"Simply trusting ev'ry day, Trusting through a stormy way; Even when my faith is small, Trusting Jesus, that is all."
**March of Time**

Over the last year or so, time seemed to slow down. Maybe it was the clearing of the calendar. Or perhaps it was the adjustment of our normal activities, particularly church. The longing for a return to "normal" caused us to wonder if the pandemic would ever end.

In the last month as restrictions have eased, some semblance of normalcy has returned, and it seems time rapidly accelerated forward. Longed for activities returned, such as VBS and church lunch hour. A number of young adults graduated high school or college and are quickly transitioning to new experiences with a different phase of life. We are looking forward to the Gateway Woods Auction and Brotherhood Conference in the coming month.

As our calendars fill back up, we would do well to remember the "pause" we endured and maybe even enjoyed at times. We can't stop the march of time, or even change the speed. However, we can use it wisely in prayer, reading, worship, godly fellowship, and other God honoring ways. May he help us to do that more often.

"See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil." Eph. 5:15-16

In Christian love,
Rick and Michelle Kaisner, Silver Lining Editors
Caring for and Discipling One Another

For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.¹

One of the most rewarding things about being a parent is seeing our children be kind to each other. When we see this, it gives us insight into God’s perspective on how His children treat each other. This idea is consistent with our church’s fourth Guiding Principle: “We disciple and care for one another, as a committed church body.” We might view this principle as only benefiting believers. But Jesus saw it differently. He said: “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye have love one to another.”² He is telling us that we help believers and unbelievers know we are genuine followers of Christ by loving other followers of Jesus. In an age where truth is said to be relative, and things are often not as they appear, this is a powerful statement. It shows that this Guiding Principle benefits those who do not believe and those who do. This is because our care for one another demonstrates the truth of our faith in a powerful way, making it an excellent witness for Christ.

In this article, we will explore the three operative ideas of this Principle: caring for one another, discipling one another, and being committed to doing this.

Caring for one another

Since the Lord has commanded us to love one another, it is essential to consider what the Bible says about carrying out this command. A review of scripture shows us that loving others has little to do with how we feel and much to do with the actions and attitudes we choose.³ The Bible instructs us to honor one another above ourselves,⁴ help those in need,⁵ encourage one another,⁶ be kind to others,⁷ and bear each other’s burdens.⁸ All these instructions describe ways we can care for one another! Let’s consider some practical applications for these biblical instructions.

To care for someone by honoring them, we regard and treat them with admiration and respect.⁹ When we interact with them, we will listen to what they have to say. We will not interrupt them or dismiss their point of view without consideration, even if we disagree. We will treat them as being worthy of our respect.

In Romans 12:13, Paul instructs us to help those in need. This is an instruction to be generous financially. But you may know believers with other kinds of needs. According to recent studies, loneliness affects approximately 36 percent of the population,¹⁰ and about 29 percent of the population experiences depression.¹¹ If you know someone who is lonely or depressed, you may be able to help more than you think. You can do this by spending time with them, listening to them, letting them know you are there for them, and helping them find support.

Discouragement is common to the human condition, but the Bible tells us to encourage one another and that the tongue of the wise is health.¹² We can encourage someone by letting them know we will pray for them and following through with that commitment. Giving someone a specific, sincere compliment can help them counter discouraging thoughts they are battling. Offering specific practical help can also lift the discouraged.

Kindness can be defined as, “the joy of meeting someone else’s needs before your own simply for the sake of the relationship.” Being kind to others is a way to care for others. When we do this, we think about another person’s needs and put them before our own. It could be letting someone else have the last piece of pie or asking someone about a topic they are passionate about and listening while they talk. When we are kind, the way we treat the other person allows them to understand — Please turn to pg. 59
Greetings and good morning on this beautiful April Sunday. It’s good to be here. As you can see, it’s just me today so I’ll definitely appreciate your prayers. Of course, it isn’t just me. It’s you. We’re here together. You’re praying. The Spirit is good, and so we trust that he’ll be our teacher today no matter what is spoken, no matter how many of us are here. I want to welcome everybody and those who are joining us virtually as well.

I had to think this past week, it’s great that during the week we can have our own devotional time. We can read. We can pray. We can meditate on the word, but I think it’s really important and good for us to come together to worship, to sing, to pray, and to read the scripture. I watched an interesting conversation, a discussion between two scholars, this past week, and they were talking about how in our country right now there’s an epidemic of loneliness. Obviously, the pandemic has sort of accelerated that, but it’s been going on for decades. The number of people feeling lonely is off the charts even though we are supposedly in the most connected society of all time. I wouldn’t say we’re so much connected but more like networked with digital connections, networks, and that kind of thing. Anyway, what I found interesting was they said they found in their research that loneliness isn’t actually pushed back or decreased by how much digital interaction we have. This is no surprise, but it was a little surprising that they found also how sociable we are – how often we’re with people in person, even how frequently we’re in large groups – doesn’t actually change how lonely we are. Being sociable doesn’t change that. What they see actually moves the needle and helps reduce loneliness is being committed to people.

Isn’t that interesting? When you’re with someone, it doesn’t necessarily help with loneliness, but if you’re committed to something, to a group, you have a sense of belonging, and that helps reduce loneliness. So, I want to thank all of you for committing to be here whether you’re online or whether you’re committing to join us to pray, sing, and worship. It really is a helpful thing, and that commitment seems to be the key that turns that interesting dynamic of reducing loneliness. It’s not just being with people but being committed to people. Just an interesting thought there to start us off on this Sunday morning.

Let’s open and make a beginning in the book of Psalms, and then I’ll just share something that’s been on my heart. Let’s start with reading a psalm, chapter 8. Psalm 8 is just a wonderful psalm and pretty familiar I’m sure as we get into it. There are a lot of psalms that we could pick that praise God, but Psalm 8 is what was put on my heart this morning.

What a great psalm that is. I think it’s appropriate as I’ve been thinking about something, over the years actually, and I don’t know that I’ve ever preached about this. I don’t know that I’ve ever heard someone preach about this, at least in church. Here’s the thought that’s been on my heart, and it’s kind of tied to psalm 8: God, among all the wonderful things that he is, that great list of attributes, we must not forget that God is a master artist. God is a master artist. Among all the great things – father and savior – pretty high on that list, I would suggest, is this reality that our God, our great God, the God of psalm 8, is a master artist.

I’ve thought about this idea for a number of years, but it always becomes the most pronounced to me and I have the strongest sense of this truth when I visit, strangely enough, the zoo. When I’m
visiting a zoo, I just have this sense that God is this master artist. I think I mentioned a few weeks that our family went on a little midwestern road trip, and one of our stops was Omaha, NE. Of course, if you go to Omaha, one of the things you’re likely to do is go to the zoo. It’s a really fantastic zoo, one of the best in the country. So, I’m in the zoo, and I go into the aquatic section. At that Omaha zoo they have this tunnel where you’re under the water. I’m standing there just looking at the incredible artistry that I’m seeing. I’m seeing these little, bright yellow fish swimming in this school of probably 100 fish, and they’re all in unison. I look to the one side, and I see these little beautiful, deep purple fish. Then on the other side, I see some fish that are round and sort of short and some that are really thin and long. I see some fish that are small enough I could eat them, and I see some big enough that they could eat me. I see an octopus which is a strange creature; it squirts ink. It’s an odd thing. I’m just sitting there looking at the colors and the shapes, and I’m saying, “God, you are a master artist.” He could have just made one fish, and said, “Here. Fish.” – like this gray fish, but no, he’s makes thousands of kinds of fish with diversity in color and shape.

Then, I go outside and see the monkeys. I see monkeys as big as the gorilla, and then I see these tiny little monkeys that just dart up in the trees making me wonder, “How do they do that?” It’s a remarkable thing.

At the Omaha zoo, they had a tiger in a really good display. We’re watching this magnificent creature with this deep orange coat of fur and then these black stripes – just walking around. It has those blue eyes that pierce right into your soul, it looks like, and I’m saying, “God, you are a master artist.” We just get to see the creative impulse of our God when we go to a zoo.

But it’s not just the visual. You can imagine at the petting zoo where you touch a sheep and it’s soft. You think that feels really interesting. Then you look at an elephant, though I’ve never touched an elephant at the zoo; I don’t think that’s looked upon very nicely. But you can imagine touching an elephant, and it’s textural. It’s very different, and you think about the artistry of what we touch and how God made elephant skin and sheep and the soft skin of a baby. There’s artistry there. There’s intention. There’s creativity with tactile things we can touch and feel.

Then, I go outside at the zoo, and I hear the birds chirping. It’s beautiful. I also hear the roar of the lion, and I say God made all these different animals that make different noises. I think about how God created music and harmony and the complexity of notes, scales, and octaves and how it all plays together. I think of how our voices, if we sing at certain different decibels and levels, it makes beautiful harmony, and I say God’s not just a God of visual or what we can touch, but also of sounds. The creative impulse of God is remarkable. He didn’t have to do that. He could’ve made one or ten sounds, but there’s millions of sounds.

Then, I think about even smells. Now at the zoo, admittedly, some of the smells maybe aren’t the greatest, but there are smells that are beautiful. God didn’t have to do that. Think about the smell of maybe freshly mowed grass or a lilac. Popcorn. Food. Think about all the diversity of the smells that God has created. He didn’t have to do that, but he did. It’s just remarkable.

Forget the zoo. Let’s say you’re at home at night, and it’s a clear, still night. You go outside, and you’re hearing the crickets and looking up at the sky. You’re seeing not just one star in the sky but billions of stars, and you say, “God, what you’ve created is beautiful. The works of your hands are beautiful. You are an artist. A master artist.” He’s an artist unlike any other artist because he can actually make his own raw
Ministry Program Updates

**Eastern European Nazareans**  
*Europe Committee*

“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”  
Hebrews 10:25

“The Blessing of a Church”

What does it mean to each of us to be in church, assembling ourselves together? This verse in Hebrews gives us such insight into one of the reasons we should not forsake gathering together for worship, that being to exhort one another. It also reminds me of one of the most touching moments for me in working with the brethren in Eastern Europe.

Several years ago, a group of brothers from the European Committee of HarvestCall were in the middle of a visit to Eastern Europe, and we had gathered together for Thursday evening services at the Arad, Romania church. We had a very blessed evening of worship, but it was what happened after the service that really touched me.

A number of years previous to this visit, a new church building had been erected in Arad, which is where the services were held. Next to the current church building was the previous building. It was in need of repair, but it had a good foundation and was still structurally sound. The floor was simply dirt. This was the first time that I had been at this particular location in Romania so I was being given a tour of the facilities by a brother that has become very dear to me over the years. None of those particulars really mattered that evening, however, when we walked together through the old church building. At some point during the tour we just stopped walking and started to talk.

We were standing in virtual darkness on the dirt floor of this old building, and this dear brother began to share his heart. He had twelve children, and the oldest ones were getting to be young adults. None of them had yet sought the Lord in repentance, and he was so concerned that he would lose his children to the world. Any of us who are parents can relate to this feeling and concern for our children, but this conversation really showed that it doesn’t make any difference where in the world we live, what our

**Mission Opportunities in Front of Us**

*Bible Distribution Committee*

Are we missing the opportunities to spread the gospel that are right in front of us? Hearing this question during a recent HarvestCall training challenged us to focus on a mission mindset. Romans 10:17, says “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” We each have an opportunity to provide the Word of God. Our Bible Distribution committee has imagined the potential impact of each member of our brotherhood distributing 10 Bibles a year. We could reach over 100,000 people!

We all have unique connections and opportunities to reach people and touch lives. Highlighting these unique connections, one brother shared a story about meeting a preacher who was a member of a motorcycle gang. This preacher stated that he has chances to reach individuals the brother never will. A brother who regularly sends Bibles to a local prison shared a letter he received recently from one of the incarcerated recipients. He expressed appreciation for receiving God’s Word and declared his commitment to follow Christ’s teachings. Other ways to assist in Bible Distribution efforts include distributing through locations such as food banks, restaurants, businesses, homeless shelters, medical offices, senior living...
backgrounds have been or what experiences we have had in life, the concerns that a parent has for their children and the desire for each of our children to come to a saving faith are the same.

Since the time of this particular visit, HarvestCall has had the opportunity to help this Arad congregation repair this old church building which is now being used as a fellowship hall and for other church gatherings. There are other current repairs to the church facilities in Arad that they are planning to make and with which HarvestCall is assisting. These repairs include the stone steps leading to the entrance to the current church building, the outside of the old church building and certain improvements to the courtyard area between and around the two buildings.

It is a blessing to be able to assist these congregations with some of their church repair projects. It is a wonderful way to be able to work together as we generally provide the funds for the materials needed and the brethren in the congregation voluntarily do all of the labor to actually make the repairs. It is also a blessing to be able to report that since the time of our conversation, five of the twelve children of the brother have been converted which gives hope to the overall future church in a land where the majority of the members are retired.

In thinking about the experiences we have had in Eastern Europe, it is thought provoking to try to empathize with the feelings of those dear brethren in their appreciation for their houses of worship where they can gather together to exhort one another. What causes

--- Continued on pg. 49 ---

facilities, and hotels/motels, or giving Bibles to friends and neighbors. Another way to distribute God’s word is by giving children a Bible Story Book.

The mission of the HarvestCall Bible Distribution committee is to equip, empower, and assist local churches and individuals to spread the gospel through the distribution of Bibles and related resources. To help facilitate this mission, HarvestCall established a website to order materials. To reach the site, go to www.harvestcall.org/distribute-bibles, and click on “ORDER BIBLES.” Alternatively, you may order materials by calling 309-965-2141 or by e-mailing biblesdistribution@harvestcall.org. A national fund eliminates financial obligation when ordering materials. Donations to cover costs are optional.

To better prepare for making the most of each opportunity to spread the gospel — not knowing if we are planting like Paul or watering like Apollos (1 Corinthians 3:6), — we encourage each of our brethren to maintain a readily available supply of God’s Word. We wish to continue casting God’s bread upon the waters (Ecclesiastes 11:1), knowing that his Word “shall not return unto me void” (Isaiah 55:11) and that the seeds we plant have the yield potential of “some thirty, some sixty, and some an hundred” (Mark 4:1). Distribute Bibles and seize the opportunities in front of us!
Turning 18 is a greatly anticipated event among most teens as they navigate the demands and limitations they are faced with in the teen years. This can be viewed as a rite of passage as well as an open door to independence and freedom. However, what a teen expects things to look like does not always turn into reality. There can be many wonderful opportunities and joys, but there are also many challenges and changes where continual support is needed. An emerging adult is commonly defined as an individual between the ages of 18 and mid-20’s. This in-between age is where individuals work to gain a sense of identity, financial stability, and discernment of God’s plan for their life, and it is an important generation for all of us to understand and encourage.

The Challenges
If you have ever sat through a high school graduation ceremony, you have seen firsthand the joy and anticipation in the eyes of graduates as they look to the future. During this ceremony, students are encouraged to go forward with great zeal, motivation, and determination for the tasks that lie ahead. As these students start transitioning to the next phase of their life, most find themselves looking for answers to questions such as Who am I? Who are my friends and supports? What are my goals? What are my values? What is God’s plan for my life?

Emerging adults are facing many transitions which can bring about an array of emotions including excitement, fear, worry, and a sense of loss. For some, the decision for college/trade school is an easy, much anticipated transition as it is a time to pursue career goals while connecting with a broader, more diverse group of people. For others this decision may be difficult for a variety of reasons including financial limitations, lack of desire for higher education, or uncertainty about desired next steps. For young adults in the latter category the decision to delay or not go on to further education may bring about a sense of shame, perceived judgement, and a sense of separation from others in their peer group. Other difficult decisions facing this age group include what job to pursue, where to live, what or if they will be part of a church community, and who or when to marry.

Mental health needs can be a concern among this age group as well. Studies indicate around 40% of young adults experience anxiety and depression. Many factors are linked to this rise of mental health needs, ranging from unhealthy lifestyle choices and sleep habits, to the amount of social media or technology consumed. Social media increases the comparison trap and performance pressure which can cause individuals to feel different or not good enough in various aspects of life. Without the right supports in place these mounting pressures can lead to an increased risk of a variety of mental health needs including addiction or suicidal thoughts or actions.

The Role of Helpers
Some emerging adults seem to manage through this time period with limited difficulty and others seem to face all of these challenges and more. What makes the difference? Is there something that can be done to help the young adults in your life move through these challenges with ease? In order to answer these questions, it is helpful to reflect on what was most helpful for you during these years. Typically, the answer to this includes people who were intentional in their support and encouragement for continued growth. The same is true today as young adults benefit from a community of supportive people who are willing to listen, support, and challenge them.

As young adults are gaining increased independence and maturity, they have the desire and ability to grow into new roles in their family, church, and community. Young adults play a crucial role in the health and vitality of the church. Parents, Sunday School teachers,
and older adults in their lives can play an important role in supporting and encouraging them to be a part of the mission and vision of the church. The Apostle Paul reminds Timothy “Let no man despise thy youth...” (1 Timothy 4:12) and this can serve as a good reminder to appreciate the gifts and talents this age group can bring. Feeling needed and valued in a community such as the church can serve as an anchor while navigating the challenges of this time. The following are some things to consider when trying to engage and equip this group of emerging adults.

• **Engage in relationships early on in their life.** It is never too early to start forming relationship with youth in the church. Sundays School teachers have a unique opportunity to connect with youth on a weekly basis to learn about the important things in their life while also building a spiritual foundation. Adults in the church who are willing to take time to engage in service projects, community events, and recreational activities with youth also have the opportunity to develop these relationships and have a positive impact in their lives. Forming relationships is something that takes time but it does not have to be a complicated process; be present, show interest through both actions and words, and be dependable.

• **Be a good listener.** James 1:19 instructs us to be “… swift to hear, slow to speak…” In today’s culture there are so many messages young adults are hearing and trying to discern. They need a safe place to be able to talk through hard conversations regarding faith, church, and present day matters. It is easy to have our own discomfort and emotional reaction to topics like these, but by being willing to simply listen while pointing them back to the Scripture creates a safe, healthy space for young adults to explore these topics.

• **Encourage use of spiritual gifts.** As young adults are forming their identity and making decisions for their life, there is value in helping them steward the spiritual gifts they have and include them in the various missions of the church (1 Peter 4:10). Helping young adults learn about and grow in their spiritual gifts can help them better understand themselves and their place in the church.

• **The strength of hospitality.** Romans 12:10-15 serves as a reminder of the benefits a church community offers. Rejoicing with young adults in the opportunities that lay ahead and in their accomplishments is just as important as providing empathy and support to them when faced with challenges and unmet expectations. With the young adults in your life, it is important to notice changes in behavior, mood, or even attendance at events and find ways to intentionally connect with them. A friendly face, kind word, an encouraging text, or a warm meal can open up the opportunity for them to step into a place of vulnerability and share their concerns and needs.

Emerging adults are faced with so many opportunities and potential for growth, and as a church family we can help steward them on this path. Hebrews 10:24 reminds us “And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works”. By encouraging and showing support to the young adults in our life, the challenges they will naturally face may seem more manageable as they remain connected to a community of individuals wanting to see them grow into their God-given gifts and abilities.

ACCFS continues to develop resources to help singles in their walk with the Lord. These resources can be found on our website at www.accounseling.org/category/singleness. If you would like more information or have requests/comments, please contact ACCFS at (309)263-5536 or office@accounseling.org.
Apostolic Christian LifePoints
www.aclifepoints.org
@aclifepoints on Facebook or Instagram
Ashlyn Gramm-Mission Communication Coordinator

“But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.” Isa. 40:31

On October 1, 1971, the Apostolic Christian Home for the Handicapped opened and admitted their first residents. Bro. Bob Knobloch had moved from Princeville to Morton to serve as the administrator. As they began admitting residents, they had to work through philosophical questions regarding whom to serve and what types of services to provide. On April 1, 1978, the second half of the building opened and was slowly filled because of a desire to keep beds available for possible church related needs.

On May 1, 1981, Elder Bro. Ron Messner came to serve as the Social Services Director, a position which recently had become open. There were 106 licensed beds and only 12 people using wheelchairs.

Since then, Timber Ridge was filled, and we started taking higher-care people including individuals needing feeding tubes and oxygen. We built Oakwood Estate, began downsizing Timber Ridge, built Linden Estate, started the first CILA settings, continued to add CILAs through State initiatives, converted Oakwood Estate into a wheelchair facility, and moved our first clients in wheelchairs into a CILA setting. Part way through these changes, Bro. Bob retired and Bro. Ron became the Executive Director.

This is a pretty simplistic summary of all that happened in 40 years, but Isaiah 40:31 describes the process. There were times when things went very well and other times when it took a ton of work and stress to move ahead. This verse is consistently true, and we believe that all the wonderful people we have had the privilege to work with would say the same. We have tried hard to wait and to step forward as God has given us opportunity and direction. God has sustained our energy and interest.

As shared earlier, the Board of Directors has hired Bro. Blake Stahl as the new Executive Director. He has been training since early April. It has been helpful to have several months with Bro. Ron and Bro. Blake together to share information and processes and to facilitate meetings with staff leadership, State officials, and other professionals we associate with.

On July 1, Bro. Ron will transition from actively serving as the Executive Director and move into a support and consultative relationship with Bro. Blake and then retire at the end of July. We are so grateful for the leadership Bro. Ron has provided throughout his many years serving at LifePoints. 

Note of Thanks From Bro. Ron

“It has been an incredible blessing and privilege to work with the residents, family and staff who are a part of our services. Thanks to each of you. I find it difficult to think of not having those relationships but I trust God will be faithful in transitioning through the next steps.”

Gateway Woods Apostolic Christian Children’s Home
Chad Kaeb — Development Director

Going 100% virtual for the Auction last year allowed people from greater distances to participate, which proved that we must keep an online component going forward. We also know that so many of you missed being on campus and we missed having you here! Therefore, the 2021 Auction will be our first ever hybrid auction!

Online Silent Auction

For those who prefer (whatever the reason), you can participate online August 4 - August 6. There will be exclusive items you won’t be able to find at the in-person auction. You can join us online
even if you plan to come in-person and will be able to pick up your items on Saturday, August 7. Otherwise, we’ll make drop-off or delivery arrangements the week following the in-person auction.

You will be able to register to bid and preview online items starting Monday, August 2. Bidding will be opened Wednesday, August 4 and the first lot of items will close starting at 8:00pm Eastern on Friday, August 6.

**In-Person Auction**

For those who are able, join us for a live, in-person event on Saturday, August 7 like usual (with a few extra precautions, of course, based on local guidelines). Not only will you be able to connect with brothers and sisters, purchase a pork chop sandwich, or sip a lemon shake-up, there will be exclusive items you won’t be able to find on the online silent auction.

We will start the day with breakfast and bidder registration beginning at 7:30am and have an opening program at 8:30am. All three tents will begin auctioneering at 9:00am and will run until all items are auctioned off. If your teen wants to learn how to bid, be in the Green Tent at noon. Come for an hour or stay all day. We can’t wait to see you!

To get updates on details of this year’s hybrid auction go to: gatewaywoods.org/auction to sign up for email updates.

**News:**
- If you want to make a Kingdom impact by sowing seeds of hope for an eternal harvest, visit gatewaywoods.org/sowers-of-hope to learn more about our newly launched monthly giving program. Sign up today to receive a special gift as a reminder to be praying for the youth you are impacting.
- We currently looking for a Teacher, Houseparent Couple and an Assistant Houseparent. For more information, 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.
- Summer is underway and that means there are lots of volunteering opportunities at Gateway Woods! If you are interested in giving your time and talents, please contact Dawson Finch, at vol.coordinator@gatewaywoods.org or via phone at 260.627.2159.

You are an important advocate to help us spread the word about God’s work at Gateway Woods. Please continue to lift us up in prayer, check our website gatewaywoods.org and our Facebook page at facebook.com/gatewaywoods often for updates, and make sure that you are on our mailing list. If you would like be added to our mailing list, please contact us at 888.443.4283 or send an email to info@gatewaywoods.org. Finally, if you would like to receive a monthly email detailing how the work at Gateway Woods is bringing help and healing to those in need, please consider joining our Restoring Hope email list. You can do so at gatewaywoods.org/newsletter or by emailing jon.ringger@gatewaywoods.org.

**Arizona, Phoenix**

**Marge Lindenbaum**

“I have seen the travail, which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised in it. He hath made everything beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.” Eccl. 3:11

Do you feel the disconnect from this world in these uncertain times? The word translated here to say “world” is better translated, “eternity”. God put eternity in our hearts, it seems, to make us dissatisfied with what this life and world have to offer. The first part of this chapter is a recitation of many things that are, blessedly or sorrowfully, brief and passing. While we can’t know the times and intents of God’s plans and his timing, we can know when things are not so bright, that the light will return, and when things are “lollipops and..."
roses”, that too shall pass. Solomon was proclaiming the vanity of all the things listed here when he wrote the book of Ecclesiastes. It doesn’t really matter what work you do, what people you love, what enemies you make. It will all pass and eventually be meaningless. This can be depressing! And that might just be the point. Nothing in this world that we can accomplish on our own is going to last forever. And nothing that God accomplishes - through us or without us - is going to perish or pass away. God is timeless, and that is beyond our understanding. Time can be an enemy or a friend, but I don’t believe it is a natural thing for us. We are out of place in time. Does it not seem artificial and foreign sometimes? The introduction of the Holy Spirit into our beings brings us more into sync with the things that are natural to us. The eternal in our lives and hearts brings joy when it is permitted to live in the person of the Spirit in us. The eternal in our lives and hearts brings joy when it is permitted to live in the person of the Spirit in us. And it is when I think of eternity and the freedom from the oppression of our enemy that I can reach the point of proclaiming with Solomon, “all is vanity” and feel joy in proclaiming it. Every earthly thing is going to be destroyed and everything of God will survive it all. Without the Spirit of God, there is no preciousness of life. There is no purpose in working if all our work is going to amount to nothing. But when we work for Jesus, and store up treasure in heaven, we are getting a small taste of eternity and a reason to continue in our endeavors. I am so grateful that God put eternity in my heart. I long for it when I am weary of this world, and I can experience it enough to know it is what I desire over what is found here. This becomes more true with every passing year. I am looking up and lifting my head more often and more passionately these days, and listening for that trumpet! I hope to see you all soon!

“For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.” Isa. 57:15

It is summer here in the desert, and the heat has set in, and we are noticing smaller crowds. We enjoyed a visit from Bro. Jim Meiss (Sis. Candy, Austin-Bastop, TX), and appreciate his service while they were here. We get to spend time with them. As this is being written, we are looking forward to sharing Holy Communion and feel the closeness of our congregation to each other and to our Lord as we remember his great sacrifice and love for us. May each of you experience the same fellowship and communion as you go forward in your walk with him.

Arizona, Prescott

Autumn Rokey

The summer days are heating up. Another season of vacations, kids at home, and whatever new challenges are coming your way, may make the quiet times with God harder to set aside. However, the beautiful words of the hymn, In the Garden (Tabernacle Hymns, #130), remind us how rejuvenating time with God is for our soul.

"I come to the garden alone, While the dew is still on the roses; And the voice I hear, falling on my ear, The Son of God discloses. And he walks with me and he talks with me, And he tells me I am his own, And the joy we share as we tarry there, None other has ever known."

Thankful for visiting ministers Elder Bro. Dan Moser (Sis. Anne, Elgin IL), Bro. Brian Katich (Sis. Debbie, Phoenix, IL) and Elder Bro. Ron Messner (Sis. Pam, Washington IL).

Arizona, Tucson

Dean and Jackie Knobloch

We are thankful to welcome Marshall Wulf (Bro. Duane and Sis. Ann) as our brother in faith. He was proved and baptized in Magdalena, MX where he began his repentance.

We held our annual business meeting and voted Bro. Duane Wulf in as trustee and Bro. David Zimmerman as HarvestCall representative.

We want to welcome Sis. Jan Moser (Roanoke, IL) and her sister, Joyce Piper, to our congregation. We hope to resume noon lunches in the beginning of July. We are looking forward to the added time for fellowship.
California, Los Angeles/Altadena
Kali Sauder

With the return of two services again, we began a sermon series reading through Corinthians. We are learning, through Paul’s letter to this divided church, just how important the foundation of Jesus Christ is to our faith and our life together as the family of God. Just like a family, church dynamics can be hard sometimes. I think we have all experienced it, maybe especially in this season of many divisive issues and decisions.

“Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; And ye are Christ’s; and Christ is God’s.” 1 Cor. 3:22-23

This truth is comforting; by it the Spirit says, “No matter what. No matter what the trial you are facing, the difficult person you are called to embrace as your brother in Christ, no matter the differences of opinion, the chaos of the world around you, no matter what, you are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.” We can stand firm on this foundation. From this starting point we find grace to go on in joy, no matter what.

“All the way my Saviour leads me; Cheers each winding path I tread; Gives me grace for every trial, Feeds me with the living bread; Tho’ my weary steps may falter, And my soul a-thirst may be, Gushing from the Rock before me, Lo! a spring of joy I see; Gushing from the Rock before me, Lo! a spring of joy I see.”

California, San Diego
Sarah Fulop

And just like that half the year has gone. Last Sunday, Bro. Mike Grimm reminded us to live intentionally. We live in a culture where busyness is praised. It is so easy to say, “I’m just too busy.”

We just honored the love and sacrifice of our earthly fathers while being reminded of the bottomless mercy and unconditional love of our heavenly Father. So don’t forget to invest in relationships. Slow down, grab coffee with that friend you haven’t spoken to in a year; play Chutes and Ladders with your eight-year-old for the umpteenth time, give your dad a call or send a text to an old co-worker.

Remember that we were put on this earth to serve Christ, each other and bring glory to God. So, take the time to invest in relationships. This earth is temporal; our goals, dreams, and successes are nothing compared to our relationships with each other and Jesus.

A big thank you to everyone who helped with our annual church cleaning and our Sunday school picnic. I think I can say we all enjoyed the time spent together in work and play.

As June gloom blows away and school is out, many families are traveling to invest in family relationships out of state. A half empty church can feel a little boring and sad at times. But sometimes slow times and no news can be a perfect opportunity to reconnect, recharge and enjoy the city’s beautiful sites on the long summer nights. Blessing to all of you in this next month.

Colorado, Denver
Jenna Hartter, Rebekah Stoller

Elder Bro. Greg Lehman (Sis. Mary Beth, Wolcott, IN) visited and shared Communion with us the end of May. On Saturday evening, we shared a meal and then enjoyed hearing Bro. Tom and Sis. Teresa Katanic share their testimony of how the Lord has worked in their lives over the last few years. We are thankful to have them as part of our church family again after several years living in other states. After their testimony, we shared Communion together.

Bro. Greg asked us to consider those who sat at the feet of Jesus and how we can do the same.

On Sunday afternoon, Bro. Greg assisted Elder Bro. Mike Leman in reading the Memorandum. It was a busy but blessed weekend.

We said “goodbye for now” to Sis. Gabriella Wiegand as she headed to Leo, IN to start work as an Assistant Houseparent at Gateway Woods. We are praying that her transition goes well and that the Lord uses her mightily in her work with the teens there. We also welcomed Sis. Hope Fischer from Leo, IN to Denver as she is working here for the summer.

In the last month, ministering Bro. Philip Schulz (Sis. Kelli, Burlington, IA) and Bro. Doug Wagenbach (Sis. Lillian, San Diego, CA) shared their time with us in the
course of their summer travels. We invite any who are vacationing in the area this summer to stop by and visit as well.

**Connecticut, Rockville**  
**Heidi Beutel, Kim Schneider**

We are thankful that as a church body we continue to have the blessings of taking steps in returning to our customs and practices that have been put “on hold” during the past year. Church lunches, greeting with a handshake, removal of masks, are all things we once either took for granted, or never dreamed of doing, that we can now pause and give thanks for God’s nearness, provision and faithfulness during these past months.

This year we were also able to hold our annual Sunday school picnic, a tradition that we so enjoy. We want to thank all who labored on behalf of our children in the past year. May God be your reward. The children excitedly entered their new classes the following Sunday.

A precious baby boy, Lincoln David, was born to Bro. Matthew and Sis. Laura Moser. Grandparents are Bro. Steve and Sis. Janis Moser and Bro. Doug and Sis. Jane Schneider.

Our love and prayers are with Sis. Cindy Garrow (Bro. Ed) as she continues to recover from her recent surgeries and hospitalization. Prayers are also with baby Kayden Falkowski (Adam and Anneliese) as he recovers from his recent open-heart surgery. May God’s healing hands be upon them both.

**District of Columbia, Washington**  
**Henrietta Meyer**

We rejoice that COVID-19 numbers have improved so the local and state jurisdictions have lifted their restrictions. Lord willing in July we will be assembling in person twice a month with visiting ministers. We will be renting a small room so please let us know if you plan to be with us as we may need to rent a larger room.

This month our visiting (virtual) ministers were Bro. Tim Ramsier (Rittman, OH) and Bro. Greg Fehr (West Bend, IA).

Now that this area is beginning to return to “normal” I had hoped to be able to report a physical meeting place. However, places must be short staffed as phone calls are not timely returned. Lord willing, we will have news for you next month.

If you are planning to visit Washington, D.C. area for vacation or business, please contact Sis. Henrietta Meyer at 703.904.8301, hmeyer2831@gmail.com or Sis. Doreen Steffen at 302.540.6574, or bdsteff@yahoo.com for assistance, to let us know how many to expect for Sunday services and to find out when and where services are to be held.

**Florida, Fort Lauderdale**  
**Renee Mangold**

“We are grateful to have visiting ministers Elder Bro. Randy Gudeman (Sis. Becky, Francesville, IN) and Elder Bro. Bob Dotterer (Sis. Laura, Sardis, OH) this past month. We pray for a blessing on them for their willingness to come and share God’s word with us.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to Sis. Sally Gress and Sis. Billie Klopfenstein at the passing of their brother and son Dick Klopfenstein. Dick passed away on May 28 after a long battle with cancer.

Resuming one service and lunch followed by a Bible study is going well as we continue to take care with seating and serving a meal. We also have a fellowship hour via Zoom the first Thursday evening of each month for those who can attend.

**Florida, Sarasota**  
**Becky Funk**

“For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lords’ death till he come.” 1 Cor 11:26

As we remembered the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we were blessed to be able to take partake in Holy Communion on May 29. We’re reminded of Christ’s love in his sacrifice and the freedom we have in him.

We mourn the loss of Bro. Terry Miller (Sis. Bev), who passed away on Sunday, May 30. Our sympathy and prayers are with Sis. Bev and the entire family.

As church starts to return to normal, we are thankful that Bro. Mark Lindberg (Sis. Laura, Chicago, IL) and Bro. Richard Martin (Sis. Jackie, Gridley, IL) and their families were able to visit and minister the Word to us.

Congratulations to our high school graduates, Sis. Faith Sabo (Bro. Ryan and Sis. Rachel and Jeff and Sis. April), Sis. Kyra Koehl
(Bro. Mark and Sis. Tricia) and Josh Streitmatter (Elder Bro. Jeff and Sis. Lynne). A graduation reception dinner was held at the fellowship hall on Sunday, June 13 for the graduates. We wish them God’s blessing as they begin the next chapter in their lives.

“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. 3:5-6

**Georgia, Peachtree City**  
*Elise Funk, Brenda Stoller*

The first weekend of June, we celebrated the marriage of Sis. Ashlyn Waldbeser (Elder Bro. Tom and Sis. Sue) and Bro. Benjamin Pfister (Elder Bro. Dan and Sis. Sherri, Bluffton North, IN). We will deeply miss Sis. Ashlyn here in Peachtree City but are thrilled for Ben and Ashlyn to be in Indianapolis and part of the church family there!

Over the last month we had many ministering brothers visit including Elder Bro. Tim Funk (Sis. Deb, Peoria IL), Bro. Clint Bahler (Sis. Elisa, Indianapolis, IN) and Elder Bro. Dan Pfister (Sis. Sherri, Bluffton North, IN). We will deeply miss Sis. Ashlyn here in Peachtree City but are thrilled for Ben and Ashlyn to be in Indianapolis and part of the church family there!

We were excited to kick off our third discipleship program here in Peachtree City on June 12! We have participants from a variety of churches including Detroit, Fairbury, Gridley, and South Bend. We began the program in person here at the Peachtree City church. It was a special week getting to know one another and growing deeper in our walk with Jesus. Some of the most impactful activities were intensive Bible study, practicing spiritual disciplines, fellowship, and spending intentional one-on-one time with Jesus. After the first week of the discipleship program, the participants returned home to continue the program virtually. We have continued to meet online and have biblical teaching videos to further guide us in incorporating the things we have learned back into our “everyday life.” It has been a rich and fulfilling season of growth together! If you would like more information about discipleship including how to be involved in our next program, please visit our website at peachtreeministries.com or find us on Facebook or Instagram at @peachtreeministries.

**Haiti, Bonne Fin - Hospital Lumiere**  
*Rick and Komari Aberle*

Greetings in the name of Jesus from Bonne Fin, Haiti.

We are again thankful for visitors to the mission here at Hospital Lumiere. Several board members spent time here in the past month, including Bro. Randy Gasser (Detroit, MI) who shared the Word with us.

In May, Bro. Brandon and Sis. Katelyn Kaehr completed their short-term service at the hospital. We thank them for their service and ask God to continue to bless them as they serve him in the Bluffton, IN, area. Sis. Lydianne Metzger traveled home on furlough and plans to return in late June. We also ask the church to be prayerful for Sis. Trinity Walder who has served as a school teacher for the past two years. She has ended her service and has moved home to the Smithville, OH area. Finally, Sis. Komari Aberle also traveled to the hospital for a brief visit as Bro. Rick and Sis. Komari Aberle completed their in-country service with the mission. Please be prayerful as they reunite as a family and adjust to life in Sabetha, KS. Bro. Rick plans to continue working with the mission and hopes to travel back to the hospital frequently.

Even though the group here is small, we still had opportunity in early June to assemble together for church services in Les Cayes. Bro. Kevin Schrock (Sis. Rachel, Congerville, IL) and family visited their family (Bro. Kurt and Sis. Julie Schrock) in Les Cayes in the Construction Department. Bro. Kevin shared the scripture with the group that was able to gather there.

**Haiti, Les Cayes**  
*Mike and Susie Walder*

Greetings from Les Cayes! The Schrock family (Bro. Kurt and Sis. Julie) enjoyed having family come visit in early June. Bro. Kevin and Sis. Rachel Schrock (Congerville, IL) and their children were here for a week and it was a true blessing to have them. It appeared they got a lot accomplished and saw many beautiful places. We were thankful that Bro. Kevin and Bro. Les Kaeb (Francesville, IN) shared a sermon with us on a Sunday afternoon as Bro. Les was also here at the dairy farm.
As June approached, many of the families here wrapped up school and quickly moved into furlough mode and their summer plans in the U.S. Bro. Isaac and Sis. Brittany Steiner and family, Bro. Eric and Sis. Melanie Stoller and Sis. Debbie Knobloch made their way back home first, followed by Bro. Mike and Sis. Susie Walder and daughters.

A huge blessing for missionaries and teams alike is a new daily flight between our local Les Cayes airport to Port-au-Prince, saving everyone many hours of weary travel. We can’t take as much luggage using this flight, but it’s the safest and shortest route we have ever had. This local airport is also where our mail arrives every Thursday via Agape Flights (based in Venice, FL) that flies mail and packages weekly to many missionary families in the Caribbean. This wonderful service is also a huge blessing for everyone.

We won’t be seeing each other for a few months, but furlough is a great time for reuniting with family, friends, and home churches. Our summer break is also a necessary time for shopping and packing up in advance for the year ahead. Personally, we are looking forward to meeting our first grandchild!

Illinois, Belvidere  
Darcy Steffen  
“O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary. Because thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee. Thus will I bless thee while I live; I will lift up my hands in thy name.” Psa. 63: 1-4

We are experiencing a drought here in northern Illinois. We wait and pray for rain, and when it does finally come, it is not enough to make any real difference. No matter what season of our lives we are in, I pray that as the psalmist so eloquently put it above, we will look to our Savior to quench our thirst and revive our land.

I failed to mention it last month, but we congratulate Leah Anliker (Bro. Brian and Sis. Peg) on her graduation from high school! Even more exciting is that she will rely on her heavenly Father for her future as she recently surrendered her life to him! Please keep her in your prayers as she begins her Christian walk!

Joy and sorrow often seem to go hand in hand in this life, and it is with heavy hearts that we share the loss of little Jax William Secor. He was the son of Chad and Kenda Secor and grandson of Bro. Bill and Sis. Lana Schifferer. Please keep Chad and Kenda and big sister Avery in your prayers as they mourn the loss of a little boy they were never able to raise.

Even though Belvidere is small and the options are few, the Lord still provides for us. We recently had church elections for Sunday school teachers and trustees. We thank Bro. Grant Anliker (Sis. Emily) for his time serving our church in the trustee role, and Bro. Rudy Troxel (Sis. Rosario) for his efforts of love in Sunday school. The new trustee is Bro. Brian Anliker (Sis. Peg) with Bro. Coby Steffen as an apprentice trustee. The new Sunday school teachers are myself and Bro. Chris Koehl (Sis. Shelly). Bro. Sam Bachtold (Sis. Betty) and Sis. Shelly Koehl (Bro. Chris) will be substitute teachers. We appreciate your prayers as we all willingly serve within the body of Christ.

We had our VBS this past week, and the theme was Camp Solid Rock. We deeply appreciate all the hours of planning, prep, and instruction by all involved. We also would like to thank ministering Bro. Jonathan Hodel (Sis. Megan) from Roanoke, IL for coming up and sharing with us about the Rock. We are still talking about a story and lesson he shared about El Capitan, a vertical rock formation in Yosemite National Park. Apparently there are different forms of rock climbing including free soloing in which the person will climb without any safety equipment: no ropes, no harness, no help. Bro. Jonathan reminded us that while we are to cling to the Rock, God never intended for us to go at this life alone. We are to encourage and strengthen one another and use the helps which God has given us as we climb heavenward.
Illinois, Bloomington
Kinsey Dotterer, Lauren Zimmerman

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” Matt 28:19

As a church, we prepared with the Bible Class students for their mission trip to Sunset Gap, TN, by donating food for the students and supplies for the family packs that were put together to distribute to families in need. The students and their adult chaperones had many prayers said for their trip as they were the hands and feet of Jesus to those in need. We look forward to hearing more about their trip soon.

We rejoice with Aria Kaufmann, daughter of Bro. Matt and Sis. Rebekah, as she has given her heart to the Lord.

Illinois, Bradford
Becky Endress, Lena Stoller

“By their love His members are united, In a union godly and devout... Many members are as one arrayed, As from many grains one bread is made.”
Communion Hymn, Zion’s Harp #26

As we consider Christ’s suffering and sacrifice at Communion, it is also a special time as a church family as we come together and are reminded that it is Christ that draws us together. Just as Communion isn’t the only time we remember Christ’s suffering, considering our special bond as a church family shouldn’t be a onetime event either. We were thankful to partake in Holy Communion on June 12 with Elder Bro. James Fehr (Tremont, IL) assisting our Elder Bro. Bruce Endress.

Also, Bro. Dan Koch (Sis. Julie, Tremont, IL) visited us this past month. We appreciated Bro. Dan’s willingness to serve us on the pulpit.

Maria Endress (Bro. Ben and Sis. Katie) has begun her repentance. We rejoice as she makes a beginning and pray she can feel God’s nearness and the love and prayers of the church.

Jenny Moody underwent back surgery this past month. Also, Bro. Loris Stisser (Sis. Lottie) spent some time in the hospital. We pray for God’s healing hand on both of them.

Bro. Wendell Stahl and Sis. Leah Knobloch will begin terms as Sunday school teachers after our summer break. We thank Sis. Donna Nenadov and Bro. Phil Endress for their years of service in Sunday school as they complete their terms.

May 29 marked Bro. Richard and Sis. Marilyn Tanner’s 50th wedding anniversary.

Bro. Matt and Sis. Tracy Kieser and Sis. Julia Moser (Bro. Douglas, dec., Fairbury, IL) are thankful first-time grandparents. Anneliese Marie was born to Bro. Walter and Sis. Erica Moser (Fairbury, IL).

Illinois, Champaign
Brent Young

We enjoyed the privilege of hearing Bro. Andrew Walker’s testimony and were again encouraged of God’s faithfulness in pursuing us across years and distance. We were reminded that the story of ‘The Prodigal Son’ could be titled ‘The Merciful Father’. We are grateful to Elder Bro. Tom Stock (Sis. Karol, Cissna Park, IL) for sharing the weekend with us, aiding with the testimony, baptism, and preaching of the Word.

We are also grateful to Bro. Klint Beyer (Sis. Kara, Sabetha, KS) and our Elder Bro. Jeff Grimm (Sis. Ruth, Goodfield, IL) for visiting and bringing inspired messages.

The men of Champaign enjoyed our annual camping and kayaking event. God blessed us with perfect weather, as well as safety and sweet fellowship. May he grant us each grace to continue to invest in and build on these relationships.

Several of our young people will be serving in different places this summer and while we will miss them, we are thankful for their willingness. Bro. Dawson Finch and Bro. Harlan Kupferschmid will be at Gateway Woods, Bro. Zach Plattner at Isaiah 55, and Sis. Addie Waibel at Casa Vida y Esperanza (CVE). May God watch over each one; granting them many opportunities to serve as well as an enjoyable time.

For all Sunday visitors, beginning on June 27, 2021, we will be returning to our traditional schedule. The morning pulpit
time will again be 10 am and the afternoon pulpit time 12 noon with lunch in between. It seems that we all long for a ‘return to normal’ and my favorite recent example was when I announced to the Sunday school that church lunch was returning. The students burst into spontaneous applause!

**Illinois, Chicago**  
*Diana Eisenmann*

We were blessed to have Elder Bro. Kevin Ryan (Sis. Cheryl) visit in May to help Elder Bro. Brad Eisenmann share the Spring Memorandum.

The virtual Guiding Principles Bible Study continued, as well as the online Monthly Bible Study. In June we had our last day of Sunday school as well as the Sunday school picnic. Bro. Brad and Sis. Cindy Eisenmann hosted the picnic, and it was wonderful to fellowship and share a meal together as a church family again. Similarly, we resumed church lunch in June as well, for the first time since March of 2020. It’s hard to believe how something that was so commonplace pre-pandemic, sharing a meal as a church, can feel so momentous now. We experienced these events with renewed appreciation for the simple joys of our routine activities and practices.

Bro. Luke Kieser has agreed to serve as a Sunday school teacher this coming fall.

With a mix of joy and sadness, we bid farewell to Bro. Blake and Sis. Christine Stahl and their children, Xander and Ellyana. We rejoice for God’s leading in their lives and using Blake’s talents at LifePoints, but we will greatly miss all of them.

Yirenny Cordero graduated High School in May and plans to move to Massachusetts in the fall for school. She is the daughter of Aridio and Sis. Katrina Cordero. Bro. Emmaus Rassi also graduated this year and has moved to Ohio for work. He is the son of Bro. Matthew and Sis. Bridget Rassi. We extend congratulations for their academic achievements and pray for God’s guidance and blessing on this new chapter.

Bro. Wendell Gerber (Bluffton North, IN) passed away in May. He was the grandfather of Bro. Jay Nicholas (Sis. Mallory). We pray for God’s comfort upon their family.

**Illinois, Cissna Park**  
*Denise Kaeb, Lou Ann Kaeb*

As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more. But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him…” Psa. 103:15-17

We were saddened by the loss of Lawrence “Pete” Bauer on May 23 but we are thankful he is in the steadfast arms of Jesus! We extend our love and condolences to his sisters, Sis. Dort Walder of our congregation, Carol Waldbeser and one brother, Bob Bauer all of Cissna Park.

On June 1 we gathered at the park to welcome visitors from Fairview Haven. It was the first outing the residents were able to go on since the beginning of COVID-19 so we felt privileged and all enjoyed good food and fellowship/singing!

May we all rest in the steadfast love of the Lord as we journey through this life!

**Illinois, Congerville**  
*Mary Knapp, Krista Wieland*

We were blessed with an encouraging weekend as we heard the testimony of our Bro. Joseph Anderson (Jon and Cyndee) and witnessed his baptism. We rejoice with his family. We thank Elder Bro. Rick Plattner (Sis. Mary, Fairbury, IL) and Elder Bro. Tom Stock (Sis. Karol, Cissna Park, IL) as well as our Ord. Deacon Bro. Zach Anderson for their labors of love on our behalf during the weekend. May God bless Bro. Brad Gudeman (Sis. Teresa, Bradford, IL), and Bro. Dan Walder (Sis. Pam, Cissna Park, IL) for being with us and sharing the Truth.

We wish our graduating seniors God’s blessings as they transition to new chapters in their lives. Our seniors this year are: Allison Schrock (Bro. John and Sis. Jackie), Sis. Hannah Schrock (Bro. Kevin and Sis. Rachel), Sis. Hannah Walder (Bro. Josh and Sis. Tina), and Alison Wiegand (Bro. Dwight and Sis. Deb).

Our Sunday school children just came through a week of VBS. We thank each one who invested time and energy into teaching the youth. May God bless the efforts that were put forth by the teachers, parents and students.
“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” Prov 22:6

Illinois, Elgin

Amy Gasser

We thank Bro. Art Mueller (Sis. Marlene, Belvidere, IL) and Bro. Greg Rassi (Sis. Carla, Chicago, IL) for ministering to us on two recent Sunday afternoons following the morning services at Highland Oaks.

We extend sympathy to the family of Bro. Lloyd Kellenberger, formerly of Elgin, who passed away on May 19 in Gainesville, FL. Survivors include his wife, Sis. Carol; his daughter, Amy Grzywa and her family (Gainesville, FL); his son, Andrew Kellenberger (Kathy, Litchfield Park, AZ), and a sister, Carolyn Haas from our local congregation. The funeral took place in Florida.

Congratulations to Austin Lodge and Jen Eberhardy, who have announced their engagement. Their parents are Dave and Lori Lodge and Joe and Angie Eberhardy of Menomonee Falls, WI.

Twin girls, Ava Jean and Emma Hope, were born to Daniel and Samantha Steffen on June 4. Their excited siblings are Kaylee, Jakob, and Nolan. Their grandparents are Jeff and Cindy Lange and David and Sis. Linda Steffen.

Bro. Paul Weiss recently had eye surgery. Rose Gerth (Mark) is recovering from hip replacement surgery.

On Sunday, June 6, many from our Elgin congregation traveled to Eureka for the wedding of Bro. David Kellenberger and Sis. Alissa Wiegand. Their parents are Bro. Chuck and Sis. Debbie Kellenberger and Bro. Don and Sis. Jane Wiegand (Eureka, IL).

Elder Bro. Dan Moser read the Spring Memorandum from the Elder body on Sunday, June 13, in place of our afternoon service.

Illinois, Eureka

Debra Blunier, Lavonne Schumacher

It has been with great joy that we have welcomed many visitors into our midst for the weddings of two of our sisters. We rejoice with Sis. Tamara Edelman (Bro. Keith and Sis. Nadine) as she became the bride of Bro. Tate Wyss (Bro. Fred and Sis. Diane, Washington, IL) on May 23. We appreciated the morning service spoken by Elder Bro. Randy Kellenberger (Sis. Karen, Kansas City, MO) and Bro. Randy Mogler (Sis. Evie, Washington, IL). Elder Bro. Ron Messner (Sis. Pam, Washington, IL) and our Elder Bro. Trent Meiss carried out the wedding service in the afternoon. June 6 was a special day for Sis. Alissa Wiegand (Bro. Don and Sis. Jane) as she became one with Bro. David Kellenberger (Bro. Chuck and Sis. Debbie, Elgin, IL). We thank Bro. Dean Steffen (Sis. Carol, Belvidere, IL) and Bro. Scott Schambach (Sis. Hope, Elgin, IL) for their labors of love on the pulpit in the morning.

Elder Bro. Dan Moser (Sis. Anne, Elgin, IL) and our Elder Bro. Trent Meiss conducted the wedding service. May the Lord richly bless these two dear couples!

“Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisbeth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.” James 4:14-15

We were reminded of this scripture as ones we loved were taken from our midst recently. Our hearts ache with Dean Martin in the loss of his dear wife, Becki on May 28. Our prayers are with their seven children who still live at home, Sis. Ruth Martin (mother of Becki), Sis. Deloris Martin (mother-in-law), and Sis. Sharon Martin (sister-in-law). Our Sis. Lucille Gramm (Bro. Ed, dec.) passed away on May 29. She will be missed by many. May God comfort the hearts of her family during this time. We rejoice that preparation was made by these two dear souls and that we have a hope of meeting them again.

Our prayers are with several in our congregation who have had surgeries recently. We pray for a speedy recovery for Sis. Dorothy Schmidgall (Bro. Marvin, dec.) and Bro. Art Anliker (Sis. Carol).

Bro. Eli and Sis. Larissa Cottrell welcomed sweet little Addison Marie into their hearts and home on May 19. Big sister Alaya and grandparents Bro. John and Sis. Gloria Cottrell and Bro. Mike and Sis. Jodi Bahler (Wolcott, IN), share in the joy of this new little one!

VBS is always a special week for our students! This year it was held June 7-11. We would like to express a special thank you to the brothers who gave of their time and talents
to talk to our Bible Class students. May God bless Bro. Kurt Plattner (Goodfield, IL), Bro. Craig Stickling (Peoria, IL), Bro. Brad Stoller (Eureka, IL), Bro. Ryan Hoerr (Princeville, IL), and Bro. Jeremiah Psinas (Morton, IL). To culminate our week, the Bible Class teachers, parents, and students took a bus trip to the Creation Museum.

On our return trip, we blended our voices together and sang,

“All things bright and beautiful,
All creatures great and small.
All things wise and wonderful
The Lord God made them all.”

Creation, Hymns of Zion, #207

We are so blessed to serve such an almighty and all powerful God!

**Illinois, Fairbury**

*Kati Meiss, Trish Steidinger*

We are rejoicing with Bro. Dave and Sis. Kara Blunier as their son Kenan began his repentance. We continue to pray for others to answer the call of the Saviour.

Bro. Seth, Sis. Courtney Miller and Caden are thankful for the safe arrival of Brynlee Ann. Grandparents are Bro. Roger and Sis. Crystal Miller and Bro. Chad and Sis. Lisa Massner, (Taylor, MO). Also welcoming a new daughter, Anneliese Marie, are Bro. Walter and Sis. Erica Moser. Thankful grandparents are Sis. Julia Moser (Bro. Doug, dec.) and Bro. Matt and Sis. Traci Kieser (Bradford, IL).

We had several visiting ministers this month who were willing to preach the gospel. We thank Bro. Dennis Rassi (Sis. Dianne, Austin-Bastrop, TX), Bro. Alan Schambach (Sis. Sarah, Remington, IN), Bro. Brian Waibel (Sis. Wendy, Champaign, IL), Bro. Jim Manz (Sis. Elizabeth, Junction, OH), and Elder Bro. Jay Luthi (Sis. Jane, Lamont, KS).

We gathered together to listen to our Elder Bro. Rick Plattner exhort us with the Spring Memorandum. It is always so good to be made aware of where one can draw closer to God.

**Illinois, Forrest**

*Jessica Gerber, Marsha Lanz*

“Our give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.” Psa. 107:1

God has given our congregation several reasons to be thankful this past month.

We thank visiting ministers Bro. Art Mueller (Sis. Marlene, Belvidere, IL), Bro. Tom Bolliger (Sis. Jane, Tremont, IL), Bro. Matthew Kaisner (Sis. Jodi, Fairbury, IL), and Bro. Clint Dotterer (Sis. Rebecca, Denver, CO) for sharing God’s word with us.

We also appreciate the ministering brothers who came and shared with our Bible Class students during VBS. May God bless Bro. Art Mueller (Sis. Marlene, Belvidere, IL), Bro. Paul Zimmerman (Sis. Loretta, Forrest, IL), Bro. Todd Witzig (Sis. Nicole, Gridley, IL), and Bro. Matthew Kaisner (Sis. Jodi, Fairbury, IL) for being willing to give of their time.

We thank our Sis. Janet Schmidgall (Bro. John) for her years of service as a Sunday school teacher. May she be richly blessed.

On Sunday evening May 23, Bro. Todd and Sis. Zoë Stoller gave an update on CVE in Magdalena, MX. It is always a blessing to see how God uses individuals to do his work here on earth.

Finally, we thank our Elder Bro. Marvin Dotterer for reading and expounding on the Memorandum. God truly is good! The challenge to us is to take the time to slow down in the busyness of our lives and reflect on the blessings he gives us each and every day!

**Illinois, Goodfield**

*Amy Hinrichsen, Judy Knapp*

Sweet summertime is here and with that lots of sunshine! “Heavenly sunlight, heavenly sunlight, flooding my soul with glory divine. Hallelujah; I am rejoicing, Singing his praises, Jesus is Mine.” Heavenly Sunlight, Gospel Hymns #772

Praise Jesus for two new babes that have just been born! Rob and Melissa Rieke are excited to welcome a sweet baby boy, Theodore Michael, born on May 11. Thankful grandparents are Bro. Brian and Sis. Lisa Rieke and Debbie McGregor. We are prayerful for baby Theodore and Rob and Melissa as he was born 8 weeks early and had to stay in the hospital several extra weeks. He is now home, and they are doing well.

Brent and Marissa Wiegand joyfully welcomed their precious daughter, Hazel Jo, into the world on May 22! Thankful grandparents are Bradley and Karen Hutchinson.
and Bro. Greg and Sis. Jennifer Wiegand. We wish them all the best as they raise their daughter.

We are thankful that Bro. Matthew Keiser is making Goodfield his home church. We welcome Bro. Matthew and are always thankful for new members.

We are very thankful to announce that Cade, Emrie, Job and Elle Knapp are at peace with God and man and are ready for baptism. Cade and Emrie are the son and daughter of Bro. Ryan and Sis. Liz Knapp. Job and Elle are the son and daughter of Bro. Josh and Sis. Carolyn Knapp. We are planning for their testimonies and baptisms on July 10-11.

We congratulate Sis. Carly Hartman and Bro. Jim Bolliger (Tremont, IL) as they joined hands and became man and wife on June 6! It is so beautiful to see God bring two lives together as one. The happy couple’s parents are Bro. Jim and Sis. Ree Hartman and Bro. Tom and Sis. Jane Bolliger (Tremont, IL). It was special to have Bro. Tom have part of the wedding service.

We were also blessed to have Bro. Rick Kaisner (Sis. Michelle, Chicago, IL) minister to us in May. We’re thankful for his willingness to share God’s word.

Our retired Elder Bro. Wes Knapp passed away on Monday, May 31. Bro. Wes joined his dear wife in Heaven, Sis. Millie, who passed away earlier this year. We extend our love and sympathy to their children: Sis. Donna Lou Baner (Bro. Steph, Gridley, IL), Shari Eastman (Doug), Chuck Knapp (Jennifer) and their families during this time. We will miss Bro. Wes and his love for all. We are thankful that he can be with Jesus!

We are prayerful for Bro. Tony Monfre (Sis. Deonne) as a cancerous mass was found during a recent hospital stay. He has begun chemo treatment. May God give him strength and grant him healing.

Our Sis. Susie Wyss (Bro. Dale) is thankful for God’s miraculous hand and is doing well recovering from her heart procedure in Arizona. We will continue to pray for her and all those going through health challenges.

**Note of Thanks:**

The family of Bro. Wes and Sis. Mildred Knapp want to thank all of you for the love, prayers, gifts, stories, deeds of kindness and acts of service in the loss of both of our parents in the past few months. We are so thankful they can be together with Cindy (their daughter) and we look forward to seeing all of our loved ones again someday. God bless you!

**Illinois, Gridley**

**Perry Klopfenstein**

Bro. Terry D. Miller, 81, passed away on May 30, 2021. He is survived by his wife, Sis. Bev, whom he married on July 24, 1960. He is also survived by one son, Jeff Miller (Janet, Pensacola, FL); two daughters, Wendy Burns (Kevin, Rockford, IL) and Sis. Stacy Leman (Dave, Roanoke, IL). Also, seven grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren. Bro. Terry will be missed. He had an inviting way to show special esteem and brotherly love.

A first child was born to Bro. Gideon and Sis. Harmony Slagel on May 20. He was named Emmaus Lloyd. Grandparents are Bro. Kevin and Sis. Kara Moser (Fairbury, IL), and Dennis and Lorene Slagel. May the Lord be with the parents as they train up their son.

A son, Kellan Paul, was born to Bro. Matt and Sis. Elise Zehr. He has a sister, Isla. 3. Grandparents are Bro. Dave and Sis. Vicki Zehr; and William and Sis. Juanita Kaeb. God be with the parents in nurturing their new son.

We surely offer our sympathies to Sis. Donna Lou Baner over the loss of her father, retired Elder Bro. Wes Knapp (Goodfield, IL). Sympathies are also offered to Bro. John Gramm, whose sister-in-law, Sis. Lucille Gramm, passed away in Eureka Sis. Mary Gramm lost her brother, Bro. Joel Wuthrich, (Bloomfield, IA). She is also in our thoughts and prayers.

**Illinois, Morton**

**Annette Tanner**

“Praise ye the Lord, I will praise the Lord with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation.” Psal. 111:1

Along with our regular Sunday and Wednesday evening services, we have been blessed with special teachings from God’s word.

On May 16 Bro. Andrew Rassi (Sis. Sandy) brought us the topic “Being a Steward of Money”. He shared these five principles:
1. God owns everything.
2. God is in control of everything.
3. God supplies our needs.
4. God requires us to be faithful stewards.
5. Trees (referring to us) bring forth fruit—good or evil. Are we a “Me Tree” with roots of love of money, self and pleasure? Or are we a “He Tree” with roots of love of people, God and giving?

May 21, Elder Bro. Ted Witzig, Jr. (Sis. Donna) and Bro. Jeff Neihouser (Sis. Sue) read the Memorandum from the Spring 2021 conference. We continue to pray for our elders as they prepare for the Elder and Brotherhood Conference to be held in Rittman, OH the first week in August.

June 2, Bro. Fred Funk (Sis. Diane) spoke at our Family Worship Night beginning a new series “Bible Basics-Old Testament Part 1”. We were reminded the Bible is God’s Word to humanity written by approximately forty men with God as the author. Our purpose is to glorify God. “The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.” Psa. 12:6

On June 9, we began the “Sharing the Gospel” Bible study. Bro. Fred Funk (Sis. Diane) answered the question “What is the Gospel”? with the acronym from the study:
• G - God’s Holiness
• O - Our Brokenness
• S - Christ’s Sacrifice
• P - Our Profession
• E - =
• L - Life

Bro. Clinton and Sis. Maria Leman welcomed Kai Ryder into their family on June 3. Reef and Arbor are excited to have a new brother to love. Happy grandparents are Bro. Tim and Sis. Beth Leman and Bro. Andy and Sis. Jayne Sauder all of Morton.

We congratulate Bro. Al and Sis. Geri Neukomm who celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary in June. May God continue to bless them in the years ahead.

As we look forward to returning to our regular worship schedule on July 4, with noon lunch and more time to fellowship, we are thankful. “Praise God, from whom all blessings flow, Praise Him, all creatures here below, Praise Him above, ye heav’n-ly host; Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost!”

Doxology, Tabernacle Hymns #324

Illinois, Peoria
Bonnie Bach, Crystal Wettstein

What a special blessing to hear the testimonies and witness the baptisms of 3 young souls! We welcome Sis. Faith Reinhard and Bro. Mackenson Reinhard (Bro.Tim and Sis. Joan) and Bro. Justin Ricketts (Bro. Gary and Sis. Marie Unsicker and late Bro. Brian Ricketts) as part of our church family. May they grow in grace, love, and obedience to the Spirit! Bro. Fred Witzig (Sis. Nancy, Washington, IL) ministered to us that Sunday.

We rejoice that two more souls are seeking to walk close to the Lord. They are Jennifer Adams Wolper and Jeff Goard. As they start this new life, may they feel God’s guidance, grace, and love!

The Sunday school students have been busy enjoying summer activities including the annual picnic at the Fellowship Hall and a week of VBS. The VBS topic for 2021 was “Daniel and His Friends.” We pray that lessons learned and friendships made will be a blessing for a lifetime. The older students and congregation learned from speakers in the sanctuary. These were Bro. Arlan Miller (Gridley, IL), Bro. Greg Beutel (Tremont, IL), Bro. Jeremiah Psinas (Morton, IL), and Bro. Matt Kaufmann (Bloomington, IL).

Many thanks to those who worked so hard to bring the week together!

Family night this month was held at the Fellowship Hall. We appreciate Bro. Max and Sis. Katie Hoerr sharing from their years of wisdom. All ages in a church family work together to bring glory to God!

Bro. Derek Menold (Sis. Wendy) and Bro. Ryan Menold (Sis. Shari) lost their grandmother, Sis. Marie Menold (Princeville, IL). May Thomas (Bro. Ivan, dec.) passed away June 1. Her children are Marilyn Kauffman (Larry), Jeannie Dorsey (Rick), Bob Thomas (Karen), and Linda Thomas. Our thoughts and prayers are with these loved ones in their loss!
“To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven.” Eccl 3:1

After faithfully serving the church as a minister for 33 years, Bro. Mike Rieker has retired from pulpit ministry. Along with his wife Sis. Carol, he has served the church is countless other ways as well! May God bless them both as they continue to work for the Lord but now in different things!

Illinois, Princeville
Ruth Herrmann, Cherie White

“…Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.” Matt. 6:9

With thankfulness, we pause to remember not only our earthly fathers, but with great joy remember our heavenly father who gave his all!

On May 23 we heard the engagement of Bro. Josh Stahl, (Bro. Doug and Sis. Ann) to Sis. Willow Sauder, (Bro. John and Sis. Misty, Tremont, IL). May they continue to feel God’s leading as they prepare for their upcoming wedding.

Bro. Todd Herrmann and Sis. Lydia Pfaffmann were united in holy matrimony in Washington, IL on June 13. Joyful parents are Bro. Dean and Sis. Dawn Herrmann and Bro. Robert and Sis. Lillian Pfaffmann (Washington, IL).

We are thankful for the opportunity to enjoy a visit from Elder Bro. Greg Lehman and his wife Sis. Mary Beth (Wolcott, IN) as he recently shared God’s word with us.

For Memorial Day weekend, we were so blessed when our Single Group invited other groups from numerous congregations. We enjoyed sweet fellowship in song service as they invited our Bradford and Princeville congregations on Sunday evening. What a joy to observe the continuation of serving God according to faith amongst our generations!

Beginning of June was our VBS for our Sunday school. We appreciate the efforts of the teachers and helpers who remind our young people of God’s truths. Thanks to Bro. Fred Dietz (Sis. Shaena, Elgin, IL) and Bro. Jay Steffen (Sis. Melinda, Congerville, IL) who were willing to come and speak to our students in Bible Class.

Sis. Mary Lynn Streitmatter (Bro. Steve) had surgery. Bro. Jordan Feucht (Sis. Kathy) experiences afflictions of the body. May God be with each one.

“Let our eyes be raised to heaven Where the sun is shining bright…” Morning Hymn, Zion’s Harp, #166

We are reminded of our hope and goal in this life as we experience the passing of a dear loved one. Our Sis. Joy Baurer is survived by her children, Bro. Brad (Sis. Cheryl, Roanoke, IL), Clark (Irica, Chicago, IL) and Deonne Snare (Philip, Vienna, VA).

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom…” Psal. 111:10

We pray for each one that are graduating from high school: Job Feucht (Mark and Sis. Paula), Libby Martin (Bro. Larry and Sis. Tiffany), Joseph Mueller (Bro. Stacey and Tonda), Bro. Joseph Stahl (Bro. Doug and Sis. Ann), Taryn Steidinger (Bro. Chris and Sis. Carol) and Bro. Nolan Wagenbach (Bro. Troy and Sis. June).

Note of thanks:

Thank you for the outpouring of love, prayers and cards during my illness and surgery. It was very much appreciated. May God bless each one.   Bro. George Baer

Illinois, Roanoke
Judy Sauder, Barb Schwind

Bro. Sam Bertschi (Sis. Marjorie) is our new minister. Elder Bro. Trent Meiss (Sis. Lucille, Eureka, IL) and Elder Bro. Kent Heimer (Sis. Jan, Tayler, MO) assisted our Elder Bro. Frank Sauder in the election process. We pray for Bro. Sam, Sis. Marjorie, and their family for God to bless them and use them in a mighty way to bring others to Jesus and encourage the believers.

New Sunday school teachers were elected. Primary grade teachers are Sis. Susan Bertschi, Sis. Lynne Hodel, and Sis. Stacy Leman. Intermediate grade teachers are Bro. Landon Isaia and Bro. Tyler Schick. Bible Class teachers are Bro. Eric Hoffman, and Bro. Scott Luginbuhl. We pray for God to bless this group as they teach our children about the Lord and his ways.

On May 23, a Baccalaureate Service was held for our high school graduates: Joshua Feucht (Bro. Matt and Sis. Jennifer), Wyatt Gerber (Bro. Cory and Sis. Gini), Jessie Hodel (Bro. Jeff and Sis. Jenny), Joseph Hodel (Bro. Phil and Sis. Lynne), Sis. Destyne King (Joe and Alicia LePretre), Brady Leman (Bro. Scott and Sis. Erin), Timothy Leman (Dennis and Sis. Karen),
Luke Wacker (Jim and Sis. Cheryl), Joseph Wettstein (Bro. Gary and Sis. Elna), Emma Wüthrich (Bro. Reggie), and Chloe Yordy (Bro. Scott and Sis. Mandy). Bro. Matt Feucht encouraged our graduates not to be anxious but to trust, delight, commit to, and rest in the Lord. He will provide for our needs (Philip. 4 and Psa. 37).

Also on May 23, a topical Bible study “Technology, the Bible and You” was presented by Bro. John Bradle (Sis. Jill). Bro. John encouraged us to use technology to further God’s kingdom, to have a biblical worldview not a media controlled worldview, and to put God first, redeeming the time.

Bro. Nate Hodel (Sis. Jamie) led a Bible study “Contending for the Faith” on May 30. Bro. Nate used the story of Davy Crockett and the Alamo to illustrate contending for the faith. He encouraged us to stand strong on the biblical issues of the day (ie. marriage between one man and one woman, sanctity of life), be diligent in prayer, strive for holiness and sanctified living, build strong families with a father’s spiritual leadership and sacrificial love, and support the church family in activities and practices.

Our love and prayers are with those from our church family who have lost loved ones. Harry Hinthorne, son of Sis. Vi Hinthorne and brother of Janet Pomeranke, passed away on May 10.

Bill Ryals’ son, Jason, of Jacksonville, FL was killed in a motorcycle accident on May 24.

Sis. Joy Baurer (Princeville, IL) went to her heavenly home on May 31. She was the mother of Bro. Brad Baurer (Sis. Cheryl).

Bro. Terry Miller (Sis. Bev, Gridley, IL and Sarasota, FL) went to be with Jesus on May 30. He was the father of Sis. Stacy Leman (Bro. Dave).

Bro. Robert Zimmerman passed away on June 2. His survivors include his sons; Robert (Kathy, Elmwood, IL), Bro. Stan and a daughter Sis. Tamara Lehman (Bro. John, Wolcott, IN), nine grandchildren, two great grandchildren, a brother William Zimmerman (Myrna, Georgia) and a sister Sis. Mary Bradle (Bro. Robert). Bro. John Lehman (Sis. Tamara) had the funeral service for Bro. Bob on June 7. Bob was known for his ability to work with his hands and fix almost anything. He also was a good “neighbor” to others by always being willing to help them out. May the Lord comfort each of these families.

Bro. David Moser (Bro. Greg and Sis. Shar) is engaged to Sis. Claire Izeboud, daughter of Elvera van Slingerland and Otto van Zelst of the Netherlands. Her U.S. “parents” are Bro. Steve and Sis. Susie Jones (Washington, IL). We wish this dear couple God’s richest blessings!

On June 6, Bro. Frank spoke on John 15, encouraging us to abide in the vine no matter what trial comes our way, and then he addressed the church about our reopening plans.

Our love and prayers go with those from our church who are relocating. Sis. Jan Moser is moving to Tucson, AZ. Bro. Eli Durand (Tom and Sis. Marsha) left to begin basic training in Oklahoma on June 7. Sis. Lydia Lindberg is moving to the Taylor, MO area. May the Lord be close to each of them in this transition process.

In June our junior and senior Bible Class students and their parents enjoyed a weekend at the Ark Encounter and Creation Museum.

On June 7-11 our Sunday school students, as well as adults, were welcomed to VBS. On June 7 Bro. Fred Witzig (Sis. Nancy, Washington, IL) spoke on “Faith Defined.” Bro Fred shared the Greek word “pistis” often translated faith in English, can mean belief, faithfulness, or allegiance. He encouraged us to see faith and works not as opposing concepts but as going hand in hand. Bro. Dan Leman (Sis. Tess, Denver, CO) shared “Faith in Jesus’ Work on the Cross” on June 8. Bro. Dan emphasized we must be buried with Christ by baptism into his death. Jesus rescued us from sin and gives us the power to overcome it. On June 9 Bro. Zach Anderson (Sis. Karla, Congerville, IL) discussed “Faith in Jesus’ Resurrection.” Bro. Zach encouraged us to live a new life in Christ led by the Spirit. He urged us to beware of worldly cares and riches, comparisons, not separating from the world, social media, bitterness, unforgiveness, lack of Bible reading and prayer, or not dying to self, which threaten
our new life in Christ. He urged us to take the message of Christ’s resurrection to the world. Bro. Brandon Emch (Sis. Maria, Kansas City, MO) shared the topic “Faith in the Way of Life Jesus Lived and Taught” on June 10. Faith is forward-looking, based on the Word of God, and motivates and inspires us to obedience and endurance. Bro. Brandon encouraged us to abide in the vine and that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. Our VBS ended on June 11 with Bro. Ryan Bertsch (Sis. Jessica, Bluffton North, IN) sharing “Faith is How the Kingdom Comes.” When Christians work together as the church, the body of Christ, following Jesus’ teachings, they begin to bring the kingdom of heaven on earth as it is in heaven. Bro. Ryan emphasized that the kingdom of heaven is here and is a way of life different from the world. The kingdom is not a place but the position of your heart. Qualities of kingdom citizens include being born again, being poor in spirit, living righteous lives, focusing on Jesus and not looking back, obeying God because we love him, being ambassadors for Christ, and caring for children, the sick, the poor, the lonely and widows. Our younger students had a wonderful week of Bible stories, object lessons, crafts, and skits also on the topic of faith. We thank everyone who contributed to this inspiring week of VBS.

Hattie Hodel (Bro. Jonathan and Sis. Megan) has begun her walk with the Lord. Alex Martin (Bro. Todd and Sis. Joy, Washington, IL) has found peace with God and man and is looking forward to baptism. It gives us great joy to see loved ones walking with Jesus.

Abigail Ann was born to Bro. Jon and Sis. Jessi Schwind on June 11. Abby’s siblings: Cece, Elsie, Jack and Sadie, and grandparents Bill and Janet Rosecrans (Kickapoo, IL) and Bro. Dave and Sis. Barb Schwind are also rejoicing in the birth of this precious baby.

Pray for Bro. Dave Schwind (Sis. Barb), who will have scans again in July.

Our little grandson, Jack, attended VBS for the first time. A couple weeks short of his third birthday, he was probably the youngest participant, but what he lacked in age and experience he more than made up for in enthusiasm. For weeks he had been talking about going to VBS and then later Sunday school with his big sisters, and he was more than ready and eager to worship, learn the stories, sing the songs, and greet others with his big smile and friendly wave. Am I always as eager to worship and share the love of Jesus as Jack? Do I anticipate worship services with such joy? No wonder the Lord encourages us to have childlike faith!

Note of Thanks:
I want to thank all the people that prayed for me, sent cards and encouragement when I had my new hip surgery. Our church family is so special and I’m glad to be a part of it. May God bless you all. Sis. Jan Getz

Note of Thanks:
We would like to thank you all for the love, prayers, and support shown to Jason and the family. Over the past 25 years Jason was faced with many trials and our church family was always by our side. As a young child starting down in Sunday school, many seeds were planted to help build a godly foundation. Being Sunday school teachers often feels like a thankless service, but the impact of planting those early seeds has such a lasting impact in our lives. Years later after Jason accepted Christ into his life, God used him to reach out spreading the gospel, especially to the youth. Although he will be greatly missed, it is a comfort to know he is now free from his earthly body and walking with Jesus.

Again thank you to our church family and may God richly bless each one of you.

In Christian Love,
Bro. Jim and Sis. Julie Tibbs

Illinois, Tremont
Debbie Aberle, Lucy Kaiser

We are thankful that Bro. Dave Hartter (Sis. Beth, Sabetha, KS) and Bro. Kent Wiegand (Sis. Lanae, Goodfield, IL) were able to visit our congregation this month and minister the Word to us. We especially appreciate Bro. Kent’s willingness to share a Family Night topical lesson with us entitled “God’s attributes and our response”.

We wish to congratulate Sis. Willow Sauder (Bro. John and Sis. Misty) on her engagement to Bro. Josh Stahl (Bro. Doug and Sis. Ann, Princeville, IL). May God bless them as they look forward to marriage and a life together. We also
extend congratulations to Bro. Jim and Sis. Carly Bolliger as they were joined together in Holy Matrimony. Bro. Jim's parents are Bro. Tom and Sis. Jane Bolliger and Sis. Carly's parents are Bro. Jim and Sis. Rec Hartman (Goodfield, IL).

Bro. Dustin, Sis. Paige, Sawyer, and Skylar Kilgus are thrilled to welcome home a baby boy, Kash Werner. Kash’s grandparents, Bro. Todd and Sis. Rita Kilgus and Bro. Dean and Sis. Trudy Bolliger, are so thankful that he has arrived.

Bro. Terry and Sis. Christine Koch are excited to welcome another grandson, Richard Andrew White, born to Rich and Ashleigh White.

The juniors and seniors of the 2019-2020 school year finally got to go on their mission trip after having to reschedule and re-plan multiple times. A group of students and parents were blessed to be able to minister to those in need in Sunset Gap, TN over the course of a week.

“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. 3:5-6

As our graduating seniors move on to college or the workforce, we pray that they will take this verse to heart and trust the Lord in all of their plans. Our seniors this year are: Laina Allen (Chris and Sis. Sheri), Seth Keever (Bro. Chad and Sis. Laurie), Sean Koch (Bro. Kap and Sis. Gayle), Jolene Plattner (Bro. Chad and Sis. Laura), Bro. Daniel Sauder (Bro. Matt and Sis. Jenni), Andrew Schaefer (Bro. Kevin and Sis. Tammy), Cole Wagenbach (Bro. Dan and Sis. Jeanne), and Simon Wagenbach (Bro. Sim and Sis. Lori).

We pray that God grants his healing mercies to Sis. Sarah Steiner as she recovers from surgery. We extend our sympathies to Sis. Rosemary Wegman (Bro. Sam) as she mourns the loss of her sister, Sis. Lucille Gramm (Eureka, IL). May she feel the love and comfort of the Holy Spirit.

Illinois, Washington
Lillian Pfaffmann

Another announcement, another wedding! Sis. Claire Izeboud is engaged to Bro. David Moser (Roanoke, IL). Her parents are Otto and Elvera van Slingerland of the Netherlands and Bro. Steve and Sis. Susie Jones (American “parents’); his are Bro. Greg and Sis. Shar Moser (Roanoke, IL). May the Lord be in their midst as they plan their lives together!

Sis. Lydia Pfaffmann and Bro. Todd Herrmann (Princeville, IL) were united in Holy Matrimony on June 13. Their parents are Bro. Robert and Sis. Lillian Pfaffmann and Bro. Dean and Sis. Dawn Herrmann (Princeville, IL). We pray their threefold cord with the Lord is tightly bonded...

"As they go forth upon life's way, Sustain them by Thy grace; May they Thy holy laws obey And live in joy and peace." O God of Wisdom, Hymns of Zion #286

Our Sis. Chrystol Luthi (Bro. Reuben) had been hospitalized with cancer-related health issues. We are so thankful she is presently home and enjoying the sweet fellowship of her adoring husband and devoted family. May the Lord grant her strength and grace to endure whatever lies ahead.

We pray God’s blessings on the ministering brothers who served us on the pulpit: Bro. Clint Schmidt (Sis. Magdalena, Winthrop, MN), Bro. Dewayne Dill (Sis. LaRae, Minneapolis, MN), and Bro. Matt Zimmerman (Sis. Kim, St. Louis, MO).

Indiana, Bluffton
Suzie Fiechter, Liana Reinhard, Olivia Steffen

Greetings of love! We are just finishing our two weeks of morning VBS. What a blessing to have 359 children gather together to learn more of their Savior! We are especially grateful after cancelling VBS last year because of COVID-19. The church will be filled on the final Friday evening, as we all join together in praising and exalting God! It brings many of us to tears as we hear the children’s voices, and we pray that each of these souls will someday come to him in repentance.

We appreciated the visit of Bro. Leland and Sis. Mary Plattner (Zapata, TX) as they were here for the graduation of their grandson. Bro. Gregg Rumbold (Sis. Heather, Peoria, IL) also ministered to us as they were visiting their daughter’s future in-laws. We hope they both return soon!

Bro. Logan Macklin (Bro. Ron and Sis. LaNae) and Sis. Ciera
Hamilton (Matt and Jacki) were united in marriage. Bro. Dave Smith (Loretta, dec.) and Sis. Lori Steffen (Bro. Mark, dec.) announced their engagement. We pray for the Lord’s continued blessing on each of these dear couples.

God has added to the family of Bro. Garrett and Sis. Kayla Tonner with the birth of little Shaelyn Grace. Her grandparents are Bro. Brian and Sis. Joy Tonner and Bro. Jeff and Sis. Peg Yergler (Bluffton North, IN).

Our prayers are with Bro. Gary and Sis. Deb Garman as his health declines.


Bro. Vince Pfister recently challenged us with this question. “Am I more concerned with what people think of me or with what they think of God because of me?”

Indiana, Bluffton North
Deanna Brinneman, Rhonda Maller

“Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.” 1 Tim. 4:12.

We are excited to celebrate the Class of 2021! Bro. Tim Drayer encouraged our high school graduates to remember their ABCs: Have A purpose, Be courageous, and Come boldly. Congratulations and best wishes to Krew Bussell (Bro. Travis and Sis. Missy), Sis. Kyra Isch (Sis. Brittany), Sis. Elaina Lemmen (Roger and Sis. Cindy), Sis. Deidra Reinhard (Bro. Kent and Sis. Jodi), and Bro. Zane Schaden (Bro. Jeff and Sis. Kim).

We are rejoicing with our new convert, Elly Bertsch (Bro. Ryan and Sis. Jessica).

On May 23, we were blessed with the baptisms of six precious souls. Bro. Brent Kaehr (Sis. Allison, Bluffton, IN) and Bro. George Gal (Sis. Tina, Akron, OH) were our visiting ministers that day. Bro. Kaden Bussell (Bro. Travis and Sis. Missy), Bro. Hayden Craighead (Bro. Jason and Sis. Gwen), Bro. Clay Frauhiger (Bro. Jeremy and Sis. Sally), Sis. Kylie Frauhiger (Bro. Jesse and Sis. Janelle), Sis. Grace Moser (Bro. Klint and Sis. Amy), and Bro. Daylin Reinhard (Bro. Kent and Sis. Jodi) were all baptized. We look forward to watching these souls walk in faith!

“For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.” 1 Cor. 12:13

It is always exciting when a new baby is born. We are happy to welcome little Shaelyn Grace Tonner. Her parents are Bro. Garrett and Sis. Kayla Tonner. Shaelyn’s grandparents are Bro. Jeff and Sis. Peg Yergler, and Bro. Brian and Sis. Joy Tonner (Bluffton, IN).

On June 5, Bro. Ben Pfister (Indianapolis, IN) was joined in marriage to Sis. Ashlyn Waldbeser (Peachtree City, GA). The parents are our Elder Bro. Dan and Sis. Sherry Pfister and Elder Bro. Tom and Sis. Sue Waldbeser (Peachtree City, GA).

Sis. Lori Steffen (Bro. Mark, dec.) and Bro. Dave Smith (Loretta, dec.) announced their engagement on June 6. We rejoice with them and support them in love and prayers as two families become one.

On June 7, our two-week VBS begins. After a year’s absence, the directors, teachers, and students are so excited to have the opportunity to meet together and learn more about Jesus during this time.

Although there is much to celebrate this month, we also extend our sympathy, love, and prayers to those who have lost loved ones.

“We know that we have passed from death unto life…” 1 John 3:14.

Our sympathy to Bro. Ed Maller (Sis. Rhonda) in the passing of Ed’s mother, Sis. Delores Maller, 94, on May 23. She is also survived by her son, Gary Maller (Kim, South Bend, IN), 12 grandchildren, 32 great-grandchildren, and sister-in-law Sis. Ellen Geisel.

We extend sympathy to the family of retired ministering Bro. Wendell Gerber, as he passed into eternity on May 28. He is survived by his six daughters, Sis. Melanie Gerber, Melissa Netherland, Sis. Mona Craighead (Bro. Mike), Margo Haiflich, Sis. Marsha Nicholas (Bro. Mark), and Sis. Maureen Reinhard (Bro. Roger), all of the Bluffton area. He also leaves 8 grandchildren, 11 great-grandchildren, 2 brothers, Bro. Vernon Gerber and Tillman Gerber (Betty), both of
Bluffton, a sister, Audrey Paxson, (Michigan), and three sisters-in-law, Sis. Evelyn Gerber, Sis. Julia Gerber, and Sis. Joyce Troxel.

We mourn with Bro. Jerry and Sis. Kathy Rauch in the loss of their grandson, little Anders Lee Kaehr. The son of Bro. Andy and Sis. Hannah Kaehr (Bluffton, IN), Anders was born into the arms of Jesus on June 6.

Several in our congregation continue to battle health issues, and we offer up continual prayers for them.

“Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.” Luke 21:36

Indiana, Francesville
Jacki Huber, Connie Linback

“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.” Psa. 100:4-5

When we consider God’s mercy, goodness and faithfulness, praise and thanksgiving come naturally. Every good thing comes from his hands, and there is beauty and light wherever God, Jesus and the precious Holy Spirit are. As we enter into his presence with thanksgiving, our own hearts and attitudes are filled with his light.

We don’t have a lot to report this month, but we are thankful to have had many visitors. Among them were Elder Bro. Curt Frank (Sis Lyla, LaCrosse, IN) who shared with us further in the process of considering an Ordained Deacon, as well as ministering Bro. Kent Levy (Sis. Holly, Morton, IL), who was with us on a Sunday when numerous couples participated in an “Invite-a-friend” weekend. We appreciated the clarity of the Word and wish to extend our thanks to both brothers for sharing!

Love and prayers are with our dear Sis. Carol Bucher who is recovering from a recent surgery.

Indiana, Indianapolis
Edie Bollier

“O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.” Psa. 136:1

In this Psalm we are reminded 26 times of something God has done for us, for his unlimited love for us and that “his mercy endures for ever”! Summer has arrived with the wonders of heat, and sunshine and flowers and cicadas! The seventeen year cicadas were so loud at church one Sunday that we were concerned for our outdoor VBS, but God was merciful and they had reached their peak and passed by the time VBS week arrived. It was a blessing to have a beautiful week of weather and lessons on letting our light shine to others. Each night we were able to use our tent and gather outdoors for lessons and activities. What a blessing to work together as a church and teach the young children about the heroes in the Bible who let their lights shine for God and how they can too, with Jesus’ help.

Our church is happy to welcome Bro. Chris and Sis. Sara Hattan and their sons, Isaia and Malachi, who moved here from Latty, OH. We wish them God’s grace and strength as they adjust to all the changes.

We are also looking forward to having Bro. Ben Pfister and his new bride Sis. Ashlyn settle in Indianapolis after their wedding in Peachtree City, GA.

Indiana, LaCrosse
Meagan Frank, Sharla Messner

Greetings to all in the name of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ.

Our graduate this year was MaKenzie Martin (Jason and Karla). We wish her the Lord’s blessings as she starts a new chapter in her life.

We want to thank Bro. John Lehman (Sis. Tamara, Wolcott, IN), for lending himself in the ministry this month.

We have just finished VBS. It is so enjoyable to see the excitement in the faces of the children. We want to thank Bro. Tim Bucher (Sis. Julie, Valparaiso, IN), Bro. Ted Bachtold (Sis. Teresa, Forrest, IL) and Bro. Craig Stickling (Sis. Jacqueline, Peoria, IL) for being our guest speakers for the Bible Class and adults. Our theme this year was “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” (2 Tim. 1:7). God gives us so many tools (love, the Bible, prayer, etc.) to help us in our earthly walk here below, but we need to take these tools and use them for others and ourselves to keep our faith growing. Having the best tools for a job does not mean it will be completed. As we were reminded during VBS, the ‘buts’
in the Bible are a warning that we need to pay close attention for what is being said next. As we go through our time of technology, which can make fears arise quickly, remember to use the Bible as a measuring stick for all things that we see or hear in this world. NOTHING in this world happens without God knowing and allowing it to proceed. This creates the firm foundation that enables us to face with confidence whatever comes to us.

Indiana, Leo

Jan Beer

Dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic changed so many things for us. It has been an intriguing exercise to find the good that can come from that situation. That seemed to be the underlying theme of the Spring Memorandum shared with us on Sunday, May 23, by our Elder Bro. Lynn Stieglitz and our ministering brothers. One conclusion is quite clear: God is faithful!

Our prayers went with Elder Bro. Lynn, Sis. Leonda and Sis. Marlise Stieglitz when they left May 26 to visit their aging missionary uncle in Brazil. Vic Schlatter, his wife and family have been missionaries for many years, but Vic’s health is now declining. Although Lynn and Leonda returned on June 7, Marlise is graciously caring for her uncle and aunt while their grown children visit the US. We pray for her during this time of service to her loved ones, and we look forward to her safe return on July 7.

Zeb Strahm, four-year-old son of Bro. Todd and Sis. Kara, was injured by a kiddie ride on June 4. He was visiting his uncle and aunt in Ohio when the accident happened, so Todd and Kara made a quick trip there. Hospital tests revealed lacerations to his liver, but no broken bones and no head injury. He came home from the hospital on June 6.

The Strahm family is grateful for the prayers extended on their behalf and give God praise and thanks for his great mercy in this situation.

Another prayer request with a happy ending was for the welfare of Don and Tina Jackson’s daughter, Christi, and her unborn child. After many tests, and some hospitalization, Eva Marie Sunday was born June 8 to Christi and Cory Sunday, with a birth weight of three pounds and four ounces. She and mommy seem to be doing well. Christi is a granddaughter to Bro. Richard and Sis. Jolan Jackson. We are thankful to God for this new life.

“And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.” Gen 2:18

This was one of the Scriptures read at the wedding of Sis. Kelsey Kaeb and Bro. Clark Laukhuf on June 6. Their parents are Bro. Chad and Sis. Kristy Kaeb and Bro. Mick and Sis. Lisa Laukhuf, all of Leo. Kelsey and Clark plan to make their home in Bloomington, IL until Kelsey finishes her college degree. Our love and prayers follow them as they establish their God-honoring home.

Because of the COVID-19 restrictions the past year, we are especially thankful for the summer events that can be held this year! Our VBS is being held June 14-18, with the theme “Mission Possible”. We are grateful for the director, Sis. Christa Wiegand, and all the volunteers who are willing to plant the seed of God’s Word in the hearts of our young people. Also, the same week, our high school Sunday school students went on their delayed 2020 Mission Trip! Since they were not allowed to travel last year, the seniors from last year were included on this trip to Seymour, TN, where the students and adults are helping the people in that area. All of the junior high and high school camps were able to be held this summer also.

Not long ago, it was mentioned from our pulpit that these mission trips and summer camps are often a part of a young person’s testimony we hear before their baptism. We are thankful that brothers and sisters are willing to exert time and effort into these activities, which are bearing fruit in the lives of our young people. May God’s name be glorified.

Indiana, Milford

Heidi Beer, Anne Wilson

Greetings in the name of Jesus our savior.

This month included two special services. The first was for the “Promotion” of our Sunday school students moving up to the next grade level. Crown Financial and church member’s testimonies were highlights of this past year for the Bible Class. The second service was for our graduates: Claire Beer (Bro. Brent and Sis. Pam), Justin Beer (Bro. Mark and
Jodi), and Adam Beer (Elder Bro. Randy and Sis. Deb). The sermon included comments about their achievements being fertilizer for their future endeavors. Philip. 3:8. We love and appreciate all they have achieved, but a relationship with Jesus supersedes it all.

We also held our annual VBS with the theme being “Soldiers of the Lord”. The last night included the smiles of kids showing their crafts and explaining their lessons to their parents. We thank Bro. Joe Gerber (Champaign, IL), Bro. Matt Miller (Latty, OH), Bro. Chet Manz (Toledo, OH), and Bro. David Maibach (Smithville, OH) for their teaching. Much planning, traveling and effort went into the week, and it was a blessing for our church family.

One special highlight last month was that the Milford fire department requested to use our church’s parking lot for their training so that they could have a helicopter land. It was exciting for the kids to watch, and we were thankful to help our community.

Indiana, Remington
Jenni Honegger, Marcella Tyler

We are thankful to Bro. Stan Schambach (Sis. Norma, Prescott, AZ) and Bro. Jeff Bahler (Sis. Heidi, Wolcott, IN) for visiting our church and preaching the Word to us so faithfully. We also had representatives from Gateway Woods come on a Wednesday night and give us an update of what services and blessings they are providing to hurting children and families and how we can help. May God bless each one for their service!

In addition, we also enjoyed a week of VBS along with the Wolcott church. We were challenged and encouraged to continue to fight the battle against Satan with the help and leading of Jesus as we are “Under Attack”. These were the ministers and their topics:
- Bro. Mark Dotterer (Sis. Kate, Eureka, IL) – “On Alert”
- Bro. Sam Manz (Sis. Shelby, Junction, OH) – “Confusing Signals”
- Bro. Matt Miller (Sis. Wendy, Latty, OH) – “Invisible Chains”
- Bro. Neil Stoller (Sis. Luann, Princeville, IL) – “Comrade in Arms”
- Bro. Matt Feucht (Sis. Jennifer, Roanoke, IL) – “Victory in Jesus”

Many thanks to all these ministers and to the brothers and sisters in Wolcott who worked hard to organize and implement this blessed week for us!

Many of us attended the Cheer Circle’s annual auction this month and enjoyed the spirited bidding and fellowship as we raised money for them to disperse throughout the coming year. We are thankful that the Cheer Circle members are so faithful and diligent in their service to others.

We had several hospital patients this month. Sis. Charlene Getz (Bro. Eldon), Bro. Ken Schneider (Sis. Bernice), and convert Thad Bahler (Bro. Tim and Sis. Lynnette) all covet your prayers for their healing.

Sis. Wilma Claus (Bro. Paul, dec.) passed on to be with the Lord this month. She left behind her children Cyndy Claus (Neal Houze), Lynn Hunt (Dan), Karen Hood (Bradley), Jon Clauss (Shelley), Kevin Clauss (D. Max Maccheyne), 12 grandchildren, and 14 great-grandchildren. We are thankful for her testimony of faith and pray that God will comfort the family as they mourn her loss.

Let’s remember to be prayerful for the upcoming conference in August. Our elders and ministers need our prayers to remain faithful to the Word and united with each other in such uncertain times.

Indiana, South Bend
Joshua Martinez

“And the LORD, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed.” Deut. 31:8

We want to extend our love and sympathy to Bro. Rich Gramm (Sis. Samantha) and Bro. Larry Gramm (Sis. Melinda) and their families in the passing of their mother and grandmother, Sis. Lucille Gramm (Bro. Edward, dec.). Those left behind feel the sorrow of an earthly good-bye and yet for the believer, there is the eternal delight of hearing “enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

May the Lord bless Bro. Jason and Sis. Jessica Isch for serving our youth. They drove some of our Sunday school students to the Memorial Day Weekend ALive event in Alabama and others to the Illinois Girls Camp the next week!

On June 6, Elder Bro. Scott Schafer (Sis. Gigi) held a special afternoon service to celebrate and encourage our high school graduates:
Sam Schlatter (Bro. Otto and Sis. DeAnn) and Bro. Ben Lester (Bro. Ed and Sis. Tricia). On that same Sunday, Bro. Scott announced that Marty Jo Martinez (Bro. Joshua and Sis. Keyna) has peace with God and man and looks forward to baptism!

On June 9, we held a song service to bid farewell to Bro. Josh and Sis. Janelle Steffen and their children, Ember and Foster. The Steffens will be missed, but we know they will be a tremendous blessing to the Smithville, OH church family!

We always appreciate visitors who make our church a part of their vacation plans. On June 13, we were blessed by a large group of sisters from the Eureka congregation! On that day, in attendance were also some friends of the faith who, because of the past-year's COVID-19 travel restrictions, had not had much exposure to visitors from other congregations. These “almost persuaded” friends were immensely impressed by the visiting sisters’ joyful, modest and humble Christian witness. We salute and say a sincere “thank you” to the 16 single sisters who selected us as a Sunday services stop and shared the spiritual sounds of sacred songs in our sanctuary!

“Sound the battle cry! See, the foe is nigh; Raise the standard high For the Lord; Gird your armor on, Stand firm, ev'ry one; Rest your cause upon His holy Word. Strong to meet the foe, Marching on we go, While our cause we know, Must prevail; Shield and banner bright, Gleaming in the light; Battling for the right We ne'er can fail O Thou God of all, Hear us when we call, Help us one and all By Thy grace; When the battle's done, And the vict'ry's won, May we wear the crown Before Thy face Rouse, then, soldier, rally round the banner, ready, steady, pass the word along; Onward, forward, shout aloud Hosanna! Christ is Captain of the mighty throng!" "Sound the Battle Cry, Tabernacle Hymns, #132

Summer is here and we are enjoying all that it brings! One of those things was our VBS with the Remington congregation. Our little church was buzzing with enthusiasm each evening… especially when our theme song “Sound the Battle Cry” was sung! The theme this year was “Under Attack.” The visiting ministers and their topics are listed in the Remington article.

We sincerely thank each of these brothers for taking the time to come and talk to our Bible Class and converts during these confusing and seemingly
upside-down times! We may get discouraged but we must remember that there IS victory in Jesus!

Our congregation was so excited when we heard the engagement of Sis. Erin Bahler (Bro. Mike and Sis. Jody) to Bro. David Lehman (Elder Bro. Greg and Sis. Mary Beth). We pray that God will bless them richly as they make plans for their wedding and their lives together!

We are sad to have to say farewell to Bro. Josh, Sis. Bethany, Emily, Erin and Ava Johnson as they have returned to Wichita, KS.

Iowa, Bloomfield
Kendra Wettstein

We thank Bro. Neil Stoller (Sis. Luann, Princeville, IL) and Bro. Seth Hartter (Sis. Brenda, Burlington, IA) for preaching the Word to us this past month.

Prayers of sympathy go out to Sis. Shirley Wuthrich and family as Bro. Joel has passed on to his eternal reward. May God be near them during this time of sorrow.

Note of Thanks:
A special thank you to all who remembered us during Joel’s illness and passing. He especially appreciated the visits, phone calls, and singers who came so faithfully. We thank everyone for the many cards, memorials, food, and flowers. All remembrances were greatly appreciated.

The Joel Wuthrich family

Iowa, Burlington
Marilyn Anderson, Angela Steiner

As summer is in full swing, we can each find ourselves enveloped in some varying degree of that all-familiar word “busy.” Whether it’s family needs/responsibilities, relationships, surrounding pressures, goals on the to-do lists, endless outside activities and duties, or a busy season with work, our days slip by at a frightening pace. I was so convicted, challenged, and encouraged by our Spring Memorandum hosted recently at Mediapolis, IA and shared with our home ministers, both from Mediapolis and Burlington. They reminded us of Jesus’ character and how he responded to daily demands and constant interruptions with gentleness, compassion, and surrender. He never complained, but rather gave thanks to his heavenly Father, and with humility and patience, embraced the tasks at hand. Jesus never forgot his purpose on earth. Wow. How are we reflecting the character of Jesus today?

Jesus loved little children and took time out of his day to show them love and care. We want to support our new Sunday school teachers, Sis. Adrianna Schulz and Bro. Mike Steiner, as they will have an opportunity to reflect the character of Jesus and teach our children.

Our Burlington church family also enjoyed being together with all our children at the Sunday school picnic hosted at Perkins Park. It’s always fun to have a variety of delicious potluck food set out on the tables, special to watch the kids interact, and a blessing to share in a singing together.

We are also thankful for the mothers, wives and everyone that took time out of their busy days to participate in and assist with our VBS hosted at the Fellowship Center this past week. We trust that God was glorified and that the young souls would have felt Jesus near.

It was delightful to have our small church building bursting at the seams with energy and praise when our Single Group recently hosted an invite. Thank you to those that made an effort to come and encourage the brethren!

Just as Jesus loves to hear our praise, he also cares about our illnesses. We lift up our Sis. Charity Scheitlin who is still recovering from her fall and now residing at her daughter’s home in Bloomfield, IA. May God grant her healing according to his will.

As the months continue to slip by, may we follow Jesus’ example and make time for quiet stillness to be intimate with our Father and keep him first each day.

Iowa, Elgin
Maria Rocke

The Sunday school Bible class traveled to Morris, MN for the Youth Fellowship weekend. The theme for the weekend was “The Goodness of God”. It was a nice opportunity for our young people to spend time with others their age and build friendships that will last a lifetime. Thank you to all who had a part in making the weekend such a blessing!

Visiting us this month was Bro. Dallas Massner (Sis. Christy,
Burlington, IA) and Bro. Kevin Banwart (Sis. Sandy, West Bend, IA). We’re thankful for their efforts of love from the pulpit.

Iowa, Garden Grove
Laura Funk

We have experienced above average temperatures and below normal rainfall this past month. The Lord nourished us with rain this past weekend.

Our souls have been nourished with God’s word by visiting ministers Elder Bro. Doug Schock (Sis. Clara, Bloomfield, IA), Bro. Larry Bahr (Ft. Scott, KS), Bro. Myron Knobloch (Lester, IA) and Bro. Kurt Plattner (Sis. Joan, Goodfield, IL).

Our congregation partook of Holy Communion served by Elder Bro. Doug Schock and Ord. Deacon Bro. Brad Funk. Am I/you in “common union” with the Lord?

My dad, Bro. Joel Wuthrich (Bloomfield, IA) passed into the arms of Jesus on May 26. His wife and five children were at his bedside when he took his last breath. We are missing him on earth but thankful he could say “Greetings Brother” to Jesus.

We are thankful for the many expressions of sympathy whether by card, text, or phone call. Our family enjoyed the singing, piano/guitar/flute playing, and food shared with us while we attended to dad. Also, the food, flowers, monetary contributions, and gifts are all appreciated. Praying God’s blessings for all.

Iowa, Iowa City
Diana Butikofer

We are thankful to welcome Garett Butikofer as a brother following his baptism on May 23. May the Lord continue to guide and bless Bro. Garett. We appreciate how our visiting ministers served us that weekend: Elder Bro. Jon Schmidgall (Sis. Julie, Mediapolis, IA), Bro. Kent Getz (Sis. Betty, Elgin, IA), and Bro. Andrew Klumpp (Sis. Rachel, Bradford, IL).

Our prayers continue for Darinda Ganfield as she recovers from surgery related to her ongoing battle with cancer.

We were blessed to hear the Spring Memorandum recently delivered by our local ministers and are thankful for the elder brothers’ guidance and leadership.

We thank this past year’s teachers Bro. Tim Gerst, Bro. Luke Gerst, Sis. Ruth Gerst, and Sis. Renae Snodgrass. The newly elected teachers are Bro. Luke Gerst, Sis. Jeanette Moser, and Sis. Audrey Landherr. May the Lord bless them with wisdom and love in this important responsibility.

Iowa, Lester
Kristi Knobloch, Lois Mogler

We are privileged to enjoy many freedoms. How thankful we are for the freedom from condemnation.

“But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.” Rom. 6:22

We welcome Sis. Gabi Feucht (Bro. Tim and Sis. Carla) as she was baptized June 6. Elder Bro. Gary Sinn (Sis. Paulette, Latty, OH) came to share the weekend.

Other visiting ministers have been Elder Bro. Scott Schafer (Sis. Gigi, South Bend, IN), Bro. Damon Knobloch (Sis. Steph, Morris North, MN), Bro. Aaron Frank (Sis. Sharla, Elgin, IA) and Bro. Larry Bahr (Fort Scott, KS). We appreciate each one.

We pray for our loved ones who endure health challenges. Sis. Shirlee DeHaan, Bro. Chuck Knoblock (Sis. Coralee) and Bro. Melvin Knobloch (Sis. Wilma) are among those who have been hospitalized.

We extend our sympathy to the Metzger family: Bro. Don, Bro. Alvin, Bro. Art (Sis. Kristy), Bro. Glen (Sis. Joyce), Bro. Harvey (Sis. Mary) and Bro. Rodney (Sis. Polly), in the passing of their brother-in-law Bro. Joel Wuthrich (Sis. Shirley, Bloomfield, IA). Bro. Phil Mogler, age 99, passed away peacefully on June 2. Our sympathy is his wife, Sis. Donna and daughters: Janice Nohl (DeWayne), Joyce Messner (Bernie), Jeryl Grimm (Doug), June Schulz (Roger) and Jaleen Mogler who are thankful for their father’s example. We also remember his granddaughter Sis. Gwen Metzger (Bro. Troy), siblings Sis. Florence Knoblock, Bro. Howard Mogler (Sis. Lillian) and brother-in-law Bro. Frank Moser. As the pillars of faith depart may we strive to strengthen the church.

We welcome Chase Metzger (Bro. Dick and Sis. Gail, Morris North, MN) and Bro. Joel Kieser (Bro. Matt and Sis. Tracy, Bradford, IL) who are in our
area for continuing education and related work.

Two couples have announced their engagement. Jeff Moser (Bro. Donn and Sis. Joyce) to Cassie Buchholz and Drew Mogler (Bro. Dwight and Sis. Donna) to Chloe Ebel. We wish them God’s guidance as they plan for their lives together.

Iowa, Mediapolis
Laura Kuntz, Janet Lanz

As I sit down to write this month’s news, we are right in the middle of our week of VBS. It is such a blessing to all involved, and a summer activity the children always look forward to. Even though it is a blessing, it can also be a tiring week for all who volunteer to help, but it is time well spent! Our church first started having VBS when I was in 1st grade, and I have such fond memories of going. The scripture we memorized and the songs we sang have stuck with me through the years.

We recently held Sunday school elections. Bro. Mitch Schulz, Bro. Travis Frank, and Bro. Roger Reker, and Sis. Megan Schmidgall and Sis. Bethany Frank were selected to be our new teachers. We appreciate the diligent efforts of our outgoing teachers who will very soon be completing their terms. Whether we are discipling our kids in our homes, at VBS, or in Sunday school, we fervently pray that the seeds we are sowing will take root in their hearts!

What joy it is to report that the seeds sown have taken root in the hearts of three individuals! Jesse Massner (Bro. Chuck and Sis. Lois) has turned to the Lord in repentance. Additionally, Kevin Gerst (Selena) and Larae Steiner (Bro. Randy and Sis. Shayla) have both expressed that they have peace with God, and are looking forward to baptism.

We extend our heartfelt sympathy to Sis. Bethany Frank (Bro. Brent), Bro. Mitch Schulz (Sis. Renee), and Kendra, Amy, and Sis. Marie Schulz in the loss of their dear grandfather, Bro. Phil Mogler (Sis. Donna, Lester, IA).

Bro. Reed and Sis. Jenni Wagenbach lovingly welcome Addison Jo into their hearts and home. Grandparents delighted to have another granddaughter are Bro. Colin and Sis. Barb Wagenbach, and Bro. Curt and Sis. Kathy Frank.

We listened to good teaching and encouragement when Elder Bro. Jon Schmidgall and some of our Burlington and Mediapolis ministers delivered the Memorandum to our combined congregations on a Wednesday night. On another Wednesday night, Bro. Jon spoke to our congregation on the topic of biblical meditation. It’s always interesting when science confirms biblical truths, and we learned how we can use specific strategies based on how the brain works to help us more effectively use God’s Word as a weapon to combat the unbiblical thoughts and behaviors we struggle with and replace them with biblical truth from God’s Word.

“Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” Ephesians 6:16-17

Iowa, West Bend
Jenny Banwart, Karen Schmidt

We wish God’s blessings to Bro. Joel Schar (Bro. Tim and Sis. Joanne, Akron, OH) and Sis. Abigial Zaugg (Bro. David and Sis. Melissa) as they were joined in Holy Matrimony. We will miss Sis. Abby and pray she will feel at home in Akron. We enjoyed many visitors from near and far and thank the visiting ministering brothers who were here also. They included: Elder Bro. Rod Bajema (Sis. Sue, Lester, IA), Elder Bro. Wayne Hartzler (Sis. Camille, Rittman, OH), Bro. Todd Graf (Sis. Lydia, Akron, OH), Bro. Bryon Palitto (Sis. Lisa, Akron, OH), Bro. Tom Bahler (Sis. Lanae, Rockville, CT), Bro. Tim Ramsier (Sis. Jonell, Rittman, OH), and Bro. Matt Wulf (Sis. Tara, Morris, MN).

Other visiting ministers we enjoyed this past month were Bro. Dave Lanz (Sis. Tami, Mediapolis, IA), Bro. Kent Getz (Sis. Betty, Elgin, IA), Bro. Mark Dotterer (Sis. Kate, Eureka, IL), and Bro. Clint Schmidt (Sis. Magdalena, Winthrop, MN). May God richly bless them for their labors!

May we remember Bro. Leonard Anliker (Sis. Helen) and Sis. Julie Zaugg (Darrel) in our prayers as they have spent time in the hospital.

June brought two new babies to our congregation. Bro. Tory and Sis. Calla Schmidt welcome Ciana Rose into their lives. Excited for a granddaughter are Bro. Ted and Sis. Kelly Schmidt and Bro.
Denton and Sis. Rose Knobloch. Bro. Garth and Sis. Katrina Fehr welcomed Grayson Garth. His happy grandparents are Bro. Bryon and Sis. Anita Fehr and Bro. Monte and Sis. Karla Gerber (Lester, IA). May God grant each parent grace to train up their children.

We extend our sympathy to Bro. Leonard and Sis. Helen Anliker on the passing of their brother-in-law, Bro. Joel Wuthrich (Sis. Shirley, Bloomfield, IA).

Japan, Shioda & Tokyo
Anna Inoue, Carrie Ito, Rachel Witzig

“Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?” Matt. 6:26

As we wait for the Japanese government to lift the state of emergency that prevents us from enjoying the blessing of large gatherings for church fellowship and the visits of loved ones from across the ocean, we are thankful that the Heavenly Father knows our needs and provides accordingly.

Despite the limitations, we are always thankful for the opportunity to gather as a church family.

We gratefully anticipate the opportunity to invite our English and Sunday school students from Tokyo and Shioda to join us for VBS in our Tokyo church. We pray that the Lord will bless this opportunity to share his truth and love with children who have not grown up in Christian homes. Please join us in prayer that the Lord will open their hearts to his Word.

Kansas, Bern
Leigha Rokey, Rita Menold

“We Will Glorify” was the theme song for our VBS this past week as we centered around the seven ‘I AM’ statements of Jesus found in the Gospel of John. There is indeed much to give glory in for all the things Jesus has done for us, as we heard the children present at the program closing our VBS week.

We also give God the glory for souls being added to our flock. Bro. Jacob Ruyle shared his testimony with the church and was baptized. We welcome him into our congregation, as well as his parents Ron and Cindy Ruyle who have made the decision to be part of our Bern church.

We celebrated with Laif and Amber Strahm as they became one in the Lord. Their parents are Bro. Adrian and Sis. Harriet Strahm and Bro. Dayton and Sis. Wanda Menold.

Our thoughts and prayers have been with Sis. Lou Menold, Sis. Anna Edelman, and Jared Rokey who have had surgeries and been hospitalized this month.

We also want to thank Bro. Aaron Luthi (Sis. Maria, Lamont, KS) who brought a message to the high schoolers and single group about the choices we make and how they impact our lives for eternity. Elder Bro. Wayne Hartzler (Sis. Camille, Rittman, OH), Bro. Adam Zeltwanger (Sis. Christy, Morris North, MN), and Bro. Klint Beyer (Sis. Kara, Sabetha, KS) brought the Word of Truth to us this month. We greatly appreciate them being with us.

It’s the time of year in Kansas that the lightning bugs have made their appearance and as I was driving home one evening the fields were just glowing with little lights sprinkled everywhere and I had to think of my own life. Is my light glowing for Jesus? Another thing I noticed is that when one light goes off others are still glowing, as if they are working together in unity to keep the light on all the time. Am I doing this in the body of Christ? In my local church? Are we working together to keep the light bright? The last thing I took note on was when a lightning bug hits your windshield it keeps glowing for some time after it dies. Will my life be like this? Will I be remembered by the Light that shown through me? Will we still leave a glowing impact even when we pass from this life? Thankful for little reminders as this and praying that we each one can keep our lights glowing for Jesus.

Kansas, Kiowa
Janice Bahr, Millie Frieden

So, Jon shows up a little late that morning. Farm employees know that during harvest punctuality is a must. And who is that person slinking along behind Jon? His new girlfriend, Stephanie, explains Jon. She will be spending the day with him on the job, he says. So many things wrong here. The girl seems nice enough, but incredibly quiet. And hungry! She shares Jon’s lunch with him and then hesitantly joins the
harvest crew for the evening supper in the field.

Well, we cannot be expected to feed her, I fumed. She is not an employee. And my fresh pie… barely enough to go around to the hungry crew, leave alone to this uninvited guest.

But still there seemed to be plenty of food, even pie, and the girl did look hungry and tired at the end of her long day at the farm. She ate heartily.

Jon was told not to bring her back in the morning; she left the field with him, holding tightly to his arm.

Okay, so maybe the girl did need a friend; maybe she did have issues and extra baggage that we knew nothing about. But that was not my farm’s concern or responsibility… Right?

I am, by nature, a late morning sleeper. Next morning, I was wide awake at 7 o’clock.

I picked up my cell phone to glance at any new messages that arrived in the night. None.

Nobody ever interacts with or even sees me on most days except my dear husband. But still that morning I prayed that maybe God could use me to help someone that day anyway.

Suddenly I saw the news headline flash across my phone screen: Police and family frantically trying to locate missing girl from three states away who was last seen in Oklahoma, our neighboring state.

Ahhhh… how terrible for that family. I really must say a prayer for them. I quickly scanned the article out of curiosity.

WAIT A MINUTE…

Dear God in Heaven… what did the article say this missing girl’s name was? Stephanie?? A runaway from Wisconsin. Severe medical issues. No medicine. Life threatening consequences.

The tip line to authorities is quickly contacted. The rest is history.

The girl was reunited with her frantic family. Her mother messages me to thank me for caring about her daughter; for feeding her; for being so kind to her.

I was immediately struck to the core. SHAME ON ME. I was begrudging this poor girl hospitality and our precious food. SHAME ON ME.

The Savior spoke to me that day: “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me.” Matthew 25:40

The girl’s mother sent yet one more message: “You saved a life today.”

God can and will use each of us in ways we cannot comprehend at the time. A willing spirit and a Godly awareness are all we need to be the hands and feet of Jesus.

(The above narrative was written by Sis. Millie Frieden and is a true account.)

Our small congregation had to say goodbye to one of our own this month; Bro. Joe Frieden was called home to be with the Lord. He had been a faithful brother in our church for many years. He was active up until the last day and then just reclined for his afternoon nap and awakened in Heaven! Oh, that we could all be so blessed! He leaves to mourn his passing his dear wife, Sis. Mildred, 3 children; David (MJ, Las Vegas, NV), Sis. Janice Bahr (Bro. Jeff), and Danny (Stillwater, OK). Also surviving are 2 brothers, 3 sisters, 7 grandchildren, and 15 great grandchildren.

On a more joyous note, we extend congratulations to Carter and Brya Stewart on their recent wedding. Carter’s parents are Bro. Kelly and Sis. Jennifer Stewart and his grandparents are Bro. Kent and Sis. Darcy Kisling of our congregation.

We welcomed visiting minister Bro. John Baumgartner (Sis. Lori, Bern, KS) as they traveled to Kiowa to minister God’s word to us. We are so appreciative for all visitors who desire to come.

Hospital patient for this month has been Sis. Millie Frieden who is now doing much better. Thanks for all the prayers!

Kansas, Lamont

Maria Luthi

We would like to thank the visiting ministers who shared the Word with us this month: Bro. John Baumgartner (Sis. Lori, Bern, KS), Bro. Roger Aberle (Sis. LaVonne, Sabetha, KS), and Elder Bro. Brad Eisenmann (Sis. Cindy, Chicago, IL). It is always an encouragement to hear the gospel preached.

Bro. Max Burnham hosted our church family for a Memorial Day fish fry which was a blessing to all. As we remember the sacrifices and faith of those who have gone...
before us may our own faith be strengthened in following the Lord.
As was recently shared across our pulpit, we can go on courageously and joyfully because, “The battle is ours and the victory is ours.”

Kansas, Sabetha
Leanna Hartter, Whitney Hartter
Greetings of love from our Sabetha congregation!
We were thankful to have three visiting ministers this month, Bro. Adam Zeltwanger (Sis. Christy, Morris North, MN), Bro. Troy Metzger (Sis. Gwen, Lester, IA), and Bro. Ryan Schock (Sis. Melanie, Bloomfield, IA).
Our annual Sunday school picnic was held this month, and as always it was a blessing to gather as a church family.
We rejoice with Annie Edelman (Bro. Steven and Sis. Kelly), Kenton Fehr (Bro. Todd and Sis. Cynthia), and Amber Strahm (Bro. Lynn and Sis. Sally) as they express they are at peace with God and man! We look forward to their testimonies and baptisms.
We welcome Bro. Rick and Sis. Komari Aberle and their family home, as they’ve been serving at Hospital Lumiere in Haiti.
We are thankful for the safe arrival of Stetson William, son of Bro. Jesse and Sis. Brianna Hartter. He is also welcomed by two first-time grandparents, Bro. James and Sis. Sandy Hartter and Bro. Darin and Sis. Marci Grimm.

Kansas, Wichita
Niklaus and Sara Schrader
Greetings from Wichita, Kansas.
Summer has finally arrived bringing us temperatures in the 90s and 100s.
We offer our sympathy and condolences to Bro. Jeff Frieden and Sis. Rose Ann Reeves as their oldest brother Bro. Joe Frieden (Kiowa, KS) passed away.
We were blessed to have Bro. Mark Schmidgall (Sis. Sally, Mediapolis, IA) and family visit us on minister rotation. It was a fruitful and uplifting time of fellowship.
We very much appreciate all those families that travel long distances to minister to our congregation.
With great joy, we welcome back the Johnson family to our congregation: Bro. Josh, Sis. Bethany, Emily, Erin, and Ava.
“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.” Psa. 119:105

Mexico, Ixtlán
Ruth Gerber
“I write unto you fathers because ye have known him that is from the beginning…” 1 John 2:13
We are so thankful for each of the fathers in our lives, including those that have been spiritual fathers to us. Bro. Marshall and Sis. Jan Heinold (Washington, IL) came to visit this month and it was a blessing for each of us that got some time with them. It was also special to see the love shown to them by so many of their “children.”
Our Elder Bro. Mike Leman (Sis. Deb, Denver, CO) visited too and shared communion with us. We had a time for reflecting on Jesus’ death and on the ways in which we have seen our brothers and sisters learn to die to themselves.
We were also blessed to have Bro. Joe and Sis. Sue Klotzle (Altadena, CA) with us. Bro. Joe shared from John 14 and focused on the ways that we can grow in our relationship with our heavenly father. He is the one that has prepared an eternal home for us!
Very thankful for all the good times of conversation and fellowship!

México, Magdalena
Laura Aviña
“Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.” Rom. 12:15
We are rejoicing with our new Bro. Marshall Wulf (Bro. Duane and Sis. Ann) and Bro. Francisco Alcaraz (Jaqueline Careaga) who were baptized on May 23. We thank Elder Bro. John Wiegand (Sis. Jane, Silverton, OR) for serving us during the testimonies and baptisms, and also as we shared the Lord’s supper together. What a weekend of joy, inspiration, and remembrance of God’s faithfulness!
Our love and prayers are with Bro. Julian Nuñez and Sis. Laura Cervantes as they mourn the loss of their stillborn daughter, Juliana, born May 26. May God comfort and strengthen them.
We are also praying for the family of Angélica Román in the loss of her infant granddaughters, Renata and Regina, born prematurely on May 8 to parents, Lupita and Ivan, and who passed away on June 5 and 10 respectively. May they feel God’s strength and presence during this difficult time.

“I will love thee, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.” Psa. 18:1-2

Michigan, Alto
Heidi Kaeb, Renee Steffen

Greetings in the name of Jesus from West Michigan! It has been an unusually warm and dry season here, and we are thankful for the smooth planting season for farmers and for the sunny, warm weather to enjoy.

Our congregation has really enjoyed our recent visitors! The graduation parties, vacations, and baptism have drawn many to our area and it has been a blessing to fellowship together. We want to thank the visiting ministers who preached God’s Word to us in June: Bro. Mark Wettstein (Sis. Karen, Lamar, MO), Bro. Matthew Steffen (Sis. Deanna, Princeville, IL), Elder Bro. Curt Frank (Sis. Lyla, LaCrosse, IN), Bro. Neil Stoller (Sis. Luann, Princeville, IL), and Bro. Dan Walder (Sis. Pam, Cissna Park, IL).

Sis. Lena Stoller gave her testimony of faith in Jesus for salvation and was baptized the next day. We rejoice with her and her family and thank God for calling and saving another soul.

There are many still facing trials and health concerns, and we lift them to our good Father who is always present and faithful. We give him all the praise as we heard the news that Bro. Martin Blough is in remission from his cancer! We are so thankful for the testimony of faith he continues to share on his journey.

Michigan, Bay City
Sarah Knochel

We rejoice with Kip Wackerle (Patti) as he began his repentance and is desiring baptism. We pray that God would continue to lead and guide Kip in the days ahead.

We trust that God’s comforting hand is with Bro. Morris Wieland in the recent passing of his son, Kevin.

We are thankful to see summer visitors passing through Bay City. Michigan is a beautiful state with many opportunities to explore and rest in God’s beautiful creation. We encourage you to include Bay City in your travel plans!

Michigan, Detroit
Krista Wieland

Hello, all cherished family and friends!

I recently had to go to urgent care for a test required by a new employer. It took a lot longer than planned due to some miscommunication and missing paperwork. Don’t you love it? But it happens. I was glad to be done as I left and began walking out to the parking lot. I didn’t even make it twenty steps and I tripped on uneven pavement/cracks and twisted my ankle. I tried to stand up and immediately regretted it. A good samaritan came out with a wheelchair and I found myself entering the same urgent care facility minutes after I had left. They looked about as confused as I felt as I made my grand entrance. It was a sprain, not a break, which was good. But I always love how the doctor tries to make you feel like less of a crybaby when they say things like “sprains hurt worse than breaks”. Do they really? I should know because I have had both, but the word pain seems to be the only word that comes to mind.

A day after my incident, my husband asked if I had tried putting weight on the foot yet. I looked at him like he was crazy but then understood his rationale: In order to strengthen this weakened part of my body, I had to gradually start using my foot and that would mean a level of pain. The alternative was for me to walk on my heel and look like a bad circus act. So I took his advice and at first did too much but then figured out a little walking at a time is best. That is how it is with life isn’t it? Things do not always go as expected but we get back up and slowly take small steps forward even if those small steps come with some pain.

We had a wonderful weekend of testimonies and baptisms. The converts were Ann Marie Mason and BJ and Zach Blume (Bro. Brian and Sis. Cherise). To hear of new Christians being drawn to Jesus never gets old. Thank you to Bro. Joe Gerber (Sis Heidi,
Champaign, IL) who was here for the weekend and shared the Word with us on Sunday morning.

This is the season of graduations! Bro. BJ Blume, Bro. Graham Bedolla, Sis. Stephanie Rauhe and Devin Smith were our high school graduates this year. We are so proud of them and know God will do special things with each of them!

We welcome Isaac Bahler from Remington, IN who will be in our area for the summer for an internship. We look forward to getting to know him better!

Bro. Brian Blume (Sis. Cherise) has the church’s support to step into the role of pulpit ministry for our Detroit congregation. Please keep them in your prayers. We are thankful for the work of the Holy Spirit in guiding us through this process of placing an additional brother in the ministry. We look forward to Bro. Brian’s installation service coming up on June 30.

Sis. Kristen Hitz was in church briefly for the first time in many months (illness) and it was SO good to see her again.

**Minnesota, Morris**

*Brenda Messner, Renee Messner*

Greetings of love from Minneapolis.

We want to recognize and congratulate our high school graduates: Koye Leenderts, (Aric and Sis. Rae Lynn); Jack Pelzel, (Bro. Jamie and Sis. Jodi); and Olivia Kent, (Jay and Lisa).

College degrees were recently awarded to Alexandra Kent, she graduated with a nursing degree from St. Catherine University. Bailey Kent, graduated from Creighton University School of Medicine. She plans to study Anesthesiology at UW Madison. Both are daughters of Jay and Lisa Kent.

We pray that God continues to guide and direct them in his wisdom and throughout their future plans.

"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." 2 Tim. 1:7

**Minnesota, Morris North**

Greetings in Jesus!

This past month we held the senior breakfast for our seniors that graduated. Having their dad’s share some thoughts and bless them is important as they make this big transition in their lives.

During a recent conversation with some brothers and converts, we wanted to highlight the impact that HarvestCall had in their lives as unconverted and as young Christians. How the HarvestCall purpose helped demonstrate to them how we proclaim Christ and serve others as part of our denomination.

We are thankful for the work that HarvestCall is doing beyond our little congregation and how that, in turn, helps grow our congregation.

Lastly, we were able to hold our annual Sunday school camping event again this year. It was quite a treat when some of us shared our old memories of Sunday school camping and now we can carry on the tradition with our children. The kids that are lucky enough to stay the night got the opportunity to try...
crayfish for the first time, although we don’t know if that will continue as part of the camping tradition.

**Minnesota, Winthrop**

**Ginny Stoll, Dixie Messner**

We were so encouraged to hear that Tom Miller (Maggie) can feel peace in his heart and is looking forward to baptism.

We appreciated having Bro. Damon Knobloch (Sis. Stephanie, Morris North, MN) and their family with us Sunday, June 6 to share the Word with us. It has been a while since they have been here. We all enjoy having family coming back for visits.

Bro. Sam Miller (Sis. Sandy) is now home from the hospital after a battle with COVID-19 and hopefully on the road to recovery.

Our prayers are still with Sis. Ginny Stoll (Bro. Ed) after her first surgery on her jaw for teeth implants and now with the news of cancer being present too. They need all the prayers we can offer right now. Karen Smith also had surgery and is on the road to recovery.

Our sympathy is offered to the family of Bro. Terry Miller (Sis. Bev, Gridley, IL), who passed away after a battle with cancer. He was the brother-in-law of Bro Dick Schmidt (Sis. Mary Lou), Sis. Nancy VanDeest (Bro. Dick), Bro. Tim Schmidt (Liz) and Char Lauwagie (Howard), all of our congregation.

**Missouri, Kansas City**

**Julie Webel**

As the seasons change and we move into summer, we are sorry to see Bro. Eric and Sis. Katy Frantz and their family move away to Akron, OH as he has completed his three year residency here in Kansas City. We will miss them very much and pray for a peaceful and smooth transition to their new home. Just as they are leaving, we are also welcoming Bro. Nelson Knobloch who relocated here for his job. We are happy to have him join our congregation. We also look forward to Sam Getz from Remington, IN being with us while he completes a summer internship in our area.

Thank you to all who helped with VBS this past month. We are grateful to the HarvestCall VBS team, who spent the week here in Kansas City helping us teach and share the good news of Jesus to our Sunday school children. A special thank you to Bro. Ron Kipfer (Sis. Linda, Bluffton, IN) who was our guest speaker on Friday evening of VBS, and for his Saturday presentation to our church. We also appreciated his help from the pulpit on Sunday morning. Thanks also to Elder Bro. John Lehman for his exhortation Sunday afternoon. Many blessings to all of you for your labor of love to our congregation. We appreciate all our visitors very much.

**Missouri, St. Louis**

**Michelle Rassi**

We love to have visitors and are especially thankful for the visiting ministers that came and shared the Word with us this month: Elder Bro. Frank Sauder (Sis. Kathy, Roanoke, IL), Elder Bro. Kent Heimer (Sis. Jan, Taylor, MO), Elder Bro. Marvin Dotterer (Sis. Nancy, Forrest, IL), Elder Bro. Dan Kilgus (Sis. Jenna, Remington, IN), Bro. Matt Miller (Sis. Wendy, Latty, OH), and Bro. Dan Leman (Sis. Tess, Denver, CO).

We are enjoying new flooring and paint as our redecorating project is almost complete. Our decorating committee did a wonderful job and we are blessed.

Many thanks to the Taylor church for hosting the Regional
Minister Meeting. It was a blessing for those that attended!

The Sunday school year came to an end with the Sunday school picnic on June 6. The children and adults enjoyed playing outside, a cookout, homemade ice-cream, horse rides, and a singing.

Bro. Loren and Sis. Betsy Schrenk moved to St. Louis in 1986 and he began his pulpit ministry in 1988. Earlier this year, he retired from the ministry. On June 12, we had a special dinner and recognition evening to thank them for their years of service. The theme of the night seemed to be “faithfulness”. May God richly bless this dear couple for their selfless, humble service in the work of the Lord.

Missouri, Taylor

Tami Pflum

We praise Jesus for the work he has been doing and will continue to do in the life of Cassidy Edelman (Bro. Kent and Sis. Bethany, Forrest, IL), who has been living in our community the past year while working and attending school in Quincy. Cassidy recently made known her desire for the accountability of a church family as she continues to deepen and strengthen her walk with the Lord. We rejoice with Cassidy and her family and are glad to come alongside her.

May 19 was a special evening as we celebrated our three high school graduates, Gabe Hull (foster son of Sis. Shelly Hoerr), and twins Bro. Jonathan and Sis. Natalie Wegman (Bro. Scott and Sis. Dawn) with a graduation service followed by a reception. May they each continue to seek the Lord’s direction as they turn the page on a new chapter in life.

Sis. Lois Sutter (Bro. James, dec.) has been in our thoughts and prayers as she said farewell for a time to her brother, Bro. Joel Wuthrich (Sis. Shirley, Bloomfield, IA).

Bro. Arnold Gerst (Sis. Marge, dec.) recently underwent surgery. Our prayers continue for him.

We have multiple births to celebrate this month and are thankful for the safe arrival of each precious little one! Our heartfelt congratulations to grateful grandparents Bro. Chad and Sis. Lisa Massner in the birth of their granddaughter, Brynlee Ann, to Bro. Seth and Sis. Courtney Miller (Fairbury, IL) on May 19.

Bro. Ben, Sis. Anneliese and big brother Reid welcomed little Brylee Kay Lindberg on June 15. We anticipate future visits from doting grandparents, Bro. Jake and Sis. Wanda Hoerr (Phoenix, AZ) and Bro. Rich and Sis. Julie Lindberg (Roanoke, IL).


Another cause for rejoicing this month was the return “home” of our dear Sis. Lydia Lindberg. Sis. Lydia, who previously made Taylor her church home for a time, has once again taken on employment in our area. We are so happy to see her smile and hear her gentle voice, and thank God for bringing her back into our midst.

Even as we continue to pray for Bro. Rusty and Sis. Amy Adrian and their family, whose precious little grandson Reece Adrian (Adam and Katherine, Quincy, IL) continues to face ongoing medical concerns. We were happy for the opportunity to rejoice with them in the engagement of their son, Bro. Aaron Adrian (West Lafayette, IN) to Sis. Natalia Bartos from Windsor, Ontario (Bro. Zlatan and Sis. Marja Bartos) on May 23. Our thoughts and prayers are with this dear couple as they work through the logistics of a marriage between individuals from two different countries.

June 4-5, Taylor hosted the Regional Minister meeting, with attendees from Texas, Colorado, Kansas, and Missouri. We extend a special thank you to the ministering brothers who chose to stay and worship with us on Sunday, including Bro. Clint Dotterer (Sis. Rebecca, Denver, CO), Bro. Matt Schupbach (Sis. Courtney, Kiowa, KS), Bro. Leland Plattner (Sis. Mary, Zapata, TX), and Bro. Ron Allenbaugh (Kiowa, KS).

Thanks to Elder Bro. Kent Heimer and Ord. Deacon Bro. Tim Lehman for sharing the Memorandum with us on June 13. We appreciate all their efforts as they lovingly lead our congregation and continually point us to Jesus.

A heartfelt thank you is also extended to Bro. Darren and Sis. Sue Plattner (Champaign, IL) who came for our monthly Wednesday evening Bible study June 16.
Bro. Darren’s topic was, “What Difference Has Christianity Made in the World?” He touched on the following five ways. Christianity has influenced our culture and world:
1. Valuing human life
2. Caring for the poor
3. Caring for the sick
4. Providing inspiration for modern science
5. Helping to abolish slavery

Although it isn’t an exhaustive list by any means, it was inspiring to consider the profound impact Christianity has had through the ages as Christian values have shaped and molded so much of our culture in ways we often don’t even realize or acknowledge. Bro. Darren left us with a challenge to consider what kind of difference our personal Christianity is making in the world.

Last but not least, we once again say “Thank you” to our local ministers who recently poured themselves into a six-part sermon series on The Sermon on the Mount. It was helpful to spend consecutive Sunday afternoons learning about the profound teaching contained in Jesus’ famous sermon. We don’t say often enough how very thankful we are to our home ministers who are willing to study the Word and diligently share it with us week after week.

Ohio, Akron
Joelle Indermuhle

As we are always grateful for our elders and ministers who are willing to share God’s Word with us, we would like to extend thanks to the brothers who visited this month. They include Elder Bro. Mark Masters (Sis. Jeannine, Mansfield, OH), Elder Bro. Wayne Hartzler (Sis. Camille, Rittman, OH), Elder Bro. Duane Farney (Sis. Karen, Croghan, NY), Elder Bro. Vic Bauman (Sis. Brenda, Smithville, OH), and Bro. Bill Wettstein (Sis. Heidi, Eureka, IL).

Our prayers and sympathy are with Sis. Eleanor Pamer (Bro. Eugene) in the passing of her brother-in-law, Bro. Phil Mogler (Lester, IA). May God comfort all who are grieving the loss of loved ones.

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It is a blessing to welcome new babies into the congregation. Faith Rose joined the family of Bro. George and Sis. Marianne Popov on May 21. Her excited older siblings are Seth, Chloë, and Malachi. Grandparents include Lazar and the late Ana Popov of Brunswick Hills, OH and John and Karen Petrak of Brisbane, Australia. Welcoming little Troy Joseph on June 3 were Bro. Greg and Sis. Christina Gasser and older siblings Aubrey, Tecca, Layla, and Silas. His thankful grandparents are Bro. Roger and Sis. Sue Gasser (Junction, OH) and Bro. Don and Sis. Nan Steidl. May these little ones be blessed as they grow up being taught of God’s ways!

Ohio, Columbus
Nancy Banks

As the summer heat is now upon us, the humidity and afternoon rains bring life and growth to the hay, the corn, the garden, and the weeds! Isn’t that also true of our spiritual life? We have periods of time where all is going well and then there are times in our life where we are totally helpless as the troubles (weeds) pop up, and no matter how hard we work at finding solutions, another issue arrives. We get weary, but it’s during these times that prayer is the answer. God is always listening and although the solutions may not come as quickly as we would like, he shows us ways to deal with the trials and gives us the strength to cope each day.

“He the Head and we His members; He the light and we the glow; He the Master, we His brethren, In true fellowship we grow.”
The Fellowship of the Saints, Zion’s Harp, #33

Greetings of love from New York! We’ve been blessed with visitors in the past month and look forward to more this summer! We appreciate our visitors and the fellowship they bring. It has also been a blessing to have more greetings given in church as brothers and sisters are traveling more. May we always appreciate the blessing of Christian fellowship!

New York, Croghan/Naumburg
Anna Stoller

“Heart with heart in love united,
Seek upon God’s heart repose.
Let your love, to flames ignited,
To the Saviour upward flow.

Ohio, Akron
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His grace to meet our every need.”
God is our Refuge,
Hymns of Zion #4

During these times, there are others watching us to see how we cope. We must remember that all we can be is the lighthouse and let the light of Jesus shine!

We appreciate the visitors we had this month. A sincere thank you goes out to Bro. Brian Huber (Sis. Jacki, Francesville, IN), Bro. Mark Roth (Sis. Tammy, Congerville, IL) and Bro. Adam Uhler (Sis. Ann, Smithville, OH) for their visits to Columbus and their service on the pulpit.

A delicious breakfast was enjoyed by all as we congratulated Joel Grimm (Bro. John and Sis. Julie) on his recent graduation from high school. He was presented a Bible by Sunday school superintendent Bro. Scott Germann and we send many prayers and best wishes his way as he begins this new chapter of his life.

Ohio, Junction
Karen Schlatter

The Bible reminds us in Rom. 12:15: “Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and we weep with them that weep.” Our church family is experiencing that as we laid to rest our dear Sis. Kathy Manz. She passed away suddenly and leaves many family members and friends to adjust to her passing. Her close family was her husband, Bro. David, and her children Sis. Jennifer, Bro. Mark (Sis. Cathy), Sis. Julie McCullough (Bro. Jim), Jill Christner (Chad), Sis. Jodi Stoller (Bro. Trent), Bro. Matt (Sis. Deanna), Kurt, Bro. Klint (Sis. Kallie), and Bro. Chet (Sis. Jenny). She also leaves behind many siblings, grandchildren and one great grandchild. We will certainly miss Sis. Kathy as we always enjoyed her warm heart and loving smile.

Visiting ministers in the past few weeks have been Bro. Jay Steffen (Sis. Melinda, Congerville, IL), Bro. Jason Dotterer (Sis. Lynn, Forrest, IL), Bro. Josh Zimmerman (Sis. Molly, Forrest, IL), Bro. Dana Nieman (Sis. Lea, Remington, IN), Bro. David Maibach (Sis. Larisa, Smithville, OH) and Bro. Jim Butikofer (Sis. Diana, Iowa City, IA). We appreciate each one for visiting us and sharing from the Word of God.

We are thankful for Malia Manz (Bro. Chris and Sis. Erica) who was announced for peace. May she feel the Lord’s nearness and grace each day as she strives to serve him faithfully.

We welcome Bro. Clark Schlatter (Bro. Ray and Sis. Corrine) who has moved back to our community. I am sure he will be missed in the Toledo congregation but we enjoy having him back worshipping with us.

Retired Elder Bro. Bill and Sis. Emily Schlatter welcomed a new grandson to their family. Bro. Kent and Sis. Alisia had a new baby boy, Westin Zane, born on June 20. He is also welcomed by two older brothers, Rhett and Grayson. Each child is a precious gift from God.

Ohio, Latty
Angie Klopfenstein, Carmen Stoller

Greetings of love! We were blessed the week of June 7-11 to have VBS. Many thanks for those involved with the teaching, song leading, serving in the kitchen, speaking, and praying. It was a blessing for all involved!

We would like to thank Bro. Matthew Steffen (Sis. Deanna, Princeville, IL), Bro. Dana Nieman (Sis. Lea, Remington, IN), and Bro. Curt Rassi (Sis. Kathy, Tremont, IL) for sharing the wonderful Word of Life with us this month. May they be blessed for serving our church.

Our love and prayers go out to Sis. Jodi Stoller (Bro. Trent) on the loss of her mother, Sis. Kathy Manz (Bro. Dave, Junction, OH). May the Holy Spirit provide comfort during this time.

Bro. Chris and Sis. Sara, Isaias, and Malachi Hattan are relocating to Indianapolis, IN. May God be with them during this time of transition.

Ohio, Mansfield
Katie Miller

Bro. Dave and Sis. Joy Sauder welcomed a precious baby grandson, Caden Daniel. Caden was born to Adam and Amanda Sauder and is also loved by his sister Oaklyn. Oh, how Jesus cares for the little children!

We grieve the passing of Sis. Marilyn Beer and continue praying for her children: Ronald (Donna) and Bro. Marvin (Sis. Robin) and the grandchildren. We can be encouraged that the love shown
during a lifetime continues to radiate, likened to how that many years after a star’s end, we continue to see it’s light in the night sky.

“And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.” 1 Cor 13:13

Our thoughts have been with Bro. Al Beer (Sis. Janet) during a time of hospitalization.

We enjoyed an early Sunday morning breakfast to recognize our high school graduates. Congratulations to Ethan Sauder (Brian and Danyelle) and Emily Dawson (Bro. Ed and Sis. Judy)! We pray that amidst all accomplishments and goals, they strive to walk in truth.

“Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: so shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man.” Prov. 3:3-4

It was renewing to take time to read the Spring Memorandum letter. May God give continued grace to the elders and each who follow the example of Jesus Christ.

“With Thy gentle mind,
With Thy meekness kind,
Clothe me, heart and mind renewing,
Pride and anger still subduing.
For naught can endure
But Thy image pure.”

The Incomparable,
Zion’s Harp # 19

VBS was a memorable part of the month for our church. Special thanks to Bro. Marvin Hartzler (Sis. Sue, Rittman, OH) who visited and preached the inspired Word for our midweek worship service and to Bro. Scott Bahr for presenting a thought-provoking topical presentation, “The Pursuit of Truth” to the adult class on Friday. We appreciate the willingness of these brothers to speak as well as the week-long dedication of the teachers on behalf of the Sunday school students.

Ohio, Rittman

Madel Dotterer, Julie Steiner

“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. 3:5-6

We pray that our young people will always put their trust in God as they make plans for their future. Our High School Graduates for 2021 are: Madalyn Baltic (Bro. Milan and Sis. Amy), Sis. Brittany Gasser (Bro. Aaron and Sis. Deb), Joel Hartzler (Bro. Dan and Sis. Jennifer), Julia Hartzler (Bro. Sam and Sis. Gail), Jubal Hartzler (Bro. Tim and Sis. Sharon), Rustin Hartzler (Bro. Marvin and Sis. Sue), Brianna Hill (Bro. Tom and Sis. Elaine), Halle Miller (Bro. Mike and Sis. Robin), Jevan Riggenbach (Bro. Bob and Sis. Lorie), Sis. Allison Steiner (Bro. Joel and Sis. Katrina), Sis. Brystal Steiner (Bro. Eric and Sis. Tricia), Sis. Leah Steiner (Bro. Nate and Sis. Anita), Sis. Elsa Stoller (Bro. Greg and Sis. Joy), Samuel Stoller (Bro. Gary and Sis. Michelle), and Hayden Tanner (Lonnie and Lisa).

We are happy for the engagement of Bro. Connor Gasser (Bro. Mark and Sis. Jill) and Sis. Megan Baltic (Bro. Milan and Sis. Amy). We trust God will direct their decisions as they plan their life together.

“My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever.” Ps. 73:26.


Our dear Sis. Linda Zollinger passed from this life into eternity on May 22. Sis. Linda had been a member of both our Rittman and Phoenix churches, as she had lived in Arizona for 30 years, and then moved back to be closer to her family. She is survived by her brother, Bro. Ed Zollinger, brother-in-law, Bro. Henry Dotterer, and sister-in-law, Sis. Marge Zollinger (Smithville, OH), and many nieces and nephews.

We were also saddened to hear of the passing of Sis. Kathy Manz (Bro. Dave) from Junction, OH. Sis. Kathy was a sister to Sis. Jan Hartzler (Bro. Dean) and sister-in-law to Sis. Alice Widmer (Bro. Darrell). May God grant his comfort and peace to these families in this time of loss.

“And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.” Mark 10:16

Bro. Jerry and Sis. Martha Bauman were blessed with another grandchild with the birth of Nora Joy on June 7. Nora is welcomed by parents Andy and Mary Steidl and siblings Mya, Naomi, Gwen,
Amos, Grant, Marta, Lanna, and Raya. Bro. Eric and Sis. Melanie Stoller had a new grandson with the birth of Jettson Lariat on May 22 to Bro. Joel and Sis. Haley Stoller (Smithville, OH). Jettson’s older brothers are Zayden and Jaxon. Bro. Glen and Sis. Lois Maibach had a new granddaughter as Bro. Christopher and Sis. Joelle Indermuhle (Akron, OH) were blessed with the birth of Laura Eleanor on June 17. Laura’s older brothers are Titus and Joshua.

“All the earth shall worship thee, and shall sing unto thee…” Psa. 66:4

Our congregation welcomes Bro. Isaac and Sis. Brittany Steiner and their children, and Bro. Eric and Sis. Melanie Stoller home from Haiti for a short time this summer. We appreciate their willingness to serve in a foreign land.

We also appreciate those ministering brothers who served our congregation while visiting our Rittman church this past month. We were blessed by the sharing of the Word from Bro. Nathan Rassi (Sis. Michelle, St. Louis, MO), Bro. Matt Feucht (Sis. Jennifer, Roanoke, IL), Bro. Jim Zollinger (Sis. Tresa, Silverton, OR), and Bro. Marvin Zollinger (Sis. Pam, Smithville, OH). May God bless each one for their efforts.

Ohio, Sardis
Renee Blough, Doris Miller

Graduating from high school in 2021 were Greta Beard (Bro. Seth and Sis. Faith), and Bro. Emmaus Rassi (Bro. Matthew and Sis. Bridget, Chicago, IL). Bro. Emmaus spent the second part of his senior year in Sardis doing work study for his carpentry program. We are thankful he is continuing his employment in our area.

Angel Reese, foster daughter of Bro. Eric and Sis. Jami Hartzler, feels at peace with God and man. How blessed we are to have a God that calls us where we are and gives grace to those who seek him.

“To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.” Luke 1:79

The Sunday school children enjoyed games, activities, and food at the annual picnic. Bro. Doug Harmon (Sis. Lanna, Toledo, OH) kept everyone’s attention as he spoke about beauty and virtue to finish off the special day.

Our prayers continue for Bro. Rob Figel (Sis. Angie) as he undergoes preparation for a bone marrow transplant. May God’s perfect will be accomplished for all those who love and trust him in their afflictions and trials.

Ohio, Smithville
Connie Maletich, Marcy Stoller

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” Rom. 8:28

Bro. Matt and Sis. Jessica Maibach, along with Brynn and Jayde, celebrate the arrival of Zion Paul. Loving grandparents are Bro. Alpha and Sis. Denise Maibach (Rittman, OH) and Bro. Randy and Sis. Joni Wenninger (Latty, OH). A new addition was also made to Bro. Joel and Sis. Haley Stoller’s family in the arrival of little Jettson Lariat. Siblings Zayden and Daxon join their grandparents Bro. Steve and Sis. Amy Dotterer and Bro. Eric and Sis. Melanie Stoller (Les Cayes, Haiti) in welcoming him to the family.

Bro. Boyd Nieman recently spent time in the hospital. We pray for his continued healing.

We extend our sympathies to Sis. Marge Zollinger (Bro. John, dec.) for the loss of her sister-in-law Linda Zollinger and to Sis. Becky Zollinger (Bro. Ken) and Sis. Millie Stoller (Bro. Jeff) for the loss of their sister-in-law Sis. Kathy Manz (Bro. Dave).

We join Sis. Baylee Figel and Bro. Wesley Beer (Mansfield, OH) in their time of joy as they announce their engagement. Their parents are Bro. Andy and Sis. Cyndi Figel (Sardis, OH) and Bro. Chuck and Sis. Tammy Beer (Mansfield, OH).

It was a blessing to hear the testimonies of four dear souls. Sis. Lane Uhler (Bro. Adam and Sis. Ann), Bro. Kaden Katanic (Bro. Mike and Sis. Heather), Bro. Jeremy Miller (Bro. Mike and Sis. Carol), and Sis. Allison Gavrilovic (Mirko and Mary, Brunswick Hills, OH) were added to our fold.

We enjoyed the visit and shared fellowship of visiting ministers Bro. Clark Stoller (Sis. Cindy, Gridley, IL), Bro. Seth Beard (Sis. Faith, Sardis, OH), and Elder Bro. Bob Dotterer (Sis. Laura, Sardis, OH).
Ohio, Toledo

Anne Baumann, Brooke Harmon

What do you think of when you hear the word “God”? A.W. Tozer stated, “What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.” In fact, there is a whole field of study dedicated to better understanding God as he has revealed himself called theology. The word theology can be intimidating but each and every one of us already has a mental theology of God. We need to be examining what we believe about God (our theology) and bring our thoughts into subjection with what scripture reveals about God.

So back to the original question, what comes to mind when you hear the name of God mentioned? If you’re anything like me the word holy quickly comes to mind. I’d like to take a short journey with you on the holiness of God.

Two times in the Bible the phrase “holy, holy, holy” is used to describe God when humans encountered the throne room of God. His holiness is what sets him apart from all other beings. It describes his transcendence, his majesty, and his purity. Does the holiness of God make you fear? It should as we are called to fear God. But there should also be something more for those who are in Christ, a curiosity and beauty surrounding the holiness of God that draws us to him. If our reaction is to withdraw at the mention of the holiness of God, our definition of holy is too small.

Simply put God is holy. Since God is holy that means he can’t sin. If God cannot sin, that means he can’t sin against me. If God can’t sin against me, that makes him the most trustworthy being in the universe. His holiness is the reason why we should trust him. As those of us who are in Christ start to see more of the beauty of God, we will want more of God. By wanting more of God, we start to trust more of God. By trusting more of God, we start to say “no” to other things because those other things cannot compete with God. We don’t need more rules. We don’t need to be told what we should do and shouldn’t do. We already know those things. Instead we need to know the motivation behind why we do what we do and that motivation is God himself. I recently heard someone say “we sin because we love it.” This is a sobering reality until we realize the greater truth. The power over sin is a greater love. So to those of us who believe, focusing too much on the do’s and don’t’s can lead to legalism and self-righteousness. Instead fix your eyes on the one who has redeemed us and as your knowledge and love of him grows, the power of sin in your life will steadily weaken.

“Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.” Rom. 8:37

Greetings to all from Kitchener! As I sat down to write this article, nothing was coming to mind and I wasn’t feeling particularly inspired. The Holy Spirit brought Romans 8:37 and Psalm 29:11 to mind, and I added the verses, wondering how they connect. Both verses talk about the confidence we can have in Christ if we choose to live our lives for him. We can be conquerors and overcomers, all while holding onto the peace of Jesus. When I think of the word “conquer,” it makes me think of the holiness of God.
I think of one army defeating another, and at first thought, it doesn’t seem like a peaceful word. But in order to restore peace, Christ needed to conquer sin, a battle needed to be fought, a sacrifice needed to be given, and Jesus did just that. This is why we have peace and victory in him!

Our visiting ministers this month were Bro. Brad Gudeman (Sis. Teresa, Bradford, IL), Bro. Michael Wagenbach (Sis. Erica, Wolcott, IN), Bro. Adrian Strahm (Sis. Harriet, Bern, KS), and Bro. Scott Schambach (Sis. Hope, Elgin, IL). Elder Bro. Mark Bahr (Sis. Bev, Detroit, MI) also brought the Word to us on May 19 for a midweek service. As always, thank you for willingly bringing the message to us. We appreciate it so much.

Since the Canadian/American borders are still closed, we welcome you to ‘visit’ us on our Zoom calls! We meet Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings, and please reach out to Sis. Alma Gingrich (elmeralma4@gmail.com) for the link details.

Blessings on the coming month!

“The LORD will give strength unto his people; the LORD will bless his people with peace.” Psa. 29:11

Oregon, Silverton

Lorraine Kuenzi, Teresa Sinn

We welcome Bro. Troy Honegger (Remington, IN) to the Pacific Northwest for the summer!

Families continue to grow in our congregation! Bro. Jesse and Sis. Kari TeSlaa along with Jedidiah, welcomed Treyson Lynn on June 3. Grandparents are Sis. Marilyn Kuenzi and Ronda Thielen and Gary TeSlaa from Iowa. Bro. Nick and Sis. Brittany Prince along with Anna, Emma, and Clara, welcomed Matthew Fletcher on June 7. Bro. Jason and Sis. Colette Snook welcomed their first grandchild, Ryan Mae who was born to Bro. Nolan and Sis. Kiara Grimm (West Bend, IA). Praise God for the safe arrival of these little ones!

We are thankful to Bro. Adam and Sis. Jami Luginbuhl (Philadelphia, PA), who came to spend a weekend with our Bible class students. There was lots of fun and laughter along with a spiritual focus, which makes these weekends unforgettable.

Thank you to Elder Bro. James and Sis. Brenda Fehr (Tremont, IL), for fellowshipping with us for a weekend and sharing the gospel message.

Travis Sinn (Bro. Tom and Sis. Edith) has begun his repentance journey! We are so thankful for God’s continued call and pray for strength and grace for the road ahead!

The young group hosted an invite-a-friend weekend this month, and we were blessed to have a very full church! Thank you to Bro. Jeremiah Psinas (Morton, IL), for sharing the gospel message with us over the weekend.

Ron Lichty’s (Sis. Ginge) mother recently passed away. Ron and the family would appreciate your prayers of support during this time.

Please pray for Bernie and Margaret Dettwyler’s grandson, Raymond (Jonathon and Katie), as he has recently had some serious health issues and the prognosis is uncertain.

We spent a wonderful weekend listening to testimonies and witnessing the baptisms of Bro. Jake and Sis. Elena Metzger and Bro. Hayden Metzger (Bro. Kurt and Sis. Koreen). Thank you to Elder Bro. Duane Rocke (Sis. Bonnie, Minneapolis, MN) who spent the weekend with us and shared the gospel message. Our congregation has been blessed with many baptisms this year, and we look forward to many more Lord willing!
Sis. Lydianne Metzger (Bro. Kurt and Sis. Koreen) has recently transitioned to full-time status as a missionary in Haiti. We pray for God’s blessings on her and look forward to seeing how God works in her life as she serves him!

**Pennsylvania, Philadelphia**

*Laura Isch*

"His pledge in faith will ever stand; 
It is His blessed pleasure  
That naught me from 
His mighty hand  
Shall separate or sever. 
He will not break  
The Word He spake;  
So confidence in Him I take,  
And praise Him then forever."

Confidence, Zion’s Harp, #177

“…My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness…” 2 Cor. 12:9

What a beautiful reminder we received in a sermon recently! Although we often feel weak and inadequate, it is through this humility and weakness we can receive God’s all-sufficient grace. We can depend on him, having confidence that he will keep his promises and provide for us. What a God we serve!

**Tennessee, Nashville**

*Mike Fritz*

We have been blessed by the Word brought by our recent visiting ministers: Bro. Fred Dietz (Sis. Shaena, Elgin, IL), Bro. Mark Roth (Sis. Tammy, Congerville, IL), Bro. Scott Aberle (Sis. Dorine, Washington, IL), Bro. Justin Koch (Sis. Marcia, Washington, IL), Bro. Chris Laukhuf (Sis. Rachel, Latty, OH), Bro. Greg Beutel (Sis. Mary, Tremont, IL), and Elder Bro. Lynn Stieglitz (Sis. Leonda, Leo, IN). We have also been encouraged by the fellowship of visitors from Bradford, Elgin, Fairbury, and Washington, IL; Leo, IN; Mediapolis, IA; Fort Scott and Sabetha, KS; Latty and Rittman, OH; and Philadelphia, PA.

We continue to meet for worship at an alternate location while repairs are being made to our church building, so when you plan to visit, please contact us to verify where we are meeting that Sunday. Contacts are Bro. Jordan and Sis. Emily Fritz, 615.852.1490, jordannfritz@gmail.com; Bro. Jeremy and Sis. Jillian Bradbury, 765.993.8917, jeremy.bradbury1975@gmail.com; or Bro. Jeremiah Stoller, 615.761.7033, jeremiahleestoller32@gmail.com.

**Texas, Austin/Bastrop**

*Candy Meiss*

Greetings from the Austin/Bastrop church of Texas!

What a difference you can make in someone’s life! Can you recall a special time in your life when someone showed you love when you needed it most? A smile, a kind word and unconditional love shown in many ways can be the light that shines God’s message of hope, encouragement and salvation through Jesus Christ. Philip shared with the Ethiopian eunuch so that he could understand the scripture when the eunuch asked “…what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” (Acts 8:36-37).

We were blessed by hearing the pure Word by the Holy Spirit’s inspiration by Elder Bro. Gerry Hertzel (Sis. Ellen, Sabetha, KS) and Ord. Deacon Bro. Leland Plattner (Sis. Mary, Zapata, TX).

We thank God first and foremost for a beautiful week of VBS and also thank his faithful kingdom-workers for teaching, coordinating crafts, music, activities, snacks and transportation. We were blessed by a deeply moving message for a Zoom evening presentation during VBS by Bro. Rob Parker of Gateway Woods. We were grateful for loved ones who came to Texas to assist with VBS and the good seed that was sown into tender hearts.

Bro. Dennis and Sis. Diane Rassi traveled to Edinburgh, TX and worked with the Princeville Bible Class. Some of the work was from the aftermath of Hurricane Hannah. Another project was helping a family that lost their home to fire.

"Amid life’s busy, hurrying throng,  
the gay, the sad, the weak, the strong,  
While I am traveling along, I  
want my life to tell for Jesus.  
I want to be a beacon light, To  
cheer way-farers in their night,  
And help them on their way aright;  
I want my life to tell for Jesus.  
I want my life with Jesus hid,  
That I may do what he shall bid:  
I want to love as Jesus did; I  
want my life to tell for Jesus.
I want my life to tell for Jesus!
I want my life to tell for Jesus,
that ev’rywhere I go Men
may his goodness know,
I want my life to tell for Jesus!”
I want My Life to Tell,
Gospel Hymns, 761.

May we all be encouraged to let our light shine for Jesus and bless others we meet on our way.

**Vermont, Clarendon**

**Sarah Wagenbach**

We were thankful to have Bro. Jerry Isch (Sis. Linda, Philadelphia, PA) come to share the Word with us this past month. It was a joy and blessing to have them here in person.

June 6 was Bro. Nathan, Sis. Miriam, Sis. Gabrielle, Jason and Phoebe Reutter’s last Sunday worshipping with us as they moved to the Rittman, OH area. While sad to bid them farewell, we wish them God’s nearness and blessings in this transition. We are assured that God will watch between us and are thankful for our fellowship, Christian friendship, and love that we can continue to have though miles separate us.

We are thankful to share we will be re-opening and re-assembling in Clarendon, Vermont. We will resume meeting at the North Clarendon Grange, 111 Moulton Ave, North Clarendon, beginning July 4.

We have missed being together locally and experiencing the support and fellowship of visitors over the past year. We warmly wish to extend an invitation to any who would be in our area to join us.

All COVID-19 restrictions have been lifted in Vermont. No masks are required, however feel free to do so if you desire. We will continue to greet with a handshake for those who are comfortable and will not be greeting with Holy Kiss until further notice.

Morning Singing will begin at 10:10am with Sunday school and Worship starting at 10:30am. Afternoon Worship services will start at 12:30pm.

A modified simple lunch will be served between services. In order to ensure we have plenty of lunch please let Sis. Amber Rocke (802.779.3872) know if you will be attending.

If you have any questions please contact Elder Bro. Kevin Ryan (860.306.4497), Bro. Mark Hoffman (860.965.7535), or Bro. Phil Wagenbach (802.558.5477)

We look forward to having you with us again.

**Eastern European Nazareans**

*Continued from pg. 7*

this great joy? Is it the years they experienced during two world wars and then communist leadership where they were not able to gather together and where great numbers of them perished or were dispersed from their homelands? Is it simple thankfulness for a faith in God’s goodness and his ability to provide for their needs when they cannot completely provide for themselves? Regardless of the reason, there is great joy for these brethren in having a place to worship and encourage one another in their walk of faith.

Some of us have had the opportunity to see firsthand this joy, share with them and exhort one another, and receive their deep appreciation. However, God has chosen us to be instrumental in making it happen. Our financial support to HarvestCall allows this building assistance to be possible. In addition to providing financial support, please pray that Nazarean believers can continue to reflect the light of salvation to their world where economic and political turmoil have become commonplace and rejoice with them as they gather together to praise the One who provides for their each and every need.

*by Bill Eisenmann*
BUILD UP

But ye, brethren, building up yourselves on your most holy faith....

Bro. Ernie Wiegand (Bradford, IL)

CONCLUDING his letter about contending for the faith amid false teachers who corrupted Jesus’ identity and teachings, Jude encouraged the brethren to spend time building up themselves on their most holy faith. While today’s spiritual battles may not completely mirror what believers faced then, it is still essential that we spend time building ourselves up on our most holy faith. Satan is still trying to corrupt what our loving and holy God instituted through Jesus. God’s Word instructs us by defining this building up process and how to do it. Our Lord has also given us the gifts and the minds to succeed.

For a good sense of how we can accomplish Jude’s commission in our own lives, let’s develop a working definition of building up yourselves on your most holy faith. Read literally, the phrase can mean to build up or edify ourselves individually, or to build up each other. Both have equal validity and importance in the lives of believers who follow Jesus Christ and participate as members of his body.

We get a clear picture of individually building ourselves up in the story of David returning to Ziklag to find it destroyed with the women and children taken captive. Despite the bleak situation and his followers being angry with him, David encouraged himself in the Lord (1 Samuel 30:6). Likewise, our time spent in prayer to and communion with God, while reflecting on his promises to be faithful to us, reinforce our foundation of faith. Meditation in the Word and supportive, religious materials allows us to grow in understanding how we should respond to life’s varied situations. The apostle Peter laid out that we should diligently add to our faith a series of attributes or graces, which eventually reaches the capstone of God’s work: consistent, agape love (2 Peter 1:5-8). Ultimately, our goal is to become steadfast and active disciples, not just learners who don’t put into action what we have realized.

When we participate as members of Christ’s body, we can increase how God effectually works in us to build up ourselves on our most holy faith. Meeting together for worship and/or study promotes edification upon our faith. As we participate in the body, we have opportunity to exhort one another to provoke faith, love, and good works. Joining our fellow servants in the work of the Gospel is a good way to establish close bonds among Brothers and Sisters. The friendship and trust we build while sharing experiences in Gospel work establish a good platform where we can process life’s issues to avoid or overcome detrimental things. Sharing what God has done for us with others is a good way to refresh our knowledge of God’s fidelity in all of his aspects. These include the grace of Jesus Christ, eternal life that awaits, and his unchanging love that helps us rebound from our missteps. Lastly, the more we integrate into the body, the more opportunity we have to esteem another higher than ourselves and exercise patience with others. Both signify the true love by which others can know us as God’s children.
God has specifically prepared some through giving the Spirit’s gifts for use to edify the body. Writing to the church at Ephesus, Paul explained how God wants individuals to exercise his gifts in different ways, "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." (Ephesians 4:13). In Romans, Paul encouraged all believers to "follow after things that which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another" (Romans 14:19).

In seeking to build on Christ’s foundation, we can get off track and can begin to build in ways and areas of life that are counterproductive to God’s purposes. We know that the real human purpose doesn’t primarily consist of increasing our possessions and social status, or in sampling and experiencing the earth’s bounty. Yet, at times, we can become unbalanced in these areas. Materialism, or misplaced focus on self and a misguided understanding of how or what to build, may eventually lead to spiritual issues if left uncorrected (1 Corinthians 7:31, 2 Timothy 4:10, Galatians 2:11-14). In other misguided moments, we can also think we’re correct in attempting to help someone with an issue when our approach actually damages the person. This can happen either when someone has wrong motives when attempting to help another person see their error or when that would-be helper is just wrong on the issue.

1 Corinthians 3:10-15 cautions against building upon Christ’s foundation with lower quality building materials, so we can receive a reward rather than suffering loss. Since we’re building on a most holy faith that we should not take lightly, we should each take heed regarding our building methods and materials. God blesses us with almost 2,000 years of history for evaluating how things went for former generations of Christians. On the flip-side we should recognize that some building methods or materials that worked well at a specific time in the past may not be as well-suited for our era or culture.

We all know that it is important to build ourselves spiritually, but it is something that we can neglect. What keeps us from building each other up individually or as a body? It could be any number of things, including – but not limited to: life’s pressures (like child-rearing or work), misplaced desires, not understanding or recognizing opportunities, personal insecurity, complacency, or fearing how someone will take it. We each need to build ourselves up on our faith, so that we can be well fitted for God’s service. Whether as a spouse or single, called to domestic life or called to forego domestic life in lieu of a ministry, we can build ourselves up to God’s glory.

When we as a body are built up and strong, we can fulfill what God intends for our specific functions in the body.

While different positions have different challenges, we all need to exercise faithful living that demonstrates the faith that resides in us. God not only desires that we build on our faith, but he also provides blessings because of it. When we build, we get to experience life more as God intended for us. We experience more intimate fellowship with our God and Father. This way, our hard times don’t seem as hard, we spend greater time in joy, and fearful things are not as fearful. We also gain more whole and real fellowship with each other because we are built up and can build on others. When we as a body are built up and strong, we can fulfill what God intends for our specific functions in the body. Our building of each other also provides a good base from which future generations can start.

Let’s be aware that our battle is largely unchanged since the day of Jude. Let’s take courage in the fact that God hasn’t changed since that time and that his power and grace are always present. Let’s be disciples whose hearts are steadfast upon the things that are of true value here on earth as well in heaven. Let’s keep ourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life!
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and experience that they are loved. To bear another’s burdens means to come alongside someone and help them with a problem they are experiencing. The word picture of carrying a burden (weight) is significant for those who have dealt with a situation in life that weighed them down. We use words like “burden” and “weighed down” because what we have experienced may feel like a physical weight on our hearts or mind. Sometimes the best way we can bear someone else’s burdens is to go to them and sit with them in silence like Job’s three friends after he lost his family and almost all his possessions.13

Discipleship
The second part of the Guiding Principle we are discussing is to disciple one another. Jesus Himself commanded us to go and make disciples.14 But how do we do that? To understand this command, it is helpful to learn how the followers of Jesus would have understood discipleship. In Israel during New Testament times, the idea of a teacher (rabbi) and learner (disciple) was a familiar concept. John the Baptist and the Pharisees also had disciples.15 A disciple literally followed his rabbi while he was in training. The disciple lived with the rabbi and the rabbi’s entire life was observed by the disciple daily. The relationship was so close that a disciple would often emulate their rabbi in his likes or dislikes, preferences, and mannerisms. The disciple would have understood that believing was not merely an intellectual exercise; instead, he would conform his life to his rabbi’s way of interpreting scripture.16

This demonstrates that the discipling done by Jesus (and other rabbis) was a life-on-life living, teaching, and showing process.17 So, to disciple someone means intentionally spending time with them as you model Christian living. Discipling will include instruction and demonstration of how to live out faith in various circumstances. It is like an apprenticeship, where someone learns a trade as they work alongside a more skilled tradesperson. For the Christian, parenting is one form of discipleship. A child learns much about how their believing parents cope with life’s challenges and joys by watching their behavior. We can disciple others as we interact with them in daily life or in social settings. It will require us to be vulnerable and (sometimes painfully) honest.

Commitment
Finally, the Guiding Principle states that we are committed to caring for and discipling others. When we are committed to something, we are willing to give our time, energy, and passion to it, even when it is not easy, convenient, or short-term. Commitment means prioritizing the caring for and discipling of others, rather than prioritizing personal enjoyment. Commitment means we persevere in the face of what may feel like failure. We can take this as a challenge, that we would ask the Lord to work through us to have an attitude committed to purposefully and joyfully discipling and caring for one another.

Endnotes
1 Romans 12:4-5
2 John 13:35
3 1 Corinthians 13:4-7
4 Romans 12:10
5 Romans 12:13
6 1 Thessalonians 5:11 (ESV)
7 Ephesians 4:32
8 Romans 15:1-2
9 merriam-webster.com/dictionary/honor
10 fee.org/articles/harvard-study-an-epidemic-of-loneliness-is-spreading-across-america/
11 bu.edu/articles/2020/depression-rate-has-tripled-among-us-adults/
12 Proverbs 12:18
13 Job 2:12-13
14 Matthew 28:19
16 Luke 6:40 hbible.org/article/being-first-century-disciple
17 Matthew 4:19-20
material. He can create something out of nothing; none of us can do that. We take the raw materials and make something, but he can make it out of nothing. What a remarkable God! An artist of the greatest kind.

The last thing I’ll say here in thinking about God as an artist is what strikes me most. Like at a zoo where I’m seeing all the different kinds of fish and the different kinds of monkeys and other animals, I’m realizing just how superfluous it is. Let me define that as it’s kind of a strange term. What is superfluous? Superfluous is actually in the Bible, and what it means is that something isn’t necessary. Something isn’t necessary, but there’s an abundance of it. For example, God could’ve made one star but instead made billions. He could have made one fish and said, “Fish”, but there are all kinds of fish. He could have said, “I create tree”, and a tree pops up. But no, there are evergreens and redwood trees, pine trees and bonsai trees. It’s superfluous. He didn’t need to do that, but he did in great abundance. That’s one of the things that strikes me most interestingly about God’s creation and his heart as an artist – this creative impulse he has to create.

Now, nature is not the only place where we see this heart to create as an artist. We’re going to look into the scripture as well. Nature might be so called his masterpiece but there’s also evidence in scripture that God has the heart as an artist as well.

First, let’s sing and pray. The hymnbook is opened here to #157 As Pants the Heart (Zion’s Harp).

So, since I did visit the zoo, we’re thinking here this morning about God as a master artist, and we’ve already seen how if you look at nature, you can see how he has the creative impulse visually in color. We know he’s an artist when it comes to how things feel, to touch; think of the skin of a little baby and how precious that is. We know that he creates with smells like grass and lilacs and with the sounds he creates. He cares about that. He wouldn’t have had to create harmony, but he did in this creative impulse he has.

It’s not just in nature that it shows God’s heart as an artist, but the scriptures also teach this well, and the place where I see this probably most pronounced is when God gives his instructions to Israelites about how to build the tabernacle. That’s in Exodus, so let’s turn there.

It’s about four or five chapters – we’re not going read them all – about God’s commands of how to build the tabernacle. Now, I will tell you, I confess to you, that in past years when I was reading through the scripture, this is a section I would often sort of skip right past because it’s got so much detail. If you’re reading in the KJV, sometimes you’re not quite sure what this measurement is or that one. It’s just hard to kind of get into it because you’re not sure what it’s even talking about.

In thinking about this a little bit differently, I’ve come to see it’s really interesting to look at God’s commands how to build the tabernacle when you’re talking about God’s heart as an artist. He cares about beauty and visual and touch and these types of things. We’re going to just look at a few scripture verses from this bigger section where God’s giving commands about how to build the tabernacle, and I think you’ll see coming through that that yes, in fact, God has the heart of an artist. He cares about how things look and feel and smell. Not just in nature. Let’s go to chapter 26, we’re going to read just a few verses here and think about God as an artist. What is he caring about here? From verse 1 in Chapter 26 of Exodus.

“Moreover thou shalt make the tabernacle with ten curtains” – he wants ten – “of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet”
Those are the colors that God wants: blue and purple and scarlet, with cherubims. He says, “I want cherubims sculpted of cunning work.” Now, this is an old King James way that when it says “cunning work”, it basically means he wants it to be done by the skilled craftsman. He doesn’t just want any old person, but a skilled craftsman, someone that knows what they’re doing. He wants blue and purple and scarlet. He wants ten curtains, and he wants sculpted cherubims.

Verse 2: “The length of one curtain shall be eight and twenty cubits, and the breadth of one curtain four cubits: and every one of the curtains shall have one measure.” (v.3-4)

We’re going to stop in chapter 26 there. The point here is this: notice what he wants. “I want these colors. I want ten curtains. I want them linked together a certain way. I want them in loops.” Again, this is an artist saying how he wants something to look and that he wants it done by a skilled craftsman, someone who knows what they’re doing, and not just any old person. It’s interesting, isn’t it? The heart of an artist.

Let’s go in the same chapter to verses 36 and 37. Again, God cares about these things. “And thou shalt make an hanging for the door of the tent” – I want you to make a tent cover and it needs to be blue and purple and scarlet, “and fine twined linen, wrought with needlework.” (v.36) Now, again, that’s the old King James way of saying this: needlework was something done by an embroiderer. “I want this done by an embroiderer.” Wrought with needlework. That’s what that means. “I don’t want just any old person doing this but someone who knows what they’re doing because I want it hung a certain way and I want these colors. “And thou shalt make for the hanging five pillars of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold, and their hooks shall be of gold: and thou shalt cast five sockets of brass for them.” (v.37) This is what I want, brass and gold. God cares about what this thing looked like and felt like. “I want a certain kind of embroidery.”

Let’s go to Chapter 28, and God is going to say, “When the priests serve, I want them dressed a certain way.” He even gives commands how to make the clothing in chapter 28. Look at verse 5 where it’s talking about the ephod which was kind of a linen apron that the priests would wear. Listen to what God says about it. He cares what it looks like. “And they shall take gold, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen. And they shall make the ephod of gold, of blue, and of purple, of scarlet, and fine twined linen, with cunning work.” (v.36) Again, I want it to be someone who knows what they’re doing.

Jump to verse 39. Just a few more scriptures. In the middle, there’re all these details I can just blow right through, but the point here is God cared about this stuff. There’s five chapters devoted to this. Verse 39 is talking about other kinds of clothing items. “And thou shalt embroider the coat of fine linen, and thou shalt make the mitre of fine linen, and thou shalt make the coat of fine linen, and thou shalt make the girdle of needlework.” Again, I want it to be done by an embroiderer, someone who knows what they’re doing.

One more scripture. Let’s go to chapter 30. It talks about that God cares what it looks like, the colors, how it felt, the embroidery, and how things were connected together. Then in Chapter 30,

— Please turn to pg. 62
God actually cares about even smells. Did you know that? He cares about this stuff. He’s the master artist. Let’s look at verse 22. “Moreover the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Take thou also unto thee principal spices, of pure myrrh five hundred shekels, and of sweet cinnamon half so much, even two hundred and fifty shekels, and of sweet calamus two hundred and fifty shekels, And of cassia five hundred shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, and of oil olive an hin: And thou shalt make it an oil of holy ointment, an ointment compound after the art of the apothecary: it shall be an holy anointing oil.” (vv.22-25) What does that mean? Apothecary – it’s a perfumer. It’s an old King James way of saying a perfumer. He says, “I want these kinds of spices. I want you to mix them together at this ratio, and I want it done by a perfumer – someone who understands this stuff – and not just any old person. God cared about getting this right – how the anointing oil smelled. He cared about the visual lay out. Isn’t that remarkable? He didn’t just say, “I need a tabernacle, four walls and a roof, get it done.” He’s got five chapters of precise color, visual, texture, sounds, and smell. This is the heart of an artist.

The last thing we’ll look at here is Chapter 31. God cared so much about the artistry of how this thing looked and felt and smelled that he actually inspired people with his Holy Spirit to do it. Chapter 31: ‘And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, See, I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship,” — this is a skilled craftsman inspired by God — “To devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, And in cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of timber, to work in all manner of workmanship.” (vv.1-5) Now, again, cunning means skilled.

You see here that, surprise, surprise, the Bible says that God cares about things like beauty, the lay outs, how things come together, and how they even smell. He cares. He is, after all, a master artist. You can look at creation and see it’s superfluous. He didn’t have to create with all color. Here, He could have said, “Four walls and a roof; get it done”, but he didn’t. It’s superfluous. It wasn’t necessary, but there was an abundance. God cared. I hope that’s clear from nature and from scripture that God is a master artist, and so I would say to us today what does all this matter? Why does it matter that our God from nature and from even the scripture is a master artist? Why does God care about art? And why should we care about it?

Just a couple thoughts here as we move toward closing. The first being this: if God creates things that are superfluous – unnecessary – but he still takes a lot of time to craft them, that idea pushes back at least in my heart, against what I would call almost an idolatry, perhaps, or at least an over fixation, on this thing called efficiency. I love to be efficient. You might love to be efficient. Our culture loves to be efficient. How quickly can I make this? How quickly can I scale this thing up? And how cheaply can I do it? Cheap and quick. Our culture loves efficiency, and yet, as I’m looking at God as a master artist, thousands of different kinds of fish I’m seeing probably isn’t efficient. He could’ve made just one. “I make fish.” Instead, there’re thousands of different kinds of fish. It makes me wonder that maybe God doesn’t care as much about efficiency as I do, and
That pushes back on some things in my heart. I don’t like things being superfluous necessarily, but God seems to value something that might take a little bit longer to make but is beautiful. Again, it’s superfluous — not necessary — but there’s an abundance of that thing. Isn’t that remarkable?

Maybe all of this morning as we think about God as an artist, we need to ratchet down our infatuation with efficiency. Maybe God cares more about beauty than getting things done quick and cheap. So, it’s a nice push back, at least in my heart, when I think about God as art because art takes time. Art takes time, and it’s not really necessary. No ones going to starve because they can’t sing a song. Maybe God cares about more than just the basic things of life. That’s the first thing I would say.

The second thing is this that if God is the master artist, and ultimately our heart as Christians is to be conformed to the image of God, maybe we ought to take some time to create some art as a reflection of heart to be like him. After all, he is the master artist. Or we want to be conformed to the image of Jesus who of course is God, but do you know Jesus was an artist? He was a master storyteller. We don’t know that he drew or painted or that sort of thing. He told stories. Storytelling is a great art. So, if I think of wanting to be conformed to the image of God and his son Jesus Christ, maybe that tells me that I ought to spend a little more time, after their image, trying to create some art as a reflection of my love for him.

Now, you may say, “Whoa, whoa, I have no artistic ability, and you’re telling me that creating art might be something to do to reflect God?” I am saying that. Now, of people who have no artistic ability, I am the grand example — if art is just drawing things or painting. I have no skill whatsoever in drawing or painting. I will tell you that. If I drew you a stick figure, you’d look at it and say, “Hmm, stick figure? Or is that a bowling ball of some kind?” I’m not good at drawing or painting. But remember art isn’t just the visual. We talked about that. There are other kinds of art. Maybe you can’t draw, but maybe you can sing or play an instrument. It’s art. It’s the art of sound. Maybe you’re not great at an instrument or maybe you’re not great at drawing, but maybe you’re really good at cooking things.

I want to pause there and say this: in art, one of the senses I didn’t mention was taste. I think that’s really important though to mention because we talked about efficiency, about God not valuing efficiency so much as maybe beauty and things that are a bit superfluous. Let me give you an example when it comes to taste to make this point. We know that God can be very, very efficient getting food to people. You see that in Exodus. He’s got about a million people to feed out in the wilderness, so what does he do? He drops manna out of the sky pretty much the same time every day and says pick it up just like this, store it like this. I mean it is efficient. Every day, boom, you’ve got enough manna, and the manna has enough nutritional content to keep them alive. For years, it’s just boom, manna, boom, manna. That is efficient. Right? He can do that if he wants to, and he did it that time. Realistically, 99% of the time, he doesn’t operate by dropping manna out of the sky with efficiency. Think about the cuisines in our world. Think about the flavors. Think about the Mediterranean olives and the spices and the oil. Think about Italian, about Asian, about all these different tastes, and the mixing and blending of spices. Yes, he can be efficient. We know he can be efficient. We’ve seen it in the Bible, but typically he’s not operating that way. There are all kinds of cuisines. I would say he is a culinary artist. He didn’t have create all those tastes and — Please turn to pg. 64
blends, but he did because that’s his creative impulse.

Again, when I say we have an opportunity to reflect God’s image as this master creator, I’m not saying you have to be good at drawing pictures or painting or even singing. Maybe your gift is culinary. Maybe that’s where you can reflect God’s heart as a master artist, but maybe that’s not your thing. I’m not particularly good at a lot of those things but I like words. I like poetry. That’s also a kind of art. Storytelling – using words as art. I would be hard pressed to imagine that there is somebody who has no ability whatsoever across all of those things. Maybe you’re not so great with words, but maybe you’re really good with wood or clay or sculpture or landscaping. That is an artform as well.

I have to believe that if we are to reflect the heart of our master creator, the master artist, there’s surely something that we can do to stop, to step back from our busy schedules, and to say I’m just going to do some art or I’m going to cook something just as a reflection of the heart of God as this master creator. Just think for a second if our country would take a week off from social media, no tweeting, no Facebook, no whatever else there is, put the websites away, put the phones in the cabinet, and we said “Let’s just make some art.” I haven’t sculpted something since high school when was I forced to in art class. I kind of enjoyed that, so I’m just going to make a sculpture. Wouldn’t our country, wouldn’t we, be better for it? It’s not going to save anybody. It’s superfluous, but there’s something good about just taking time to create something in reflection of a God who has chosen to create things in diversity. That’s an important take away. Again, think about that. Seriously lay it to our hearts. Maybe it’s something that God would have us to be doing to create some art.

Now, I want to just say a couple quick warnings about that as we come to a close here. There is a danger of taking this and going too far with it because the Bible does say that we, as humans, have a tendency, if we’re not careful, to worship the creation more than the creator. In other words, what we start to do is create art for art’s sake. We really didn’t get into music for music’s sake or cooking for cooking’s sake, and that’s not really a good thing. We don’t want to worship the creation more than our creator. We create art not for art’s sake, and we don’t cook for cooking’s sake; we cook for the sake of reflecting the image of a God who is a master artist. We want to remember that. It’s about worshiping him, serving him, reflecting him and not just doing it for its own sake. That’s kind of a first guideline I would suggest.

The other thing I would also suggest is that there is art that’s made to bless, and there’s art that’s made to impress. Those are very, very different things and for very different motives. Let’s just say that art that’s made to bless – good art – is when someone’s creating art for the purpose of saying, “I want this art, this workmanship, this skilled craftsmanship, to reflect the creator, and I’m doing it to bless somebody else.” That is art that blesses. Art that impresses isn’t about reflecting God or bringing him glory and attention but to bring glory to us and reflect on us.

So, let’s just say for example, you’re making a great meal, and you’re doing it because you want to bless the people who come and to reflect this God who has made masterful tastes and blends together. That is a gift. Our world needs more Christians doing art in the kitchen. But if your motive is that they’ll think, “wow” or someone says you’re really good at this or your cooking is fantastic, that makes you look good rather
than making God look good. The food will taste the same, but the motives are different. One is art to bless; the other is art to impress, and they’re very different things. It is in that motive, I would argue, where the difference comes between something being superfluous, which is good, and something being wasteful. Remember, the goal for art is to be superfluous. It’s not necessary, but it’s abundance, and it blesses. That can be wasteful if it’s done for the wrong motive. So, art that is done to bless and is superfluous, let’s do it. Wasteful or superfluous all depends on our motives for doing it as we cook or draw or paint or write poetry or sculpt or sing or create smells with candles. Please, let’s all consider doing art in reflection of God as a master artist.

The final thing I’ll say is this as we close, it’s a little bit more personal to you and to me. We’ve talked about God as this great creator, and we think of sunsets, elephants, fish, stars, sun, and all of these things. We think of the beauty of trees and forests. We think of God’s precision with the tabernacle, its colors, its embroidery, the smells, and all of these things, and we are impressed. We worship God and thank him, but here’s the reality that we have to affirm and own: you – every one of you and me – as hard as it is to believe at times, are also God’s artwork. All of us are. We are also God’s artwork. The same intention, the same lavishness, the same superfluity, that God used in creating the cosmos he poured into creating you. You too are artwork of the master artist. Don’t let anybody tell you otherwise. Don’t let society tell you otherwise.

Now, we are works in progress, no doubt, but we have been created with the same intention and the same grace that we see in creation. Finally, let’s read just a few verses in Eph 2, and you’ll see what I mean. We, in fact, are the artwork of God. We need to own that and celebrate that when we’re struggling. We need to affirm that when we don’t feel like we’re enough, we don’t feel like we add up, or we don’t like how God made us. Eph 2, starting at verse 4 and reading to verse 10.

We are God’s workmanship. YOU are God’s workmanship. The hands of a master artist created you and created me with purpose and intention. What my job to do now is to let him have the brush and quit snatching it out of his hand. Quit saying, “I think I’ll paint the portrait of my own life.” No, he’s the master artist. Pry our hands off of the paintbrush and give it to the master artist. He is the potter; we are the clay, but we must own and affirm the fact that we are God’s artwork. That word – God’s ‘workmanship’ – can also be translated ‘masterpiece’. We’re God’s masterpiece, and yet we’re works in progress. We must give up the tools, the brushes, to God.

So, the next time you’re outside maybe at night, and you’re seeing the sunset, the purples and the oranges splash off the clouds, and you have that sense of worship that we all feel when we see beauty like that, just say, “Thank you, God, for being a master artist. You didn’t have to create a beautiful sunset, but you did. God, you didn’t have to create me, but you did.” He’s a great master artist. You are his piece of art and no doubt a work in progress, but we all are. This week, let’s just think about how can we better reflect the heart from the master artist, God. After all, we too are his work or art.
Remembering Our Spiritual Heritage

Migration to America

The ancestors of Apostolic Christians came to America in great numbers. Religious persecution and economic hardship were primary factors in the decision to emigrate to America. Improved canals, roads, and railroads aided the travel between the eastern seaboard and the Mississippi valley. The federal government’s aid to railroad development and the Homestead Act of 1862, which made 160-acre land tracts available for a small fee, encouraged settlement of western lands.

Froehlich’s Comments About America

Although Samuel Froehlich had some concerns about his followers going to America because he feared that prosperity might lead to spiritual leanness, he did offer encouragement to some who emigrated.

In 1847, Froehlich had commissioned Benedict Weyeneth to go to America (to upstate New York, in Lewis County). In 1848, more Froehlich followers settled near Sardis, Ohio. In 1850 (back in Europe), Andrew J. Braun spent Christmas Day in jail, having been forbidden to hold meetings. Froehlich advised him, “If it is no longer possible for you to live your faith where you are, then emigrate to America. Braun and the entire congregation of Schweinfurt emigrated to America on July 2, 1854, settling at Peoria, Illinois.

Ocean Traveling and Travails

Many emigrants wrote vivid accounts of their experiences while traveling to America. Traveling was difficult, many suffered severe seasickness, some suffered shipwreck, and death was a constant threat. The ship carrying John Adam Eisenmann (later Elder at Cissna Park, IL) encountered a severe storm. Sinking was a possibility. One of the Eisenmann children became very sick and was expected to die. Elder Eisenmann kept on his knees praying for the poor little child. Suddenly, someone appeared to give medicine to the young child. The child immediately responded and improved; and at the same time the storm abated. Mother Eisenmann felt an angel dispensed the medicine to the child because a man who resembled the one who brought medicine to the sick child could not be found.

In 1889, Elder John Adam Reeb (later Elder at Cissna Park, IL) and other families left Alsace-Lorraine and crossed the ocean on the ship “La Loraine.” Some were skeptical that the huge vessel might sink, but one faithful soul said, “Oh no, Minister Reeb is with us, and I know God will not let anything happen to us.”

Burial At Sea

John H. Baumgartner (Bluffton, Indiana), in The First One Hundred Years, 1870-1970, describes travel conditions as emigrants crossed the “stormy” Atlantic. The Aeschlimans, Ballers, Gerbers, and Strahms all had children die while crossing the ocean and were buried at sea.

LeHarve, France

Many of our fore-parents sailed from LeHarve, France on the French ship “Persistent.” The sailboats had severe competition with the steam ships from 1840 to 1860, and they had to have very cheap rates from LeHarve, France to New York for the emigrants. They lined the docks by the thousands, clutching their pathetic bundles, their children, and their hope for a new life in a new land.

-by Perry A. Klopfenstein
Obedience is better

“...Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, ...” 1 Samuel 15:21

Obedience. In many ways, this one word, or better yet, its root word obey, is the foundation of living a Christian life. But even though foundational, it can be the most difficult aspect of our life.

I appreciate the account we can read about in the book of Samuel, where King Saul had disobeyed the command of God when he conquered the Amalekites. Often when I read this, it serves to convict me of where I am not doing very well in my walk with God. Take a moment to review this story. Recall the interaction Saul had with Samuel, how he excused himself. Then, when the conviction of sin came upon his heart, although sorry, his primary thought was to be seen with Samuel, so the people would continue to follow him.

Now, turn your mind to the society and culture we live in today. There is much emphasis on individual independence. Independence of mind, of thought, of action. We are bombarded with messages and attitudes, that if the individual ‘feels’ a certain way, or it makes them happy, it is ‘right’. Our world today is accelerating more and more down this path. When I process the messages coming at me today, it is easy for me to reject the things that are obvious sin. But has our enemy made inroads into our life by ‘numbing’ us to some of these things? Have you ever had a thought, or even found yourself accepting a wrong thought, justifying your acceptance by saying “well, no one is really getting hurt by this.”

An attitude of independence is naturally ingrained in all of us, at least to some degree. Independence and obedience are linked. The more independence we seek, the less dependent we are on God. The less dependent we are on God, the harder it is to obey him. When we do not obey God, we break our relationship with him.

Obedience can be so difficult for us because of what it can sometimes cost. At the risk of sounding glib, it is easy to obey when it is easy to obey. But it is not always easy. In My Utmost for His Highest, Oswald Chambers writes “If we obey God, it is going to cost other people more than it costs us, and that is where the pain begins.” We can accept difficulty in our own lives, but if it impacts others, we often will hesitate to obey. We see how someone is “really getting hurt by this.” So then, are we tempted to disobey what God may be asking of us, justifying it like Saul?

The verse from the book of Samuel states clearly that God desires obedience in the life of his followers. The rewards of obedience are clear as well. Acts 5:32 tells us “And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.” If we obey him, we will have the Holy Ghost. That is the gift Jesus left for us when he ascended to heaven!

Hebrews 5:8-9 helps tie this all together. “Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;” So, obedience can involve suffering. Both for ourselves, and oftentimes for others around us. That is hard. We naturally want to flee suffering. But let us challenge ourselves to accept that we or others may suffer due to our obedience to God. It is OK. Why? Because Christ did. And because he sends the Holy Ghost in response to obedience. With the Holy Ghost comes relationship with God. And with that relationship, we have hope of eternal salvation!

-by Rick Aberle
For who in the heaven 
can be compared 
unto the Lord? ...

Psalm 89:6