

December 8 was the wedding day of Bro. Braden Streitmatter (Bro. David and Sis. Crystal) and Sis. Lydia Sauder (Bro. Paul and Sis. Marie). Sharing in the joy was Elder Bro. Brad Eisenmann (Sis. Cindy, Chicago, IL), Bro. John Rassi (Sis. Heather, Tremont, IL) and Bro. Gerald Wagenbach Jr. (Sis. Bonnie, Mediapolis, IA). We thank our dear ministering brethren for sharing the Word with us. In the evening, we had our Christmas Program. The children ministered unto us sharing Jesus’s birth and the message of joy for the Christmas season. May we have a time of reflection of God’s great gift to mankind amidst the hustle and bustle of the world around us.

We are so thankful for the finalization of the adoption of Sawyer into Bro. Steven and Sis. Kari Beutel’s family. It is evident to see the love shared among the
family members in taking Sawyer as their own son and brother.

It was a memorable evening as we gathered at the Fellowship Hall to commemorate 50 years since our present Princeville Church building was erected. It was so touching to see our dear Elder Bro. Craig Martin reveal the contents of the time capsule that was placed in the cornerstone with our precious children gathered around! Our hope and prayer is that these dear children will be the future church worshipping God together in sweet fellowship. It was certainly an evening for our hearts to be knit together in brotherhood and friendship.

Illinois, Roanoke

Judy Sauder, Barb Schwind

“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding; In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.” Prov. 3:5 and 6

May we be trusting in the Lord, acknowledging Him, and following in His ways in this New Year.

Beckett Grey, son of Bro. Luke and Sis. Allison Fischer, was stillborn on November 11. We extend our love and sympathy to his parents, brothers and sister: Clay, Halle, Reed, and Cason; grandparents Bro. Duane and Sis. Rachel Schroeder and Bro. Kevin and Sis. Annette Fischer; and great-grandmothers Sis. Anna Marie Reutter and Sis. Marge Fischer.

Our prayers are also with others in our church whose loved ones have passed on. Bro. Rol (Sis. Carol) Rumbold’s brother, Roger (Patsy) Rumbold of Henry, IL, passed away December 4.

Keith (Connie) Hohulin of Cumming, GA, passed away December 6. He is the son of Sis. Marie Hohulin and a brother of our retired minister, Bro. Tim and Sis. Cathy Hohulin.

Bro. Jon Zeller (Sis. Christy, Morton, IL) was our guest minister on November 24. He came to help support our mentoring program where brothers and sisters in our church are paired with high school students to encourage and support them.


We welcome Justin and Kerri Fehr and their children, Lincoln and Adler, who have been worshipping with us. They reside in Eureka.

Mike Steevens and Sarah Dominique welcomed a baby boy, Mikah Audchild, on November 26. His older sisters and brother are Ava, Sophie and Auden. Grandparents are Sue Schupp of Washington, IL, and Bro. Brent and Sis. Marge Hodel.

On December 1, our church shared the good news of Jesus’ birth through caroling. Afterwards, we enjoyed supper together at the fellowship hall.

We rejoice that Mida Fehr has begun her walk with the Lord.

December 4 was our annual church and nursing home business meeting. Bro. Steve (Sis. Linda) Pfister is our new church trustee; Bro. Chad (Sis. Brenda) Martin is our new nursing home trustee; Bro. Dave (Sis. Stacy) Leman is our new fellowship hall trustee; and Bro. Bob (Sis. Ann) Knepp will serve on the nominating committee. We thank those who have served in those positions.

Our Sunday school Christmas program was December 8. It warmed our hearts to see the children of our church sing of their love for Jesus. Bro. James Fehr (Sis. Brenda, Tremont, IL) was our guest minister.

Our Bible Class, Scripture Memory Class, ACTIVE (Jr. high boys), and HOPE (Jr. high girls) all held Christmas activities that involved helping and serving others. What a blessing our youth is to our church!

On December 18, the Prairie Choristers, our Youth Choir and a Men’s Choir presented “Is There Room?” a selection of Christmas songs and a scripture reading. The beautiful music and words inspired us, and we were challenged with two questions: Is there room in your heart for Him to write His story? Are you willing to trade your dreams for His glory? Those 2 questions struck a chord in my heart. We not only wrestle with those questions when we surrender our hearts to the Lord in repentance and come to Him in faith, but as converted people we continue to wrestle with these questions. Many times God’s story for my
life looks very different than how I would choose to write it. Is there room in my heart for Him to write His story, and am I willing to trade my dreams for His glory? These questions pose a daily battle for me. There are no “quick fixes”, but by God’s grace we can be overcomers. May we have surrendered hearts so the Lord can write the story of our lives for His glory! Romans 5:1-5.

Bro. Bob Zimmerman, Bro. Harold Roth, Sis. Vi Hintorne, Sis. Pat Fischer, and Bro. Dave (Sis. Barb) Schwind are dealing with health issues. Please continue to pray for them.

Note of Thanks

From Bro. Harold Roth - To my faithful church family: Many thanks for the beautiful cards, prayers, and get well wishes for my 103rd birthday. God bless you all!

Illinois, Tremont
Debbie Aberle, Anita Koch

“In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.” 1 Thess 5:18.

We have appreciated the visits of ministering brothers, Bro. Glen Steiner (Sis. Rachel, Winthrop, MN), Bro. Jedd Rocke (Sis. Marsha, Goodfield, IL), Bro. Barry Dietz (Sis. Rachel, Bradford, IL), and Bro. Virgil Kaeb (Sis. Suellen, Sarasota, FL).

Our thoughts and prayers for recovery have remembered Bro. Bob (Sis. Doris) Baer and Bro. Mike (Sis. Michelle) Oswald as they submitted to surgery, also Bro. Jon (Sis. Rebekah) Wagenbach who spent a few days in the hospital. Liam Dill (Bro. Brent and Sis. Whitney) is getting around on crutches after an injury. We pray that his little foot will heal soon. We continue to pray for Sis. Sandy (Bro. Ken) Dill with her health concerns.

God has blessed several of our grandparent couples with new babies to love. Bro. Dan and Sis. Julie Koch are excited to welcome Donovan Florencio (Bro. Santos and Sis. Katie Lopez, Bastrop, TX). Bro. James and Sis. Brenda Fehr are thrilled to welcome Beckett Ray (Bro. Colin and Sis. Lynelle Steidinger, Ft. Myers, FL), Bro. Tom and Sis. Jane Bolliger are rejoicing to welcome Chase Brian to their family circle. His parents are Bro. Royce and Sis. Sarah Schieler, Goodfield, IL. We also rejoice with Bro. Levi and Sis. Dani Hancock and Rayna as they welcomed Oaklee Mae into their hearts and home. Bro. Marty and Sis. Karla Rollins are her grandparents.

“And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you, Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.” Luke 2:10-12.

Christ is Born! O Holy Night! Come see the Baby Jesus. One Small Child. Hallelujah! Joy to the World! We were blessed by the Sunday school children and the choir who presented the beautiful story through song.

Our sympathy is expressed to the families of Ruth Endress and Libby Mathers, who have passed from this life into eternity.

Illinois, Washington
Lydia Pfaffmann

With eager anticipation we await the Christmas season! It’s by far the most wonderful time of the year! Yet despite the joyful season, there has been some loss in our congregation. Bro. Nate and Sis. Michelle Braker along with their two children, Gideon and Aurelia, felt called by God to be assistant houseparents at Gateway Woods in Leo, IN. We will miss them very much!

We’re sorry to hear the passing of Loretta Wettstein, mother of Sis. Janine Rocke (Bro. Kevin) and Sis. JoEllen Martin (Bro. Todd). We mourn their loss during this season of family, memories, and traditions.

Visiting ministers to be welcomed on the Washington pulpit this month were Bro. Kevin Banwart (Sis. Sandy, West Bend, IA) and Bro. John Lehman (Sis. Tamara, Wolcott, IN). We appreciated them allowing the Spirit to help them share their spiritual perspectives with us.

We were thankful to have Larry Edwards back in church after being hospitalized for a brief period.

May the joy of the Christmas season capture your hearts with the enchantment and mystery of Jesus and His magnificent love for us!
Indiana, Bluffton
Suzie Fiechter, Liana Reinhard, Olivia Steffen

“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

It’s a beautiful time of year as we contemplate “God with us”. Because of our hopelessness and His great love for us, He was willing to leave the perfection of Heaven and come to save us. He truly is wonderful! We have been blessed this season to hear our Sunday school children praise Him in song and a church choir present the Hallelujah chorus.

Bro. Joe and Sis. Lisa Leman have returned from their mission work in Asia to give birth to Lincoln David. Thankful grandparents are Bro. Jeff and Sis. Val Leman of Bluffton North, and Sis. Jenny Frauhiger (Bro. Lynn, dec.). Bro. Seth and Sis. Jodi Gerber were also home and updated us on CVE.

We’re thankful for our renewed fellowship with them for a time!


We rejoice with Bro. Patrick Bluhm (David and Lynnette) and Sis. Alyssa Bertsch (Bro. Tom and Sis. Brenda) as they were united in marriage.

Amanda Schneider is seeking the Lord in repentance. We welcome her as part of our church family! Her parents are Dale and Andrea Schneider of Francesville, IN.

Many of our loved ones struggle with health issues: some known and some unknown. Our prayers have been with Bro. Gary Garman (Sis. Deb), Bro. Clarence Gehring (Sis. Joyce), Sis. Jamie Rinkenberger (Bro. Luke) and Bro. Matt Kaehr (Sis. Olivia).

Our love and sympathy go out to Tony and Linda Oswalt, Bro. Andy and Sis. Jenae Schmit, Bro. Jason Oswalt, and Josh and Sara Oswalt with the passing of their mother and grandmother, Marie Hendricks.

Indiana, Bluffton North
Rhonda Maller, Tiffani Schladenhauffen

“Oh, praise the LORD, all ye nations; praise him, all ye people. For his merciful kindness is great toward us; and the truth of the LORD endureth forever. Praise ye the LORD.” Psalm 117

We were blessed to share an evening of praise and worship with our Bluffton North and Bluffton congregations. The song leaders shared scriptures as well as leading us in hymns. We also held our annual Christmas Caroling on the second Sunday in December. Groups visited and sang at three area nursing homes before returning to Bluffton North for a chili supper and Christian fellowship.

Our church family was also blessed with visiting ministers, Bro. Alan Schambach (Sis. Sarah, Remington, IN) on November 17, and Elder Bro. Lynn Stieglitz (Sis. Leonda, Leo, IN) on November 24. Elder Bro. Lynn Fiechter (Sis. Ronda, Bluffton, IN) also joined us to assist our Elder Bro. Steve with sharing the memorandum.

Both Bro. Joe and Sis. Lisa Leman (Asia) and Bro. Adam and Sis. Jenna Leman (Magdalena, MX) shared the various aspects of their challenges, opportunities, prayer needs, and reasons for praise on the mission field.

Sis. Cyndee Hoover (Bro. Phil) is recovering from knee surgery. Our prayers are with her and all those who have had surgeries or face the challenge of an ongoing illness.

Bro. Joe and Sis. Lisa Leman welcomed their little son Lincoln David into this world. Cora is his excited big sister.

Our Sunday school Students have been busy helping others in Jesus’ name. Recently, they held their annual drive to gather toys, clothes, and coats for local families in need. The 5th and 6th graders visited a shut-in, and the pre-nursery through first grade sang Christmas songs for the residents at Christian Care. May each of us foster a spirit of sharing and giving all through the year.

Indiana, Francesville
Jacki Huber, Connie Linback

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

As we celebrate Jesus’ birth this beautiful Christmas season, we have enjoyed some of the traditional blessings, such as Christmas Caroling and the Sunday school children sharing songs and messages of hope in their Christmas program. A soup supper, hosted by the younger Sunday school classes, was also enjoyed at the beginning of the season.

We rejoice with the angels in heaven that two dear souls are seeking the Lord in repentance. Our prayers are with Amanda Schneider and Kenia Hernandez as they begin their walks with Jesus.

The engagement of Bro. Jerod Putt (Bro. Brian and Sis. Tami) to Sis. Jayla Wettstein (Bro. Mark and Sis. Karen, Lamar, MO) was recently announced. Sis. Jayla has been residing in Minneapolis, MN where she is going to school.

A blessed weekend was enjoyed when Holy Communion was shared. Elder Bro. Tom Stock (Sis. Karol, Cissna Park, IL) was here to assist with Communion on Saturday evening, and was also with us for the day on Sunday. We appreciate Bro. Tom’s willingness to share God’s word with us! Bro. Andy Kaufmann (Sis. Marie, Bloomington, IL) also shared God’s word on a recent Sunday. We extend our heartfelt thanks to him for visiting as well.

We extend sympathy to Bev Overmyer (Bro. Dick) in the passing of her sister, Patricia Allen.

Our prayers are with Bro. Rick Wuetrich (Sis. Judy) and Fred Yaggie, who recently had surgeries and are currently recovering. We pray that the Lord would grant complete healing, according to His will.

Indiana, LaCrosse

Megan Frank, Julie Rocke

“Silent night! holy Night!
All is calm, all is bright.”

The simple beauty of this popular Christmas song never fails to bring me pause. It seems almost ironic to use the phrase “all is calm” during this busy time of year. We have had winter sickness running through our house, bringing some very un-silent nights and causing numerous to-do lists to remain uncompleted. Singing Christmas carols doesn’t fix any of that, but it certainly gives me perspective and thankfulness as I am reminded of our Father’s great love.

Thanksgiving Day was also a beautiful lesson in gratitude as we were encouraged to not simply think of our material abundance, but the ultimate blessing of our priceless Salvation. We would like to thank Bro. Josh Zimmerman (Sis. Molly, Forrest, IL), Bro. Jim Butikofer (Sis. Diana, Iowa City, IA) and Bro. Todd Stoller (Sis. Pam, Latty, OH), for serving us throughout the weekend.

The weekend before, many of our Sunday school teachers and students delivered “Thanksgiving Baskets” to several local families, gathering afterwards for supper and an evening of games and fellowship. The students look forward to this every year, and I love seeing their expressions as they experience the blessing of giving.

Bro. Elvin and Sis. Jan Nuest were given an extra reason to give thanks, with the engagement announcement of their granddaughter Sis. Jayla Wettstein (Bro. Mark and Sis. Karen, Lamar, MO) to Bro. Jarred Putt of Francesville, IN (Bro. Brian and Sis. Tami). We wish this couple the Lord’s blessings as they make plans for the future, and look forward to having Sis. Jayla come back “home” to Indiana.

Very quickly the Christmas festivities began, and our monthly Coffee Hour group of ladies that include Sisters, friends, and multiple children, gathered at the home of Sis. Evie Heinold for a delicious Christmas brunch and time for sweet fellowship.

The first weekend of December brought our Sunday school Christmas Program and Christmas Caroling. Such a beautiful day full of joyful praises to the King, as the children shared Christ’s coming through songs, scriptures, and poems. What a blessing to finish off the day sharing the good news to others. Many thanks to the students, teachers, and song leaders for their efforts throughout the day!

While there is much joy surrounding this season, there can also be sadness as many reflect on the loss of loved ones or struggle with health issues. Sis. Connie
Knobloch and Rosie Moser (Wayne) have each spent time in the hospital. We continue to pray for their recovery and that they can feel the comforting hand of our Father.

No matter what circumstances surround us this Christmas, may we cling to the Hope sent to bring Joy to a weary world.

Indiana, Leo
Jan Beer

Why do we interrupt our normal schedule to attend church service on Thanksgiving Day? Our Bro. Brian Wenninger gave a very timely message from Leviticus 23 and Romans 3 in answer to that query. Leviticus 23:39 begins telling us about a feast that was to be held after the harvest. It was a time for God’s people to pause and remember all the ways God had provided for them throughout the past. Thanksgiving Day is a national holiday in America. Each year since 1863, the President of the United States has written a Thanksgiving Proclamation (it would be interesting to research and read some!). Thanksgiving Day church service was a wonderful way for us to begin to take time to pause and remember all the ways God has provided for us in the past and still provides for us today.

The young people in our Leo “young group” have been proving their servant hearts again. In November, the group raked leaves for some of the senior members of our congregation. Then, in early December, they provided a free evening of babysitting so parents could go Christmas shopping or spend a quiet evening together. Moms didn’t even have to feed the kids supper because the young group provided that, too! We are so very thankful for each of these active Christ-followers in our church family.

Our sympathy and prayer support abound for our dear church family who have lost family members to death recently. Evelyn, foster daughter of Sis. Stef and Bro. Shane Beer, lost her mother very suddenly and unexpectedly with a heart attack on Sunday, December 1. That same weekend, she lost two other family members in unrelated circumstances. She and her two small children could really use your prayers. Two other dear families have experienced the loss of their father. Sis. Brenda (Bro. Brace) Wieland’s dad, retired elder Bro. Edwin Ringer of Gridley, on December 3 and Bro. Ed (Sis. Deb) Graf’s dad, Bro. Carl Graf of Akron, on December 16. Our prayers for comfort continue for all of these families.

Friday, December 6, was a great night to go Christmas caroling! Several groups of us fanned out from the church building to visit and sing for several families in the Fort Wayne area. Then we met back at the church for nice hot chili and warm fellowship. Blessings abounded!

Elder Bro. Lynn Stieglitz announced that Ethan Drayer, son of Bro. Bruce and Sis. Heather, has voiced his desire to walk in fellowship with us in the Apostolic Christian Church. We welcome him into our church family as he continues to grow in grace and spiritual wisdom.

The Leo Sunday school Christmas Program was well attended on Sunday afternoon, December 15. The theme this year was the prophecies that had been made about the birth of our Savior. It was very enlightening to hear about so many of the Old Testament scriptures, and it gives us encouragement to continue to put our trust and faith in a God who keeps His promises. May each participant and each hearer be blest by the rich Truth that was presented.

Indiana, Milford
Heidi Beer, Carol Haab

We are thankful to Bro. Mark Reinhard (Sis. Angie, Bluffton, IN) and Bro. Marvin Hartzler (Sis. Sue, Rittman, OH), for serving our church congregation this past month.

We also welcomed Bro. Seth and Sis. Jodi Gerber home for a visit from CVE, Magdalena, MX. We appreciated the update on CVE and we continue to remember the staff, children and church in our prayers.

It is always a blessing for our church to have the annual Christmas program by the Sunday school kids followed by all church Christmas Caroling. It’s a great way to usher in the season thinking of the true meaning of Christmas, appreciating our
church body, and reaching out to remember those in our community. One of our high schoolers read this touching poem at our program.

*If you look for Me at Christmas, you won’t need a special star, I’m no longer just in Bethlehem, I’m right there where you are. You may not be aware of Me amid the celebrations- you’ll have to look beyond the stores at all the decorations. But if you take a moment from your list of things to do, and listen to your heart, you’ll find I’m waiting there for you. You’re the one I want to be with, you’re the reason that I came, and you’ll find Me in the stillness as I’m whispering your name. Love, Jesus*

-Author unknown

May those thoughts stay ever present in our minds as God gifts us a new year.

**Indiana, Remington**

**Jenni Honegger, Marcella Tyler**

We are thankful to the ministers who visited us this month: Bro. Todd Stoller (Sis. Pam, Latty, OH) and Bro. Ryan Schock (Sis. Melanie, Bloomfield, IA). May God bless you for your efforts and your love towards us!

We rejoice with Bro. Luke and Sis. Hannah as they seek to raise their precious family for His glory.

Bro. Rolync Scheitlin (Sis. Lori) had surgery this month and we pray for his speedy recovery.

Heather Koshenina’s (Nick) father, Richard E. Watkins, of Lebanon, IN, passed away this month. We send our prayers to Heather and to the whole family as they grieve his death.

This past weekend we listened to the Sunday school students tell us once again about the miraculous birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

What a blessing to hear the little ones sing his praises and recite the scriptures we all know so well! Many of us then had the opportunity to go Christmas caroling to several homes in the community and share the joy of the season with them as well.

As we look forward to celebrating Christmas and then another New Year, we are so thankful for Jesus and for His willingness to come to earth for our sakes. My daughter asked me last week if I thought the angels were sad when Jesus left Heaven, and I had to think about that for a while before answering that I thought they probably were! Yet they were still able to sing “Glory to God in the highest” at His birth with faith and trust that God’s plan was indeed the best. What an inspiring thought to begin a new year!

**Indiana, South Bend**

**Joshua Martinez**

“For unto us a child is born.”

Isaiah 9:6

We thank the Lord for the love and friendship we share as a church family. On Saturday, December 7, we enjoyed Christmas caroling followed by supper at church. 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 11, we enjoyed our annual organizational meeting. We thank outgoing head trustee, Bro. Brad Langhofer (Sis. Becky), and all who helped oversee the physical and spiritual needs of our church. We appreciate the willingness of all who will continue or will assume those responsibilities this coming year.

On the evening of Saturday, December 14, our church family had another opportunity to share the Christmas message by caroling at Wellfield Botanical Gardens in Elhart, IN. We experienced a beautiful winter wonderland of trees and paths alight in Christmas colors. We thank Bro. Josh Steffen (Sis. Janelle) for organizing this special time of fellowship and song.

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

“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  

The verse for the month is: "But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." Galatians 4:4-5

Our thanks go out to the visiting ministers, Bro. Ron Bollier (Sis. Edie, Indianapolis, IN), Bro. Joel Troxel (Sis. Amy and family, LaCrosse, IN) and Bro. Dave Obergfel (Sis. Kathy, Peoria, IL).

Thank you to our many service men and women for the sacrifices you make for our freedom. On Wednesday night, November 27, we had our Thanksgiving services. There was Christmas caroling on Sunday, December 15 with a pizza dinner afterwards.

We are still reaching out to the many in the nursing homes at Life Care and Avalon with services of song, fellowship and God's message. For the residents of Parkview Haven nursing home, our area AC Churches are given names of those living at the home along with gift ideas so they will have something under the tree Christmas morning. Though our visits and gifts seem to be such a small thing to us, it is a huge thing to them. Last month's verse was: "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." Galatians 6:9-10

Ladies sewing is going strong with many blankets and pillows being made for those in need. At the beginning of December our church ladies started a 31 day advent devotional of the life of Christ.

Just a reminder to continue to pray for Bro. Bob and Sis. Marguerite Hoerr. He is recovering well and back at Rittenhouse. Also, Diane Moser is recuperating at Avalon; she is the daughter of Sis. Leona Bucher. In addition, Drew McClanahan is awaiting biopsy results, he is a brother-in-law to Sis. Dawn Ailes. Finally, Sis. Carol Bucher has been moved to Parkview Haven in Francesville. Please keep them and their families in your prayers during this time of need and thank the Lord for His loving kindness.

Indiana, West Lafayette  
Libby Wahl  

The Thanksgiving season is a special time to celebrate our biannual Communion. Sitting in church together on a quiet Saturday evening with nightfall folding around us through the windows fostered a comforting, peaceful remembrance.

We rejoice in the engagement announcement of college student, Bro. Jerod Putt (Francesville, IN) to Sis. Jayla Wettstein (Lamar, MO). May you find encouragement and joy in each other and each others' families.

Thank you, Bro. Michael Schneider (Sis. Jodi, Junction, OH) and family for visiting our fellowship and sharing the Word with us. It is appreciated. Also, thanks to Elder Bro. Greg Lehman (Sis. MaryBeth, Wolcott, IN) and Bro. Dan Stoller (Sis. Deb, Remington, IN) for supporting our college midweeks this past fall. I do think I forgot to acknowledge you previously.

God help us to bow the knee to His coming and to seek Him for 2020 vision. Be still my soul... "in every change, He faithful will remain."

Indiana, Wolcott  
Teresa Earney, Luann Gerber  

We all have so much to be thankful for as we enter the Christmas season with the birth of Jesus at the top of our list! We cherish special family time and praise God for His unending grace and mercies!

Our visiting ministers this month included Bro. Brian Wenninger (Sis. Mackenzie, Leo, IN), and Bro. Randy Gudeman (Sis. Becky, Francesville, IN). We are thankful for the messages they brought and pray for the words they spoke to be put to use as we go about our daily activities!

The weekend of December 7 and 8, God richly blessed our congregation with a new Brother and Sister. Ron and Donna Kyburz shared their testimonies with us and we opened our arms with joyful hearts to welcome them into the fold! We are so thankful they have made this most important decision in their lives!

We had our Christmas program December 14 and it is so
enjoyable to hear our children tell the story of Jesus’ birth in their sweet voices! They love to tell the story and it never grows old! The next day was our annual Christmas caroling and it is refreshing to watch the excitement on everyone’s faces as we share this tradition! I’m not sure who is more blessed….the receivers or the singers!

May God richly bless each and every one of you as you enjoy the Christmas holiday! Let’s remember to share our love with those who are hurting, lonely, grieving and are physically suffering. May He put His loving arms around them and comfort them.

**Iowa, Bloomfield**

*Kendra Schlatter*

We were thankful to have Elder Bro. Randy Beer (Sis. Deb, Milford, IN) and Bro. Brad Funk (Sis. Laura, Garden Grove, IA) with us to share the memorandum. We also thank Bro. Wes Moser (Sis. Esther, Lester, IA) for recently ministering to us.

Our sympathy is extended to Bro. Jon and Sis. Rita Wettstein in the loss of Bro. Jon’s mother, Loretta Wettstein of Eureka, IL. She is also the grandmother to Bro. Phil Wettstein (Sis. Kristin), Bro. Al Wettstein (Sis. Bethany), and Matt Wettstein.

I failed to mention that Bro. Dave Wiegand (Sis. Mary) had open heart surgery recently. We continue to pray for God’s healing hand on him. We also pray for Sis. Charlotte Teubel’s (Bro. Paul) healing as she recently was in the hospital.

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*“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.” Num. 6:24-26. Now, and throughout the New Year!* **Iowa Burlington**

*Marilyn Anderson, Elaine Eisenmann*

As always, we appreciate our visiting ministers. On Thanksgiving Day, Bro. Jon Pratt (Sis. Sharon, Valparaiso, IN) was here. Elder Bro. Jon Schmidgall (Sis. Julie) and Bro. Dale Frank (Sis. Tina) both from Mediapolis, also assembled with us this past month.

We enjoyed our time together for our annual Christmas activities - caroling and chili supper on December 8. Our Sunday School program was on December 15.

Along with holiday cheer, we have experienced sadness in the deaths of several dear souls. We extend our sympathy to Bro. Mike and Sis. Elisabeth Schumacher and family with the death of Mike’s brother Adam of Schellbach, Germany. Adam passed away in November on his 94th birthday.

We also were saddened to hear of the sudden death of Catherine Hawley of Mediapolis, Iowa. She is the mother of Monica (Matthew) Eisenmann. Our sympathy to Bro. Leo and Sis. Tami Banwart and family, whose brother Elder Bro. Wayne Banwart (Champaign, IL) passed away recently.

May God be with us all as we enter a new year, if it is God’s will.

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**Iowa, Elgin**

*Maria Rocke*

Ruth Amelia is the newest granddaughter of Bro. Jim and Sis. Marcy Knobloch. She was born November 18, and her parents are Caleb and Maranda Knobloch.

“There is a place of comfort sweet, near to the heart of God...”

*Near to the Heart of God, Hymns of Zion, #175*

We extend our sympathy to Bro. Charles Schneider (Sis. Sue) in the loss of his brother, Lawrence Schneider of West Union, IA. Also grieving are Sis. Sue Schneider (Bro. Charles) and Sis. Sandy Butikofer (Lon) in the loss of their brother, Bro. Wayne Banwart of Champaign, IL.

Ministering Bro. Darren Massner (Sis. Twyla, West Bend, IA) was with us one Sunday this month. Also, Bro. Jim Butikofer (Sis. Diana, Iowa City, IA) shared the Thanksgiving Day message. God bless these willing brothers.

Paul Butikofer and Eli Rocke were hospitalized recently. We continue to pray for their healing. The Sunday school children presented a joyful message during the Christmas program in December. We appreciate the labors of love each one put into it. As God’s children, may we present the same message daily to a lost world through a joyful walk of life.

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**Iowa, Garden Grove**

*Laura Funk*

The ministers that visited our congregation this month include Bro.Gregg Rumbold (Sis. Heather,
Peoria, IL) and Bro. Jeff Fischer (Sis Gloria, Ft. Scott, KS).

During the week at my job, or information that I receive from any media source, I wonder what is the truth? Only God knows. When I sit in a pew on Sunday, I feel assured that the truth is being spoken. I don’t have to wonder if the message I heard was gossip or a lie. The truth is from God and the Bible.

We are thankful God has blessed us with several Sunday school children who spoke the truth about Jesus’ birth and death during the annual Sunday school program.

The happiness, excitement and joy shown on the faces of the children as we caroled to our friends and neighbors was a blessing on a cold, snowy Sunday afternoon. We received many cheerful smiles of thanks. We returned to the warmth of the church for a soup supper.

This poem was shared with us during the Sunday school program.

’Twas the night before Jesus Came
’Twas the night before Jesus came and all through the house
Not a creature was praying, not one in the house.
Their Bibles were lain on the shelf without care in hopes that Jesus would not come there.
The children were dressing to crawl into bed.
Not once ever kneeling or bowing a head.
And Mom in her rocker with baby on her lap,
Was watching the Late

Show while I took a nap.
When out of the East there arose such a clatter,
I sprang to my feet to see what was the matter.
Away to the window I flew like a flash
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash!
When what to my wondering eyes should appear
But angels proclaiming that Jesus was here
With a light like the sun sending forth a bright ray
I knew in a moment this must be THE DAY!
The light of His face made me cover my head
It was Jesus! Returning just like He had said.
And though I possessed worldly wisdom and wealth,
I cried when I saw Him in spite of myself.
In the Book of Life which He held in His hand
Was written the name of every saved man.
He spoke not a word as He searched for my name;
When He said “it’s not here” my head hung in shame.
The people whose names had been written with love
He gathered to take to His Father above.
With those who were ready He rose without a sound.
While all the rest were left standing around.
I fell to my knees, but it was too late;
I had waited too long and thus sealed my fate.
I stood and I cried as they rose out of sight;
Oh, if only I had been ready tonight.
In the words of this poem the meaning is clear;
The coming of Jesus is drawing near.
There’s only one life and when comes the last call
We’ll find that the Bible was true after all!
- Lou Pinter

Iowa, Iowa City
Diana Butikofer

We are thankful Kyle and Laura (Landherr) Burkle have chosen to follow God’s call and submit their lives to Him in repentance. We pray He will lead and bless them as they follow Him.

We pray Sis. Audrey Landherr will have a swift recovery from her recent surgery.

Our Sunday school children presented the story of the greatest gift God has given us—His Son. Through Scripture and song they compared the small gifts people give and receive now to the magnificent Savior sent to a Bethlehem manger for us to receive in faith with gratitude.

Iowa, Lester
Kristi Knobloch, Audrey Metzger

“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

Sometimes it is good to just read the verses of a beloved hymn and appreciate what someone was able to put into words. The melodies shared at our Sunday school Christmas program, during caroling, and in our worship give a richer meaning to Christmas and to daily life.

Thanksgiving and Christmas are such a joyous time, filled with the gathering of family and friends. Let us remember those who have an empty seat at their table for the first time this year, and make an effort to let them know we are aware that the holidays may be especially hard for them.

The home of Chris and Sis. Mary Fagerness, Gracie, Jed and little Kate, was wonderfully blessed on November 23 when Mae Margaret safely arrived. She will be lovingly adored by them, her grandpa, Jim Moser, as well as her extended family who all are excited to welcome another precious little one! May God bless this family as they take on this added responsibility!

Wedding bells will be ringing on three consecutive Sundays in March in Lester! We are excited to share the engagements of three young couples! Sis. Shayna Popkes (John and Sis. Karmin) will be marrying Bro. Steven Schurter from our Silverton, OR, church (Lee and Jeanette Schurter). March 1 is the wedding date they have set. Sis. Tyra Knoblock (Bro. Travis and Sis. Kathy) and Bro. Brady Metzger (Bro. Jerome and Sis. Jana) are planning for their March 8 wedding. Sis. Kaysha Blomgren (Bro. Jon and Sis. Tricia) plans to marry Bro. Anthony Eason (Bro. George and Carole, Elgin, IL) on March 15, Lord willing. We wish each of these couples God’s rich blessings as they plan for their lives together!

Several in our congregation have lost loved ones recently. Bro. Roger and Sis. Janet Knoblock, Bro. Jerome and Sis. Gail Hartter, and Bro. Glen and Sis. Joyce Metzger lost their brother-in-law, Henry Messner, and many of his nieces and nephews also need our prayers and sympathy. Sympathy also goes out to Bro. Melvin and Sis. Wilma Knobloch, Bro. Silas and Sis. Edith Knobloch and Gilbert Knobloch, on the loss of their sister, Libby DenHartog, who lived in Idaho. She also had many nieces and nephews in our congregation and we express sincere sympathy to all.

Ella Leuthold (Bro. Mark and Sis. Lee) spent several days in Rochester, MN following a serious eye procedure. Bro. Howard Mogler (Sis. Lillian) was hospitalized for a procedure. We solicit prayers for a full recovery for each of them!

We were blessed with visiting ministers several times in the past month. Bro. Dave Lanz (Sis. Tami, Mediapolis, IA) shared God’s holy word over the pulpit at Thanksgiving, and Bro. Roger Aberle (Sis. Lavonne, Sabetha, KS) ministered to us on Dec. 15. We should always be mindful of the effort it takes for these Brothers and their families, but we also need to remember that we can all minister to those around us in small ways. We never know when our example may touch a searching heart at the time when it is tender and open to the plan of salvation.

Iowa, Mediapolis
Janet Lanz, Tami Lanz

We were thankful to have many single visitors in church the weekend of November 16-17 when the single group hosted an invite-a-church weekend. What a blessing to see their zeal and energy.

As always, we are thankful for our visiting ministers and their willingness to stand and preach the Word to us. We want to thank Bro. Darin Massner (Sis. Twila, West Bend, IA), Bro. Dallas Massner (Sis. Christy, Burlington, IA), Bro. Aaron Frank (Sis. Sharla, Elgin, IA), Bro. Michael Wagenbach (Sis. Erica, Wolcott, IN), Bro. Greg Fehr (Sis. Denise, West Bend, IA), and Bro. Mark Roth (Sis. Tammy, Congerville, IL).

We were thankful for the safe arrival of Walker James on November 23, born to first time parents, Bro. Caleb and Sis. Abby Larson. Grandparents are Bro. Mark and Sis. Rosemary Larson and Doug and Beth Rinkenberger. It is always sweet to see and
welcome these little bundles as they are brought to church in their parents’ arms.

We will miss Bro. Norm and Sis. Mary Ann Frank as they have moved to an assisted living home in Burlington, IA and plan to assemble with the Burlington church. It is hard to see these once young and energetic pillars of our church move on in life, and we will miss seeing them every Sunday.

We rejoice with Sis. Kenna Lanz (Bro. Dave and Sis. Tami) and Bro. Travis Fehr (Bro. Darren and Sis. Nora) from West Bend, IA as their engagement was announced to the church. May they feel God’s love and guidance as they take this next step in life.

Our annual church Christmas caroling and chili supper was held December 14. It is an enjoyable event many look forward to each Christmas season.

We also had our church Christmas program and once again it was beautiful to hear the Christmas recitations and songs recited and sung with such sweetness. We hear this beautiful Christmas story every year and it truly is the story that never grows old!

Iowa, West Bend

Jenny Banwart, Karen Schmidt

We welcome Sis. Karissa Montag (Bro. Jeff and Sis. Larae) into the fold as she gave her testimony and was baptized the weekend of November 23. Elder Bro. Curt Frank (Sis. Lyla, Lacrosse, IN) and ministering Bro. Josh Zimmerman (Sis. Molly, Forrest, IL), Bro. Dave Lanz (Sis. Tami, Mediapolis, IA), and Bro. Fred Dietz (Sis. Shayna, Elgin, IL) were here to share in the special weekend.

Bro. Mark Dotterer (Sis. Kate, Eureka, IL) was here on Thanksgiving and the following weekend. May God reward him richly for his labors of love.

We’ve been praying for Sis. Sierra Grimm (Bro. Nathan) as she has spent time in the hospital and continues to recover.

Ralph Bormann has passed from this life. May God comfort his wife Melanie and their family through this difficult time. Ralph was a brother in law to Bro. Tim Mogler and Sis. Jackie Mogler. We are also praying for Elder Bro. Wayne and Sis. Rose Grimm and Bro. Andy and Sis. Becky Virkler in the passing of their brother Elder Bro. Wayne Banwart (Champaign, IL). We always enjoyed and appreciated Bro. Wayne’s visits and words of encouragement, but we’re thankful he can go on to his Heavenly reward.

We rejoice with Bro. Travis Fehr (Bro. Darren and Sis. Nora) and Sis. Kenna Lanz (Bro. Dave and Sis. Tami) of Mediapolis, IA as they have announced their engagement. May God be with them as they prepare to join hand and heart.

Japan, Tokyo

Anna Inoue, Marie Inoue

Several years ago, we were encouraged to think and pray for local leadership for the future of our churches here in Japan. When our Elder Bro. Mark Bahr (Sis. Bev) visited; he interviewed our membership for a brother who, with God’s love and grace, might assume the responsibility as ordained deacon. Those who received full support for this office were Bro. Akihiro Ito for the Shioda church, and Bro. Makoto Inoue for the Tokyo church. They await further approval after the Winter Elder Conference to be held in Phoenix, AZ in 2020.

Bro. Willis Ehnle’s children, Tom and Jewel Ehnle and their families and a few friends, blessed us with their presence while on a family trip. It was the first time for some of them to see the places where their parents and grandparents spent many years serving the Lord. The following Sunday, we sang Christmas carols at a local nursing home. The residents were especially brightened when they heard the children sing.

Sis. Rachel Witzig was happy to have her cousins, Bro. Joel and Sis. Marcy Cox (Washington, IL) who spent about a week here visiting.

Our church has been blessed by many local visitors attending church this month. A record number of English students attended our Christmas program practice and cookie decorating. We also enjoyed more attendees than usual at our Christmas ladies’ meeting. Bro. Akito shared from Mark 2. We are grateful for the opportunity to share Jesus love and pray that God continues to bring people who are seeking Him.
Kansas, Bern
*Sheri Edelman, Tiffany Menold*

“Children, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong? What the gladsome tidings be, which inspire your heavenly song?”
*Angels We Have Heard on High, Gospel Hymns, #873*

What a joy it brings our heart to listen to our Sunday school children sing of the birth of our Savior! Thank you to all the teachers who diligently plant the seed of Truth into their young hearts!

Our thanks and appreciation goes out to Sis. Karen Martin (Bro. Doug, Eureka, IL), for sharing with our congregation and Sunday school the topics of “Living Life without Regrets” and “Living Life to the Fullest”.

We also thank the visiting ministers we had in the past month; Bro. Dave Hartter (Sis. Beth, Sabetha, KS), Bro. Kaleb Beyer (Sis. Angela, Washington, IL), and Bro. Klint Beyer (Sis. Kara, Sabetha, KS).

Kansas, Kiowa
*Janice Bahr, Millie Frieden*

Greetings to all God’s people in this, the New Year! We are indeed a blessed people to live in an exciting time when we can anticipate the Lord’s return for His own at any moment! May we always be watchful at the post as we prayerfully await the Rapture of the Church.

We welcome and congratulate Joshua Stewart and Haley Pitts as they begin their new life together as a married couple! Josh’s parents are Bro. Kelly and Sis. Jennifer Stewart. May God always bless you with His bountiful blessings!

Recent hospital patients have been Bro. Ronald Allenbach and Sis. Marie Tucker. Bro. Ron is getting along very well with his new hip and Sis. Marie is again back at the Rest Home.

Our Sunday school participated once again in assembling shoe boxes for Operation Christmas Child to be dispersed to under-privileged children in foreign countries. Many of the congregation also filled several boxes on their own for the project. In all, our Kiowa church donated a total of 60 boxes to make many children's Christmas a little brighter.

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, a wonderful testimony to us older ones in the congregation!

We want to thank our visiting minister, Bro. Brett Kellenberger (Sis. Rosanne, Sabetha, KS). We so appreciate the Holy Words of Scripture which were delivered to us that day. Visitors are always welcome to come and worship with us!

Kansas, Lamont
*Maria Luthi*

Our church began our weekly Wednesday night services with a Thanksgiving Eve service. We are thankful for our visiting minister, Bro. John Baumgartner (Sis. Lori, Bern, KS), for bringing us the Word that evening. We were reminded that even with all the blessings we have, our spiritual gifts in Christ are what we are most grateful for.

The Sunday school students worked hard to prepare and put on a Christmas program with songs and pieces centered on Christ’s birth. We so appreciate all the effort our teachers put in to include our youth and make special events like this possible. After their program, the students went caroling to several community members and then the church enjoyed a baked potato bar at Bro. Albert and Sis. Mara Jean Edelman’s home.

We gathered to wrap gifts for those with developmental disabilities and then traveled to Hartford to hand them out after singing some carols. What a joy it is to see the excitement of each resident receiving a gift! Just watching their various expressions of happiness brought smiles to our faces! We can learn so much about
contentment and joy from these precious souls God has created.

All-Church Caroling was changed slightly, due to snowy conditions, but we were still able to carol for several nursing home residents and enjoy a soup supper hosted by Bro. Ron and Sis. Jane Isch. The Christmas season is certainly a busy time, but such a wonderful opportunity to share Jesus’ love and message!

**Kansas, Sabetha**

**Leanna Hartter, Brenda Nenadov**

We are thankful that Mara Aberle (Bro. Rick and Sis. Komari) and Addison Grimm (Bro. Kurt and Sis. Hannah) have expressed that they are at peace with God and man. We look forward to hearing their testimonies and witnessing their baptisms in the future, Lord willing.

Our church pews were filled on Thanksgiving morning, as we gathered together to worship our Heavenly Father. We were very thankful to have three visiting ministers with us that day who willingly shared the Gospel. They were Bro. Ron Isch (Sis. Jane, Lamont, KS), Bro. Kaleb Beyer (Sis. Angela, Washington, IL) and Bro. Seth Hartter (Sis. Brenda, Burlington, IA).

Other visiting ministers this month were Bros. Adam Zeltwanger (Sis. Christy, Morris North, MN) and Troy Metzger (Sis. Gwen, Lester, IA). God bless them for serving us.

We extend our love and sympathy to Bro. Seth and Sis. Renee Leman and family in the passing of her grandmother from Illinois, Sis. Eleanor Baer. May the family feel God’s comfort.

As a church family we enjoyed our annual Christmas caroling and soup supper on the evening of December 8. 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 15. We always enjoy the enthusiasm from the younger students and the story of Christ’s birth brought forth in word and song.

As we have welcomed in another year, I think of the song in our Hymns of Zion that doesn’t get sung that often, except at this time of year. May we all echo these words in our hearts throughout the coming year as we serve our Lord.

"Another year is dawning, dear Master, let it be, in working or in waiting, another year with Thee. Another year of mercies, of faithfulness and grace. Another year of gladness in the shining of Thy face. Another year of progress, another year of praise, another year of proving Thy presence all the days. Another year of service, of witness for Thy love; another year of training for holier work above. Another year is dawning, dear Master, let it be, on earth, or else in heaven another year for Thee." *Another Year is Dawning, Hymns of Zion, #150*

**Mexico, Ixtlán**

**Ruth Gerber**

"And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word," Acts 4:29

It was a blessing to have Bro. Randy Mogler (Sis. Evie, Washington, IL) with us for a couple of services this past month. Bro. Randy shared from Acts 4 and emphasized the nature of the disciples’ prayers. They didn’t ask God to change their circumstances, but rather to help them and give them boldness in their circumstances so they could make him known. That was an inspiring and needed message. We were also blessed by the many stories he shared and by the sweet fellowship.

Another special treat for our community was hearing the Christmas program that the children at Colegio de las Américas presented. The singing was beautiful, and it was very moving to hear the little first graders recite Psalm 24. “Who is this King of glory?” I can still picture them raising their arms and shouting, “The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle!” Out of their lips praise seems perfect! May we all have Him in such high regard and serve Him with boldness.

**México, Magdalena**

**Laura Aviña**

We were blessed to have visitors from many of our churches over Thanksgiving. We thank each of you who came to attend
board meetings or to help with the annual CVE Thanksgiving meal. May God bless Bro. Jeff Neihouser (Sis. Sue, Morton, IL), for sharing God’s Word with us.

On December 15, our church choir sang a few Christmas carols for us.

"Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we. Let all within us praise His holy name. Christ is the Lord, Oh praise His name forever! His power and glory evermore proclaim."

O Holy Night, Gospel Hymns #34

A new year...2020. John 20:20 says, “And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.” In this New Year, may we remember what Christ has suffered for us and rejoice that we can know Him.

Michigan, Bay City
Sarah Knochel

“Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.” Psalm 100:4-5

When this is printed, we will, Lord willing, be in 2020 with an opportunity renew our focus, thanksgiving and praise to our God. Bro. Jeff Waibel (Sis. Margo, Leo, IN) visited our congregation for Thanksgiving and ministered unto us.

Our annual Sunday school Christmas Caroling and Program were held in early December. It is always special to see the youth’s excitement to proclaim the Christmas story.

We pray for those who have endured afflictions of the flesh and spent time in the hospital in the past weeks. Our thoughts and prayers are with Norm Andrzejewski (Sis. Linda), Jennifer Curtis, Bro. Brian Wieland (Sis. Char), and Jason Wieland.

Michigan, Detroit
Krista Wieland

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

Hello, everyone. Merry Christmas to each of you. We all, or most of us, have become sidetracked with all the “deals” like half off with free shipping. I have too. But thank goodness the Blood of Christ isn’t half off! Can you imagine? Or what if it was one of those ads that said “ends today; only 9 left”. What if you tried to buy it but weren’t soon enough? (FYI-please pretend with me that “ends today” really is true. As we all know there will be another ad tomorrow that says “ends today.”) The difference is Christ’s blood is available and free to all who will kneel at the cross and admit they need forgiveness for sin and believe He can save them! Free!!! He is the real GIFT!

This month we have enjoyed being together as a church family for a number of Christmas focused activities: Christmas caroling, Christmas cookie decorating for the kids, putting together Christmas baskets to give to others and collection of winter clothing for God’s Storehouse. We thank our Sunday school students and teachers for putting together a wonderful Christmas program that centered our hearts and minds on the wonderful birth of our Saviour. It is special to see the students share their joy and talents with us. We love each one of them and are so thankful for them.

Our prayers and sympathy are with Bro. Steve Wieland and his family in the passing of their grandfather, Bro Mitch Baltic from Rittman, Ohio.

We also want to thank Toledo ministering Bro. Doug Harmon and his wife Sis. Lana for coming and ministering to the residents at Woodhaven on a Tuesday night.

Minnesota, Minneapolis
Brenda Messner, Renee Messner

Season’s Greetings, prayers and blessings to you in the New Year!

Our Sunday school children proclaimed the Christmas story. Their program was titled "Jesus is the Light." They read scripture, sang songs, all giving glory to His name. What an awe-inspiring plan for the humble birth of Jesus. We are grateful to God for His holy word, to impress upon our dear young ones. Thank you, teachers and parents for practicing with the children, so we can keep the Light shining in their hearts and minds.

After a delicious lunch, we traveled to several memory care sites to sing Christmas carols.
How touching to see many of the residents singing along. The treasured tunes brought tears to some of their eyes. May God bless them and rekindle their hearts.

A newborn baby is certainly one of God’s precious gifts! Tom and Kendall Messner lovingly welcomed their first child, Ila Grace, on December 19. Excited and thankful grandparents are Todd and Sis. Renee Messner, along with Steve and Patti Meuwissen. What a joy it is to stay inside, during our Minnesota winter, cuddling a new bundle of love!

Please keep our dear Sis. Brittaney Lehman (Bro. Randy) in your prayers with the loss of her birth mother, Cassie Jo Kolish.

Minnesota, Morris
Ashley Knobloch, Brianna Wulf

This past month we have experienced the joys and sorrows of life. We rejoiced at the birth of Cecelia Jean born to Bro. Taylor and Sis. Tanya Gramm and welcomed by siblings Kyria, Vienna, Tia, and Houston. Cecelia’s grandparents are Bro. Tim and Sis. Gwen Gramm and Bro. Arnie and Sis. Myra Wulf (Lester, IA). Also, excited first-time parents Paul and Caley Koehl welcomed little Whitney Rose to their home. Whitney’s grandparents are Bro. Guy and Sis. Lynette Koehl and Bro. Rick and Lori Moser (Lester, IA). May God grant these couples grace and wisdom as they raise their children!

We were saddened by the loss of Bro. Howard Goll (Edna). We appreciate Elder Bro. Dan Moser (Sis. Anne, Elgin, IL) assisting in Bro. Howard’s service. Edna continues to be in our thoughts and prayers as she grieves over the loss of a dear spouse.

“In sorrow and pain, Thy trust do retain in Jesus the merciful Saviour. When burdened with care, When thou wouldst despair, Then call on thy loving Redeemer. He’ll lighten the load, and level the road and bear thee on hands of compassion.”

The Best Refuge, Zion’s Harp, #46

We appreciate that Bro. Todd Stoller (Sis. Pam, Latty, OH) shared the Word with us on Thanksgiving Day. We also had the blessing of having the Memorandum read to us this past month and thank Elder Bro. Paul Messner (Sis. Jan, Winthrop, MN) for assisting Elder Bro. Lowell Moser in this work. May we continue to walk hand and hand and strive for the eternal goal!

Minnesota, Morris North
Kay Feuchtenberger, Natalie Feuchtenberger

"Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit." Psalm 51:10-12

In the midst of the Christmas season, my spirit often feels renewed and my heart, a little more in tune with the spirit. The presence of God is more real and the joy of salvation is deeper.

Our Sunday school children told us the wondrous story of Christ’s birth with pieces and songs. We are thankful for the teachers and students efforts. We also had the opportunity to Christmas carol and spread the story of Christ’s birth through song. May those we sang to feel the joy of salvation.

Bro. Troy Metzger, (Sis. Gwen, Lester, IA) visited us and shared the Word. We are thankful for his service.

We celebrated the 70th wedding anniversary of Bro. Harold and Sis. Ila Gramm this month. What joy to see God’s presence in their lives and marriage through the years.

Our prayers are with Bro. Doug Moser and family, and Bro. Keith and Sis. Lois Schmidgall in the loss of Doug and Lois’ sister, Sharilyn Seter, after a long battle with cancer. We are also holding Bro. Harold Gramm in prayer as he struggles with health issues.

As we proceed into the New Year, let’s carry the spirit of Christmas forward, with a renewed spirit, a sense of God’s presence and great joy in our salvation.

Minnesota, Winthrop
Julie Schmidt, Ginny Stoll

"Be not dismayed what’er betide, God will take care of you; Beneath His wings of love abide, God will take care of you. God will take care of you, Through every day,
o’er all the way;
He will take care of you.
God will take care of you.”
Hymns of Zion, #138

Prayers are with Bro. Daryl Schmidt (Darlene) in the loss of his sister, Sis. Ethel Bednarski. Shirley Demm has spent time in the hospital and nursing home recuperating from surgery. She has now returned home.

Sis. Dorothy Jacobson and our convert Betty Milam has spent time in the hospital for testing.

"Joyously sound ye His praises!
Men, whom to His choice He raises,
Triumph to a high estate!
We are bought by love so great!
We are bought by love so great!
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!"
Glory to God in the Highest, Zions Harp, #9

What a joy to celebrate the birth of our King. Our church participated in the annual Christmas caroling on December 1 where we visited and sang carols at a local nursing home and assisted living facilities.

Our Sunday school students held their annual Christmas program on December 14. To hear the children share the beautiful Christmas message and sing in harmony about the birth of our Lord and Savior warmed the hearts of all who were there.

Missouri, Kansas City

Julie Webel

Our annual Christmas program and chili supper was held this past month. It was a joy to hear the story of Jesus birth from the youngest to the oldest of our children in Sunday school. We also enjoyed caroling at some area nursing homes.

Special thanks to Bro. Jeff Fisher (Sis. Gloria, Fort Scott, KS), for serving our church from the pulpit this past month.

Once again we participated in Christmas Shoe Box packing and “Adopt A Child” to help children in foster homes have presents on Christmas day. What a blessing to be able to help those in need.

Missouri, Lamar

Mindy Wettstein

We are thankful for numerous visiting ministers this past month, including Bro. Justin Isch (Sis. Liz, Lamont, KS), Bro. John Lehman (Sis. Carol, Bern, KS), and Bro. John Bradle (Sis. Jill, Roanoke, IL).

We had many visitors this past month, and appreciate each that worshipped and fellowshipped with us.

We would like to thank Bro. Byron and Sis. Anita Fehr and their family for serving church lunch December 1. Also that same day, the Ft. Scott church blessed us by coming to Lamar to Christmas carol at various locations, and afterwards we enjoyed a potluck and fellowship together.

We are very excited to share the news of Sis. Jayla Wettstein’s (Minneapolis, MN) engagement to Bro. Jerod Putt (Francesville, IN)! Their parents are Bro. Mark and Sis. Karen Wettstein and Bro. Brian and Sis. Tammy Putt (Francesville, IN).

Missouri, St. Louis

Victoria Eberhardt

Our congregation is so thankful for traveling brethren willing to share the Word with us. Our visiting minister this month was Elder Bro. Kent Heimer (Sis. Jan, Taylor, MO). We are so grateful for his willingness to share the national Memorandum with us. Bro. Kent also moderated a meeting of the brothers encouraging an effort to move forward in God’s love.

We were blessed to experience the Sunday school’s Christmas program. The children sang and spoke of the Gift our Savior is with such conviction and joy. It was a wonderful reminder to be thankful for all our Lord has given us.

Missouri, Taylor

Lori Marquart

The Christmas season was heralded in by carols sung at a local nursing home and at the Illinois Veterans Home on December 1, followed by a soup supper hosted by the Sunday school students and teachers. Donations were accepted to help the high school students toward a work team project this summer.

On December 4, Bro. Matthew Steffen (Princeville, IL) reminded us to be watchful for that unknown time when Jesus will return. “Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.” Matthew 24:44
Bro. Matthew was delightfully honest in his confession that it wasn’t on his calendar to be in Taylor on this date so the hour slipped up on him unaware. Thankfully, faithful brethren sent encouraging notes to him prior, prompting his memory. Thank you for serving us Bro. Matthew!

The Sunday school presented the Christmas story to our congregation on December 8. Bro. Tim Lehman finished by applying verses in John 14 to what the children conveyed during their program. When we keep His commandments and love Jesus individually, His promise is to manifest (or make evident) Himself to us. Then, Judas’ question about how Jesus will manifest Himself to the world is answered indirectly. When we individually, with the help of the Holy Spirit, love Jesus and keep His Word, the Good News of Jesus is manifest (made evident) to the world through us!

It is always a joy to have Elder Bro. John Lehman (Sis. Carol, Bern, KS), with us when they visit family. Although December 15 was the first time Sis. Carol attended church in Taylor, it is hopefully the first of many visits.

Prayers are requested for Bro. Don Hoerr who was a hospital patient.

**New York, Croghan/Naumburg**

*Karen Farney*

“For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.” Luke2-11

As this Blessed time of year is upon us, may we ponder in our hearts the reason the Christ child came, to bring us goodness and life.

On December 8, we Christmas caroled through the halls at the hospital and the extended care facility. The residents really enjoyed hearing and singing the Christmas hymns. After caroling, we had refreshments in the family room. We were thankful for a good turnout. December 11 we gathered in the church basement to put together cheer baskets. Young and old came and helped. December 15 we caroled with the residents at the Steepleview Courts.

*God’s plan fulfilled as He had willed. Then came the Christ on Earth*

*The star so bright in deepest night Foretold His Blessed birth. The Angel’s throng with joyous song Appeared to shepherds meek The Angels word the shepherds heard Thou went they forth to seek. The Nativity, Hymns Of Zion #35*

Our thoughts and prayers are with Sis. Jeanie (Virkler) Herzig in the passing of her grandson-in-law. A few months back Sis. Jeanie’s husband, Bro. Bradley, passed away. I apologize that I failed to mention he has a sister, Sis. Bessie (Herzig) Farney and a sister-in-law Carol Hulbert, as survivors.

Sis. Barbara Ebersol passed away December 13. She is survived by her step-daughter Linda Bush (Ralph), four grandchildren, eleven great-grandchildren, and three great-great grandchildren.

We appreciate Bro. Mark Hoffman (Sis. Luella, Clarendon, VT) visiting us and sharing the word.

David and Debbie Schneider were announced for peace and we look forward to their baptism. We are also thankful Vincent Farney, has answered the call and feels the need to be baptized. We are thankful the Lord is still calling.

**Ohio, Akron**

*Joelle Indermuhle*

Tim and Sis. Liz Hann were thankful to welcome little Ariel Mara into their family on December 10. Big sister Vikkie is excited to have a sibling! Grandparents in Akron are Jerry and Sis. Cindy Hann.

Our prayers are with those mourning the loss of loved ones. The families of Bro. Ryan Gasser (Sis. Coleen) and Sis. Katrina Demrovsky (Bro. Brian) experienced the loss when their grandfather, Bro. Mitch Baltic of Rittman passed away. We also pray for the family of our dear Bro. Carl Graf in his recent passing. His children are Bro. Ed Graf (Sis. Deb, Leo, IN), Tom Graf, Tim Graf (Nicola), Gary Graf (Tammy), and Sandy Reed (Pete).

The close of a year is a common time to spend some time in reflection, as we have all been placed in diverse circumstances and given different work by the Lord. Perhaps it is easy to feel
some trepidation at the thought of the rapidly changing world around us, yet may we ever find comfort in the verse found in Hebrews 13:8 “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.”

**Ohio, Columbus**

*Nancy Banks*

The first of December was a perfect day to get in the mood for the coming Christmas season. We were able to listen to the Sunday school children as they told of our Savior’s birth and the singing of Christmas carols lifted our hearts. Though the numbers may be small, the joy of Christmas radiated from their precious faces and brought a few tears to our eyes.

Following the Christmas program, we enjoyed caroling at Mayfair Village nursing home. Many of the residents love to follow along in the caroling books and a few will even sing with us. A meal was held at the church following caroling.

We are thankful for the many brothers from area churches who are helping with our remodeling projects. The Sunday school rooms are almost finished along with a new kitchenette and bathroom. The teachers and children will appreciate a warmer, more comfortable environment for their classrooms.

We express our heartfelt thanks to the many visiting ministers who helped support us on the pulpit. Preaching God’s word this month was Bro. Regg Beer (Sis. Bev, Milford, IN), Bro. Jerry Bauman (Sis. Martha, Rittman, OH), Bro. Jeff Bahler (Sis. Heidi, Wolcott, IN), Bro. Todd Graf (Sis. Lydia, Akron, OH), Bro. Chris Laukhauf (Sis. Rachel, Latty, OH), Bro. Bryon Palitto, (Sis. Lisa, Akron, OH), Bro. Nathan Walder (Sis. Denise, Cissna Park, IL) and Bro. Warren Schlatter (Sis. Cindy, Junction, OH).

We are happy to report that our dear Sis. Cheryl Gehres is home after spending time in the hospital and the rehab center. We are also thankful for Jennifer Curry’s recovery after two surgeries and time spent in rehab. Her husband, Jonathan and daughter Jaylynn are happy to have her home. Many prayers have been answered for both Sis. Cheryl and Jennifer.

**Ohio, Junction**

*Karen Schlatter*

As we look ahead to the New Year, we are filled with wonder and amazement at how the Lord has blessed us in 2019. After several months of construction of our new addition, we are once again able to hold Sunday school classes. November 24 was our first Sunday to occupy the new addition with our children in Sunday school.

Bro. Derek and Sis. Hannah Schlatter welcomed Lavinia Juliet into their home. She was born on November 19. She has two older siblings, Elena and Dallas. Her grandparents are Bro. Dennis and Sis. Laurie Schlatter from our congregation and Bro. James and Sis. Sara Steiner (Rittman, OH).

Our sympathy goes to Sis. Karen Manz (Bro. Lester) at the passing of her father, Bro. Marvin Klopfenstein from the Latty congregation. He also had many grandchildren and great grandchildren in our congregation who will miss him.

We are thankful for Matthew Monti who was announced for peace. He has been with us for close to a year and has been a blessing to our congregation. He is currently living with Bro. Ralph and Sis. Sheila Schlatter and works for them on their farm. We are thankful for his heart to learn and grow in his faith and walk with the Lord.

Visiting ministers and their families are always welcome. We enjoyed a visit from Bro. Matt Manz (Sis. Deanna) and Bro. Chet Manz (Sis. Jenny) from the Toledo congregation in early December. Since they grew up in Junction, it is so nice to have them visit on a regular basis and to see their young families as they grow and mature.

Dedication service for our new Sunday school was held on Sunday, December 8. Bro. Don Manz spoke on the history of the Junction church, especially the Sunday school. Elder Bro. Tony Manz had a message from the Bible followed with a prayer by Bro. Sam Schlatter. We also enjoyed an afternoon of Christmas caroling to many neighbors and friends with our Sunday school students that day. We gathered in the evening for a dinner back at the
church followed by singing some Christmas hymns.

Elder Bro. Tony Manz (Sis. Denise) shared the engagement announcement of their daughter, Sis. Heather Manz to Bro. Troy Hartzler, son of Bro. Dan and Sis. Jennifer Hartzler (Rittman, OH). We wish them the Lord’s richest blessings on their engagement and upcoming marriage.

Ohio, Latty
Angie Klopfenstein,
Carmen Stoller

Greetings of love! We pray you had a blessed Christmas season.

Bro. Calvin and Sis. Bekah Sinn are thankful for the arrival of Elsie Renee born on November 20. Older sisters, Madilyn and Clara, helped welcome her home. Grandparents are Bro. Todd and Sis. Janet Sinn and Bro. Ron and Sis. Elizabeth Jones (Silverton, OR).

Our prayers go with Sis. Arika Nuest (Bro. Lee and Sis. Paula) as she moves to Magdalena, Mexico to serve at CVE. May she feel God’s nearness and blessings!

Prayers and sympathies are with the family of Bro. Marvin Klopfenstein (Sis. Mary, dec.) as he finished his fight of faith. We pray the Holy Spirit will provide comfort to his children, Bro. Keith (Sis. JoAnne) and Sis. Karen Manz (Bro. Lester, Junction, OH), and to the many in his extended family.

We are thankful that Bro. Warren Schlatter (Sis. Cindy, Junction, OH) shared the Word with us this month.

Ohio, Mansfield
Katie Miller

“We sing our heartfelt thanks, Thy truth and love adoring, For guidance and for light Thy Spirit we’re imploring. Our hearts we offer Thee For life and every day, That with Thy grace we tread The straight and narrow way.”

Praise and Thanks for God’s Blessings, Zion’s Harp, #13

The seasons of Thanksgiving and Christmas remind us that we have much to be thankful for, especially that One was found worthy to be our Redeemer. We thank God for His marvelous gift!

We appreciate Bro. John Grimm (Sis. Julie, Columbus, OH) for visiting and ministering to us. May God bless those who speak truth and guidance from the Holy Word.

The body of believers is a special creation of God where each one is useful. We thank those who willingly agreed to fulfill positions in the New Year, including Bro. Chad Griffey (Trustee), Sis. April Ramsey (Kitchen Committee), Bro. Dan Sauder (Head Song Leader), and Sis. Bev Keever (HarvestCall Committee).

The Sunday school Christmas program was a joyful evening! It was a special time for the students and a blessing to hear the Christmas story proclaimed through the precious voices of our youth.

We are prayerful for Elizabeth Brandt through her surgery and recovery. Our thoughts are also with Sis. Florina Baumann whose sister-in-law Magdalena “Helen” Gutai has passed away. We take comfort in God’s perfect understanding of all things.

Ohio, Rittman
Maria Beery, Julie Steiner

“And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.” Mark 1:15

At age 98, we are thankful Walter Baltic expressed his desire and need for repentance and trust God will be near him during this time.

“For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to is wife.” Mark 10:7

We were blessed to witness the weddings of Bro. Aaron Zollinger (Bro. Marvin and Sis. Pam, Smithville) to Sis. Charity Gasser (Bro. Aaron and Sis. Deb) and Bro. Mathis Kuenzi (Bro. Troy and Sis. Sherri, Silverton) to Sis. Cindy Dotterer (Bro. Gary and Sis. Sandy). We rejoice with the new couples and will miss Sis. Charity and Sis. Cindy worshipping with us! Amidst the weddings, the engagement of Bro. Troy Hartzler (Bro. Dan and Sis. Jennifer) to Sis. Heather Manz (Bro. Tony and Sis. Denise, Junction) was made known. We continue to see God work in the lives of souls and stand in awe of his faithfulness!

Our prayers are with Bro. Novko Atanasov (Sis. Julie), in the passing of his dad, Nikola Atanasov. We also extend sympathy to the family of Doretta Kaufman as she was laid to rest.
After 106 years here on earth, Bro. Mitchel Baltic took his last breath. We trust God will comfort his children, Bro. Daniel (Sis. Betty), Bro. Pete (Sis. Karen, Mansfield), Sis. Nettie, and Sis. Mary Gasser (Bro. Fred), his brother, Walter, and his many other family members. We also want to remember Sis. Doris Gasser, Sis. Carolyn Marty, Sis. Kathryn (Eugene) Bachman, and Bro. Fred Stoller in the passing of their brother and brother-in-law, Bro. Dean Marty (Sis. Martha, Smithville).

Brooke Zollinger (Bryan) spent time in the hospital and is glad to be back home and feeling better each day!

Thanks to the ministers who visited our congregation this month. We trust God will bless Bro. Adrian Strahm (Sis. Harriet, Bern), Retired Elder Bro. Ken Indermuhle (Sis. Linda, Sardis), Bro. John Grimm (Sis. Julie, Columbus), Bro. Marvin Zollinger (Sis. Pam, Smithville), Bro. Dana Indermuhle (Sis. Joy, Sardis), Bro. Dana Nieman (Sis. Lea, Remington), Bro Jim Zollinger (Sis. Tresa, Silverton), and Bro. Nathaniel Ramsey (Sis. April, Mansfield) for serving us.

We have several new babies to report. Bro. Jared and Sis. Abbey Keever finalized the adoption of baby Everett Emil. He joins older siblings Eli, Ella, AE’non, and Esther. Bro. Jim and Sis. Sara Steiner are thankful for the safe arrival of another granddaughter, Lavinia Juliet. Lavinia is welcomed by her parents, Bro. Derek and Sis. Hannah Schlatter (Junction), and older siblings, Elena and Dallas. Sis. Karen Hartzler added another grandson with the birth of Callen James. Callen will be loved by his parents, Lane and Lanae Hartzler, and siblings, Kanin and Tayah. Zane Joshua joined the family of Bro. Josh and Sis. Megan Riggenbach (Smithville). Zane joins siblings, Isaac, Aubrey, Paige, and Emma. Grandparents are Bro. Bob and Sis. Lorie Riggenbach and Bro. Mark and Sis. Sue Steiner (Smithville).

As we begin a new year, we trust God will bless each of you with his grace and peace!

Ohio, Sardis
Renee Blough, Doris Miller

We are grateful to Bro. Matthew Rassi (Sis. Bridget, Chicago, IL) for bringing forth the Word on Thanksgiving weekend. We treasure the blessing of fellowship and sharing when loved ones “come home” with their families. We appreciate all our visitors!

Christmastime is full of traditions that remind us of the birth of the Christ Child. Whether we are caroling, sending cards, giving gifts, taking part in a Sunday school program, or counting down the days on an advent calendar, worshipping Jesus Christ our Savior and Redeemer is the reason Christmas is fulfilling. Let’s focus on the spiritual aspects of life in all that we do in the New Year.

Ohio Smithville
Connie Maletich, Millie Stoller

We extend our heartfelt thanks to Bro. Lucas Frank (Sis. Crystal, Detroit, MI), Bro. Randy Gasser, (Sis. Sue, Detroit, MI) and Bro. Bob Riggenbach (Sis. Lorie, Rittman, OH), for sharing the Word of God with us.

Bro. Aaron Zollinger and Sis. Charity Gasser were joined in marriage on December 8. We offer best wishes to them and their parents, Bro. Marvin and Sis. Pam Zollinger and Bro. Aaron and Sis. Deb Gasser (Rittman, OH). We welcome Sis. Charity to worship with us.

Bro. Josh and Sis. Megan, Isaac, Aubrey, Paige and Emma Riggenbach welcomed Zane Joshua into their family on December 12. Thankful grandparents are Bro. Mark and Sis. Sue Steiner and Bro. Bob and Sis. Lorie Riggenbach (Rittman, OH). Bro. Steve and Sis. Jollene Hofacre are also rejoicing in the birth of a new grandson as little Asher Yosef joins the family of their daughter Stephanie (Bob) Sax.

Our prayers for healing are with Sis. Jennifer (Bro. Roger) Bauman and Sis. Elaine (Bro. Ed) Marty, as they have both spent time in the hospital this month.

Likewise, our prayers and sympathies are with Sis. Martha Marty in the loss of her dear husband, Bro. Dean. Also mourning are his children, Ralph (Marie), Ronald (Patricia), Daniel, David (Michelle), Paul (Jeanine) and Deana (Scott) McCune and his sister, Sis. Eileen (Bro. Bob) Stoller.
Ohio, Toledo  
**Brooke Harmon, Rebekah Witzig**

Bro. Aaron and Sis. Whitney Masters are thankful for the safe arrival of a precious baby girl, Lainey Elizabeth, on December 8. Excited big brothers are Kendon and Nolan! We pray the Lord will bless their family as they adjust to the changes a new baby brings.

As a church family we enjoyed a Saturday evening together Christmas caroling to local nursing homes where some of our loved ones reside. The following evening we were blessed to listen to our Sunday school students sing and recite about the birth of our Saviour during the Christmas program. Both of these evenings were uplifting and encouraging as it helps us to keep our focus on the true meaning of Christmas.

We are grateful to our Elder Bro. Bill Schlatter (Sis. Emily, Junction, OH) and Elder Bro. Vic Bauman (Sis. Brenda, Smithville, OH) for preaching the Word of Life to us recently. They also shared with the congregation that Bro. Matt Manz (Sis. Deanna) has been asked to take on the responsibility as elder of the Toledo church. Please be prayerful for Bro. Matt and his family as they take the next steps in this process.

Sis. Teresa Rywalski had surgery and has been hospitalized for several weeks. Our thoughts and prayers are with her as she recovers, and we look forward to the time she is able to assemble with us again!

Ontario, Kitchener  
**RoseLynn Metzger**

“O how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day.” Psalm 119:97

A snowy hello from Canada! The Christmas season is here and we gladly anticipate the celebration of the birth of our king, Jesus. Our visiting ministers this month included Bro. Myron Knobloch (Sis. Beth, Lester, IA), Bro. Ryan Bertsch (Sis. Jessica, Bluffton North, IN), Bro. Arlen Leman (Sis. Denise, Forrest, IL), and Bro. Greg Stieglitz (Sis. Lisa, Indianapolis, IN). We commemorated the death of our Lord through communion on November 24. With us were Elder Bro. Mark Bahr (Sis. Bev, Detroit, MI) and Elder Bro. Ted Steffen (Sis. Sandra, Alto, MI). On December 14, we held our annual Christmas Dinner and Sunday school program. It is always a blessing to fellowship and sing carols together with church family and community members! This Christmas season, let’s remember to keep Christ in our hearts, because he is the reason for the season.

“Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.” John 11:25

Oregon, Portland  
**Louisa Gallup**

We enjoyed listening to the Sunday school students presenting us with the annual Christmas program. They had the support of the four sisters in our Single Group, who graciously offered to join the four boys in singing the Christmas songs. The efforts of the teachers are appreciated as well. After the program, we enjoyed fellowship and a meal together.

Visiting ministers this past month were Bro. Ron Jones (Sis. Liz), Bro. Jim Zollinger (Sis. Tresa) and Bro. Harvey Kuenzi (Sis. Jennifer), all from Silverton, OR. Their support is deeply appreciated.

Oregon, Silverton  
**Lorraine Kuenzi, Teresa Sinn**

What an eventful time of year! As we are in the midst of the Thanksgiving and Christmas season, it’s a good reminder to keep Christ number one in our lives instead of letting the busyness overwhelm us.

We kicked off the season with a Thanksgiving singing and potluck to set our minds on the true reason for the season.

The last weekend in November we had the opportunity to listen to the testimonies and witness the baptism of five individuals whom Jesus has called into service for Him! Bro. Nick and Sis. Brittany Prince, Bro. Josiah Metz (Bro. Joel and Sis. Laura), Bro. Micah Kuenzi (Bro. Jeremy and Sis. Kristy), and Sis. Maryn Schaefer were welcomed into the fold, and we are thankful for the work God has performed and will continue to perform in their lives. We appreciate Elder Bro. Mike Leman (Sis. Deb, Denver, CO) for spending the weekend with us and pray for God’s blessings on you!
We were blessed to hear the Christmas story through the verses and songs the Sunday school presented on December 8. We appreciate the students and teachers hard work and preparation on our behalf!

Thank you to Bro. Mike Leman (Sis. Lisa, Portland, OR) for sharing the Gospel message with us Wednesday evening December 11.

Sis. Wendi Sinn (Bro. Clinton) recently had hip surgery and would appreciate your prayers for a quick recovery.

As always, it’s a blessing to sing Christmas carols to friends, family, and the elderly in a variety of living situations. We spent an evening as a congregation caroling in various settings and pray that each individual was blessed by the Christmas story that was sung about.

Bro. Mathis Kuenzi (Bro. Troy and Sis. Sherri) and Sis. Cindy Dotterer (Bro. Gary and Sis. Sandy) from Rittman, OH, were married December 15. We are excited to welcome Sis. Cindy into the Silverton congregation but recognize it will be a significant transition and are prayerful for the couple as they begin their life together in Him.

We are excited to share the announcement that Bro. Steven Schurter and Sis. Shayna Popkes from Lester, IA (John and Sis. Karmin) are engaged! This is an exciting transition, and we are prayerful for God’s leading in their relationship.

**Pennsylvania, Philadelphia**

**Laura Isch**

“And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” Luke 2:13-14

“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” John 14:27

This is the time of year we hear a lot about peaceful stillness, silent nights, and peace on earth. I like to remember what Christ Himself said about the peace He brought to the world. Even though there is trouble and turmoil on this earth, His presence can give us the strength to be untroubled and unafraid. What a gift He has given to us!

The Sunday school presented their annual Christmas program on December 15. We enjoyed hearing the Christmas story coming from their young voices.

We were blest this month to have Bro. Loren Schrenk (Sis. Betsy, St. Louis, MO) minister the Word to us. We appreciate his willingness to be used by the Holy Spirit.

Our prayers and sympathies are with Ed and Connie Baer with the loss of his mother, Sis. Eleanor Baer (Princeville, IL). We enjoyed Sis. Eleanor’s visits to Philadelphia and her gentle spirit will be missed.

**Tennessee, Nashville**

**Mike Fritz**

We praise God for the willingness of our visiting ministers to serve us. Our recent ministers have included the following: Bro. Brian Metzger (Sis. Angie, Lester, IA), Bro. John Cottrell (Sis. Gloria, Eureka, IL), Bro. Tim Drayer (Sis. Gwen, Bluffton North, IN), Bro. Greg Stieglitz (Sis. Lisa, Indianapolis, IN), Bro. Chris Wuethrich (Sis. Carla, St. Louis, MO); Bro. Tom Bolliger (Sis. Jane, Tremont, IL), Bro. Byron Stoller (Sis. Carol, Gridley, IL), Bro. Alan Schambach (Remington, IN); Bro. Brian Huber (Sis. Jacki, Francesville, IN) and Bro. Dave Obergfel (Sis. Kathy, Peoria, IL).

Also, we have been blessed by the fellowship of brethren and friends visiting from Phoenix, AZ; Florida; Eureka, Tremont, and Washington, IL; Remington, IN; Lester and Mediapolis, IA; and Latty and Sardis, OH; as well as some local visitors.

If you are traveling to or through the Nashville area, please plan to fellowship and worship with us. We meet for worship every Sunday. Please contact us ahead of time to confirm our schedule. Contacts are Bro. Mike and Sis. Monica Fritz, 615.866.5543, fritzmb.family@gmail.com; Bro. Jeff and Sis. Cynde Stoller, 309.530.5760, cyndelynnstoller@gmail.com; or Bro. Jordan and Sis. Emily Fritz, 615.852.9109, jordanmfritz@gmail.com.
Texas, Austin/Bastrop
Candy Meiss

We send our Love and Greetings from Austin/Bastrop.

We are thankful for visiting ministers. This month we were blessed by our Elder Bro. Gerry Hertzel (Sis. Ellen, Sabetha, KS), Bro. Leland Plattner (Zapata, TX), Bro. Dan Koch (Sis. Julie, Tremont, IL), Bro. Clint Dotterer (Sis. Rebecca, Denver, CO) and Bro. Brian Waibel (Sis. Wendy, Champaign, IL).

Thank you Bro. Clint, for ministering to us on Thanksgiving. It was a special blessing to have you with us for the holiday.

Our annual Christmas program was enjoyed by all. The support and assistance with all aspects of the Christmas program, whether that was help with leading, teaching, singing, praying, listening, snacks, decorations, technology, or books was appreciated by all. The children all received gifts and here are some responses to the gifts that Bro. Kirby experienced. As he was returning some of the kids to Stoney Point, one girl had opened her book, and was reading it aloud. She kept repeating this phrase, as she sounded out each word: “Jesus loves me, even me.” Another girl texted Bro. Kirby later that evening: “Thank you so much for the beautiful Bible, I love it!” Another boy was thrilled to see his name on the Bible book, and insisted on reading an entire chapter with his family. We want to thank Bro. Brian and Sis. Wendy Waibel for their willingness to be part of our program after a quick practice during the lunch hour. The program was bilingual and many visitors from the surrounding area came to hear the Christmas story in verse and song from their children.

We are grateful to Elder Bro. Gerry Hertzel and Deacon Bro. Leland Plattner for their willingness to read the memorandum and share with us. We are thankful for all the love we feel for each other and the blessings it bestows to be part of this fellowship. May we continue to live for Him, whom all blessings flow.

We are saddened by the loss of our dear friend and Elder Bro. Wayne Banwart. Our congregation has been blessed in countless ways by Bro. Wayne’s selfless service.

We are so thankful for our visitors and encourage everyone passing through to stop and worship with us!

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

Texas, Dallas-Ft. Worth
Sheena Pelsy

Greetings! As the year comes to an end, the Dallas church has a lot to be thankful for. We were very blessed to gain a handful of new members in addition to having church services twice a month instead of one. We are so very thankful for the many visiting ministers and visitors that joined us for services. The latest visiting ministers were Bro. Nick Waibel (Sis. Sandra, Francesville, IN) and Elder Bro. Gerry Hertzel (Sis. Ellen, Sabetha, KS).

With Christmas this month, Bro. Nick Waibel gave us a refreshing sermon that reflects the power of Jesus Christ and the importance of His birth. He read from 2 Peter 1 which reminded us that we are poor and needy sinners surrounded by a corrupt world. But because of Jesus Christ and His divine power we can become divine partakers of His glory and mercy!

“Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” 2 Peter 1:4

Without Jesus Christ we are nothing, but because of Him we can live our lives with an eternal perspective, joyfully awaiting His return. In 2 Peter, the author also reminds us not to sit still in our faith. We are living in a corrupt world and we must constantly run to Christ to escape that corruption. We are called to abound in the precious promises given to us. We cannot be merely hearers of the Word, but also doers! As the New Year approaches, let us be active in our faith and constantly apply God’s Word to our lives.

Elder Bro. Gerry Hertzel also shared the Memorandum with the church.

Services are being held every 2nd and 4th Sunday. If you plan to visit or want to call ahead to verify services, call Bro. Adam Graf (330-590-7086).
Imagine with me, if you will, a botanist who has for his entire career been in charge of a tropical arboretum. Life of all kinds is teeming here, and every day he traverses the confines of the place and observes how the plants are doing. He knows all of the plants in their fantastic variety and checks on their growth and development and how they are interacting with those around them. He is the perfect gardener of his Eden.

One day his boss comes to him and gives him a new assignment, the care and keeping of a desert habitat. Here is a stark contrast in duty. The ecosystem is vastly less complicated. There are only a few choice species able to survive this harsh environment, those that are thick-fleshed and prickly on the surface. The environment is sparse and without much variety in the shades of color available to enjoy. The assignment is distasteful to him, but because he deeply appreciates his boss and understands that his boss knows what is best, and accepts the new responsibility.

This to me is an analogy of the life of Jesus Christ before and after the Advent. He had the glories of Heaven to enjoy from eternity past. There was a boundless variety of life to interact with, all of it thriving. Then God, the Father, gave him a new assignment, to come to earth, an impoverished and barren place. The only life here is a few prickly cacti (rough and hardly living people) with whom he was to interact and help direct to an abundant and fulfilled life. Yet, he was obedient to the Heavenly vision! He willingly worked and ultimately died that all of us could enjoy the opportunity to be with Him.

Our under-gardeners, Elder Bro. Kevin Ryan (Sis. Cheryl) and Bro. Brent Walder (Sis. Naomi) of Rockville, CT came to read the memorandum. We appreciated the efforts these two couples made and the many other times they have come and tended our small rural garden set in the beautiful Green Mountains. A few weeks before this reading, Bro. Kevin (Sis. Cheryl) came and conversed with each of our families individually to see where we were as a church body. We are certainly thankful for the work both Bro. Kevin and Bro. Brent are doing to encourage a culture of thriving among us.

Additionally, we enjoyed the visits and ministry of Bro. Tom Bahler (Sis. LaNae), also from Rockville, CT, and Bro. Doug Wagenbach (Sis. Lillian, San Diego, CA). The fellowship of single sisters from Akron, OH and Bluffton Country, IN were also an injection of encouragement to us. May the Good Lord bless all of you for your untiring efforts in encouraging the Gospel message here.

We anticipate the hymns and the account of Christ’s birth during our annual Christmas program. We thank the superintendent, teachers, and students for all their hard work in preparing for it.

Another Year is Dawning
Hymns of Zion, #150

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

Another year of mercies, of faithfulness and grace. Another year of gladness in the shining of thy face.

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

Another year of service, of witness for thy love; another year of training for holier work above.

Another year is dawning, dear Master let it be, on earth or else in heaven another year for Thee. Amen.

Light from the Word
Now available by downloadable PDF at www.acpublications.org
After entering the website, click on the item located at the left hand frame entitled, “Light from the Word Reprints”. The entire set of editorials are available in a complete download (June 1987 to current).
A Scripture for the New Year

Ephesians 4

1. I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,
2. With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;
3. Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
4. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;
5. One Lord, one faith, one baptism,
6. One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.
7. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.
8. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.
9. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?)
10. He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.
11. And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;
12. For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:
13. Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:
14. That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;
15. But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:
16. From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.
17. This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,
Save the Date to attend ALive 2020

Plans are underway for the Athens, Alabama congregation to host ALive2020 over the Memorial Day weekend, (May 23-25, 2020) at The Vision. Registration will begin February 1.

As planning continues, you can learn more details about the weekend and register on our website at www.ALiveAlabama.com. You can also find more info on Facebook @ALiveAlabama or send an email to info@alivealabama.com.

The Vision is a 300+ acre Christian retreat/camp/lodge/event facility with walking/hiking trails, fishing and swimming. A vintage playground, Gaga Ball pit, game room and other activities are also available for kids. View more information about the facility at www.visionministry.org.

The Athens congregation looks forward to seeing you at ALive 2020 to Rest. Revive. Relate.
Opportunity to Serve - Resident Caretaker Needed  
Rochester Christian Guesthouse - Rochester, Minnesota

Due to the pending relocation of the current caretakers at the Guesthouse, an opportunity to serve is available starting in the Spring of 2020.

The position is part-time and on an as-needed basis, similar to hosting guests occasionally overnight in our own homes. It is an ideal ministry for a family, young couple, or empty-nesters, who would enjoy relocating to Rochester for a time, and whose regular employment would accommodate it.

If an opportunity to serve those from our denomination who are in Rochester seeking medical treatment at the Mayo Clinic is of interest, the Guesthouse Board would like to hear from you.

**The general arrangements and responsibilities are as follows:**

- Commitment length of 3-5 years is preferred, but any length will be considered.
- The upper two floors of the residential home are available for use by the caretaker family, under a favorable financial arrangement.
- The bottom floor of the home has three private rooms that are available for those connected to our denomination to use, on a free-will-offering basis.
- The caretaker duties in general are as follows:
  - scheduling appointments for use of the Guesthouse facility
  - answering any questions or concerns
  - cleaning of the Guesthouse facility
  - buying supplies: cleaning, paper, coffee, sometimes food, and parking passes
  - paying bills for services and supplies used by the Guesthouse
  - if needed, providing rides to medical appointments at the area clinics or hospitals
  - Seeking to be hospitable including hosting guests occasional for meals or evening dialog, and providing a listening ear for guests that desire fellowship or empathy

Further details and a full description of the opportunity, history, and mission of the Guesthouse can be provided by sending an email to: cmschmidt4@yahoo.com or by calling Bro. Clint Schmidt, Board Chairman, at (612) 280-3818. Additional information is available on the Minneapolis congregation’s website at www.minneapolisacchurch.org/guesthouse.

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Christian Guesthouse and Worship Services in Rochester, MN  
**Accommodations for Mayo Clinic outpatients and families – two locations:**
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:**
For information and reservations, contact caretakers:
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
Fairview Haven: Assistant Director of Nursing Job Opportunity

“An Apostolic Christian Community where choice is valued, growth is encouraged and life abounds!”

If you are a registered nurse looking for a purpose or a mission to serve at and this statement sounds like something you could be passionate about, then Fairview Haven wants to talk to you!

Fairview Haven is currently seeking a qualified Assistant Director of Nursing for our five star retirement community in Fairbury, Illinois. We are seeking an RN (or an LPN willing to take that next step) who will work closely with our Director of Nursing and a caring team of nurses and CNAs to provide top of the line senior care to the loved ones we serve.

While the job description will be determined based on talents, duties may include level of care assessments, psychotropic monitoring, orientation of new nursing staff, Quality improvement programs, team management, etc.

In addition to working for one of the highest rated nursing homes in the country, Fairview Haven offers you a competitive compensation package including great health insurance benefits, one of the best retirement plan matches around, vision, dental and Aflac insurance offerings, flexible scheduling including adequate paid time off for special events in your life.

The only important qualification for this position is that you have a calling to serve and a passion for our mission.

The first step is prayer - please ask God if you are the right person for this position. If there are barriers, He can remove them! If you are feeling led after a talk with the almighty, give Brandon Stoller (bstoller@fairviewhaven.org) or Dave Blunier (dblunier@fairviewhaven.org) a call at Fairview Haven to discuss further - 815-692-2572.
**Available Topics**

- Faith: Depending on God [1601] Price: $8.50
- Forgiveness: Making Peace with the Past [1602] Price: $8.50
- Four Great Loves [1603] Price: $8.50
- Friendship [1604] Price: $8.50
- Fruit of the Spirit [1605] Price: $8.50
- God’s Comfort [1606] Price: $8.50
- Grief [1607] Price: $8.50
- Hope [1608] Price: $8.50
- Images of God [1609] Price: $8.50
- Integrity [1610] Price: $8.50
- James [1611] Price: $10.00
- Prayer [1612] Price: $8.50
- Sermon on the Mount [1613] Price: $8.50
- Joshua [1614] Price: $10.00
- Parenting [1615] Price: $8.50
- John [1616] Price: $10.00
- Philippians [1617] Price: $10.00

**Philemon**

This informative Bible study from the NavPress Life Change series has been adapted with permission by ACCFS. The study consists of 11 lessons and can be done individually, in small groups, and congregationally. Topics included in this study: Historical Background — Paul And Philippi, Map of the Roman Empire, Timeline of Paul’s Ministry, Overview, A Prayer for Partners, The Important Thing, Worthy Conduct, The Mindset of Christ, Working It Out, Co-workers, Gains and Loss, Citizens of Heaven, The Peace of God, Review. Price: $10.00

For additional information and ordering visit www.acpublications.org

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Store Hours: Monday - Friday
8:30am - 11:30am (Central Time)
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. The trip will be over a weekend and include worshipping with a deaf congregation.

To learn more, Email or Call: Kent Mogler at 612-360-4361 or moglerkent@gmail.com

Haiti Awareness Tours

If you’d like to see the ministry of Hospital Lumiere and other Haiti projects in person, but do not have the time or desire to participate in a week-long work team, please consider our 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 ministries in southern Haiti.

To learn more, contact:
Rich Bertschi at 309.467.2351 or hospitallumiere@harvestcall.org
Rick Wuethrich at 219.863.4163 or rick@wuethrichfarms.com
Mexico Medical / Dental Teams

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<th>PROJECT</th>
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Todd and Teresa Earney  260-273-9528  Email: tearney@adamswells.com

Mexico Construction Teams

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

Jamaica Teams

QUESTIONS FOR JAMAICA TEAMS:
May 22-30  CCCD - JDV  40
Mark Lindberg  815-641-9065  Email: Lindbma@hotmail.com
If you are interested in sponsoring a work team to Jamaica contact Loren Dettwyler at lmdettwyler@gmail.com

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.

To learn more, contact:

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

Hospital Lumiere - Bonne Fin, Haiti

MISSIONARY SERVICE OPPORTUNITY

The Hospital Lumiere team is presently seeking candidates for missionary service in a variety of roles that will fit your calling, interests and experience. Singles, Couples and Families of all ages are encouraged to prayerfully consider full time missionary service supporting the ministry and outreach in Bonne Fin, Haiti.

There are many service and ministry opportunities at HL. The most important qualification is that the brother and/or sister is called by God to serve at the hospital. The service opportunity and placement will be developed to match the candidate’s interest and experience. Potential service roles for non-medical candidates:

- Business office management
- Finance and Accounting
- Hospital Administration
- Facilities Operations and/or Maintenance
- Hospital Operations (non-medical)
- Hospital Technical Support
- Information Technology Support
- Missionary School Teacher or Teacher Aid
- Campus and Hospitality Management
- Missionary Support

Qualifications and Requirements:
- Member in good standing within the Apostolic Christian Church of America
- A servant heart, willingness to serve those in need
- Desire to engage as ambassadors of Christ with the Haitian staff at HL and the surrounding Bonne Fin community
- Relocate to Hospital Lumiere in Bonne Fin, Haiti
- Learn Haitian Creole (French language fluency is also beneficial)

For additional details for these exciting and worthy service opportunities contact Tom Hitz. Email: tchitz@sbcglobal.net or Phone: 734.635.4112

If you are interested in Medical service, please review the Medical Professional Advertisement.
Bible Distribution:
Sharing His Word in Love

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

Together we can provide Bibles for seeking people. This could be someone you attend school with, someone you work with, or someone God has shown you at a gas station. Bibles and approved Bible story Books are available. Carrying a New Testament to distribute can help you remember what our real task is. To order, contact:

Apostolic Christian Church Bible Distribution
651 E. Peoria Street, Goodfield, IL 61742
Phone: 309-965-2141
Email: bbibledistribution@acpublications.org

AC Medical Fellowship Committee Biennial Meeting for 2020

SAVE THE DATE

AC Medical Fellowship meeting is scheduled for Saturday April 18, 2020 in Goodfield, IL at the Fellowship Hall.

Registration will begin at 8:00 a.m. and presentations at 8:30 a.m. and will continue until ~7:00 p.m. with a light breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Spouses are welcome.

If you are on the HarvestCall Health Care Provider registry, you will receive an email in a few months with a formal invitation and registration form. There will also be a Facebook posting.

PART-TIME COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

This is an opportunity to use your communications and organizational skills as a part-time employee to help our brotherhood proclaim Christ and serve others.

A part-time Communications Coordinator is needed in the HarvestCall office, located in West Lafayette, IN. This person writes and edits content and provides hands-on coordination of a wide variety of projects. He/she is the person who ensures projects stay on track and deadlines are met. The Coordinator works regularly with the Communications Director, Videographer/Graphic Designer, committee Communications Managers, other volunteer contributors, and miscellaneous vendors.

This is an approximately 20 hr/week, paid position with a flexible schedule. A portion of the work could be done from home. Pay will be commensurate with the experience and skills of the chosen candidate. Some occasional evening and weekend work is required.

To learn more or apply, contact HarvestCall’s Communications Director, Dan Weerts at dweerts@harvestcall.org.
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 caregivers 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 caregivers 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

Seeking caregiver assistants, single or married, willing to support a caregiver in our Christ-centered family-like homes for children who have been pulled from their homes due to circumstances out of their control. A caregiver assistant 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 assistant responsibilities include:
Support or provide spiritual leadership and training for the children; support the caregiver in providing for the daily physical, social and emotional needs of the children; continual pursuit of personal emotional and spiritual growth; continual professional growth as an assistant; administer discipline in love and using biblical principles in accordance with CVE policies; grow in cultural knowledge and sensitivity.

Terms of Service

- Live on or near the CVE campus, may include living in the home 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
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

The past decade has seen tremendous growth in brethren serving full time in the cross-cultural ministries of Apostolic Christian Church. Supporting those the church sends as missionaries is our responsibility and an example given us by the early church. We can support them in prayer, in fellowship, and financially.*


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**Now Available**

**Missionary Support Card Packs**
A Resource Tool to Stay Connected with our Missionaries

The past decade has seen tremendous growth in brethren serving full time in the cross-cultural ministries of Apostolic Christian Church. Supporting those the church sends as missionaries is our responsibility and an example given us by the early church. We can support them in prayer, in fellowship, and financially.*

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- Personal Connection
- Servant Fund Needs
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  - E-mail & Texting
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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

To Sponsor a Child or School

Fill out this form and send to the office. You’ll be assigned a student or school and sent further information. Learn more about child sponsorship, including costs, at: harvestcall.org/child-sponsorship

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Spouse _________________________
Address _________________________
City ____________St ___ Zip ______
Home Ph _________________________
Cell Ph _________________________
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Please check preference:
    ☐ Haiti Student ☐ Jamaica
    ☐ Haiti School ☐ Guatemala
    ☐ Mexico ☐ Zambia
    ☐ Wherever needed

If possible, I prefer:
    ☐ Boy – Age ______
    ☐ Girl – Age ______
    ☐ No Preference

Send to:
HarvestCall Child Sponsorship
PO Box 36
Morton, IL 61550
Phone: 309-266-6080
Fax: 309-266-5281
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TEACHER OPPORTUNITY

Hospital Lumiere, Bonne Fin, Haiti is presently seeking a teacher and teacher aid for missionary children. These positions involve full-time teaching in the multi-level classroom setting of the Bonne Fin Missionary School on the Hospital Lumiere compound. The missionary role is expected to start during the summer of 2019. These are full time missionary positions with a service term of one school year. There is opportunity to extend the term of service.

**Teacher qualifications** include being a member in good standing of the Apostolic Christian Church, a minimum of a Bachelor’s Degree, preferably in the field of Education or Child Development, ability to communicate effectively with students, parents and visitors to the school, a nurturing and caring attitude toward children, and a heart and desire to serve others through service to Jesus Christ.

**Teacher Aid qualifications** include being a member in good standing of the Apostolic Christian Church, a minimum of a High School Diploma, a Bachelor’s degree preferred, preferably in the field of Education or Child Development, ability to communicate effectively with the teacher, students, parents and visitors to the school, a nurturing and caring attitude toward children, and a heart and desire to serve others through service to Jesus Christ.

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PROFESSIONALS in the Medical Field

Full Time / Long 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. Current medical positions:

**PHYSICIAN:** (General Medicine/Family Practice, Internists, Orthopedists, Surgeons, OB/GYN) These positions are intended to serve patients, lead a department and mentor Haitian physicians.

**ANESTHESIOLOGY:** (Anesthesiologist and CRNA’s)

**NURSE PRACTITIONER:** Support and mentor positions for medical and patient care within the hospital and clinic.

**NURSE:** Support and mentor Haitian nursing staff, engage in patient care

There are many needs for medical professionals to serve the patients and Haitian staff including those listed above. If you are led to the mission field but your skill set and qualifications are not a good match for the positions listed above, please contact us. There is flexibility on requirements listed as well as job descriptions and qualifications. Many times, the role that is filled can be developed to fit the gifts of each applicant.

**For additional details for this exciting and worthy position contact Tom Hitz.**

Email: tchitz@sbcglobal.net or Phone: 734.635.4112

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Missionary School - Bonne Fin, Haiti

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Continued Articles

Loving as Jesus Loves
— Continued from pg. 3

What do we do? Many years after his last hours with Jesus before the crucifixion, John wrote a letter to the church detailing how to fulfill this new commandment and encouraging the church to embrace this way of life. In the words of a friend of Jesus who had lived many years in obedience to what he had learned, he wrote down the basic elements of the Way of Love.

- **Believe** that Jesus is the Son of God. All who deny that Jesus is the Son of God also deny the Father.

- **Confess.** God is light and in Him is no darkness. His children should have no darkness either. Bringing our sin to the light through confession, is a powerful step in removing darkness from our lives.

- **Obey.** We know we love God when we keep His commandments and we know we love our brother when we keep God's commandments. Obedience to God is love. His commandments aren't burdensome or grievous. Don't love the world. If we do, we don't love the Father. All who have hope in Jesus purify themselves and do not live in a sinful way of life.

- **Receive** the Holy Spirit. The anointing of the Spirit is sufficient to give us understanding of the Bible and teach us the truth.

- **Live** it out. We know we have passed from death to life if we love our brother. Love consists of actions not merely words. If we love in actions, we assure our hearts and have confidence that Christ is in us.

- **Guard** your mind. Many deceptive spirits have gone out into the world.

- **Rest** in the assurance of God’s love. Perfect love casts out all fear.

- **Pray.** He hears us when we pray and will do whatever we ask if it isn't contrary to His will. Therefore, if we pray for the ability to love like Jesus, the Father will fill us with love.11

Just as Jesus condensed three years of teaching into a few words and object lessons after He shared the last Passover with His disciples, John condensed those three years into a few pointed paragraphs. Loving God = belief and trust that Jesus is the Son = loving our brother = keeping God’s commandments = great assurance (no fear).

As a church, we have always embraced this biblical commandment, given to us by Jesus, to love as He loves. Recently, we have consciously reaffirmed this as our primary purpose. Loving as Jesus loves is truly a sacrificial way of living – not just the occasional single act. How have we made love our primary daily activity? Are we daily keeping His commandments? Is our love toward our brethren truly noteworthy or have we been jaded by prosperity and the ways of the world and seen our love fade? Jesus tells us that our love for each other is our greatest witness and primary means of sharing the gospel.12 A life of love is, without a doubt, our greatest purpose and highest calling.
brother. This happened in one of the central IL churches. The brother goes to church every Sunday, right? So, somebody is observing his farm and knows that no one is around on Sundays. So, one Sunday he decides to come home at noon, and somebody’s backed up to his corn crib taking advantage of the lack of security. The brother confronts him, and he is given grace to follow this commandment. He says, “if you need it, you can have it.” He doesn’t demand it back. He doesn’t call the authorities. I don’t know what effect it had on the man that was a criminal, but it certainly was a blessing to the brother. If that became known in the community, it would’ve caused many to ask, “what is it that motivates Christians?”

What is it that’s supposed to motivate us? You know, we pray for others, but do our actions agree with our prayers? Do we really want them to be blessed? These are hard questions, especially when we’re honest in answering them.

The first part of this chapter was kind of affirming what we had talked about earlier – being cognitive of our gifts and using them appropriately. That’s what it’s saying, right? It’s very affirming to the minister when he makes statements like that and it’s affirmed immediately when he reads the Word. That gives you more confidence when you stand up here, I can tell you.

“Let love be without dissimulation.” (vs 9) What does that mean? We hear a lot about prejudice in our time. It’s saying here, don’t be prejudiced against someone else, but love them. What is love? I think that love is actually a verb and a noun. I’m kind of sorry that there’s only one word in the English language for love.

Love to me, for most of my life, was a feeling toward another person or a thing. But when we think about love, I think for the most part should be an action, right? Isn’t this how we’re supposed to love here? Whenever we are going to love this man who is our enemy, we love him not because we have a good feeling towards him; we love him because of what we do. How do we love our brother? How does that sister who came and played the piano for me love me? Was she afar off and just had good feeling toward me? No, she came, and she gave of herself. How do we love others? Often, we have to give of ourselves. It’s not just our feeling of someone else; it’s what we do. It’s what we do.

Can we be insincere in our loving? Well, I’m not going to go there. I suppose it’s possible, but when we love Christ, when we love others, when we love his enemies, when we love our enemies, when we love our brother, indeed we are loving Christ. Why are we here? Are we here just to have his blood cover our sins so we can get to heaven? We talk about being his hands and his feet. That’s why we’re here. Because he’s not here, but what did he leave for us? He left his spirit for us so he can direct us to be his love in our time. We each have different ways of loving, and we have to watch and wait for his direction for that love.

Just one thing before I stop – an example of what I mean by that: so, I had a profession in which I could help others in a way that most others could not, and early on, I had a desire to serve God using those talents. I thought I saw a way (this is Loren's thinking now), and I consulted a couple of brothers about that. They advised me not to, and I was confused. I thought that God said I should do this, but I submitted to my brothers’ advice, and then another brother came. He said, “I have a need for your talents,” and I said, “oh, now I see.” If we’re confused and can’t quite see the right way, what we need to do is pray and wait. The right thing at the wrong time is the wrong thing. Sometimes in order to get to the right time, we have to have patience. We have to be prepared ourselves. May God give us each the ability to evaluate our talents, wait for the right time, and use them to love him as we love others. We will be blessed in this life and have hope for everlasting life.
Over the generations, our church has gravitated from a few souls, under the leadership of Samuel Froehlich, who departed from the state church in Switzerland to begin anew in preaching and establishing churches. In Switzerland, they became known as Evangelical Baptists, and eventually in America as Apostolic Christians. To go out and preach and to establish new congregations is not easy -- indeed, it is a difficult enterprise. Yet, Bro. Froehlich, using the Bible as his main focus, was able to feed a hunger for truth, and many turned to the Lord in true repentance. Eventually many of these believers gravitated to America in 1847, and new congregations were formed in the United States. Historically, author Herman Ruegger, an official in the Swiss state church, wrote “Apostolic Christian History, Volume I,” in 1947. He makes reference to Bro. Froehlich’s four “missionary journeys” across the cantons of Switzerland to “test the waters” concerning spiritual thirst. These journeys have not been focused on to any significant degree, and it’s deemed significant that today’s church might benefit to read about them. In this, and succeeding “Remembering” columns, we plan to make reference to these missionary journeys. Ruegger’s comments, on pages 43-45, follow:

First Missionary Journey in Aargau

On the first of April, 1831, Froehlich began his missionary work in Leutwil on Hallwilersee, his former congregation. Hardly had the news spread that he was there when from two to three hundred people gathered every evening in order that he might preach to them the Word of Christ. Some also came to spy on him; the majority, however, from desire. Within eight days many hearers, whom he had instructed before and in whom God had prepared the way, requested baptism.

Froehlich examined them carefully to be convinced of the uprightness of their faith and of their knowledge, and admonished them to count the cost of following Christ. Then he baptized them according to the instruction of the Lord, and on Palm Sunday he could, for the first time celebrate the Lord’s supper with 38 members.

Meanwhile the foe was not idle. On the evening of April 13, 1831, when many were gathered together, a gendarme (police official) appeared and ordered that all who had sheltered Froehlich must appear before the district magistrate. As Froehlich did not permit himself to be intimidated and continued to preach the good tidings, a summons followed, and he was told to leave the village at once and return to his native Brugg. In vain, did he refer to the highest Aarau court and traveled to Aarau to the magistrate. He was dismissed with a warning.

On May 6, a gendarme dragged Froehlich out of a meeting and brought him to the district magistrate at Lenzburg. In answer to the question: “Who had commanded him to preach,” his reply was, calmly, “Christ.” The angry official raised his hand to strike him, but withdrew it under a stream of profanity. Finally, he tore his clothes and emptied his pockets in order to find his books; then he ordered the gendarme to put him into prison. When Froehlich appealed to the fact that the magistrate at Aargau had not arrested him he was finally allowed to go free.

Outside two brethren awaited him, who had followed him from the meeting at Leutwil to Lenzburg, to see what would happen. He greeted them like angels from heaven and they accompanied him on his wearisome journey to Brugg.

Editors note: Froehlich went on three more missionary journeys, and faced trials, opposition, and persecution. These will be examined in the next issues.

-by Perry A. Klopfenstein
The Light of Hope

The Rapture

The word rapture is not in the Bible but it means the state of being transported, and our new, spiritual bodies are to be transported, according to the Bible. That is written in I Thessalonians 4:16 and 17: “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” This is spoken of as The Rapture.

This event of the Lord Jesus Christ coming as far as the clouds, in the air, is also sometimes referred to as the second coming of Christ, although at that time he doesn’t come all the way to earth. Christ comes all the way to earth at least 7 years after the Rapture, inasmuch as we understand there is to be a 7 year tribulation period between the two events.

Christ coming all the way to earth is prophesied in Zechariah 14:4, “And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley.”

When Christ comes all the way to earth to fight against the nations gathered together to destroy Israel, he brings his angels with him. “When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory.” Matthew 25:31 All those who are in Christ will also come with him, “And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints.” Jude 14. Those who are in Christ will have received their new bodies at the time of the Rapture and will come with Christ and His angels to reign on earth 1,000 years, which time is called The Millenium.

So far as we know, the next major event prophesied in the Bible is the Rapture. We don’t know when it will occur but Christ exhorts us to be ready, “Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.” Matthew 24:44

In the original text quoted in this article, we are taught that the Lord Jesus Christ himself will descend from heaven with a shout. It sounds as if Christ himself will do the shouting but then it adds, “with the voice of the archangel.” Archangel probably means the highest ranking angel, higher than Gabriel, who was and is, God’s messenger. If it is with the voice of Michael, the archangel, see Jude 9, then he may be with Christ and they shout together. What will they shout? Perhaps, “Wake up! You will be changed in the twinkling of an eye.” That expression is used in I Corinthians 15:52, “In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump.”

Next we read that the dead in Christ shall rise first. I believe that “the dead” refers to the bodies of true believers, not their spirits. Paul teaches us that our spirits, we ourselves, are with Christ after we die or depart from our bodies. “We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.” II Corinthians 5:8 After the bodies of the dead arise from the graves, those believers who are alive and remain, that is, their bodies and spirits, will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and ever be with the Lord. It is a joyful event. Watch and pray.

-by Willis Ehnle
From thence she seeketh the prey,
and her eyes behold afar off.
Job 39:29