"On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand; All other ground is sinking sand, All other ground is sinking sand."

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Summertime

Many articles this month noted summer travels and visitors. This was marked by smaller congregations as people traveled, or the opposite effect of churches swelling with guests. The opportunities taken by many to visit other congregations during their trips is truly a blessing. These visits help knit our brotherhood together.

By the time this issue is in the hands of you our readers, the summer months will be slipping away. Children will be returning to school soon, harvest is coming, and things will settle back down. Summertime trips will taper off.

While we may not be visiting other congregations as much in the coming months, hopefully the fond memories we have made will provoke our hearts to pray for the loved ones we met along the way.

In Christian love,
Rick and Michelle Kaisner, Silver Lining Editors
Daily Spiritual Discernment

“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

We apply spiritual discernment to our daily decisions, based on the Bible, prayer, the Holy Spirit’s direction, and Godly counsel from fellow believers. (Guiding Principle E)

Most people make hundreds, perhaps thousands, of decisions every day. While many decisions are minor with little or no spiritual consequence, others may profoundly affect our Christian walk and that of others. Applying spiritual discernment to such decisions based on the Bible, prayer, the Holy Spirit’s direction, and godly counsel is of critical importance.

Bible

Broad Biblical principles apply to all decisions. Doing all to the glory of God, loving neighbors, pursuing righteousness, and walking in integrity are examples of such overarching principles. With each decision, the reality of sowing and reaping assures there will be consequences. Suppose a neighbor is in need. Providing a meal for them or doing chores for them are both God-honoring, biblically-based options. Such responses will lead to brightened views of Christ. On the other hand, taking advantage of that neighbor’s unfortunate situation by loaning money at an unreasonably high interest rate is not a biblically-principled response. That decision likely will result in a tarnished view of Christ. It matters less which specific God-honoring decision we choose – providing a meal or doing chores – but more that broad Biblical principles are followed.

While general principles apply to all decisions, occasionally there are times when the Bible also provides specific discernment. Jesus challenged the Jews to “search the Scriptures” in deciding whether to follow Him. The Bereans studied the Scriptures daily to discern the accuracy of Paul’s teaching. Stephen, in recounting Scriptural history, developed a case for worshiping Christ. In these situations, the Bible was instrumental in specifically targeted spiritual discernment. Although the Bible is not designed to be treated as a means of divination (seeking guidance through signs) and it does not dictate minute detail (like which act of kindness to do for a neighbor in need), studying it can provide clarity in specific matters of spiritual concern. As we spend intentional time reading, understanding, and applying Scripture, the light of the Bible illuminates our path.

Prayer

The Bible contains examples of prayers for discernment. Solomon prayed for a wise and discerning heart. Paul prayed God would grant the Philippian church knowledge and judgment (discernment) in approving “things that are excellent.” James wrote God grants wisdom to those who ask.

As exciting as those prayers are, it’s essential to remember God’s promises have premises. Conditions must be met for prayers to be answered. Among other conditions, we are called to ask in faith, and according to His will, while living humbly and righteously. But, just as the Bible is not a book of magic, so prayer is not a genie. If used in an attempt to gratify our own desires, no matter how strong our faith or righteous our life, prayer will fail. However, when regularly and properly exercised, prayer is invaluable in guiding spiritual discernment.

In the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus provided a framework for discernment as He asked for direction away from some situations, and for direction toward other situations. His request for guidance away from temptations and evil, while seeking direction towards God’s will and the advancement of God’s kingdom, serves as a guide for our requests. To what degree will a
Greetings, dear brothers, sisters, and friends, to all of you that have come. It’s good to see you. Last evening, I had the opportunity to go on a nice walk with my wife. We were talking about things that we see in the world. The report can be troubling. It can be bad news, this deterioration. You get heavy hearted, but we pulled ourselves back to the sovereignty of God. What we can do is stay close to the foundation, the word of God, stay close to other believers, follow the truth, and be faithful and obedient to the word of God. We’re encouraged. I feel when the evening ended, we had put our trust in the sovereignty of God. We know that he will guide us. We know that he will provide for us. We also do not have the expectation to be protected against suffering. We must understand that it is, and it will come. We pray as we open the word this morning for his Holy Spirit to be here among us and that the Holy Spirit would do the work of a surgeon to get into our hearts, whether it’s encouragement or preparation or maybe conviction.

I’ve opened here into the book of Isaiah. Let’s read from Chapter 9. These first verses are captioned ‘The Birth of the Prince of Peace’. We know who the prince of peace is, that being Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. Let’s begin at verse 1 of Isaiah 9.

We’ll pause right there at verse 7. That obviously is read quite a bit in the Christmas season, but it’s always good. This were many, many years, a little under 700 years before Christ, that Isaiah would be prophesying of the Messiah. It says, “The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined” (v1).

We can turn to the book of St. John, and I’m just going to read a few verses of that. I’m turning to St. John because we’re talking about light here, and here is Isaiah talking about a group of people that are in darkness. We can attribute darkness to the sinful place or situation where there’s not a whole lot of righteousness.

John is a man that would be writing this Gospel afterwards. He’s one of the last ones to write and, in fact, he writes Revelation when he’s about 90 years old. The Gospels had already been written, and he is writing this with many years of thought. He’s giving the explanation of some of the other Gospels. He is bringing up what we’ve read here in Isaiah. He says, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men.” (vv1-3)

God gave life which was the light from him. Verse 5: “And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.” Then, there are verses talking about John the Baptist. It says, “There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light,” (vv6-7). That’s Jesus Christ. So, here John is even affirming this in Isaiah that John the Baptist was getting ready for the light that would be coming. “But was sent to bear witness of that Light” (v8).

From verse 9: “That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not” (vv9-10). Again, it’s just talking about light. Jesus Christ is that light that shines into the darkness.

Have you ever had the opportunity to talk with people that are in darkness? Their life is in darkness. Yes, we’re talking to a human being that has life, but you can see it in their eyes that they are in darkness. If there was
light to shine into them, it would be an impactful light. Jesus Christ was prophesied of, not only from Genesis, but all the way through to here, where the prince of prophets, Isaiah, is again speaking of Christ.

Then, I’m jumping down here to verse 6. He’s speaking of this child, the light that’s going to be coming. Think of these names. Wonderful. Counselor – someone who sees and understands and guides; that’s a counselor or one who gives good counsel. The mighty God – Jesus Christ when he first came, he came humble and weak. He came into Jerusalem on the colt of a donkey, but when he comes the second time, it is with power. The mighty God. The everlasting Father – all people, all nations will come through him. The prince of peace – Jesus Christ brings peace into a person, peace into a marriage, peace in situations, peace into an enslavement, peace into an addiction. He overcomes everything.

It’s talking also of when he comes and what he begins – that government. It says “Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment” (Isaiah 9:7). There’s that word judgment. Part of the attributes of God is that he is righteous. It does not negate his judgment. It goes together, that’s where we get fairness. It is inside of all of us.

We can go around and around with an atheist or someone who does not believe in God and talk about what is right and what is wrong. How come inside every human being there is that sense that says we live somewhat by the laws that God has set in place? They know it’s wrong to kill a child. They know it’s wrong to do these things. We can read that in Romans as well.

Let’s sing a song and then we’ll open up into the New Testament. I’ve opened up to Hymn #167, ”Jesus, Friend of Children.” Wouldn’t it be great if Jesus Christ himself visited this church? Where do you think he would be after lunch? I think he would be up here in front singing with the children. He loved children. He scolded his disciples and said, “Don’t you dare shoo them away. Bring them over here.” They would bring babies and put them in his arms. Kids would gather around him. They could sense he was gentle, sincere, safe, and cared about them. He cared about children, and he looked at his disciples and said, “Unless you can become like one of them” – innocent and dependent upon me like these children would be with their parents – “you can’t come into heaven.” Jesus Friend of Children, #167.

For this morning, I would like us to turn to 2 Corinthians as I want to cover 2 Cor. 12:1-13. I feel that the Holy Spirit is in this. It is God’s word, but it’s very relevant for what we are all dealing with in today’s time. This is a chapter that’s going to be very familiar.

In the prior chapter, Paul is giving his credentials and the trials and testing and beatings that he’s gone through. In Chapter 11, verse 25, he says, “Three times I was beaten with rods, with stones, shipwrecked,” all these other things, and then he goes on from verse 29, “Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not? If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities” (vv29-30).

Now in Chapter 12, he’s going to get into something we may not know much about. From verse 1 in Chapter 12: “It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven.” (vv1-2) Now, Paul is speaking of himself, but he’s being very careful because he is throttling back, you might say, on the fact he was given revelations from God. He was an instrument used by God when he became converted on that road to Damascus. He would go there, and he got his sight. Then, he would go to Arabia for about three years, and the Lord really spoke to him. I believe that’s the time period to which he’s referring.

— Please turn to pg. 58
Ministry Program Updates

Touching Hearts on a Farm in Haiti  
Haiti Dairy – Caribbean Committee

What is it like to serve as a HarvestCall missionary on Good Vision Farm in Haiti? Bro. Eric and Sis. Melanie Stoller (Rittman) have been living in Haiti for about a year and a half. Before that, they lived and worked on a dairy farm in Ohio. In some ways, it’s not a lot different and in some ways it’s very different. Haitians speak French Creole. A wonderful tutor comes to the farm to help the missionaries learn to speak and understand Creole, but the language barrier is a challenge. And of course, they are distant from family and friends. It helps to have good internet, return home from time to time, and have family come to Haiti too. But like home, there is a routine to the days and many things to do to fill the time. Eric and Melanie care for the dairy animals on the farm, as well as processing and bottling the milk, and Melanie makes a lot of ice cream that the local Haitians love to purchase! Eric oversees the daily milking process, manages the cow herd, and spends plenty of time on a tractor to name a few things.

There is a wonderful peaceful feeling at Good Vision Farm in Haiti. Many of you are aware that the country of Haiti has been in some turmoil since the assassination of their president. And certainly the day this happened, even on the farm, faces of the Haitians were drawn and there was much concern. But in visiting with the missionaries, they feel peaceful and protected.

The people in the community around the farm interact very closely with the missionaries. People (and many children) walk past the farm every day. Recently, Melanie saw several little girls rinsing their laundry in the canal that runs through the farm property and she asked them, in somewhat limited French, if she could join them. They were so excited and waved big smiles. It touched his heart that even though he still had trouble communicating with them in their language, he most definitely connected with them.

When You Look For Something In Faith, You Find Hope  
Hospital Lumiere – Caribbean Committee

In the U.S. we take prompt access to good medical care for granted. In many parts of the world including Haiti, that medical care can be difficult to come by. It was difficult for Gedson Metelus. Gedson broke his ankle in 2018 and it was never treated. They just put a brace on his ankle and he tried his best to adapt. Gedson managed to slowly hobble around, but it was extremely difficult and very painful.

Gedson lives in Les Cayes with his parents and six siblings. His father makes a living there as a rice farmer. Gedson’s parents are Christians and attend the Mission for Christ Church in Les Cayes. Gedson’s mom, Gerlaine told me her favorite Bible verse is Matthew 7:7 “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you”. Gerlaine says “When you look for something in faith, you find hope”.

Gerlaine’s hope recently came to fruition when a friend told her about Hospital Lumiere. They had been at Hospital Lumiere for six days when I visited with them. After they arrived at the
Creole, if she could join them. They were so excited to have her interested in what they were doing.

Eric loves to wave at the children. Once, Eric was plowing a 400’ field, so it took a little while to make a round on his tractor. He saw a little boy and a little girl, maybe 6-7 years old, and they were watching him. Eric made a round past them and waved. They turned around to see if he was waving at someone else, and when they discovered he was waving at them, they didn’t wave back but they continued to watch. The next round, they got big smiles when he waved, and the next round they waved back. After that, there were vigorous waves, and then more children came. When Eric was finishing the field, a group of happy children were watching him go around with great big waves and even bigger smiles. It touched his heart that even though he still has trouble communicating with them in their language, he most definitely connected with them.

We are so grateful to have two missionary families at Good Vision Farm. Bro Daryl and Sis. Debbie Knobloch (Bradford) have now been serving for 3 years, and at four years, their time serving will be done. Daryl manages the employees, maintenance and agronomy decisions on the farm, while Debbie does the financial accounting. Daryl’s maintenance and mechanical abilities are especially important, as there is no “service department” in the area. This brings a wonderful opportunity for another missionary couple to serve and live at the farm. The missionary house is simple but very comfortable.

There are opportunities to visit the farm. For example, during the winter months, there is such a need for someone to come down and help plow fields or do mechanical work, even for one to three weeks. It would be a great way to see what life on the farm is like. We would encourage you to visit with Sis. Amber Miller if you wish to discuss any part of this missionary journey. Is this something God could be calling you to do? Amber can be reached at amiller@harvestcall.org. – by LuAnn Troxel

hospital, Dr. Robert Belding performed surgery on Gedson’s ankle. Dr. Belding cut out a wedge of bone to properly align Gedson’s ankle and secured it with two screws. After several years in misery, Gerlaine’s hope for her son’s condition was realized in a surgery that took about an hour. Gedson is now able to walk around on crutches and should return home soon.

There are many more families like Gedson’s in need of medical care. Their hope is that they too will find it someday. Hospital Lumiere is a beacon of hope. Your prayers and faithful support are what keeps the Hospital Lumiere beacon shining.

– by Rich Bertschi
We know we are to love others. The Scriptures could not be clearer. Jesus announced the second greatest commandment was to love our neighbor as ourself. Furthermore, love is not just a command to the believer, it is a characteristic of a believer. That is, love is not just something a Christian does, love is who a Christian is. The apostle John says it concisely, “Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God; and everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.” (1 John 4:7)

The Bible is replete in spelling out what love looks like…both by example and by teaching. Primarily love is embodied in the example of Christ. Time and time again we see Christ in loving interaction with the rich, the poor, the sinner, the elite, the outcast, the downtrodden, the hurting, the suffering, the sick, men, women and children. Furthermore, love is described in the epistles: Love is patient. Love is kind. Love does not boast. Love does not envy.

I want to love like that, like Jesus, but I am constantly reminded I do not. When my neighbor asks for my time, I inwardly resist. When I get the missionary newsletter in the mail, I may not even read it. When I learn in the news of a celebrity’s hardship, my first reaction is “well, I’m not surprised.” No, I am far from loving people like Jesus loved them.

Fortunately, there is good news for people like me. The good news is love grows. God intends to perfect his love in us. Paul penned it this way, “And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men…” (1 Thess 3:12). Peter included love as the culminating virtue that through diligence a believer grows (2 Peter 1:5-7). And how can we miss the transforming work done in the disciple who was known for his temper. For it was John who wanted to call fire down from heaven and consume the Samaritans. Yet, in his old age, he penned his epistles which stand as a masterpiece on love.

The question remains for those of us for whom love does not come easy, what can we do to develop a heart after Christ? Become a person who regularly says…

1. “Thank you.”
2. “Help me understand.”
3. “How can I help you?”

ACCFS has several resources to encourage men in their biblical roles and responsibilities. Recommended resources and presentations can be found on our website at www.accounseling.org/men. If you would like more information, please contact ACCFS at (309)263-5536 or info@accounseling.org.

Generating Love for Others: Becoming a Person Who Says Three Things

A person who says “thank you” recognizes they are in the debt of others. Humility is generated in this person. A person who says “help me understand” bestows honor on others because they listen and are willing to be shaped by what they learn. Understanding is generated in this person. A person who asks, “how can I help you?” opens the door for participation. Care is generated in this person. These three phrases are not hard to say. Nor is it hard to find occasion to say them. But by making them common in our lives, we will begin to improve our posture. A posture that turns us from looking inward to that of looking outward. A posture that resembles Christ. Humble, understanding and caring - loving.
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In the last issue, Bro. Ron summarized the history of Apostolic Christian LifePoints, pointing out God’s faithfulness. Looking ahead, the future is bright for ACLP. It doesn’t mean the road ahead will be easy. It doesn’t mean the path will always be clear. It doesn’t mean the journey will be financially prosperous. It does mean we have the opportunity to press forward in the knowledge and promise of God’s faithfulness.

At ACLP, we remain committed to the goal of providing Christian residential living arrangements for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the most appropriate setting to maximize their abilities. The need for these facilities is almost limitless. Without employees who live out the LifePoints mission, we cannot provide residents with the services they need and deserve. Presently, adequate staffing numbers continues to be our greatest challenge. Nonetheless, we continue to trust God to see our need and direct our steps.

From a personal perspective, the first three months of leadership transition have been good, and quite frankly, intense. Meeting ACLP leaders. Visiting the residences. Interviewing potential residents and their guardians. Preparing for Board meetings. Reviewing policies. Celebrating joys. Grieving losses. Attending CILA picnics and other various activities. Processing new regulations. Asking questions – asking lots of question.

LifePoints is built upon developing deep relationships. I have been blessed with opportunities to both observe and participate in new relationships these past months. Each new connection increases my gratitude to God for calling me here and grows my love for this ministry. I just arrived home from spending the evening bowling with the Detroit CILA. I kept Sarah (name changed for the sake of privacy) from bragging rights in beating the Executive Director by grabbing a spare in the final frame and tying it up 101-101. We celebrated with a high five, fist bumps and the promise of a rematch. As we were leaving, one of Sarah’s housemates asked the house manager if I could join them for dinner on a later date. It is my understanding that the ladies are incredible chefs – how honored I would be!

ACLP began when a need was identified and God provided the resources necessary to meet that need. Today, ACLP cannot continue without your consistent prayer and financial support. We cannot continue without you sharing your gifts with us, whether those gifts are in the form of sharing a bike ride, planting a garden, giving a hug or offering a word of encouragement. So thank you for being a part of the ACLP ministry, for being part of God’s ministry.

Gateway Woods Apostolic Christian Children’s Home
James Drayer — 2021 Education Intern

Sacrifice is defined by giving up something worthy or of value for the sake of something else. For 10 years of my life - first as a houseparent kid, then later working as an Education Intern at Gateway Woods School - I saw the definition of sacrifice played out in incredible ways.

As a houseparent kid, I saw my parents day in and day out, devote love, grace, and mercy to resident after resident after resident. No bounds were placed on the love they possessed for the residents in their care. I saw many residents throw fits of anger, tell my parents they hated them, or simply turned their back on them. I saw my parents struggle
as they felt the strain it put on the family dynamic. I saw my tired, weary, and worn parents choose to constantly devote themselves to ministering to the residents.

My parents had reason after reason to walk out of residents’ lives but instead, I saw them every morning choose to sacrifice their lives for the residents at Gateway. They treated the residents with compassion because they saw the residents as people in desperate need of a Savior. I praise God for this opportunity of living at Gateway as a houseparent kid, as it has shaped my passion for teaching.

As a math teacher, I love math, but it is only the medium in which I reach students. I recognize that every student has their own story of pain, hurt, trauma, or abuse. Just as Christ saw my deeper hurt and pain, God used my Gateway experiences to show me how to look past my students’ actions to find the deeper story. Gateway showed me that I can’t take things personally, that people make mistakes, and people have pasts that dictate their present. Having that understanding in the classroom is an invaluable experience.

Gateway was rarely easy, but then we are not promised easy lives, in fact we are called to quite the opposite and to hold nothing back. There is always a background, a story, a trauma, or a pain that we don’t quite fully know until we pour into others around us.

Living and working at Gateway, God has shown me a new perspective about people. Before we rush to judgments, let’s understand their story. I know that can be hard to do for two reasons: it requires us to pursue someone and choose to love them even when it seems impossible, and we start to see ourselves that “while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us”.

Is sacrifice hard? ABSOLUTELY! But God sacrificed his son for a wretched sinner like me, Christ laid down his life for me. Can I do any less for those around me? My only prayer now is, “God take my life, my hands, my voice, my silver and gold, my will, and my love and let it be consecrated, Lord, to thee.”

**News:**
- As God has called them to move on, we are thankful for Bro. Matt and Sis. Rachael Ringger and their family for serving as houseparents for over six years.
- We are also thankful for Bro. Connor Pfister’s time as a history teacher and Sis. Claire Berchtold for teaching math. We trust the Lord will continue to bless them in their future endeavors.
- We are excited to welcome Sis. Emily Wiegand from Philadelphia who has been hired as our newest teacher at the Gateway Woods School.
- 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 are currently looking for a Teacher, Houseparent Couple, Residential Nurse 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.

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 to 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.

**Alabama, Athens**

*Lisa Aschliman, Kristy Moore*

“Blessed are those whose hope is in the Lord their God.” *Psa. 146:5*

We have had a busy few months down here in the south! ALive 2021 is in the record books, was well attended, and we were very blessed by all the brothers that shared their time and godly wisdom with us. Bro. Kirk Plattner (West Lafayette, IN), Bro. Brad Metz (Bloomington, IL), Bro. Kent Levy (Morton, IL), Bro. Jonathan Hodel (Roanoke, IL), and Bro. Matt Knapp (Peachtree City, GA) We are planning (Lord willing) to have ALive Memorial Day at the Vision again next year and look forward to seeing all of you there.

June 14-18 we had the visiting VBS team from HarvestCall share their time and talents with our children. It was a wonderful time learning Bible stories and making new friendships. We are very thankful to these individuals who traveled from quite a distance to help us out: Sis. Becky Roberts, Sis. Renee Schlipf, Sis. Misha Cox, Sis. Anne Luthi, Sis. Salome Huber, Bro. Nelson Knobloch and Bro. Toby Steidinger.

Bro. Rick Kaisner (Sis. Michelle, Chicago, IL) was with us on July 11 and we are thankful for their willingness to share their time with our church.

We ask for continued prayers for Sis. Carolyn Lewis, Sis. Clarann Lynn, and Shawn Ray who have all had health issues lately.

If you are passing through our area and need a place to stay for the evening, please call Sis. Rebekah Klaus at 815.674.5411 for our guest house accommodations. We love having visitors and encourage anyone passing through to spend some time with us.

**Arizona, Phoenix**

*Marge Lindenbaum*

“Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. John 4:10*

We are experiencing much needed and long-awaited rains here in the desert. It is a wonderful thing to hear thunder and raindrops falling after more than a year of “dry heat”. Wikipedia defines water as, “an inorganic, transparent, tasteless, odorless, and nearly colorless chemical substance, which is the main constituent of Earth’s hydrosphere and the fluids of all known living organisms. It is vital for all known forms of life, even though it provides no calories or organic nutrients.” It seems all water might be defined as “living”, as it is vital to all forms of life. It should be noted, the water is a part of living organisms and must be ingested or absorbed to provide the vitality. An organism without life can be engulfed in water, and it does it no good. The water Jesus gives is “a well of water springing up into everlasting life” *John 4:14*. We must drink of it to be made alive by it.

John later explains that Jesus was speaking of the Holy Spirit. This indwelling Spirit gives life to those previously dead in their sin and sanctifies and cleanses the believer as he yields to its power and influence over his life.

The Holy Spirit is associated with water throughout Scripture. From *Gen. 1:2* “the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters” through *Rev. 21:6* “I will give to him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.”

The Spirit was manifest at the beginning of Jesus’ ministry, when he was baptized. Jesus assured his followers when he returned to Heaven that he would be with them always. This was accomplished through the presence of the Spirit in them. This is the power from on high they waited for in communal prayer in Jerusalem.

This mystery of God himself dwelling in his church is something that should constantly fill us with wonder and humble dismay. Yet it is easy to take it for granted, somehow. Like every part of the plan of salvation - so simple yet so profound, almost beyond comprehension at times. When I consider it, I have to think, if
I knew who it is that saith to me … I would ask of him the living water. It is a precious, vital commodity that is given freely and as abundantly as we will consume it. What a marvelous God we serve!

“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” Rev. 22:17

The recent rains here are so welcome and we praise the Lord and ask him to send more, according to his will. We are enjoying quieter days now, as we are back to our “core” group of Phoenix locals, and many of us are leaving the heat for cooler locations and vacations. We continue to serve our community in ways we are able, providing and serving meals at a local shelter. Several of our high school boys traveled to Indiana to attend a boys’ camp and had a wonderful time. We appreciate our Sunday school and the leaders who are willing to give of themselves to support the growth of our youth, and every person who willingly sacrifices for the good and growth of the church!

Arizona, Prescott
Autumn Rokey

We were excited to host the HarvestCall Traveling VBS in July. Retired minister Bro. Kevin and Sis. Dixie Knapp (Bloomington, IL), Sis. Claire Dill (Minneapolis, MN) Sis. Kristy Kieser (Princeville, IL), Sis. Shannon Rocke (Washington, IL) and Sis. Hannah Lindberg (Roanoke, IL) blessed us with their time and energy. They taught about the Teachability of Timothy, the Endurance of Esther, the Availability of Abram, the Courage of Caleb, and the Hopefulness of Hannah. Our theme verse was “Shew me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day.” Psa. 25:4-5. It was an encouraging week for our whole church to see our youth excited to learn about God and be teachable.

Thankful also for Elder Bro. Herbie Knochel (Sis. Laurie, Phoenix, AZ) for coming to preach this last month.

Arizona, Tucson
Dean and Jackie Knobloch

It is truly a blessing that God knows our every need. I am reminded of his direction in Eph. 5:1-2: “Be ye followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for an offering and sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour.”

We are now back to two full services and serving lunch, a blessing long waited for and appreciated greatly. God is good.

California, Los Angeles/Altadena
Kali Sauder

Summer is a season of travel for many, so while some weeks our gathering is small, this also means welcoming visitors. This month Sis. Rachel Sauder (daughter of Elder Bro. Frank and Sis. Kathy, Roanoke, IL) visited from Chicago, IL and shared with the church her calling to translation ministry; translating his word into the heart language of one of the more than 800 tribal languages in Papua New Guinea, many awaiting a Bible translation.

“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” Heb. 10:12

California, San Diego
Sarah Fulop

Despite, the massive heat waves and weird monsoon weather, life is quiet here in San Diego in the summer months. We pray that the reopening of our city continues and that virus variants do not isolate us from much needed gatherings.

This past month I have reflected a lot on the goodness of God. So much so, that a conversation with Bro. Mike Grimm inspired last Sunday’s sermon. In Sunday school, or in a song by Chris Tomlin, we are reminded of the simple yet powerful statement: God is good. The goodness of God is easy to witness in the miraculous healing, restored marriages, new birth and filled church pews. These are all wonderful things
that reveal the might of God. They quiet the doubters and bring unbelievers to Christ.

In the hit series, The Chosen, the disciple Thaddeus is concerned that the Jews only believed Jesus was the Messiah because he healed their physical afflictions. The Samaritans on the other hand simply heard Jesus and their faith was full. His own physical affliction did not seem to affect his complete confidence in his savior.

So, do we come to Jesus because of the miracles and blessings? What if the entire body of Christ prays and healing does not happen? What if we lose loved ones or faithful brethren turn away from their faith? What about sickness, famines, wars, and injustice? Do we still believe that God is good?

On Sunday, Bro Mike Grimm reminded us of David’s steadfast faith amidst Saul’s manhunt (1 Samuel 26). In John 13, we saw scared disciples at the end of Jesus’s earthly mission, seeking answers and security. Jesus said to look to the Father; they will not be left comfortless. Herein is the goodness of God manifested.

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

Through his Holy Spirit, we have the supernatural ability to not only survive, but to remain peaceful and faithful in the tests and trials of life. What a witness to the world! The end is written, and the work is finished! So, take comfort and rest in his spirit.

Jesus’ goodness is above any circumstance, it is in the very being of who he is!

So, as we battle the summer heat and juggle summer events and increased travel plans, family time, let us look to the Father. He is our comfort, our strength, and present in whatever trouble we have. God bless each of you and may your next month bear witness of the goodness of God to a lost world.

"You’re a good, good father. It’s who you are. It’s who you are. And I’m loved by you.”

*Chris Tomlin, “Good Good Father”*

**Colorado, Denver**

**Jenna Hartter, Rebekah Stoller**

Our congregation is excited to have a new baby to love as of the end of May. Ruby Phlox was born on May 27 to Bro. Jake and Sis. Tifani Leman. Grandparents are Bro. Jeff and Sis. Janis Bahr (Kiowa, KS) and Elder Bro. Mike and Sis. Deb Leman.

We are thankful for the warm weather and all those who are making Denver part of their summer travels. It is wonderful to see many visitors and have such fellowship from across the land again. Our Single Group hosted an invite at the end of June centered on Jesus Christ, the same Yesterday, Today, and Forever. Visiting ministers Bro. James Schneider (Sis. Tonya, Silvertown, OR) and Bro. Scott Mangers (Sis. Shanya, Altadena, CA) were here to share the weekend with the Single Group and we were richly blessed by the reminders of our Lord’s constancy and promise. We were thankful to have Bro. Jeff Fischer (Sis. Gloria, Fort Scott, KS) here to share the Word that weekend as well.

In addition, ministering brothers Bro. Matt Zimmerman (Sis. Kim, St. Louis, MO), Bro. Mitch Fehr (Sis Abbie, Morris, MN), and Bro. Brian Wenniger (Sis. Mackenzie, Leo, IN) shared worship with us in the last month.

**Connecticut, Rockville**

**Heidi Beutel, Kim Schneider**

We were blessed to have Bro. Dan Walder (Sis. Pam, Cissna Park, IL) visit and share God’s word. We pray they will be blessed for their efforts. We also enjoyed the service and fellowship of Bro. Adam Luginbuhl (Sis. Jami, Philadelphia, PA).

We rejoice with Colin Garrow (Bro. John and Sis. Rhonda) as he has surrendered his heart to the Lord and seeks to work out his soul salvation. May the grace of God be with him as he begins on this new journey.

Little Cami Sue was born to Bro. Seth and Sis. Taylor Bahler and big sister Sadie. Her grandparents are Bro. Ronnie and Sis. Bonnie Bahler and Bro. Pete and Sis. Jill Welti.

We rejoice with Sis. Janelle Gottier (Tremont, IL) and Bro. Jason Widmer (Bro. Jim and Sis. Karen, Smithville, OH) as their engagement was announced. Janelle is the daughter of Guy.
and Sis. Beth Gottier and we look forward to having her gather with us for a few months before she moves to Smithville. We wish them God’s blessings in the months and years ahead.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Sis. Ellen Kupferschmid, Emery Zahner and their families in the passing of their brother Clayton Zahner.

**District of Columbia, Washington**

*Henrietta Meyer*

This month our virtual visiting minister was Bro. Jon Zahner (Rockville, CT) and Elder Bro. Marvin Dotterer (Sis. Nancy, Forrest, IL) visited in person. What a blessing to assemble in person.

If you are planning to visit Washington, D.C. area for vacation or business, please contact Sis. Henrietta Meyer at 703.904.8301 or hmeyer2831@gmail.com, or Sis. Doreen Steffen at 302.540.6574 or bdstefi@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 were grateful to have visiting ministers Bro. David Prevo (Sis. Tara, Bloomington, IL) and Bro. Kole Meyer (Sis. Amy, Bluffton, IN) come and share God’s word and fellowship with us this month. We pray they will receive blessings for their willingness to serve.

During the summer months, we do a Bible study for our Sunday afternoon service. This year our study is on prayer. It has been insightful and aligns well with our desire to be more prayerful and intentional in our faith and outreach. We feel blessed by God’s Spirit and faithfulness. If we say, “I will pray for you,” and then don’t physically help when there’s a need that we can help with or follow through with our promise of prayer, then our faith and our actions are not working together.

> “Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?” James 2:22

**Florida, Fort Myers**

*Addison Steidinger, Carrie Steidinger*

We welcomed Bro. Eric Weiss (Sis. Amanda, Elgin, IL) and his family, along with Bro. Mike Hohulin (Sis. Faye, Fort Lauderdale, FL) as they ministered to our congregation.

We have been working through the Sharing the Gospel Bible study as a church family. As we examine each aspect of the gospel closely, we are encouraged to share the gospel with ourselves each day so we are equipped to share it with the world!

**Florida, Sarasota**

*Becky Funk*

> “His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things enter thou into the joy of thy lord.” Matt. 25:21

We send our love and say farewell to our dear Bro. Eugene and Sis. Helen Gall as they move to Rittman, OH. They will be missed at our Sarasota church. Prayers for their move.

We have begun our praise and worship the 2nd and 4th Sundays each month. What a blessing this has been to our church.

Our church began having a potluck style lunch during the summer months.

Bro. Matt and Sis. Emily Koehl hosted an ice cream social/game night at the fellowship hall. Our church enjoyed great fellowship and a fun evening.

> “God will bring you through the fire.” Psa. 66:12

**Georgia, Peachtree City**

*Elise Funk, Brenda Stoller*

Our love and prayers go with Bro. Ryan and Sis. Sheree Steffen as they traveled to Thailand to begin a year of language training in preparation to be long-term missionaries in Thailand. We will miss them but pray that many will come to know Jesus as their Lord and Savior through their lives and ministry!

We wrapped up the online portion of our Center for Discipleship program on July 9. This summer was once again a special time of drawing closer to the Lord. We had 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 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 was 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, Les Cayes

Mike and Susie Walder

“Let’s pray.” It’s a common phrase we have heard all of our lives, whether around the table or at a church service. Prayer is a simple acknowledgment that he is Lord and we are not, that we can’t do anything without him, and that we need him now. Prayer is not natural to everyone, but most people will pray when in a life-or-death situation. Prayer has to be intentional and focused to be effective. It is easy to daydream during a prayer if you do not picture the Lord on his throne and the sweet communion you are having with him. In 1 Samuel 1 we have the example of Hannah moving her lips when she prayed, which is another good way to keep focused if you struggle with daydreaming.

Unfortunately, we have noticed that our prayers are much more spontaneous, much more direct and much more often on the mission field. God is everywhere and available at any time, but it’s up to us to keep the line of communication open!

We recently received an email from a brother on the HarvestCall board we have only met once several years ago. It included this encouragement: “In our small prayer group, I got the wonderful privilege to pray for YOU and your dear family. What a JOY to lift you up to ‘our Father which art in Heaven!’”

Here is an example of the way our brotherhood supports one another powerfully… through prayer.

“The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” James 5:16

Can you please pray for Haiti and the current situation resulting from the assassination of the recent president? It is a very challenging time, but we know God has a plan for the nations and is using every event to bring souls back to him. Besides all the fear the people have to endure, we have no idea how another election upheaval might disrupt missionary travel or the upcoming team season.

At this time Bro. Eric and Sis. Melanie Stoller are at the dairy farm, while Bro. Daryl and Sis. Deb Knobloch and Bro. Kurt and Sis. Julie Schrock and family have returned to the U.S. for about a month. Here is another wonderful opportunity for prayer.

We were thankful the recent hurricane that passed right below Haiti wasn’t as serious as predicted. It was a good reminder to be ready at any time because it came unusually early in the hurricane season.

Illinois, Belvidere

Darcy Steffen

I had the opportunity to spend some time on the east coast this past week. As we were sitting on the beach watching the waves, we noticed the tide starting to rise. Around the same time, a lifeguard started blowing her whistle at some fishermen who were at the tip of a peninsula. She was warning them to come in as there was a good chance they would quickly be stuck on an island with the rising water. The fishermen either did not hear her or were completely ignoring her. She had to crawl across the rocks in bare feet, risking her own safety for theirs. It reminded me of our responsibility to our sisters and brothers in faith. Are we paying attention as we are warned of dangers and looking out for the safety of our church body?
We are so grateful to Bro. Tyler Joos (Sis. Tonya, Bradford, IL) and family for finishing up our VBS week. They stayed all weekend and Bro. Tyler preached God’s Word to us on Sunday, as well. Their family was such an encouragement to us!

Our annual Sunday school picnic was held in the middle of July. We are so appreciative of Dave and Sis. Sheila McCoy’s hospitality as they hosted us at their home near Milwaukee. One of the highlights of the day was a scavenger hunt in which one student and one adult were paired together. My favorite thing about a small church is the unique opportunity to highlight intergenerational relationships!

We rejoice with Bro. Art and Sis. Marlene Mueller in the birth of their new granddaughter, Violet Jane. Adam, Tina, Harry, and Lyla Sauder welcome her home!

Bro. Rudy, Sis. Rosario, Nathan, Maryana, Olivia, and Nolan Troxel are planning to move to Milford, IN. We are rejoicing that God has led them and is providing for them, but we are very sad to see them go. They have been so good to our little church family, and we wish them God’s richest blessings!

We mourn with Bro. Don Kaufmann upon the death of his wife Sis. Glady Kaufmann. Our prayers are with him during this time of loss.

We rejoice with Hope Lehman (Bro. Andy and Sis. Jill) and Nathan Streitmatter (Elder Bro. Mark and Sis. Sara) who have given their hearts to the Lord.

“And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.” Isa. 65:24

**Illinois, Bradford**

**Becky Endress, Lena Stoller**

July tends to be a time of family vacations. Fewer pews are filled, and greetings are shared from many places. We’re happy when some of the July travelers come worship with us. This month some of those visitors served from the pulpit. May the Lord bless each one for sharing with us: Bro. Sam Manz (Sis. Shelby, Junction, OH), Bro. Isaac Wofford (Sis. Rachel, Washington, IL), and Bro. Jim Manz (Sis. Elizabeth, Junction, OH).

Tanners Orchard graciously welcomed our church for the annual Sunday school picnic on the last Sunday of June. Their spacious dining area and well-appointed playground provided a delightful evening for all ages. May the Lord bless Bro. Richard, Sis. Marilyn and their family for their hospitality.

Two of our brothers have celebrated birthdays this month. Bro. Raymond Klumpp (Sis. Eunice, dec.) has reached 100 years of age. Bro. Loris Stisser (Sis. Lottie) turned 97. Both of these dear ones are confined to their homes but they enjoy visitors, and they are thankful for virtual connection to church services. Their addresses: Raymond Klumpp, 434 Enterprise Drive, Bradford, IL 61421 and Loris Stisser, 100 Courtyard Blvd, Bradford, IL 61421.

Dustin Moody (son of Jenny Moody), one of our 2021 high school graduates, recently arrived in Ft. Lee, VA, for training as a member of the National Guard. When that is finished in November, he will be eligible for deployment. Our prayers go with him.

**Illinois, Champaign**

**Brent Young**

Our annual Sunday school picnic marked the end of the Sunday school year, and we will now take a short summer break. Though it was a challenging year for Sunday school, God was certainly faithful. The students’ enthusiasm was undimmed, and the teachers persevered.

Our students were enthusiastic for VBS as well. This year’s theme was ‘Mountain Moments with God’ and included lessons from Mt. Ararat, Mt. Sinai, Mt. Carmel, Golgotha, and the Mount of Olives. We very much appreciate all those that put so much effort into making VBS
possible. We extend appreciation also to Bro. John Bradle (Sis. Jill, Roanoke, IL) for bringing the Mount of Olives message on Friday evening.

**Illinois, Chicago**  
**Diana Eisenmann**

Thanks to our visiting ministers, Bro. Nathan Rassi (Sis. Michelle, St. Louis, MO) and Elder Bro. John Wiegand (Sis. Jane, Silverton, OR). We also appreciate the ministers who visited and presented topics for VBS. The VBS theme for preschool through eighth grade was “He’s Got the Whole World in His Hands,” and the theme for the Bible Class and adults was “God’s Provisions.”

Bro. Les Kaeb (Sis. Christine, Francesville, IN) taught us how “God Provides for our Daily Needs,” Bro. Clark Stoller (Sis. Cindy, Gridley, IL) shared that “God Provides Salvation,” and Bro. Randy Mogler (Sis. Evie, Washington, IL) presented how “God Provides the Holy Spirit.”

In June we finished up meeting online discussing the Guiding Principles Bible study. It was a wonderful way to explore the core principles of our beloved church and seek to apply them in our individual lives. We also enjoyed the opportunity to discuss these topics in small groups and learn more about one another at the same time. We appreciate those who worked hard to put this study together.

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

After missing last year, we are so thankful we were able to have VBS the third week of June! The theme this year was ‘This Is My Father’s World.’ It reminded us, children and teachers alike, how thankful we can be that this is our heavenly Father’s world. He is ultimately in control! We had three brothers come for evening topics for our Bible Class and young group. We learned so much from each evening.

Monday evening, Bro. Josh Zimmerman (Sis. Molly, Forrest, IL) talked to us on the Power of Prayer. He advised us to add praise to every prayer. How many times do we pray for our needs but forget to praise him for everything else he has given us? I have a saying posted in our home that goes like this, "What if God blessed us tomorrow with only the things we thanked him for today?" Sort of convicting, isn’t it? Do you thank him for health, the breath of life, the heartbeat in our chest, food, a shelter over our heads, people who love us? So many blessings we just take for granted! He is deserving of our praise!

Tuesday evening, Bro. Jeremiah Psinas (Morton, IL) talked to us about Suffering. He talked of Jesus suffering for us. So much of the time we think of things we are suffering with, or the suffering in this world. How much time do we spend thinking of how much Jesus loved us and suffered for each of us?

Thursday evening Bro. Joshua Martinez (Sis. Keyna, South Bend, IN) talked to us on The Role of the Church in a Believer’s Life. He talked of his life and the role the church played for him in learning about Jesus and having a relationship with him. What an encouragement to believers to be watching and willing to share Jesus with those who do not know him!

Bro. Kenny Weets spent time in the hospital and is back home. He and Sis. Myrna appreciates the prayers on his behalf as the doctors continue to monitor things. Sis. Wanda Maul spent time in hospital. We are thankful she can stay in the home of one of her daughters until she gains her strength back. We pray she feels all the prayers for her. Sis. Sandy Rudin had a brief medical issue which seems to be resolved now. We are thankful for God’s provisions for her. At this time, Scott Beer, is hospitalized with a serious blood infection. He and Debbie would appreciate prayers!

The Sunday school picnic is always an enjoyable time for the church to be together for food and fellowship. The children enjoy the activities planned by their teachers and the rest of us enjoy watching! May we all be planting seeds of the gospel in the lives of the younger! We appreciated Bro. Zach Anderson (Sis. Karla, Congerville, IL) and Bro. Josh Walder (Sis. Tina, Congerville, IL) and their families spending the Sunday with us and attending the Sunday school picnic. Brought
back memories of them attending when they were young! We thank Bro. Zach and Bro. Josh for their willingness to share the Word of life with us!

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

We were thankful and rejoiced when we heard that Erica Walder (Bro. Nathan and Sis. Denise) had answered God’s call to follow him! We pray for her as she starts building her spiritual house on the foundation of Jesus Christ! Since she has moved to West Bend, IA in the past year, we hope she feels many prayers going up for her from her “home” church!

“Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost.” Rom. 15:13

Illinois, Elgin
Amy Gasser

We thank Bro. Dale Frank, (Sis. Tina, Mediapolis, IA), Bro. Ted Schock (Sis. Heidi, Belvidere, IL), and Bro. Dean Steffen (Sis. Carol, Belvidere, IL) for ministering to us this month.

On June 27, a farewell hymn was sung for Sis. Katlin Schambach (Bro. Matt and Sis. Renee) and Shalise Steidinger, who have relocated to Taylor, MO.

A little girl, Emery Rose, was born to first-time parents, Dillon and Macy Kellenberger, on July 1. Her grandparents are Joe and Marily Mukite and Bro. Greg and Sis. Debbie Kellenberger.

Illinois, Eureka
Debra Blunier, Lavonne Schumacher

Recently we were reminded in a sermon that God’s Word is so precious to us:

“His word our souls does nourish; It is so sweet and pure, Gives faith and strength in conflict, All trials to endure.”
The Pilgrim’s Song, Zion’s Harp, #136

How good to know that God provides our spiritual food as well as the endurance for all trials, as we turn to him.

Also precious to us are our Sunday school students. The Sunday school picnic was June 27, and we were especially glad to gather together with teachers and students, as last year the picnic had to be canceled. We are thankful that the 2020-21 year of Sunday school could be in session nearly all of the usual Sundays.

We thank our visiting ministers, who brought us the Word. They included Bro. Randy Mogler (Sis. Evie, Washington, IL), Bro. Kevin Schrock (Sis. Rachel, Congerville, IL), Bro. Arlen Leman (Sis. Denise, Forrest, IL), Elder Bro. Tony Manz (Sis. Denise, Junction, OH), and Bro. Ron Isch (Sis. Jane, Lamont, KS).

Lord willing, we look forward to testimonies and baptisms on August 7-8 of Doug and Lori Jean Wood, parents of Bro. Matt and Sis. Katie. If we are born again, we have a story that is unique to each of us, and we pray for the grace to share it whenever God creates the opportunity.

Our prayers go out at this time for Sis. Ruth Martin (Bro. Les, dec.), as she recently broke her wrist. Also we think of Bro. Tom Stoller (Sis. Edie), recovering from surgery and facing many treatments in the weeks and months ahead. Bro. Merle Rocke (Sis. Bev) also had surgery recently but is now recuperating at home. Sis. Dorothy Schmidgall (Bro. Marvin, dec.) was hospitalized and underwent surgery, but has
been discharged. Bro. Norman Rocke (Sis. Doris, dec.) had eye surgery, but is back home, too. We appreciate and pray for all the doctors, nurses, and medical personnel involved. Surely their knowledge and skills are part of God’s modern miracles of healing, though he alone can answer our prayers and knows what is best for each of us.

July 15 brought special joy, as Tatum Earl was born to Bro. Joe and Sis. Miranda Leman. He is welcomed home by big brothers Drew and Hudson. Grandparents are Bro. Ed and Sis. Ruth Leman and Bro. Sam and Sis. Luann Blunier.

**Illinois, Fairbury**

**Kati Meiss, Trish Steidinger**

Jesus, our tender Shepherd, is busy searching out wandering souls and bringing them back to the fold. We are so thankful for our recent converts, Jolyn Stork (Bro. Bill and Sis. Shay), Naomi Hartman (Bro. Ryan and Sis. Lori), Abram Moser (Bro. Jeff and Sis. Sara), Natalie Stoller (Bro. Jeff and Sis. Janelle) and Ellie Hartman (Bro. Mark and Sis. Judy). We rejoice and pray these dear souls will begin to build a firm foundation on the solid rock, Jesus Christ.

Bro. Kevin Moser, Bro. Neil Kaisner and Bro. Reid Zehr, along with Sis. Kati Meiss are our new Sunday school teachers. We offer them our prayerful support in their new duties. We pray special relationships may be formed with the students as they spend time teaching them the Word. At the same time, we thank our outgoing teachers, Bro. Darl Rassi, Bro. Jeff Stoller and Sis. Beth Steffen. May God bless you for your years of service.

On July 4, Sis. Kelly Waldbeser (Jim and Sis. Renae) and Bro. Colin Klopfenstein (Bro. Leon and Sis. Deb, Latty, OH), were united in Holy Matrimony. We wish them showers of blessings as they begin their married life together. We will miss Sis. Kelly as she moves away but know the Lord will be with them.

The Sunday of the wedding, our church was the fullest it has been in months, and the following weekend it was filled with many single guests for an invite weekend. It was wonderful to hear the rafters ring both Sundays with beautiful exuberant singing of a full church! What a blessing!

Visiting minister this month have been Elder Bro. Scott Schafer (Sis. Gigi, South Bend, IN), Elder Bro. Gary Sinn (Sis. Paulette, Latty, OH), Bro. Todd Sinn (Sis. Janet, Latty, OH), Bro. Barry Dietz (Sis. Rachel, Bradford, IL), Bro. Dennis Rassi (Sis. Diane, Austin/Bastrop, TX), Bro. Brian Waibel (Sis. Wendy, Champaign, IL), Bro. Dan Waiber (Sis. Pam, Cisnna Park, IL) and Bro. Aaron Luthi (Sis. Maria, Lamont, KS).

We had a beautiful afternoon for our Sunday school picnic on July 18. It is always an event the children look forward to. They enjoy the delicious charcoal-grilled burgers, the time of singing and playing organized games afterwards with their fellow students and teachers!

**Illinois, Forrest**

**Jessica Gerber, Marsha Lanz**

“And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!” Rom. 10:15

We thank Bro. Nathan Rassi (Sis. Michelle, St. Louis, MO) for being willing to share the gospel of peace with us.

There is rejoicing in heaven and here on earth over three dear souls that have recently turned to God in repentance. They are Kylee and Tucker Mueller (Bro. Jay and Sis. Jolene) and Micah Lanz (Bro. Mike and Sis. Marsha). May they continue to look to their heavenly father for guidance and grace.

Thankful for God’s work in their hearts, Loren Kaeb (the late Bro. Eldon and the late Sis. Stephanie), Warren Edelman (Sis. Cindy), Lyndon Schaffer (Bro. Erik and Sis. Michelle) and Ed Schrof (Sharon) were announced for peace and look forward to baptism.

Our thoughts are with those who have spent time in the hospital this month. We are thankful our Bro. John Schaffer (Sis. Sally) had successful knee surgery and pray his healing continues.

We rejoice with several families who welcomed in-laws this month. Sis. Shannon Teubel...
(Bro. John and Sis. Lavonne) was wed to Bro. Michael Bolliger (Bro. Tom and Sis. Jane, Tremont, IL). Annette Coffey, (Bro. Kevin and Sis Denise), married Andrew Heisner from Peotone, IL. May their hearts be bound with a threefold cord of love.

Our prayers are with our Bro. Kevin and Sis. Denise Coffey in the loss of her dear mother, Alice Anderson. May God comfort them during this time of sorrow.

**Illinois, Goodfield**

*Amy Hinrichsen, Judy Knapp*

"Ring the bells of heaven!  
There is joy today,  
For the wanderer now  
is reconciled...”  
*Ring the Bells of Heaven,  
Tabernacle Hymns, #202*

The angels in heaven were rejoicing on July 11 as four young souls were added to the fold. We welcome Bro. Cade Knapp, Bro. Job Knapp, Sis. Emrie Knapp, and Sis. Elle Knapp to our beloved fellowship. Cade and Emrie are the children of Bro. Ryan and Sis. Liz Knapp, and Job and Elle are the children of Bro. Josh and Sis. Carolyn Knapp. The Ryan Knapp family lived in Phoenix, AZ for several years, so it was very special to have Elder Bro. Herbie and Sis. Laurie Knochel from Phoenix here to help with this important work. Our dear Bro. Mike Grimm (Sis. Amber, San Diego, CA) also spent the weekend with us! We thank these dear brothers and their wives for their timely messages and invite them to return soon.

Along the same lines, we are rejoicing with Joan Zimmerman as she is desiring to be reconciled and has come to the foot of the cross in repentance. Her parents are Bro. Mike and Sis. Gretchen Zimmerman.

There is joy in the home of Bro. Craig and Sis. Marla Wiegand, as they were blessed to add Westin Arthur to their little family on June 17. He will be loved by siblings, Jase, Nelli, and Shea as well as grandparents, Bro. Art and Sis. Pam Wiegand, and Bro. Ron and Sis. Kary Wiegand.

Wedding bells were ringing as Bro. Roman Bauman and Sis. Ambria Herrmann were united together in holy matrimony on June 20. Their parents are Bro. Rick and Sis. Stacie Bauman and Bro. Ross and Sis. Kitty Herrmann.

On July 17, Maria Berardi became the bride of Jeremiah Smith. Parents of this dear couple are Bro. Randy and Sis. Elli Berardi and Darrell and Lisa Smith from Pekin, IL. We pray for God’s divine provision for both of these couples.

Our love and sympathies are extended to Bro. Luke and Sis. Jill Rocke and their family as Sis. Jill’s step-brother, Jeff Zimmerman passed away. Jeff was a resident at LifePoints in Morton.

Our dear Sis. Carol Martin had surgery and a bit of a setback, but is now back home. We pray she is gaining more strength as each day unfolds. We continue to lift her up in prayer as well as many others who are dealing with ongoing health issues. May God be with us all and fill us with joy and peace.

**Illinois, Gridley**

*Perry Klopfenstein*

We benefited by visiting ministers, Bro. Jeff Neihouser (Sis. Sue, Morton, IL), Bro. Blair Neihouser (Sis. Natalie, West Lafayette, IN), and Bro. Jeff Leman (Sis. Val, Bluffton North, IN). Also, during VBS, several ministers came to speak to the adult session in the sanctuary: Bro. Andy Kaufmann (Sis. Marie, Bloomington, IL), Bro. Arlen Leman (Sis. Denise, Forrest, IL), Bro. Nate Wiegand (Sis. Laura, Goodfield, IL), Bro. John Bradle (Sis. Jill, Roanoke, IL), and Bro. Mark Lindberg (Sis. Laura, Chicago, IL).

Sis. Lexi Stoller (Bro. Mike and Sis. Peg) was married to Bro. Daniel Knochel, (Elder Bro. Herbie and Sis. Laurie, Phoenix, AZ). Elder Bro. Tom Klotzle, (Altadena, CA) was here for the occasion. We wish this couple well in the days ahead, and thanksgiving is surely accorded to God for healing Bro. Daniel after a very serious accident, from which he recovered.

We offer sympathies to Bro. Larry Kiefer, over the loss of his brother, Kenneth Kiefer, of Florida.

This is to correct an error in the July issue with reference to a birth: A first child was born to Bro. Gideon and Sis. Harmony Moser on May 20. He was named Emmaus Lloyd. Our report
mistakenly referenced the parent’s last name as Slagel. I am sorry for this error.

**Illinois, Morton**  
*Annette Tanner*

“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.” *Psa. 119:105*  

We thank Bro. Blair Neihouser (Sis. Natalie, West Lafayette, IN) for sharing God’s Word with us on Father’s Day. It was good to see them and their family again, as they worshiped with us before moving to West Lafayette.

Many enjoyed the Sunday school picnic on June 27 to mark the end of another year. We appreciate all the effort our Sunday school teachers put into bringing our young people the teachings from the Holy Bible.

We welcome to our congregation Bro. Blake and Sis. Christine Stahl and their children Xander and Elly. They have moved here from Chicago, as Bro. Blake is the new Executive Director at LifePoints. We wish them God’s blessings as they worship with us.

We extend our deepest sympathy to four families who have laid a loved one to rest. Don Canalia of Arizona was the step-dad of Bro. Mike Furkin (Sis. Sandy). We thank Elder Bro. Craig Martin, (Princeville, IL), for his part in the funeral service for his aunt, Sis. Doris Michel (William Michel, Jr.). Surviving are her three sons: Scott (Carrie), Steven (Catherine) and William III, all of Morton. Tracey Robb of East Peoria was the sister of our Sis. Dawn Baer (Bro. Doug). We thank Elder Bro. Ron Messner, Bro. Matt Steffen and Bro. Randy Mogler for sharing the pulpit for the funeral service for Jeffrey Zimmerman who passed away at Apostolic Christian Timber Ridge. He is survived by his father and step-mother Bro. John and Sis. Inge Zimmerman, one sister Jody Shaw (Jeremy, Whitinsville, MA), one brother, John (Holly, Peoria, IL) a step-brother, Jason Zimmerman (Kim, Eureka, IL) and a step-sister Sis. Jill Rocke (Bro. Luke, Goodfield, IL). He was preceded in death by his mother Sis. Janis Zimmerman. May God comfort these dear families with his love and peace.

Celebrating Independence Day, July 4, on a Sunday seemed extra special this year as we enjoyed the freedom to return to our regular, before COVID-19, worship times and a longer lunch hour in which we now have more time to fellowship with members of our Morton church family and welcome more visitors. Let us never forget how fast these freedoms can be taken away from us, as we experienced in the past year and a half.

Our Bro. Fred Funk (Sis. Diane) spoke at our July Family Worship Night on the topic “Bible Basics-Old Testament Part 2” - a story of human history and God’s work in it. We were encouraged to learn from the lives of those who lived in those times. Many followed God’s direction and did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and many did not. Bro. Fred reminded us the main message is to prepare to meet our Lord.

“Word of Life, the fountain flowing  
Purely from the throne above,  
Life, and strength to him imparting,  
Who accepts the Word in love.  
As a blossom that is blighted  
From the sun’s own heat severe,  
Thirsting in the barren valley,  
Stoops to drink its waters clear.  
Full redemption is the promise  
Made to him who heeds the Word.  
They, who in their hearts retain Thee,  
Shall receive the great reward.  
In my heart I’ll strive to keep Thee,  
Word of truth, and strength, and love,  
Conq’ring as a sword in battle,  
Then I’ll wear the crown above.”  
*The Word of Life, Zion’s Harp #176*

**Illinois, Peoria**  
*Bonnie Bach, Crystal Wettstein*  

A beautiful June wedding day was enjoyed by Bro. Adam Streitmatter and Sis. Tori Stickling. Parents are Bro. Alan and Sis. Janet Streitmatter and Bro. Craig and Sis. Jacki Stickling.

Engagement for marriage was announced for Bro. Logan Sauder (Bro. David and Sis. Rachel) and Sis. Carli Leman (Bro. Herb and Sis. Lori, Washington, IL). It is encouraging to see the Lord’s hand at work when couples seek his will in their lives.

Bro. George Hoerr (Katie, dec.) is now in heaven after a lifetime of faithful service to the Lord. His wise presence will be
greatly missed. He is survived by his 12 children, George (Jeanne), Betty Downing (Ken), Bill (Linda), Fred, Bonnie DePalma (Charles), Ted (Carly), Gary (Rosalba), Matt, Mark (Shelli), Sara Borop (Jim), Sam (Jodi), and Annie Kellem. Surviving brother is Bro. John (Sis. Dot, dec.) and sisters Millie Moser, Florence Barkley, and Eloise Meister.

Family Night this month featured Sis. Sandy Fritzenmeier and her horse, Misty, at our Fellowship Hall for an outdoor lesson on how body language is important to horses and our Christian witness. It was a fun and unique way to think how our demeanor can impact those around us in a positive or negative way.

We hosted this year’s HarvestCall Proclaim and Serve conference. Over 500 attended to learn more about how our church is spreading the gospel and ways we can fulfill this mission in our daily lives. We want to thank all the speakers, presenters, attendees and Bro. Caleb Roecker on organizing this event so well. It was a true blessing.

Illinois, Princeville
Ruth Herrmann, Cherie White

“My country, tis of thee,
Sweet land of liberty,
Of thee I sing:
Land where my fathers died,
Land of the pilgrims’ pride,
From ev’ry mountainside,
Let freedom ring.”
America, Great Gospels, #306
Happy Birthday America!

Thus united And in concord Let us walk the path of life;
Hand in hand, O may love bind us For each other’s welfare strive.”
Unity, Zion’s Harp, #237

Bro. Peyton Martin and Sis. Morgan Knapp were united in holy matrimony in Washington, IL. Parents Bro. Larry and Sis. Tiffany Martin and Bro. Benj and Sis. Karen Knapp, (Washington, IL) welcome another son and daughter into their family circle.

“Each day I’ll do a golden deed, By helping those who are in need…”
A Beautiful Life, Hymns of Zion, #139

The Bible Class traveled to McAllen, TX for a week to help with disaster from a hurricane.

“The Sunday school is our delight,
We love it more and more;”
The Sunday School,
Hymns of Zion, #73

The youth always look forward to an afternoon of delicious food and activities at our annual Sunday school picnic.

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

Noah Herrmann has made his desire known that he wants to begin a journey with Jesus. Thankful parents are Bro. Dean and Sis. Dawn Herrmann.

“This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me.” Psa. 119:50

We lift those up in prayers who are recovering from surgery; Sis. Adele Martin and Sis. Kari Beutel (Bro. Steve). Sis. Helen Knobloch has been struggling with some health issues.

“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death…” Psa. 23:4

Bro. Gerald Martin (Sis. Louise), Sis. Arlene Martin, and Sis. Arlys Martin said goodbye to their sister Sis. Doris Michel (Morton, IL). Also, surviving are sister in laws; Sis. Esther Martin and Lorane Martin. Bro. Erik Givens (Sis. Debbie) lost his brother Jeff Givens (Paula, Peoria, IL). Bro. Jared Hanson’s (Sis. Julie) grandfather Wilfred Hanson passed away. May the precious memories of these loved ones, be a source of comfort in the days ahead.

“Should I restrain the Spirit’s course For fear of man so feeble?”
The Ministers Of The Gospel, Zion’s Harp, #113

We were blessed to have a visiting minister Bro. Joshua Martinez (Sis. Keyna) from South Bend, IN.

Illinois, Roanoke
Judy Sauder, Barb Schwind

This past month we finished our Bible studies on the Guiding Principles. Bro. Matt Feucht (Sis. Jennifer) led our study on June 16. Bro. Matt encouraged us that even though at times we feel like our lives have no purpose, the Lord says “…for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.” Isa 43:7. We see God’s value in each individual as we joyfully reflect Jesus’ peaceful spirit. All are equally valued by God. “For we are his workmanship,
created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” Eph. 2:10.

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” 2 Tim 3:16

On July 7, Bro. John Bradle (Sis. Jill) led our study on the guiding principle: “The Bible is true, timeless and inspired of God.” Bro. John reminded us that the purpose of the Word is to comfort, correct, convict, and call believers. We are an epistle read by others. We should be inspired by scripture as we go forth with the gospel. Bro. John encouraged us to live out the gospel by reflecting Christ.

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

On July 14, Bro. Sam Bertschi (Sis. Marjorie) led our study “We freely give as we have freely received, recognizing our lives and resources belong to God.” Bro. Sam encouraged us to be Holy Spirit filled and motivated to give freely of our resources out of our deep devotion to our Lord who has freely given us salvation and all things that we need. We thank these brothers for their timely and uplifting exhortations.

Richard Aeschleman of Mishawaka, IN, passed away on June 8. He was a brother to Sis. Mary Lou Martin. Simeon Bates (Virginia) passed into eternity on July 16. He was the father of Bro. Steve Bates (Sis. Diane). We extend our love and deepest sympathy to these dear families in their loss.

Bro. Clayton Hartter (Bro. Brad and Sis. April) left to go to Mexico to help with CVE’s summer program. We pray for God’s blessings on Bro. Clayton in this important work.

Our annual Bible Class senior breakfast was held June 20. It’s always a special morning of reflecting back on our students and how they have matured in the ways of the Lord.

June 27 was our annual Sunday school picnic at the Roanoke Park. This closes out another year of Bible instruction for our youth. We are so thankful for all those that faithfully instruct our young people and ask that our Lord would bless each one.

We rejoice with Bro. David Bertschi (Bro. Sam and Sis. Marjorie), Bro. Dexter Hodel (Bro. Jonathan and Sis. Megan), Bro. Brock Martin (Bro. Chad and Sis. Brenda) and Bro. Alex Martin (Bro. Todd and Sis. Joy, Washington, IL) who gave their testimonies of faith and were baptized on June 26-27. We are so thankful for the Lord’s redeeming work in the hearts of these young men. May God richly bless them as they journey through life. Elder Bro. Harvey Kaeb (Sis. Judy, Gridley, IL) assisted our Elder Bro. Frank Sauder with the testimonies. Bro. Jedd Rocke (Sis. Marsha, Goodfield, IL) and Bro. Mark Lindberg (Sis. Laura, Chicago, IL) were our visiting ministers on Sunday.


We said farewell to Bro. Dick and Sis. Nelma Eastman who have moved to Morton, IL, and will worship with our church there. Bro. Josh Moser left to return to Antarctica for his employment. We will miss Bro. Dick and Sis. Nelma and Bro. Josh and pray for God’s blessings upon them in their transition and as they get settled in their new homes. We are thankful that Bro. Josh’s work is somewhat seasonal, so he will be returning home again at some time.

We are so thankful for and rejoice with Amanda Durand (Tom and Sis. Marsha) who has begun her walk with the Lord. We pray for God’s blessings upon Amanda in her journey of faith.

We welcome home John and Rachel (Fehr) Bull who have returned from the UAE where they have been serving. They plan to be in the United State for about six months. May the Lord bless them as they spend time with friends and family.
Bro. Steve and Sis. Shirley Leman celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on July 18. We wish them God’s rich blessings on this special milestone and throughout the coming years.

We continue to lift up Sis. Kim Luginbuhl (Bro. Andy), Dan Steffen (Mary Jane), Mike Fehr, Sis. Evie Hangartner (Bro. Gene) and Bro. Dave Schwind (Sis. Barb) in prayer for our Lord’s healing mercies. We are so thankful for Bro. Dave’s recent scans which showed no evidence of disease. To God be the glory!

**Illinois, Tremont**

**Debbie Aberle, Lucy Kaiser**

_Our God, He is Alive! “And God said to Moses, I AM THAT I AM:” Ex. 3:14_

Thank you to Bro. Kevin Schrock (Sis. Rachel, Congerville, IL) as he presented to us a topical lesson, “The Disciplines of Daniel.” We appreciated Elder Bro. Steve Ringger (Sis. Myra, Bluffton North, IN), Elder Bro. Mark Streitmatter (Sis. Sara, Bloomington, IL), and Elder Bro. Bruce Endress (Sis. Elizabeth, Bradford, IL) for doing a session on “A Woman of God in the Body of Christ.” May God bless all of you for serving us! Our Elder Bro. James Fehr presented the Spring 2021 Memorandum to us. We appreciate his love for all of us in Tremont!

We rejoiced to hear the engagement of Sis. Janelle Gottier (Guy and Sis. Beth Gottier, Rockville, CT) and Bro. Jason Widmer (Bro. Jim and Sis. Karen, Smithville, OH). May God richly bless Sis. Janelle as she leaves us, moving back to Rockville and then to Smithville. We have enjoyed having you worship with us!

Bro. Andrew and Sis. Kaitlyn Koch (and Jaylon) are rejoicing in the safe arrival of their daughter, Brynlee Shae. Her grandparents are Bro. Chuck and Sis. Cathy Koch, and Bro. Jedd and Sis. Marsha Rocke (Goodfield, IL). Bro. Klayton and Sis. Megan Fehr welcomed Reagan Marie into their hearts and home.

Thankful grandparents are Elder Bro. James and Sis. Brenda Fehr, and Bro. Marvin and Sis. Paula Wagenbach. May God richly bless both couples with his love and grace as they teach their little ones of God’s precious plan.

Bro. Michael Bolliger (Bro. Tom and Sis. Jane) and Sis. Shannon Teubel (Bro. John and Sis. Lavonne, Forrest, IL) were united in Holy Matrimony. Sis. Shannon has been with us for a few years with a job opportunity, and we are thankful that God has provided that she can stay with us! It is a beautiful thing to observe God work in lives! Thank you, Bro. Tim Wiegand (Sis. Christa, Leo, IN) for sharing God’s Word that Sunday.

The Aberle family and the Tremont congregation enjoyed hosting the Haiti Dairy annual fundraiser. Thank you for all who attended and supported this project! Our prayers continue for it and the Haitian people at this time!

**Illinois, Washington**

**Lillian Pfaffmann**

Our congregation was blessed with numerous visiting ministers this past month. Elder Bro. Craig Martin (Sis. Terri, Princeville, IL), Bro. Matt Knapp (Sis. Dana, Peachtree City, GA), Bro. Clint Beyer (Sis. Kara, Sabetha, KS), Bro. James Emch (Sis. Gina, Phoenix, AZ), Bro. Brent Kellenberger (Sis. Beth, Kansas City, MO), Elder Bro. Randy Kellenberger (Sis. Karen, Kansas City, MO), and Bro. Matt Gerber (Sis. Ruth, Ixtlan, MX). May our Heavenly Father be their rewarder for lending themselves in his service.

Two souls were brought into the church recently, Kandace and Carli Leman (Bro. Herb and Sis. Lori Leman) We pray they continue to dig and build a solid foundation on the Lord Jesus.

Newcomers making Washington their church are Bro. Adam and Sis. Cassie Graf. They are a pleasant addition to our church body.

Two more weddings and another engagement! Sis. Morgan Knapp was wed to Bro. Peyton Martin on June 20. Parents are Bro. Benj and Sis. Karen Knapp and Bro. Larry and Sis. Tiffany Martin, (Princeville, IL). Bro. Eric Hartter and Sis. Tori Sauder became one in the Lord on July 18th. Parents are Bro. Chris and Sis. Jill Hartter and Bro. Todd and Sis. Wendy Sauder, (Morton, IL). Sis. Carli Leman was announced to be married to Bro.
Logan Sauder, (Peoria, IL). Their parents are Bro. Herb and Sis. Leman and Bro. David and Sis. Rachel Sauder, (Peoria, IL).

Indiana, Bluffton
Suzie Fiechter, Liana Reinhard, Olivia Steffen

Summer has been busy for many of us! We realize how important it is to prioritize our time with God over all the fun and various plans we may have.

We rejoice with Joab Telusma as he pursues baptism while he is visiting the United States from Haiti. We congratulate Sis. Whitney Isch (Bro. Jim and Sis. Rachel) on her engagement to Bro. Zach Baumgartner (Bro. Greg and Sis. Missy, Indianapolis, IN). They look forward to an October wedding.


Our prayers are with Nancy Hill (Dave) after she underwent a surgery to have a tumor removed. She is recovering and we are thankful her cancer has not spread, and no more chemo is needed at this time. Sis. Pat Maller (Bro. Rod) has been in our prayers following her heart surgery. She appreciates the love and support of her church body!

Now that VBS is over our Sunday school students have advanced a grade. We are excited to now resume having a nursery Sunday school class!

Bro. Nathan and Sis. Rachel Mueller gave a presentation on their mission work in Papua New Guinea. May God continue to bless their efforts to make him known!

“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” Matt. 6:33

Indiana, Bluffton North
Deanna Brinneman, Rhonda Maller

“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.” John 14:16-17

We were blessed to have visiting minister Bro. Leland Plattner (Sis. Mary, Zapata, TX) share the pulpit on July 18. He reminded us that just as Christ’s character was built on the Father, so we must build our character on Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Bro. Leland was part of the Fort Sam Reunion. What a privilege it was to have those who served join our services. Following the afternoon message, our older Sunday school students honored each brother who attended the Fort Sam Reunion, as well as the widows who came, with a thank you and a gift. It was a blessing to all.

Many in the congregation were also blessed to attend the BN/BC VBS program. The students worked so hard and put on a delightful evening of song and worship.

Bro. Nathan and Sis. Rachel Mueller told stories and showed pictures of their work in Maliyali, Papua New Guinea. It was a special evening for all who attended.

“Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.” John 11:25-26

Our dear Bro. Jay Kipfer (Sis. Dorothy “Dot”, dec.) passed away on June 18. He has two daughters, Gloria Smithson (Franchon, Westport, CT); and Sheryl Mayne (Mark Longenberger, Bluffton, IN); one son, Kurt (Ingrid) Kipfer, Carmel, IN; and five grandchildren. He is also survived by a brother, Bro. Ned (Sis. Dixie, Bluffton, IN); two sisters, Karyl Smith (Elim, Warsaw, IN); and Nondes Costello, (St. Ann, MO); and one sister-in-law, Karen Kipfer, (Lima, OH).

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

We remain diligent in prayer for those who have suffered illness in our congregation, including Bro. Phil Hoover.
(Sis. Cyndee) and Sis. Tiffani Schladenhauffen who have been hospitalized recently. We are rejoicing that our Bro. Toby Steffen (Jayla), who has been battling cancer, was able to, once again, assist in song leading.

Many of our junior high boys attended the BN/BC boys camp held June 25-27. Between canoeing, games, skits, good food, and devotions, it was a wonderful, memory-making trip for all who participated. Bro. Chad Aeschliman (Sis. Claudia, West Lafayette, IN) gave a talk on Redeeming the Time.

There have been various Sunday school parties for our students, which, of course, are enjoyed by all.

We are rejoicing with Bro. Craig and Sis. Corinne Stettner who are happy to announce the engagement of their daughter, Sis. Ella to Bro. Klint Edelman, (Bloomington, IL). Bro. Klint and Sis. Ella are both serving at Isaiah 55 in Reynosa, MX, this summer. Bro. Alan and Sis. Wendy, (Bloomington, IL) are Klint’s parents.

**Indiana, Francesville**

**Jacki Huber, Connie Linback**

“Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.” Psa. 37:3-5

These verses came to mind when I sat down to type this article. At times I struggle to think of what to say and forget to wait patiently for the Lord to guide the way.

The following VBS speakers blessed us with words of wisdom regarding how to discern truth. Bro. Jeff Waibel (Sis. Margo, Leo, IN) “What is Truth”; Bro. Tim Lehman (Sis. Amber Taylor, MO) “Do We Need the Truth?”, Bro. Mark Reinhard (Sis. Angie, Bluffton, IN) “Truth in Today’s World”; Bro. Arlan Miller (Sis Katie, Gridley, IL) “Continuing Our Lives in Truth”. On Friday evening Bro. Chad Huber (Sis. Pam) presented the conclusion for the week followed by a program by the Elementary/Jr. High students. It was a joy to watch the VBS students present Bible verses and songs in praise of the Lord.

The Gateway Woods Auction is coming up on August 7, 2021, and many of our congregation are blessed to help in various ways.

Many of our congregation are taking part in the construction of the Lifewise Academy building project south of the West Central School.

A welcome home potluck supper for Sis. Gail Gutwein, who spent 40 years on the mission field, was held at the Fellowship Center July 18.

Layne Oliver was welcomed into the heart and home of Sean and Kenzie Pelsy. Layne Oliver’s Grandparents are Bro. Dale and Sis. Terri Pelsy.

Our prayers for healing are extended for Bro. Harold Fritz (Sis. Sherry) after his recent surgery. We also pray for Lisa Pedigo as she recently spent a short time in the hospital.

**Note of Thanks**

From Bro. Gene Huber Sr. (Sis. Barb) and Bro. Harold Fritz (Sis. Sherry) for all the prayers and messages of love extended to each of them during their illness.

**Indiana, Indianapolis**

**Edie Bollier, Valerie Kipfer**

“In his hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is his also. The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land. O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker.” Psa. 95:4-6

It’s that time of year when families are traveling, seeing the beauty of God’s creation, and spending time together before school starts again. We pray for their safety on the roads, and that they can take the time to appreciate God’s beautiful earth.

We recently finished a study on Discipleship, which has encouraged but also challenged us. We have been encouraged to keep Christ first and live a prayerful life of purity, reading the Word and contributing to the body of Christ by engaging our spiritual gifts. We have been challenged to become more Christ-like, be more intentional when we study the Word, be perceptive to serving the needs of others, and being accountable for the life we are living, so that others will see Christ in us.
“With longing all my heart is filled,  
That like Him I may be,  
As on the wondrous tho’t I dwell  
That Christ liveth in me.”

Christ Liveth in Me,  
Tabernacle Hymns, #173

Welcome to Bro. Denny and Sis. Kathy Meyer, who moved to Indianapolis recently from Bluffton, IN. We are so happy to have them join us, and they are now living closer to their children.

We rejoice that Cohen Levy, (Bro. Scott and Sis. Kate), has begun his walk with the Lord. May he feel God’s guidance, grace and love!

Bro. Zach Baumgartner (Bro. Greg and Sis. Missy) is engaged to Sis. Whitney Isch (Bro. Jim and Sis. Rachel, Bluffton, IN). May they continue to feel God’s leading as they prepare for their upcoming wedding.

Indiana, LaCrosse
Meagan Frank, Sharla Messner
“A Christian, now baptized,  
To me much grace is given.  
Why was this granted me?  
That I with Christ am risen!  
This is the holy aim;  
He who does this neglect  
Cannot in truth proclaim;  
“I’m one of God’s elect.””

Baptismal Hymn,  
Zion’s Harp, #43

We were so blessed this month to witness the baptism of our new sister in Christ, Jesslyn Gudeman (Bro. Owen and Sis. Nicole). We thank Elder Bro. Randy Beer (Sis. Deb, Milford, IN) for his labors that weekend.

Other visiting ministers this month were Elder Bro. Ted Steffen (Sis. Sandy, Alto, MI), Bro. Jon Pratt (Sis. Sharon, Valparaiso, IN), Bro. Doyle Frauhiager (Sis. Jane, Bluffton North, IN), Bro. Mark Wettstein (Sis. Karen, Lamar, MO) and Bro. John Lehman (Sis. Tamara, Wolcott, IN). We wish to thank them for their many efforts on our behalf.

Our prayers are with several in our community and church family who have lost loved ones or have spent time in the hospital undergoing surgery. May the love and healing of our heavenly Father surround each one!

We wish to thank our outgoing Sunday school teachers, Bro. Kurt Bachtold and Sis. Sandy Heinold, for their labors on behalf of our children. Our newly elected teachers are Bro. Brad Frank and Sis. Sharla Messner.

Indiana, Leo
Jan Beer
“For if we believe that Jesus died  
and rose again, even so them also  
which sleep in Jesus will God bring  
with him. For this we say unto you  
by the word of the Lord, that we  
which are alive and remain unto  
the coming of the Lord shall not  
prevent them which are asleep.  
For the Lord himself shall descend  
from heaven with a shout, with the  
voice of the archangel, and with  
the trump of God: and the dead  
in Christ shall rise first: Then we  
which are alive and remain shall  
be caught up together with them  
in the clouds, to meet the Lord in  
the air; and so shall we ever be  
with the Lord”. I Thess. 4:14-17

As this world becomes darker and darker with sin, this promise to true believers gives us the sure hope of deliverance at the return of our Lord. Be encouraged.

Karinne Klopfenstein (Bro. Mike and Sis. Denise), Emma Laukhuf (Bro. Mick and Sis. Lisa) and Baker Waibel (Bro. Jeff and Sis. Margo) have testified of repentance toward God and faith in the saving power of the blood of Jesus Christ. They desire to walk with us in fellowship and pursue baptism. We are thankful that these young people chose the right path in their youth, and we pray for them as they continue to grow in grace.

June 17 is the birth date of Tinley May Stieglitz born to Bro. Tyler and Sis. Abby Stieglitz. Bro. Loren and Sis. Rita Klopfenstein and Bro. Steve and Sis. Jane Stieglitz are the grateful grandparents of this little miss. Big brother Boden and sisters Parker and Kate complete this dear family. We pray God’s grace on them as they train up these children in the way of the Lord.

We are excited and grateful when another “usual” event is added back to our church schedule after being canceled due to the pandemic. Our Family Hymn Sing was restarted on Sunday evening, June 27. A sizable group gathered in the Fellowship Center to sing praises to God and to listen to our dear
Sis. Judy Gehring as she testified of God’s faithfulness to her. Her adoption story is filled with the evidence of God’s hand on her life. Thank you, Sis. Judy, for conquering your nervousness to bring us the reminder of how much God loves each one of us; and he has a plan for each life.

Another pre-pandemic church event soon to be reinstated is our monthly Wednesday Family Night. Pizza is served from 6:00 to 6:45pm, then 15 minutes for clean up before a family worship service starts at 7:00pm. May the experience of losing these events for a time give us renewed appreciation for the gift of fellowship. May God be glorified!

Our Sis. Marlise Stieglitz safely returned from Brazil on July 6 after caring for her aged uncle and aunt there. She had to make the return trip alone, but the Holy Spirit was her faithful companion. She had a rich experience learning of their mission, and we know God will bless her for her kind service to them.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to our Peoria congregation and HarvestCall for hosting and preparing the Proclaim and Serve missions conference on July 9-10. It was a well-organized, informative, God-honoring event. It was a time of encouragement, enlightenment and spiritual refreshment. All thanks and praise to God.

Gateway Woods continues to be a source of new people worshiping with us in Leo. It is a little sad that the summer volunteers come and go so quickly that we don’t really get to know them. Bro. Dawson Finch and Bro. Harlan Kupferschmid have positions that keep them here the entire summer, and we are enjoying getting to know them. In a more permanent position, Sis. Gabriella Wiegand (Bro. Chuck and Sis. Naomi, Denver, CO) has been hired as an Assistant Houseparent. She is a joy to learn to know, and we ask for prayers for her as she tackles this sometimes very trying job. Sis. Claire Berchtold from Princeville, IL has been a Gateway Woods teacher, but she is leaving us this month to marry Bro. Joe Metz, currently living in Champaign, IL. We wish this couple God’s direction and blessing as they establish their Christ-honoring marriage. The young people bring energy, joy and love to our fellowship, and we treasure their position in the body of Christ. May God’s grace abound in their lives.

Family Camp was held July 8-11 at Quaker Haven, North Webster, IN, amid threatening weather. Intermittent rain showers were present most of the days, with a more serious rainstorm Saturday evening. The campers we spoke with said they preferred being in the rain rather than enduring the usual heat and humidity; a pleasant perspective to have! We pray expectantly for the campers to have made or strengthened their relationship with other campers and with Jesus Christ.

Our thanks is extended to the Rittman, OH, congregation for preparing to host the General Conference in early August. A lot of time and work is required to host this event, and we appreciate all their efforts. Our prayers continue for the Elder Body to feel the Holy Spirit’s guidance as they gather to discern God’s will for important matters in our denomination. May we all be faithful in “Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” Eph. 4:3.

Indiana, Milford
Heidi Beer, Anne Wilson

The abundance of lakes in our area has brought visitors most Sundays. We are always thankful for each one that comes to worship and spend time with us! Our annual church picnic was held this past month. Praise be to God for the sunshine filled evening that appeared after a long rainy day which permitted kids to play games and burn energy outside together.

God has shown us once again the miracle of a tiny healthy baby boy. We are rejoicing with Bro. Aaron and Sis. Alyssa Beer who welcomed Roman James into their family on June 27. He is adored by his big brother Khye. Thankful grandparents include Elder Bro. Randy and Sis. Deb Beer and Bro. James and Sis. Jennifer Kieser (Congerville, IL).
We are thankful that Sis. Sandy Beer (Bro. Lee) had a successful gallbladder surgery and continue to pray for a smooth and speedy recovery. Our friend George Lehman continues on his cancer journey and we request prayers on his behalf for a healing miracle, and that he would greatly feel God’s presence each day.

Indiana, Remington
Jenni Honegger, Marcella Tyler

We want to say a fond farewell to Bro. Nelson Knobloch (Bro. Neil and Sis. June) as he is relocating to Kansas City, MO for employment. Bro. Nelson has added so much to our fellowship through the years, and he will be missed! Please pray for him as he begins this new chapter.

We are thankful that we have been able to take yet another step towards normalcy this month by resuming our joint Wednesday night services with Wolcott. What a joy to once again meet and greet our Wolcott brethren each week!

Elder Bro. Dan and Sis. Jenna Kilgus welcomed a new grandson this past month! Little Westin Zane was born to Bro. Kent and Sis. Alicia Schlatter (Toledo, OH) and will add even more joy to family gatherings.

Please pray for Bro. Dan Stoller (Sis. Deb) and Bro. Rolyce Scheitlin (Sis. Lori) as they have both been surgery patients this month. May God grant them healing.

Our thoughts and prayers go with Bro. Dana Nieman (Sis. Lea), Sis. Lori Scheitlin (Bro. Rolyce), and Sis. Patti Bahler (Bro. Kurt) this month as they all mourn the loss of loved ones. Bro. Dana’s grandmother, Sis. Delphine Nieman (Bro. Charles, dec., Smithville, OH), and Sis. Lori and Sis. Patti’s brother, Bro. Doug Knobloch (Sis. Kathy, dec., Lester, IA), both went to be with the Lord. May God grant each one comfort as they grieve and adjust.

Indiana, South Bend
Joshua Martinez

“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” Acts 4:12

We always appreciate visitors who make us a part of their vacation plans! On July 4, Bro. Fred Dietz (Sis. Shaena, Elgin, IL) and his family visited us and shared the Good News from the pulpit. Our prayers for healing were for Bro. Garrett Kupferschmid (Sis. Bethany), who suffered a mild stroke, but was able to walk into church a few days later! We are inspired by his cheerful attitude, determination, and ask the Lord for continued healing!

We held our VBS this year on July 12, 14 and 16. This year’s theme was “In Christ Alone.” We wish to thank Bro. Jeremiah Psinas (Morton, IL), Bro. Jeremy Frauhiger (Sis. Sally, Bluffton North, IN), and Bro. Caleb Schafer (Sis. Laura, Indianapolis, IN) for blessing us with their Spirit-filled messages! We give thanks to the VBS Committee, the ministers, teachers, grandparents and parents who served, taught and inspired our children!

On July 18, we held baptisms and added three “precious jewels” to our church family treasure chest! We welcome Sis. Christy Langhofer (Bro. Craig and Sis. Rachel), Bro. Jesse Langhofer (Bro. Brad and Sis. Becky), and Bro. Martin (“Marty Jo”) Martinez (Bro. Joshua and Sis. Keyna) into the fold! May the Lord bless Elder Bro. Dan Kilgus (Sis. Jenna, Remington, IN) for assisting our Elder Bro. Scott Schafer with the weekend’s joyful ceremonies! To God be the glory. Great things he has done!

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

Indiana, West Lafayette
Abbie Gramm

In 1 Kings 19, Elijah had just escaped a harrowing, traumatic experience with King Ahab and Queen Jezebel by traveling a 40-days journey to Mt. Horeb. He was hiding in a cave for the sake of his life. The Lord came to him asking, “What are you doing here?” Elijah responded that though he had striven to do righteously, the people of God had not changed, and he was left alone to follow God.

“And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord. And, behold, the LORD
passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake: And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice. And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah? And he said, I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away. And the LORD said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus...”. 1 Kings 19:11-15

Did you catch that after Elijah had heard the still small voice, God asked him the same question, and Elijah responded with the same answer. And God’s response? Go back the way you came. Go back to what was excruciating and terrifying. Go back and risk your life. That does not make sense to our earthly minds or flesh, yet it leaves us with some questions. Are we letting pain and what has happened to us in the past stop us from following God? What is God patiently nudging you toward? How is God revealing himself to you? What is God asking you to face and not to run from? As always, God shows himself faithful in finishing the conversation with the reassurance that Elijah was not alone because God had reserved 7,000 in Israel who had not succumbed to idolatry. How is God affirming his promises in your life?

This month, we were able to witness the testimony of God’s power and faithfulness and the baptisms of converts Joshua Meister, Micah Meister, and Liam Virkler. Elder Bro. Dan Kilgus (Sis. Jenna, Remington, IN) assisted.

Bro. Gerry Waibel (Sis. Marcia) had liver/gallbladder surgery unexpectedly. He is home again recovering and appreciates prayers.

Sunday school is on July break, and we had our Sunday school picnic. Until August, our second service is slightly abbreviated and conducted with the youth in mind.

Indiana, Wolcott

Brittany Gerber, Luann Gerber

We were blessed to be able to have our annual Sunday school picnic this year on June 27. We are so thankful for our teachers and all that they do for our students!

Our Sis. Nancy Christopher has won her race and went home to be with her Savior. Our prayers are with her sons, Tony and Brad Christopher, and her sister, Sis. Karla Bahler.

We are also praying for our Sis. Shari Schwab with the passing of her sister, Diane Moser.

Our prayers have been with Marie Blume as she recovers from a recent surgery.

Iowa, Bloomfield

Kendra Wettstein

We thank visiting ministers Bro. Mark Wettstein (Sis. Karen, Lamar, MO), Bro. Brad Funk (Sis. Laura, Garden Grove, IA), Elder Bro. Tom Waldbeser (Sis. Sue, Peachtree City, GA), Elder Bro. Marvin Dotterer (Sis. Nancy, Forrest, IL), Bro. Jason Dotterer (Sis. Lynn, Forrest, IL ), and Bro. Jonathan Hodel (Sis. Megan, Roanoke, IL) for sharing God’s word with us. May God bless them for their efforts.

Blake and Whitney Wettstein are thankful for the safe arrival of Raelynn Shea. Thankful grandparents are Bro. Lloyd and Sis. Carol Wettstein, Scott and Brandi Moore, and Brent and Alyssa Madden.

Prayers are with Sis. Deb Metzger and Sis. Charity Scheitlin as both reside at the Bloomfield Care Center. The address for both is 800 N. Davis St. Bloomfield, IA 52537

Iowa, Burlington

Marilyn Anderson, Angela Steiner

Psalm 73:28 is inspiring. “But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord God, that I may
Every circumstance we walk through, even in daily life, gives us an opportunity to choose either trust or fear. Committing and surrendering our concerns, worries and life-happenings to the Lord is a trust that glorifies God. Dwelling on the “what-ifs,” and allowing our minds to be captured by anxious surmising is a fear that glorifies the devil. Oh, for grace to trust him more!

Spending time with his holy Word is a powerful tool to prepare us to choose trust. We were appreciative of several visiting ministers this month that served on the pulpit and encouraged us in that. Thank you to Elder Bro. Jon Schmidgall (Sis. Julie), Bro. Mark Schmidgall (Sis. Sally), and Bro. Dale Frank (Sis. Tina), all from Mediapolis IA, for visiting and allowing God to use you. We also really enjoyed having Bro. Ryan Schock (Sis. Melanie, Bloomfield, IA) expound the word to us on a Wednesday evening. May God bless you each one and may you always feel welcomed back!

Our Burlington and Mediapolis church families shared a special evening with a presentation regarding local opportunities to serve. When we stop to look around, there are so many needs even in our own little communities. May we seek to “declare all thy works” as we offer ourselves to be used of him.

As our Burlington custom is, our Sunday school sessions have paused for a summer break and will resume in August. We trust that families will still gather around in worship and draw young hearts to God at home as well as in church.

We are rejoicing and praising God as Libby Schulz and Providence Steiner have made the ultimate choice to trust God and draw near to him in repentance! We love both of these young women and pray for God to grant them grace for overcoming each day that he may continue to be glorified.

Iowa, Elgin
Maria Rocke

“At Home, ‘tis well!
With God in close relation,
The soul forgets the sorrow it has borne,
With pains o’ercome on that bright, golden morn,
Rejoices in our God’s sublime salvation.”

At Home “tis Well!,
Zion’s Harp, #170

Albert and Trudy Hanson

have our sympathy and prayers in the passing of Albert’s brother, Paul Hanson.

Sis. LaVerne Butikofer, 85, was called to her heavenly home on June 22. We extend our love and sympathy to her family; Bro. Albert, husband of 54 years; her children, Tom (Darla, Clermont, IA), Sis. Betty Getz (Bro. Kent), Sis. Sandy Knobloch (Bro. Jim, West Bend, IA), Bro. Jim (Sis. Diana, Iowa City, IA), Gene Butikofer, and Heidi Butikofer (Elgin, IA); and to her grandchildren and extended family as well.

We rejoiced with the angels in heaven with the news of Oren Getz (Bro. Kent and Sis. Betty) turning his life to the Lord in repentance. We pray Oren will continue to be lead in the ways of truth.

Our Sunday school picnic was held this month at Backbone State Park. It was a beautiful evening, and we’re thankful for the efforts of the teachers who made it extra special for the children.

We welcome Sis. Char Dietz (Bradford, IL) who has been worshipping with us this summer as she volunteers in Rochester, MN.

Our visiting ministers this month include Elder Bro. Lowell Moser (Sis. Karen, Morris, MN), Bro. Kevin Fehr (Sis. Lonnie, West Bend, IA), Bro. Jim Butikofer (Sis. Diana, Iowa City, IA), Bro. Joe Gerst (Sis. Connie, Iowa City, IA) and Bro. Kevin Banwart (Sis. Sandy, West Bend, IA). We sincerely thank each one for their part in serving us.

Iowa, Garden Grove
Laura Funk

Greetings from hot, humid southern Iowa. The Lord has blest our community with beautiful rain showers! Everything is green and growing. Mowing lawns is a weekly activity!

Sharing the gospel message with us this past month was Bro. Matt Steffen (Sis. Deanna, Princeville, IL), Bro. Tyler Joos (Sis. Tonya, Bradford, IL), and
Bro. Kent Levy (Sis. Holly, Morton, IL). We are thankful there are those willing to travel and share God’s word.

There are some in our congregation or members of their family suffering afflictions of the body. We pray God’s nearness to each patient and those caring for them.

We pray for the elders as they meet and share their concerns. Shepherding “the flock”. Am I getting close to the edge of the path? Are others following me? A sobering thought if my example is scattering “the flock”.

**Iowa, Iowa City**

**Diana Butikofer**

It was a blessing to formally welcome Sis. Jenna Gerst (Bro. Tim and Sis. Melisa) into God’s family following her baptism on July 11. Elder Bro. Jon Schmidgall (Sis. Julie, Mediapolis, IA), Bro. Aaron Frank (Sis. Sharla, Elgin, IA), Bro. Andrew Klumpp (Sis. Rachel, Bradford, IL), Bro. Jon Pratt (Sis. Sharon, Valparaiso, IN), and Bro. Joel Troxel (Sis. Amy, LaCrosse, IN) were our visiting ministers that weekend and all shared the Word, either from the pulpit or in Sunday school.

We were blessed to be served Holy Communion the same Sunday evening by our Elder Bro. Jon Schmidgall and our ordained deacon Bro. Joe Gerst. It was good to be reminded of Christ’s suffering and death for us in our sinful state. May the Lord bless all the efforts put forth that weekend.

We are thankful Wyatt Butikofer (Bro. Jim and Sis. Diana) has found peace with God and man and awaits baptism.

Congratulations to Kyla Butikofer (Bro. Jim and Sis. Diana) and Jonathan Reinhard (Bro. Doug and Sis. Elizabeth, Junction, OH) on their engagement. We pray for God’s blessings as they look to Him to guide their future.

All college students in the Cedar Rapids and Iowa City area and their families are invited to join us Sunday, September 19 for our College Student Welcome picnic after church services. Please let Sis. Connie Gerst know at 319.310.8684 if you plan to attend.

**Note of thanks:**

The family of Bro. Jim and Sis. Diana Butikofer would like to thank everyone for their kind words, deeds and prayers following the death of our Mom and Grandma Sis. LaVerne Butikofer (Bro. Albert). A special thanks to the congregation of Elgin, IA for their loving help and support of our family both before and after she passed on!

**Iowa, Lester**

**Kristi Knobloch, Lois Mogler**

We said farewell to two dear couples. Bro. Thad and Sis. Dayra Indermuhle have moved to Akron, OH to continue education. Bro. Tristan and Sis. Chelsea, Kaiden, Jaxon and Brooke Kuenzi have returned to Silverton, OR after being with us for a number of years. While we will miss their presence in our midst, we know they will be welcomed additions to both congregations.

Visiting ministers who shared our pulpit this month were Bro. Dave Lanz (Sis. Tami, Mediapolis, IA), Bro. Seth Hartter (Sis. Brenda, Burlington, IA), and Bro. Darin Massner (Sis. Twila, West Bend, IA). We appreciate their willingness to share God’s word with us.

Our sympathy is extended to Sis. Shirley Nester (Bro. Eugene, dec.) as her sister-in-law, Sis. LaVerne Butikofer (Bro. Albert) passed away in Elgin, IA. Doug Knobloch passed away after battling cancer. We are so thankful that Doug found the grace to repent in his last days and that God is a merciful Savior. Our prayers of comfort go out to his daughters, Candra Knobloch and Jessica Drewes both of Rock Rapids, IA, his father Bro. Dale (late Sis. Mary, Lester, IA), his siblings, Karen Glammeier (Ray, Sioux Falls, SD), Mike Knobloch (Bonnie, Inwood, IA), Sis. Lori Scheitlin (Bro. Rolyce, Remington IN), Bro. Stan Knobloch (Sis. Dawn, Lester, IA) and Sis. Patti Bahler (Bro. Kurt, Remington, IN).

It seems there are always those who battle failures of the body. Little Alethea Metzger (Grant and Becky) was hospitalized and is getting along better now. Bro. Dwight Mogler (Sis. Donna) and Sis. Vera Knobloch both recently had surgery and hopefully they will regain strength without setbacks.
Joining their lives together were Janel Knobloch and Jake Schmitt on July 3. Janel is the daughter of Sis. Chalea Knobloch (Bro. Vern, dec.). We wish them God’s richest blessings as they establish their home.

We are thankful to report that Addison Metzger (Bro. Jerome and Sis. Jana) found the grace to repent and now has peace with God and man.

“What joy I feel, what peace is mine
As I my All to Thee resign!”
Trust and Confidence,
Hymns of Zion, #259

Iowa, Mediapolis
Laura Kuntz, Janet Lanz

“I will be with thee.” This is the verse that we have heard from the lips of preschoolers at the VBS program for over 35 years. It is said without inhibition and with such childish delight and confidence, that we can’t help but smile. Surely God in heaven must look down in pleasure to see such young and tender hearts being taught to trust him completely. Sometimes, when the way seems gloomy, I hear those sweet little voices speaking those five simple words in unison, and they bring peace to my soul.

We had an interesting and informative evening when we listened to some of our local brethren present the various outreaches that are in operation here within our Mediapolis congregation. It really impressed on me the importance of being Christ’s hands and feet and reflecting his character on people who have not known the comfort of abundant love as we have.

Peace, peace, wonderful peace. We have two converts who have been announced for peace in the past month. Clay Buster (Jessica) and Sam Lanz (Bro. Keith and Sis. Tonya) have expressed peace in their hearts and are looking forward to giving their testimonies to the brotherhood, followed by baptism. How thankful we are for each soul that comes to taste of the mercies of the Lord. We long for our pews to be filled to overflowing!

Singing is such an important part of our worship service, and we are thankful that Bro. Jared Schmidgall (Sis. Chloe) has been selected as our newest song leader. After the absence of singing during the pandemic, we have a new appreciation for raising our voices together in honor and praise.

Our Bro. Dave Wyss was laid to rest recently. He died one day short of his 89th birthday. We are thankful that Bro. Dave found his salvation in recent years, and that his faithful wife, Sis. Kathy (dec.) was able to witness his conversion. He is survived by his children: Dan (Dana Lu Royer), Rick (Carol), Terri Hutcheson (Jay), Tom (Brenda), and Roger (Sandra), as well as several grandchildren.

We also extend our sympathy to Sis. Norma Massner, as she has laid to rest her brother, Hartzell Hillyard. We pray that good memories and the love of those around them can comfort these families in the future.

We would like to thank our visiting ministers who filled our pulpit this past month. Bro. Matt Steffen (Sis. Deanna, Princeville, IL) Bro. Troy Metzger (Sis. Gwen, Lester, IA) and Bro. Greg Fehr (Sis. Denise, West Bend, IA) were Spirit filled as they relayed the gospel message to us.

Iowa, West Bend
Jenny Banwart, Karen Schmidt

We appreciate the ministry and encouragement of visiting ministers: our Elder Bro. Rod Bajema (Sis. Sue, Lester, IA), Elder Bro. Lowell Moser (Sis. Karen, Morris, MN), Elder Bro. Jon Schmidgall (Sis. Julie, Mediapolis, IA), Bro. Dallas Massner (Sis. Christy, Burlington, IA), and Elder Bro. Curt Frank (Sis. Lyla, LaCrosse, IN).

Sis. Rachel Messner (Bro. Michael) has spent time in the hospital, and we are very thankful that she is back home and on the road to recovery.

“When a Christian dies, Precious is the prize!”
The Death of a Christian,
Hymns of Zion #248

Bro. Jim and Sis. Sandy Knobloch are grieving the loss of Sis. Sandy’s mother, Sis. LaVerne Butikofer (Bro. Albert, Elgin, IA).

We rejoice with Bro. Rodene Alce as he gave his testimony and was baptized. Bro. Rodene grew up in Haiti and we enjoy having him as part of our congregation.
Ashlyn Banwart (Bro. Marc and Sis. Jami) is engaged to Thad Fogarty (Tim and Dixie, West Bend, IA). Additionally, Colman Grimm (Bro. Jordon and Sis. Ann) and Isabell Gehrt (Mike and Kim, Mallard, IA) are engaged. We wish both couples many blessings and pray they will look to God for guidance as they prepare for marriage.

Japan, Shioda & Tokyo
Marie Inoue, Rachel Witzig

“To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:” Eccl. 3:1

A dear sister of the Shioda church, Sis. Masami Iwama, 96, passed away June 18. In recent years, she made her home in Kyushu, the southern island of Japan, where she was lovingly taken care of by her daughter’s family. “Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.” Psa. 116:15. Elder Bro. Mark Bahr quoted this verse as he commented on her death. He and Bro. Akihiro Ito of the Shioda church, along with several others, often made trips by plane to visit her. We are thankful that she is resting in the arms of Jesus and are prayerful for her loved ones during this time.

Our Tokyo and Shioda congregations look forward to three days of gathering Sunday school and English students for our annual English VBS. Many church members, as well as friends from the community, joyfully anticipate the opportunity to share the Gospel through English games, crafts, and songs. We trust that it is the Lord who opens hearts and minds to his truth and love, and we are privileged to join his invitation to share him with children who have not grown up in religious homes.

Kansas, Bern
Leigha Rokey, Rita Menold

Greetings from the Midwest! It’s been a beautiful summer here in Kansas, and it already seems as if fall will be knocking on the door soon. There is such a beauty in each change of season! We are so very thankful that Alaina Strahm (Bro. Adrian and Sis. Harriet), and Sarah Rokey (Bro. Todd and Sis. Sheila), have answered the call to serve Jesus, and desire a change of heart! It seems to put a happy spring to our step when we hear of sinners surrendering at the foot of the cross.

“Jesus saith until him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” John 14:6

Our Elder Bro. Brad Strahm recently shared the Spring Memorandum with our congregation. We so appreciate all the time, love, and energy our elder brothers put into serving and nurturing our congregations across the many miles.

Love and prayers to each of you!

Kansas, Ft. Scott
Janelle Wuthrich

“Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” Eph. 6:11

The armor of God was the topic of our VBS this past month. It was good for all of us to be reminded of how important every single piece of the armor is and how we need to continually put each piece into practice so that we are ready for whatever comes our way. We thank all those who had a part in making the day a success for the students.

Our congregation is once again enjoying outdoor Wednesday evening singings during the summer months. This was started last year as a way to continue gathering together during the pandemic and has truly become a blessing for many of us. We especially appreciate the efforts of the Lamar brethren who frequently make the trip to join us for the evening of singing and fellowship.

We were also blessed to be able to share an evening of hymn singing with others from the community in Fort Scott recently when we were invited to sing at a weekly gathering downtown. It was a joy to have so many others singing the songs we know and love right along with us, and we pray it was a blessing for everyone who took part.

Sis. Debbie Banwart and Sis. Betty Lemons have both spent time in the hospital this month and we pray for the Lord’s healing mercies upon both of them.

We have been blessed to have several visitors this past month and we heartily welcome any who
are traveling through the area to join us, whether for Sunday or Wednesday evening.

**Kansas, Kiowa**

*Janice Bahr, Millie Frieden*

God, give me eyes that I might see the work that can be done by me; God, give me ears that I might hear the cry of those who need me near. God, give me lips that I might speak comfort and peace to all who seek; God, give me a mind that I might know how to help those who need me so. God, give me hands that I might do some large or simple task for you; God, give me a prayer that I might pray thy help and guidance every day. And this one thing, all else above; God, give me a heart that I may love.

*Unknown*

We had the great privilege of having the traveling VBS young people share a weekend with us this past month. Not only did they teach our youth from the Word, and do crafts, they helped do some things for some local people here in Kiowa. Then on Sunday morning, they taught our Sunday school classes. There were two young brothers in the group and three young sisters. I have no idea if they realize the inspiration they are to our young people, but I do. When I was growing up, there was a group of young Christian sisters who were an inspiration and guiding light to me. Their joy and love for the Lord made me want what they had. Our parents raised us to love and respect our God, and I will be forever grateful for that, but to see and be included in the joy, love and peace of those young Christians was truly a wonderful experience. May God richly bless these young people for the time and effort they shared with Kiowa, Wichita, and Lamont, who joined us for the day, but also for all the other churches they traveled to and shared their love for God.

We would like to thank Bro. Ryan Hoer (Sis. Joy, Princeville, IL) and family, for sharing the gospel and fellowship with us one weekend this month. Also, to Elder Bro. John Lehman (Bern, KS) for sharing a Sunday with us. May God bless those who give of their time to bring the Word of God to our small churches, and also share the pleasure of their company with us.

"Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward." Psa. 127:3

We extend our love and prayers to Bro. Jake and Sis. Tifani Leman, who were blessed with a new baby girl in May. Her name is Ruby, and she joins brothers Connor, Cyrus and sister Maya, who dearly love this new little addition to their family. Elder Bro. Mike and Sis. Deb Leman, (Denver, CO) and Bro. Jeff and Sis. Janice Bahr, (Kiowa, KS) are her blessed grandparents.

**Kansas, Lamont**

*Maria Luthi*

Summer is in full bloom and its abundance is a beautiful picture of the fruitful life we can live only by abiding in Jesus, the true vine.

Our PreK-6th grade students met this month for VBS and had a wonderful time learning lessons about Noah and the great flood he was spared from. Fittingly, it was a rainy day for the event and the students enjoyed crafts, stories, activities, and a meal together. It is precious to see these young ones so eager to learn about God and his grace toward us.

We wish to thank Elder Bro. Randy Kellenberger (Sis. Karen, Kansas City, MO) for sharing the Word and the Spring Memorandum with us this month.

**Kansas, Sabetha**

*Leanna Hartter, Whitney Hartter*

We are thankful for visiting ministers over the past month. Bro. Kevin Fehr (Sis. Lonnie, West Bend, IA), Bro. Kaleb Beyer (Sis. Angela, Washington, IL) Bro. Mark Dotterer (Sis. Kate, Eureka, IL), and Bro. Larry Bahr (Fort Scott, KS) shared the Word of God with us.

Ben Meyer (Silverton, OR) expressed that he is at peace with God and man. His parents are Bro. Alan and Sis. Colleen.

"Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat; because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Matt. 7:13-14
Greetings in the name of our precious Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I’ve recently been blessed to spend time with young groups from Denver, CO and Roanoke, IL. This reminds me of how thankful I am to have such a united church body throughout a large diverse country. Many people that I met at these events I had never talked to before, but our common beliefs and love for Jesus brought us together seamlessly. God’s love and reach has no bounds.

Many of our youth enjoyed the Kiowa VBS in June. It’s always refreshing to fellowship with the community there.

We thank Bro. Dave Hartter (Sis. Beth, Sabetha, KS) for visiting and preaching God’s word to our congregation.

Landon Metzger and I attended the Denver Invite on the weekend of June 26. The theme for the weekend was Hebrews 13:8 "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever." The circumstances of our life may change constantly, but God’s son and perfect sacrifice, Jesus Christ, is our only constant.

An awesome time of fun and fellowship was had when the Roanoke young group visited us this last weekend. We enjoyed spending time with them at Wichita attractions and a dinner/singing at the Metzger’s home. We greatly appreciate their efforts in organizing this visit and hope to see them again soon.

And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.” Rom. 15:14

One of the things I’ve been hearing and thinking about is how important it is to affirm our brothers and sisters. How encouraging to hear a sincere “I am persuaded of you…” Let’s be ready to encourage and acknowledge the good things in each other and so build each other up.

This has been a month of visitors and many opportunities to interact with brethren we don’t often see in Ixtlan. We were blessed to have Bro. Jose and Sis. Cathy Cervantes (Tecate, Mexico-Nazarean sister church) and their family and then Bro. Chad and Sis. Claudia Aeschleman (West Lafayette, IN) and their family. Both were a real blessing as they ministered the Word. We are also thankful to have Sis. Berta de Gonzalez back in Ixtlan.

What an encouragement to see practical demonstrations of goodness in the brethren. Sis. Carmen Garcia’s house flooded in the recent rains we’ve had, and it was heartening to see and hear of those that helped to move her to a different home and then to do the dirty work of getting rid of the mud and cleaning things up. It is a blessing to know none of us who are in Christ are alone in our struggles. It is good to remember that what we do for our brothers or sisters, we do it for the Lord.

Bro. Adam and Sis. Belinda Kaeb welcomed their second son, Theo James, on July 14. He joins his older brother, Owen. Thankful grandparents are Bro. Hartzel and Sis. Denise Kaeb and Bro. Bruce and Sis. Bonita Frank, both of Cissna Park, IL.

On July 17, we were thankful to host our first youth group gathering since COVID-19 at our town location. It was a blessing to meditate on Psalm 23 and play games together.

We have been enjoying the blessing of rain the last few weeks. After months of drought, the rainy season received an especially excited welcome this year and we are overjoyed to see the lush green grass and verdant mountainsides.

"Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I the LORD have created it.” Isa. 45:8

We pray that righteousness will also rain down upon this community and that we would continue to spread the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord. Join us in praying for the Lord’s work!
I chuckled when I looked back on last month’s article which began with a comment about our unusually warm and dry season. The following weekend many of us were driving the wrong direction for miles to escape the flooding over the roads as we left the Fellowship Hall on the last night of VBS. All the little reminders in our life about our limited perspective and unknown future continue to point us to the One who knows all and holds all in his sovereign hand.

The fathers and sons had a wonderful time at their annual campout over Father’s Day weekend. This tradition is such a blessing to dads and kids alike as they greatly anticipate it each year and then bring home many stories and stronger friendships.

VBS was a busy and joyful week as we served 75 children who learned about several world cultures and how there is one family, one race, and one Savior. Our daughter, who is sixteen, never knew life without her. I didn’t recognize how sick she really was and tried to do what a nurse is taught in nursing school, help the sick become better. She didn’t get better. Yes, she had a long healthy life for an indoor pampered cat. No, that doesn’t make her absence any less painful. I guess that what I have been reminded by this situation is that time moves quickly, and we do not pause often enough to reflect and enjoy the blessings we have. Since our life is as a vapor (James 4:14) we can cherish the days and loved ones (cats included) that the Lord has gifted us with.

We were thankful to have the installation service for Bro. Brian Blume into the pulpit ministry. We thank Elder Bro. Ted Steffen (Sis. Sandy, Alto, MI) who assisted our Elder Bro. Lucas Frank and Bro. Mark Bahr with the service. Our prayers have been and will continue to be with Bro. Brian, Sis. Cherise and their family as they transition into this new role.

Our heartfelt sympathy and prayers are with the family of Sis. Linda Reardon in her passing. We are thankful that she is safe in the arms of Jesus.

We recently had a transition in Sunday school teachers and welcome Bro. Caleb Ramseyer and Sis. Angela Gasser as new teachers.
The Sunday school is an important ministry in our church and we thank them and all of the other teachers for their willingness to serve and teach.

Bro. Quinton Young will be moving to the Atlanta area. It has been a blessing to have him as part of our church family and we will be prayerful for him as he enters this new phase of his life.

We were blessed to have several visiting ministers share the Word with us this past month. They include Bro. Justin Koch (Sis. Marcia, Washington, IL), Bro. Greg Stieglitz (Sis. Lisa, Indianapolis, IN) and Bro. Steve Stieglitz (Sis. Jane, Leo, IN).

Minnesota, Minneapolis
Brenda Messner, Renee Messner

Greetings of love in Jesus!

The weekend of June 26-27 was a special time for our congregation! Elder Bro. Duane Rocke was assisted by Elder Bro. Paul Messner (Sis. Jan, Winthrop, MN) in reading the Memorandum Saturday evening. That Sunday, we were also fortunate to have visiting minister Bro. Damon Knobloch (Sis. Stephanie, Morris North, MN) on the pulpit. What inspiring messages were brought forth as we installed two new ministers.

We have an obligation, and it’s our privilege, to lift Bro. Jamie Pelzel (Sis. Jodi) and Bro. Matt Saurer (Sis. Marti) and their dear families up in prayer as we call on them to minister God’s precious word.

Thank you to Bro. Dewayne Dill (Sis. LaRae and their wonderful family), for his 30 plus years, as he retires from the ministry. We have been blessed by all the gifts and many talents they have shared with us throughout the years!

Elder Bro. Curt Frank (Sis. Lyla, LaCrosse, IN) and Bro. Josh Zimmermann (Sis. Molly, Forrest, IL) were welcomed on a recent Sunday proclaiming God’s word.

Our precious faith is very special because of Jesus and his selfless love. For many months we have requested prayers and had helping hands in this ministry search. Thank you to whomever brought these concerns to our heavenly Father. We appreciate our faithful ministers, along with Elder Bro. Paul Messner (Sis. Jan, Winthrop, MN), Elder Bro. John Wiegand (Sis. Jane, Silverton, OR) and Elder Bro. Mike Leman (Sis. Deb, Denver, CO). To God be the glory for you all!

Sis. Ila Gramm, (Bro. Harold, dec., Morris, MN) grandmother of Erika Flickinger, passed into the arms of Jesus. Erika, Will, and Pierce appreciate your prayers as they have the mixed emotions of gratefulness for Grandma going home and the loss created by one who has loved and been loved so dearly. We lift them up in prayer for their loss.

As many of our church family, brothers, sisters, and friends go through the trials of life, we pray they feel loved and know we are praying for their situations. Bob Schmidgall has been hospitalized and in need of surgery. Sis. Arletta Bragg is also scheduled for an upcoming surgery. May our great physician comfort and heal them as only he can do.

Minnesota, Morris
Peg Wellendorf, Brianna Wulf

Our sympathies are extended to the family of Jerel Schmidgall who passed away June 25. He is the father of our friend Shari Olson (Rod) and the brother of Faye Schmidgall, Bro. Neil Schmidgall (Sis. Linda), and Bro. Dennis Schmidgall (Sis. Ruby). We lift Jerel’s family up and ask that God bless them with comfort and peace during their time of grief. Services were held on June 29 at the Apostolic Christian Faith Church.

We pray that God will comfort Bro. Lowell and Sis. Karen Moser as they and their extended family grieve the passing of Karen’s brother, Leroy Thorstad. With a peaceful heart, Leroy passed on July 13 with family around him. Services are scheduled for July 17 in Hoffman, MN. We remember the family in our thoughts and prayers during this difficult time.

“If, while on earth I wander,
My heart is light and blest,
Ah! what shall I be yonder,
In perfect peace and rest?
O, blessed thought! In dying
We go to meet the Lord,
Where there shall be no sighing,
A kingdom our reward.”

Life and Full Abundance in Jesus, Zion’s Harp, #178
Our thanks to all visiting ministers who bless our congregation in their travels. Their sacrifices do not go unnoticed. The Word was brought forth recently by Elder Bro. Dan Moser (Sis. Anne, Elgin, IL). Both their labors from the pulpit and in fellowship are greatly appreciated and we thank them for coming to visit us!

“Thy Word alone enlightens,
With light and power brightens
What seems a mystery.
It gives us understanding
In living faith expanding,
Subduing ev’ry enemy.”
Assembly Hymn, Zion’s Harp, #207

We joyfully celebrate with Bro. Tony and Sis. Peggy Ascheman the marriage of their son Ross to Lindsey Dukart. The union of their hearts was held at the foothills of the Badlands near Medora, ND on June 19. Congratulations to all on this very special occasion.

“May each one then
in his own place
On Him, the Rock,
be grounded;
By His good Spirit,
Word, and grace
At all times be surrounded;
May all be hallowed
by God’s might;
He is our star and shining light.”
Heart’s Wish, Zion’s Harp, #173

Minnesota, Morris North

Greetings in Jesus!

We have been blessed with so many visitors this summer; some because of vacations, some from single group weekends and some from family reunions. Whatever the reason, we are always excited to have visitors. Even if the reason is sad, such as, for the Gramm family at the passing of Sis Ila Gramm (Bro Harold, dec.). Sis Ila weathered the year of COVID-19 in pretty good health and she was able to travel a little bit to visit her siblings and family earlier this year, but her health started to decline recently and she passed away on July 18. Bro. Harold passed away January 3, 2020. She was an example of love and service. Our congregation will miss her dearly.

We ask for your prayers for Bro. Damon and Sis. Stephanie Knobloch. Lord willing, their elder ordination service will be held on August 22, 2021 and you are welcome to attend. We are thankful to our Elder Bro. Earl and Sis. Dixie Ringger for their service to our congregation throughout the years.

Minnesota, Winthrop

Ginny Stoll, Dixie Messner

We failed to honor our graduates last month and want to take the time to recognize them now: Libby Bartels (Jay and Sis. Amy), Evan Elder (Bro. John and Sis. Joleen) and David Stoll (Bro. Ed and Sis. Ginny). We wish them well as they will now move on to another phase of their lives. God’s blessings to all of them!

Charles Johnson, the father of Jean Stresemann (Randy), passed away after several years of afflictions. Our prayers go out to her and their family.

We were thankful that Bro. Sam Miller (Sis. Sandy) was able to be in church after several weeks of recovering from his illness.

July 4 weekend we were blessed with several visitors from various places. Among the visitors was Bro. John Rassi (Sis. Heather, Tremont, IL) and their family. We were thankful to have as many visitors as home folk in church that Sunday. Thank you Bro. John for sharing God’s word with us.

Elder Bro. Paul Messner shared the spring Memorandum with us the evening of July 14. Special thank you to our elder brethren who so willingly share with us.

Our thoughts and prayers continue to be with Sis. Ginny Stoll (Bro. Ed) with her continuing health issues. Last month we reported her mouth surgery in preparation for implants. Thankfully that has healed and relieved some of her pain. As she was preparing for that surgery, she was diagnosed with lymphoma and was getting ready to do chemo to treat that when the doctors found that her kidneys were barely functioning, so the chemo is be delayed until the kidneys start to function again. All of these issues are part of her Sjogren’s disease. She and her family are in need of lots of prayers right now.

Note of thanks

Words cannot truly express how thankful I am for all the
prayers and encouragement from across the nation. God has a perfect plan in this journey.

Love in him, Sis. Ginny and Bro. Ed Stoll and family

**Missouri, Kansas City**  
**Julie Webel**

We were encouraged and uplifted to witness the testimony and baptism of our new sister in the Lord, Anna Emch, (Bro. Brandon and Sis. Maria). We rejoice with them as she has given her life to Jesus. We pray for a life driven by the desire to serve the Lord always and first in everything that she does. We were thankful for Elder Bro. Bruce Endress (Sis. Elizabeth, Bradford, IL) for being willing to help with her testimony and baptism. We also want to thank Bro. Scott Aberle (Sis. Dorine, Washington, IL) for his service in the ministry during this blessed weekend.

Our heartfelt sympathy goes out to the Meyer family on the loss of Sis. Michelle's mother, Lois Trayford. She is the grandmother to Sis. Lauren Meyer, Sis. Allison Manz (Bro. Mitch), Grant, and Blake. May God be with them and comfort them in their time of great sadness.

Special thanks to Bro. Trent Banwart (Sis. Kristi, Fort Scott, KS) for serving our congregation from the pulpit this past month.

**Missouri, Lamar**  
**Leah Rokey**

Greetings of love from Lamar! Once again, our church family has been blessed by the service and fellowship of visitors! We appreciate the servant hearts of ministering brothers as they travel to share the Word. Visiting ministers this month included Bro. Ryan Kellenberger (Ft. Scott, KS), Bro. Jim Koehl (Sis. Hildegard, Morris, MN), Elder Bro. Lynn Stiegelt (Sis. Leonda, Leo, IN), and Bro. John Lehman (Sis. Tamara, Wolcott, IN).

Each Wednesday night throughout the summer we have the opportunity to join the Ft. Scott congregation for an outdoor singing. We trust Bro. Chris and Sis. Janelle Wuthrich (Ft. Scott, KS) and their family will be blessed for hosting this each week.

**Missouri, St. Louis**  
**Michelle Rassi**

And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.” Deut. 6:6

VBS is such a special time for the Sunday School students! We are thankful that the Traveling VBS team came to St. Louis again this year. The children learned about T.E.A.C. H. — Teachability of Timothy, Endurance of Esther, Availability of Abram, Courage of Joshua, and Hope of Hannah. Bro. Dewayne Dill (Sis. LaRae, Minneapolis, MN) gave a topical presentation on Friday night for the adults with this same topic. He encouraged all parents to teach their children diligently.

**Missouri, Taylor**  
**Eleanor Yackley**

We are rejoicing with the angels in heaven because Emma Snyder (Bro. Quinton and Sis. Heather) has begun her repentance.

VBS was July 12-16. This is an exciting time for the children and their friends from the community who are also attending. May God bless the efforts of the teachers and give the increase.

We are looking forward to hearing the testimonies of Cassidy Edelman (Bro. Kent and Sis. Bethany, Forrest, IL) and Jacob Gehring (Bro. Brad and Sis. Ellen) on July 31.

We welcome Sis. Lydia Lindberg, Shalise Steidinger, and Sis. Karlin Schambach who have recently moved to Taylor for employment.

Bro. Don Hoerr spent some time in the hospital. He is at home and undergoing therapy. Prayers on his behalf will be appreciated.

**New York, Croghan/Naumburg**  
**Anna Stoller**

“He hath made every thing 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

We are thankful for God’s work in the lives of his children even when we don’t understand his plan. May we continue to trust him through whatever life brings.

We were able to gather June 28 at a park for our annual hot dog roast. It was a joy to watch...
the older and younger enjoy the beautiful evening together. We have so much to be thankful for!

**Ohio, Akron**  
**Joelle Indermuhle**

We are very thankful to welcome two new couples to Akron for a time! Bro. Eric and Sis. Katy Frantz moved from Kansas where they attended our church in Kansas City, MO. They bring their family of four children: Elias, Kyla, Nathaniel, and Priscilla. Also, Bro. Thad and Sis. Dayra Indermuhle have moved to the area to complete schooling. We pray these couples could feel welcome in our congregation.

Bro. Don and Sis. Nan Steidl are thankful to have a new granddaughter with the birth of Nora Joy on June 7. Her parents are Andy and Mary Steidl and siblings are Mya, Naomi, Gwen, Amos, Grant, Marta, Lanna, and Raya. Bro. Christopher and Sis. Joelle Indermuhle also welcomed Laura Eleanor on June 17. Her excited older brothers are Titus and Joshua and grandparents are Bro. Marvin and Sis. Carol Indermuhle and Bro. Glen and Sis. Lois Maibach (Rittman, OH).

With great joy we witnessed the rebirth of Bro. Daniel Steidl (Bro. Les and Sis. Judi) and Bro. Zoltan Hegedus (Bro. Sandor and Sis. Gyongyi) on July 11. Elder Bro. Matt Manz (Sis. Deanna, Toledo, OH) joined us for this blessed occasion.

Bro. Bob Riggenbach (Sis. Lorie, Rittman, OH) visited and preached the Word to us as well this month. What a blessed fellowship we have!

**Ohio, Columbus**  
**Julie Grimm**

Greetings to all from the hazy, lazy days of summer in Ohio; days that are filled with humidity, and showers that bring cooler breezes and more humidity.

We were not disappointed during a recent tour of the western states; gazing at beautiful mountains and crystal blue lakes, however we were saddened to see the destruction of acres and acres of crops due to extreme heat and lack of rain. We visited with several farmers in the area who will have no hay or water for their livestock this fall and winter.

Please pray for the ranchers and farmers in the western states who have dealt with extreme heat and drought conditions.

We appreciate the many visiting ministers who have served the Columbus church this month: Bro. Sam Schlatter (Sis. Linda, Junction, OH), Bro. Bryon Palitto (Sis. Lisa Akron, OH), Bro. Nathan Rassi (Sis. Michelle St. Louis, MO.), Elder Bro. Mark Masters (Sis. Jeannine, Mansfield, OH) and Bro. Scott Schambach, (Sis. Hope, Elgin, IL). It is always a joy to see a former church family, like the Schambachs, return to the Columbus area to visit.

**Ohio, Junction**  
**Karen Schlatter**

We are thankful that Carla Manz (Elder Bro. Tony and Sis. Denise) and Malia Manz (Bro. Chris and Sis. Erica) have been announced for peace. We look forward to them giving their testimony of faith in the near future.

We are also thankful for Haley Manz (Bro. Scott and Sis. Sara) who has turned to the Lord in repentance. May many more heed the call before the day of grace is over.

Sis. Carolyn Manz (Bro. Ben) and Amaya Schlatter (Bro. Evan and Sis. Miranda) have been hospitalized in the last few weeks. We are thankful for the gift of healing.

We appreciate those who come to share in the ministry with us. Bro. Matt Miller (Sis. Wendy, Latty, OH), Bro. Todd Sinn (Sis. Janet, Latty, OH) and Bro. Regg Beer (Sis. Bev, Milford, IN) were recent visiting ministers who shared God’s Word with our congregation.

June 30 was the birth of Drew Eli, son of Bro. Chet and Sis. Jenny Manz. He has several brothers and sisters who welcome him into their family. He is also a grandson of Bro. Dave Manz. Each child is a precious gift from God.

The weekend of July 17-18 we heard the testimony and witnessed the baptism of Jesse Schlatter (Bro. Warren and Sis. Cindy). We are thankful for him and rejoice with his family. We
thank Elder Bro. Gary Sinn (Sis. Paulette, Latty, OH) for assisting in the weekend.

New Sunday school teachers who will begin a term in August are Sis. Joy Manz, Sis. Loral Manz, Bro. Greg Manz and Bro. Will Manz. A huge thanks to the teachers whose terms will be ending in August are Sis. Tara Schlatter, Sis. Julie Manz, Bro. Klint Manz, and Bro. Mark Manz.

Sis. Linda Lord, who attended our congregation for several years before moving to a nursing home in the Columbus area, passed away on July 12. She leaves behind several children, grandchildren, a sister, and many friends.

Eleanor Gerber passed away on July 11. She attended church with us for many years. She leaves behind three daughters: Norah Wiker (Richard), Eileen “Michelle” Senters (Calvin), and Meg Gerber as well as many grandchildren, great grandchildren and friends. May we keep their family members in our prayers.

Ohio, Latty
Angie Klopfenstein, Carmen Stoller

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

In July, our Sunday school students moved up a grade to their new classes. We pray for our youth and for their Sunday school teachers. May God grant the increase as seeds of faith are planted in young hearts.

We were blessed to hear the reading of the Memorandum this month. We wish God’s blessings upon all our elders and appreciate the encouragement to a closer walk with Jesus.

On July 4, Bro. Colin Klopfenstein (Bro. Leon and Sis. Deb) and Sis. Kelly Waldbeser (Jim and Sis. Renae, Fairbury, IL) were united in marriage in Fairbury, IL. We welcome Sis. Kelly to Latty and pray for this couple as they begin serving God together.

We have been blessed this month to hear the Word of God from our home ministers and ministers visiting from other churches. Thank you to Bro. Darin Massner (Sis. Twila, West Bend, IA), Bro. Brain Wenninger (Sis. Mackenzie, Leo, IN), Bro. Adam Zeltwanger (Sis. Christy, Morris North, MN), Bro. Troy Metzger (Sis. Gwen, Lester, IA), and Bro. Ryan Schock (Sis. Melanie, Bloomfield, IA) for allowing God to work through them on our pulpit.

Ohio, Mansfield
Katie Miller

Bro. Wally Ramsier, Bro. Edward Ramsey II (Sis. Michelle), and Bro. Dave Eyerly (Sis. Edna) spent time in the hospital this month. We are praying for those who are recovering as well as those with ongoing health challenges.

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

May we take hope and courage in the prayers that are offered for one another.

We are grateful to announce the birth of a grandson, Dawson, to Bro. Ed and Sis. Judy Dawson. This sweet baby was born to Kyle and Elizabeth Elliot. Each new life is a special treasure to us, whose worth is without measure in the sight of God.

Many of us were able to be together for our annual Sunday school picnic. We cherish our youth and thank those who worked to make the afternoon and evening a joyful time.

Ohio, Rittman
Mardel Dotterer, Julie Steiner

Having the privilege of hosting the Brotherhood Conference this year, we are so thankful that this could finally come to pass. It has been a blessing to all work together.

Sis. Jeannette Woyat (Ron) entered her covenant with God, and was baptized in a small private service this past month. We rejoice with her family, even in the eleventh hour God still offers grace.

We are thankful that our friend Ryan Stoller (Bro. Gary and Sis. Michelle) has chosen to turn to the Lord in repentance. May God richly bless him with grace!

Joining lives as husband and wife, Kyle Keiper (Bro. Kevin and Sis. Carolyn) and Brittany Pastorius were married on June 18. We wish them God’s blessings.

On June 30, Paxton Michael Hartzler was born in Connecticut. He is the first child
for Michael and Courtney, and welcomed by grandparents Bro. Jeff and Sis. Bev Hartzler. On July 3, Jessa Raye Snyder entered this world, to parents Jeff and Sis. Rachel. She will be much loved by big brothers Hayden, Corbin, and Tristan, and grandmother Sis. Sharon Rupp. On July 8, Taylyn Kay Hartzler was born, the first child of Bro. Baylor and Sis. Isabel. Her grandparents are Bro. Marvin and Sis. Sue Hartzler, and Bro. Brent and Sis. Andrea Steiner.

Bro. Eugene and Sis. Helen Gal (Sarasota, FL) have moved to our area. We welcome them into our Rittman church congregation, praying that the Spirit of God may continue to be felt among each of us.

Special prayers for healing and strength have gone up to God for loved ones going through difficult health situations, including Bro. Glen Maibach (Sis. Lois) and Bro. Denny Franks (Sis. Sandra). May they feel God’s peace during these times.

We extend sympathy to those who have lost loved ones this past month. Sis. Carolyn Keiper (Bro. Kevin) said goodbye to her father, Kenneth Shook (Bernice) this past month. Also, Bro. Denny Nieman’s (Sis. Kay) mother, Sis. Delphine Nieman (Smithville, OH) passed away.

We’ve been blessed by numerous visiting ministers. Special thanks to Bro. Jeff Bahler (Sis. Heidi, Wolcott, IN), Bro. Randy Gasser (Sis. Sue, Detroit, MI), Elder Bro. Brent Walder (Sis. Naomi, Rockville, CT), Bro. Bryon Palitto (Sis. Lisa, Akron, OH), and Bro. Dana Nieman (Sis. Lea, Remington, IN).

Ohio, Sardis

Renee Blough, Doris Miller

Zack and Staci Reilly were blessed with the addition of Fenix Kingsley on May 10. We rejoice with them and are always glad when their family visits! His big brothers are Jaxon and Lincoln and his grandparents are Bro. Allen and Sis. Janet Indermuhle.

"Wonderful grace of Jesus, Greater than all my sin; How shall my tongue describe it, Where shall its praise begin? Taking away my burden, Setting my spirit free, For the wonderful grace of Jesus Reaches me."

Wonderful Grace of Jesus, Gospel Hymns, #115

Kyria Blough (Bro. Alan and Sis. Renee) experienced the wonderful grace that led her to understand her need for repentance, and she was able to humble herself to make a beginning of professing her desire to serve the Lord.

Retired Elder Bro. Ken Indermuhle (Sis. Linda) had his last sermon from the pulpit on June 20. He has served our congregation faithfully as both minister and elder for 48 years since being put in the ministry on May 20, 1973. He lovingly spoke of beautiful themes in the Bible focusing on comfort in Psalm 46 and the invitation issued in Matthew 11:28-30. Finally, we were exhorted in 2 Peter 1:1-7 to work to add to the glory and virtue we have been given. We cherish the loving service of Bro. Ken and Sis. Linda on our behalf.

"Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine." 1 Tim 5:17

All too often we witness that the old must die, but the young can die as well. We mourn with Terri Rowland on the death of her son, Michael Grennell. God is certainly our refuge and our strength in times of joy and times of sorrow.

The annual New Martinsville, WV memorial service was held on the last Sunday in June. Thanks and appreciation for all that gathered, especially Bro. Jerry Bauman (Sis. Martha, Rittman, OH) for preaching the word.

"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth." Psa. 121:1-2

God is with us 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

We were refreshed and encouraged by another beautiful weekend of testimony and baptism. Our new Bro. Daniel Fisher (Val and late Bro. Dave) and our new Sis. Angel Reese (foster daughter of Bro. Eric and Sis. Jami Hartzler) displayed sincere thankfulness and joy as they spoke of what the Lord has done for them.
Ohio, Smithville
Connie Maletich, Marcy Stoller

We are thankful for the visiting ministers this past month. It is so refreshing to see this beloved church practice happening again. Elder Bro. Lucas Frank (Sis. Crystal, Detroit, MI), Bro. Chris Wuehrich (Sis. Carla, St. Louis, MO), Bro. Dana Nieman (Sis. Lea, Remington, IN), Bro. Tom Hill (Sis. Elaine, Rittman, OH), and Elder Bro. Mark Masters (Sis. Jeanine, Mansfield, OH) all served us willingly from the pulpit. Elder Bro. Mark also assisted our Elder Bro. Vic Bauman with the reading of the spring Memorandum. Thank you for all the efforts put forth on our behalf.

Sis. Delphine Nieman (Bro. Chuck, dec.) went to her eternal reward at the age of 101. She will be missed by her children Sis. Bonnie Nieman, Bro. Denny Nieman (Sis. Kay, Rittman, OH) and Boyd Nieman (Teri). Sisters-in-law Sis. Marie Beery and Sis. Ruth Beery (Rittman, OH) also survive. We also extend our sympathy to Corey Shook at the death of his father, Ken Shook (Bea).

Sis. Marsha Maibach (Bro. Jay) was our hospital patient for the month. We are thankful to be able to lift our loved ones up in prayer to our loving heavenly father. Our prayers continue for all those with ongoing health issues.

We are happy to announce the engagement of Bro. Jason Widmer and Sis. Janelle Gottier. Bro Jim and Sis. Karen Widmer and Guy Gottier and Sis. Beth Gottier (Rockville, CT) are their parents.

Ohio, Toledo
Anne Baumann, Brooke Harmon

No matter what we are enduring in the present or facing in the future, we can be sure that God is faithful and that he never changes. We can trust Jesus “who will also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Cor. 1:8.

As we reflect on God’s faithfulness, let that meditation cause us to remember that we have been “called unto the fellowship” (1 Cor. 1:9) of Jesus Christ and dive deeper into relationship with him.

We are delighted about the arrival of two new babies. Westin Zane was born on June 20 to Bro. Kent and Sis. Alisia Schlatter. His brothers, Rhett and Grayson, are enjoying the new addition as well as grandparents, Elder Bro. Bill and Sis. Emily Schlatter (Junction, OH) and Elder Bro. Dan and Sis. Jenna Kilgus (Remington, IN). Bro. Chet and Sis. Jenny Manz, along with siblings Kylie, Jack, Charlie and Molly, are also relishing their new family addition, Drew Eli, born on June 30. His loving grandparents are Bro. Dave Manz (Junction, OH) and Sis. Diane Raifsnider (Rittman, OH). We continue to be amazed at the miracle of a new baby and our amazing God who created them.

Our thoughts and prayers are with our dear Sis. Connie Sancraint as she has spent some time in the hospital due to an accident. We know God’s hand is near and hope for a quick recovery.

Ontario, Kitchener
RoseLynn Metzger

“But now, O Lord, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand.” Isa. 64:8

A warm hello from Kitchener! Recently, the message behind this verse has been particularly encouraging to me. Imagine a lump of clay with no form at all. It is gently placed onto the potter’s wheel, and as it is slowly and gently worked, a sculpture comes to life. An artist’s eye can look at an uncomely slab of clay and see a masterpiece, whereas the untrained eye only sees dirt. Thankfully, our Father in heaven sees us as a masterpiece, and when we allow his amazing power to work in our lives, we too will be transformed. When we accept Christ and allow him to work in our lives, he slowly starts molding us into the image of Christ. This process isn’t always comfortable as it requires us to be stretched and retrained, but we can be confident that the one who is molding us is a loving, amazing God. Just like the potter keeps their hands wrapped around the piece of clay as it is spinning on the wheel, Jesus always holds us in
his hands. He wraps us in his love and carries us through the trials we face, knowing that whatever he takes us through has the potential to bring glory to him! This is our mission here on earth, to let our lives bring glory to him. So I encourage you, if you are walking through a valley right now, maybe the loss of a loved one, depression, injury or sickness, a family breakdown, anger, a season of uncertainty and waiting, anxiety, struggling to see how you fit into God’s plan, whatever it may be, please know that God has a purpose. If we are willing, God can use any situation to shape us into the image of Christ. If Jesus isn’t yet a part of your life, he is only a prayer away and is waiting with open arms for you to take that step towards him. He can turn anything into a beautiful sculpture if we are willing to let him take the potter’s wheel. As a closing thought, a friend who took a pottery class mentioned the importance of keeping the clay centered on the wheel, otherwise an uneven product would be produced. Likewise, Jesus too needs to be our center as we walk through this life!

This month we were again blessed with visitors over Zoom. Our visiting ministers were Bro. Myron Knobloch (Lester, IA), Bro. Kevin Fehr (Sis. Lonnie, West Bend, IA) and Bro. Warren Schlatter (Sis. Cindy, Junction, OH). We appreciated all the extra visitors, including the Rittman/Smithville/Akron young group and families who joined on with visiting ministers.

The young group from Kitchener has really appreciated a monthly Bible study with the Junction/Latty young group. Again, a special thanks to those organizing and for those who joined!

As brothers and sisters in Christ, we are called to pray for each other, and our congregation has some prayer requests for healing and health. We ask for special prayers for April Schlauch who has broken her leg. As a mother to 3 wonderfully active children, we pray for a quick recovery! Sis. Alma Gingrich has also been experiencing health struggles and intense shoulder pain. We covet your prayers for our loved ones here.

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!

“Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised,)” Hebrews 10:23

Oregon, Portland
Louisa Gallup

We rejoice with Jeff and Kyla Kuenzi at the safe arrival of their first baby, Cassie Raelyn. May God bless them with joy and good health as they raise their daughter. We look forward to meeting her soon.

Our hearts and prayers go out to Camie Knecht (Ken) and the family as her father, Randy Plummer (Linda) suffered a stroke recently. After a time in the hospital and a rehabilitation facility, he is home now anticipating further therapy. We will continue our prayers asking the Lord to provide a good measure of healing, comfort and strength for Randy and Linda and their family as they deal with this unexpected trial.

Oregon, Silverton
Lorraine Kuenzi, Teresa Sinn

It’s a blessing to gather all together for our church services now with no restriction on numbers! We are prayerful God will continue drawing us closer together as the body of Christ in this dark world.

Thank you to Bro. Marvin Hartzler (Sis. Sue, Rittman, OH), Bro. Curt Walter (Sis. Elizabeth, Mansfield, OH), and Bro. Mark Lindberg (Sis. Laura, Chicago, IL), for visiting our congregation and sharing the Gospel message with us! We appreciate your efforts and visits and pray for God’s blessings on you and your family.

Bro. Tristan and Sis. Chelsea Kuenzi along with their family, Kaiden, Jaxon, and Brooke have recently moved to the Silverton area from Lester, IA. We are thankful to have them and pray for a smooth transition.
On July 7, Bro. Clinton and Sis. Wendi Sinn welcomed their first child, Brooklyn Nicole. Grandparents are Bro. Jim and Sis. Deb Roth and Bro. Don and Sis. Linda Sinn.

Please pray for Bro. Chuck and Sis. Karen Walter. Bro. Chuck fell recently and is in the hospital with significant back pain, which is limiting his mobility.

Ron and Sis. Ginge Lichty would also appreciate your prayers as coming to church is becoming increasingly difficult due to ongoing health issues.

Pennsylvania, Philadelphia
Laura Isch
We have been enjoying having more visitors here in our Philadelphia church. What a blessing fellowship is! We appreciate each one making the effort to include us in their travel plans and pray they have felt our love and warm welcome.

"Anywhere with Jesus over land or sea; Telling souls in darkness of salvation free; Ready as He summons me to go or stay. Anywhere with Jesus when He points the way. Anywhere! Anywhere! Fear I cannot know; Anywhere with Jesus I can safely go." - Hymns of Zion, #179

Our prayers are with Sis. Emily Wiegand (Elder Bro. Ben and Sis. Michelle) as she moves to Leo, Indiana, to teach at Gateway Woods. We will miss her and hope she will come back to visit often.

Tennessee, Nashville
Mike Fritz
We are thankful for the blessing of worship and fellowship, and for the visiting ministers who so willingly serve us. Our recent visiting ministers have been Bro. Marvin Zollinger (Sis. Pam, Smithville, OH) and Bro. Nate Hodel (Sis. Jamie, Roanoke, IL). We have also appreciated the fellowship of visitors from Roanoke, IL; Smithville, 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, jordanmfritz@gmail.com; Bro. Jeremy and Sis. Jillian Bradbury, 765.993.8917, jeremy.bradbury1975@gmail.com; or Bro. Jeremiah Stoller, 615.761.7033, jeremiaholeestoller32@gmail.

Texas, Austin/Bastrop
Candy Meiss
Greetings of love from Texas. We are thankful for our visitors and for those who come to serve us. It has been such a blessing to have Bro. Leland Plattner (Sis. Mary, Zapata, TX) visit often this summer. They blessed us in so many ways including preaching the word and serving lunch. We were also thankful to have Bro. Jeff Leman (Sis. Val, Bluffton North, IN) share the Holy Word with us. It is always such a blessing to have them here.

We have many experiences that shape our lives. They are life changing and bring us down to our knees pleading to our heavenly father for his help to understand. We wonder what to do, needing his love, strength, mercy and grace, often too weak to pray. Have you ever felt totally empty, at a loss how to go on?

On a very personal note I will share a story that forever changed my life. Since yesterday was July 15th it reminded me of a Sunday afternoon, July 15, 1973; the summer after high school graduation. My best friend Bill at the time wanted to spend the afternoon with me but I said “Why don’t I go to Winamac with the girls and you spend time with the guys skiing on Lake Shaffer as they have planned”. This statement was to change our lives forever. After spending the afternoon swimming with some of the girls from church, I began my shift at the Tastee Freeze in Monon. Later that evening my parents came to the restaurant and told me the horrible news that Bill had drowned swimming/racing back to shore with a friend after they skied. I cannot begin to explain what those words did to me. I wanted to run and keep running to get away from what I
just heard. In the following days, I felt so sad and empty. I quit the job at the Tastee Freeze, dropped out of the Rensselaer beauty pageant and spent time with his family. I knew what I needed to do.

The background to the story is that Bill turned 18 on July 5th and that day, after our date, I had cried all the way home. I told him that I wanted to repent and give my life to the Lord but just couldn’t give him up. That was just 10 days before the accident and then he was gone. Bill had encouraged me to repent, but I did not heed the call that day. His parents lost their only son and his four sisters lost their brother. He was a member of the Nazarene church and had been baptized. He was the only one of the entire group that had given his life to the Lord. That summer, thirteen of us from our graduating class of 1973 in our church in Francesville repented and were baptized later that year.

Life changing. Once I asked Jesus to come into my life, repented of my sins and began to live my life with and for him, everything changed. I was no longer empty. I immediately felt his presence and I am so thankful that he has continued to be with me, blessing me every single minute with his love and guiding my every footstep. I know that everyone has a story and a life changing time when despite the horrible circumstances that we experience that God is right there, ready to forgive, ready to love and ready to bless. May we continue to reach out to him knowing that he is very near to comfort and to guide.

The following hymn was sung at his graveside:

“There is coming a day
when no heartaches shall come,
No more clouds in the sky,
no more tears to dim the eye;
All is peace for evermore
on that happy, golden shore,
What a day,
glorious day that will be.
There’ll be no sorrow there,
no more burdens to bear,
No more sickness, no pain,
no more parting over there;
And forever I will be
with the One who died for me,
What a day,
glorious day that will be.
What a day that will be
when my Jesus I shall see,
And I look upon His face,
the One who saved me by His grace;
When He takes me by the hand
and leads me through
the Promised Land,
What a day,
glorious day that will be. “
What a Day That Will Be,
Gospel Hymns #831

Texas, Dallas-Ft. Worth
Sheena Pelsy

Love and greetings from the Dallas church! We were blessed to have Bro. Brian Huber (Sis. Jacki, Francesville, IN) join us for services. While preaching from Luke 15, Bro. Brian touched on the parables of the lost sheep and the prodigal son. In both, we saw a deep love and compassion for the individuals that go astray and how it reveals the heart of our heavenly Father towards his children. Because God the Father loves us, he continues to seek after us even when we mess up or go astray. Just like the father of the prodigal son, God forgives his children and welcomes them back in his loving arms and those in heaven rejoice with him, for those that were once lost are now found.

The Dallas church said farewell to Bro. Adam and Sis. Cassie Graf as they relocated to Peoria, IL. We will miss them dearly but know that God has a plan for them to further the kingdom. We are thankful for the time and many memories with them and pray a blessing on their new season of life.

Services are being held every 2nd and 4th Sunday. If you plan to visit or want to call ahead to verify services, contact Bro. Rodney Pelsy: 219.204.3106.

Vermont, Clarendon
Sarah Wagenbach

We are thankful for our visitors this month and the support and love shown to us. Ministering brothers were: Bro. Mark Ramsier (Sis. Alice, Sardis, OH), Bro. Jon Zahner (Sis. Amy, Rockville, CT), and Bro. Clark Stoller (Sis. Cindy, Gridley, IL). We wish them God’s blessings for their time and efforts with us!
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**Grief** - This informative and comforting 55 page Bible Study from InterVarsity Press has been adapted with permission by ACCFS. Topics included in this study are: Denial, Fear, Anger, Guilt, Sadness, Hope, Faith, Acceptance, and Praise.

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Guiding Statements

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<td>Enable the brotherhood to proclaim Christ and serve others beyond the capacity of the local church.</td>
<td>God is glorified as despair and suffering are alleviated, hearts and minds are transformed, and churches are established and nurtured.</td>
<td>Our mission is to equip and mobilize brethren to proclaim the gospel, disciple and nurture believers, and demonstrate the love of Christ with deeds of compassion.</td>
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Biblical Truth
We will teach and practice the whole counsel of God under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

Submission to God
We will pray and fast, seeking the Holy Spirit’s direction and the Lord’s will, consistent with the Word of God.

Establish Churches
As the Lord wills, we will seek opportunities to establish local churches, applying the four-pillar mission of the Apostolic Christian Church of America.

Love of Christ
The love of Christ and the glory and honor of God will be the motivation of our ministry, never to be diminished by self-promotion or pride. We will exemplify the love of Christ by working together in unity and Godly order and in submission to God-ordained authority.

Stewardship
As stewards of the Lord’s resources, we will strive for efficiency and effectiveness; working as unto the Lord and not unto man by pursuing God-honoring models for ministry and communication, endeavoring to continually improve.

Commitment to Our Missionaries
In light of biblical examples and principles, and as an expression of love for our brethren, we will properly assess, equip, and support those who are sent as missionaries.

Ministry Priorities
We recognize that we cannot serve everyone, everywhere. We will need to prioritize where and to whom we’ll minister and to do that we will consider Biblical precedents as led by the Holy Spirit.

Ministry Practices
We will proclaim and demonstrate Christ’s love such that the Gospel is never secondary. Furthermore, we will strive to minister in ways that are respectful and relevant to indigenous cultures, being careful to not create dependency.

Responsibility to the Church
We will promote a biblical understanding of outreach and service, while upholding and affirming the doctrine of the Apostolic Christian Church of America as defined in our Statement of Faith. We will operate transparently to the brotherhood.

Doctrinal Integrity
When associating with other Christian organizations, we will practice spiritual discernment, maintain sound doctrine, and be accountable to our Heavenly Father and the brotherhood.

PROCLAIM CHRIST & SERVE OTHERS

Approved by the Elder Body 2015-0213
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in Haiti, Jamaica and Mexico

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This position would support the HarvestCall Construction, Well Drilling, Dairy, and Hospital Lumiere projects. They will be responsible to help maintain the vehicles, generators, and construction equipment. - Les Cayes, Haiti

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Engaged in discipling relationships as part of a healthy body of local believers. This role will specifically be alongside Sis. Erin Davis and the care of young children at En Gedi house. - Mandeville, Jamaica

DEAF DISCIPLESHP
Engaged in discipling relationships as part of a healthy body of local believers. This role will specifically be alongside the ministry of Deaf Can Coffee and the E3 fellowship gathering. - Kingston, Jamaica

BUSINESS DISCIPLESHP
To proclaim Christ and serve others through the avenue of community interaction, using the business marketplace as the primary vehicle of ministry. Discipleship through relationships with other employees and the community. - Fatted Calf - Magdalena, Mexico

YOUTH TRAINING COORDINATOR
To proclaim Christ and serve others through the avenue of community interaction, using agricultural education as the primary vehicle of ministry. This role will be responsible for leading EXPO Esperanza and the Fatted Calf intern program. - Fatted Calf - Magdalena, Mexico

ACCOUNTING-HR DISCIPLESHP
General accounting and administration, reach out and engage with local people, value and adapt to Mexican culture, and share the love and hope of Jesus Christ as a part of their daily lives. - CVE- Magdalena, Mexico

You can find full role descriptions at harvestcall.org/missionary-openings or the Job Postings section of AC Central.

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And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children.
Isaiah 54:13

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This Bible Study focuses on John 15:1-8 and is intended for a general audience. It may be used for self-study or with a group. The desired outcome is a deeper understanding of the union of Christ and His church. Price: $5.50

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Daily Spiritual Discernment

— Continued from pg. 3

decision point us in a direction of spiritual vulnerability, or toward kingdom building? How we pray about our time, resources, gifts, personalities, relationships, etc. are subject to this guidance. God’s peace will be our guide.6

Holy Spirit

As Christ’s followers, we are temples of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said the Holy Spirit will “teach you all things” and “guide you into all truth.”7 The Bible describes instances where the Holy Spirit “bade” Peter to go to the house of Cornelius, and where the Holy Spirit “said” Paul and Barnabas should be sent to the Gentiles.8 It seems so clear; yet, sometimes discerning the Spirit is difficult.

How is it the Holy Spirit “said” and “bade” those messages? How exactly does the Holy Spirit teach us or guide us today? Is there an audible voice or visible sign? Are our five senses in some way undeniably affected? Usually not. Often His communication is not sensory. The apostle Paul stated the Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirit.9 Furthermore, he said “the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God … because they are spiritually discerned.”10 The Holy Spirit almost always communicates via inward impressions rather than outward expressions.

Have you ever felt the heavy conviction of sin? Have you ever experienced an urge to act for God? Have you ever sensed something was just not right, or perhaps something just felt right? These are the inner workings of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would act in precisely that manner – convicting us of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.11 Yet, not all inner impressions are Holy Spirit inspired. Some are mere feelings. Therefore, we must test the spirits.

In testing the spirits, we find the Holy Spirit always exalts Christ, and always produces spiritual fruit.12 Daily decisions subject to these two tests become clearer. Consider, for example, an invitation to a social event. Will participating in the event likely exalt Christ and display His fruit? Or will participation be more likely to exalt self and produce works of the flesh? The answer may vary from person to person. “For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.”13 Each believer must search the Spirit.

Godly Counsel

No one is immune from deception. We may diligently search the Scriptures, fervently pray, and passionately pursue the Spirit, and still be subject to deception – particularly self-deception.

The Bible exhorts us to seek the wisdom found in a multitude of counselors.14 Through the experiences and insight of others, we gain knowledge. It was through the collective counsel of early church leaders that the path to Christ was opened to the Gentiles. Through the counsel of her cousin, Esther saved her people. But, not all counsel is wise. In following ill-advised counsel, Rehoboam divided the Kingdom of Israel. Judas Iscariot, in consultation with the chief priests, chose to betray Christ. Counsel alone is not enough; it must be grounded on Scripture and balanced with prayer, and the Holy Spirit.

When the Bible, prayer, the Holy Spirit, and wise counsel align, a recipe for effectual spiritual discernment in daily decisions is formed.

Endnotes
1   Romans 12:2
2   Galatians 6:7
3   John 5:39
4   Philippians 1:9-10
5   Mark 11:24; James 4:3,6; I John 3:22
6   Philippians 4:6-7
7   John 14:26, 16:13
8   Acts 11:12, 13:2
9   Romans 8:16
10  I Corinthians 2:14
11  John 16:8
13  Romans 14:17
14  Proverbs 11:4
This man was used by God with many revelations. He became an apostle with authority. There were those that would really elevate him, but Paul, as you can see in his speech here, is really trying to dumb that down. He's trying to use verbiage that would not elevate himself when he says “caught up in the third heaven”.

The first heaven is obviously our atmosphere, and second heaven is outer space. Then, the third heaven is where God dwells. Quite honestly, there really is no elevation measurement to that. God is near, but the third heaven is in heavenly places.

Verse 3: “And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.” (vv3–4) Going back to Chapter 11 where he was talking about all the hard things he went through, he says he’s going to glory in those but not because he was caught up into heaven.

I’m sure his eyes saw some things that he’s referencing here. He says, “I heard unspeakable words” – words that he was not allowed to ever repeat. For those walking in faith, God had ordained that they will not hear these words. As much as we would like to say, “Paul, come here. Let’s talk. What did you see? What did you hear?” He would not tell us. That would do something to a person’s faith, and God’s requirement is that a man will come to him in faith through Jesus Christ.

Verse 5: “Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities. For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth” (vv5-6). That means he’s like, “Hey, I’m going to glory, but I’m telling you the truth, so I am not a fool.” I am telling you the truth; “but now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be or that he heareth of me” (v5). He does not want to be elevated.

“And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure” (v6). That’s maybe the focal point I feel the Holy Spirit is bringing. There are some things, not only here, but throughout the Old and New Testaments, that we have to understand. When Paul says, “lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations”, he’s saying that some had revelations, but he was given a lot. There’s the abundance of revelations.

Actually, last evening, I was having a conversation with a brother, and part of it was about income. We were talking about extreme wealth and some of the big homes my wife and I had walked past. As we talked, we shared this sentiment that it is God who sets and determines our income. Great wealth, an abundance of wealth could elevate us, could harm us, could not be for God’s glory, but could be for our harm. We trusted, as we were speaking, that God would set that level. God can see into the heart and can tell who could use that responsibly and those that it would ruin them so he keeps us in a certain spot.

I bring that example in because of the word of abundance – of anything really. For each of us, we might say, “If I just had more wisdom… Lord, if I just had a greater mental capacity. If I had better health…” The Lord gives us what we have. We can read in other places that it says the Lord gives to everyone according to their ability. The Lord knows when we have little. Remember the widow who gave the two pennies? Jesus said she had given more than anybody. The Lord knows when we have little or much. Accept that. The Lord has determined the amount that we’re going to have.

“And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should
be exalted above measure” (v6). So, the Lord allowed and used Satan. Something that came to Paul and hurt him, yes, the flesh, but hurt him in his heart too. Does anybody know exactly what it is? No. But it did hurt him in his heart and in his flesh. Now, notice the word given as he has penned this: to ‘buffet’ me. “It’s to bring me down to a certain level lest I should be exalted above measure and that I understand that the Lord is in control of everything.”

I would also reference another verse in Romans. This is the same author, Apostle Paul. He is bringing up this truth about the Lord and his sovereignty. It says, “For of him,” – of God – “and through him, and to him, are all things” (Rom 11:36). All things. “For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things.” It is done for God’s glory.

An example: take Joseph. Joseph says, “Lord, why am I in the dungeon?” God says, “It is my will. I’ve used Pharaoh. I’ve used Potiphar. I’ve used these people, and you are there for my glory because I am going to use you for all these things to perform what I promised.”

Bringing it back here to Paul when he’s talking about this: he can understand this truth, but he prayed as we read on here. It says, “For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me” (v8). So, three times he prayed to the Lord. I do not believe it was three in one setting. I think it was three different accounts. He had prayed to the Lord knowing that the Lord had the authority to move it. The Lord had allowed it, but like a child coming a father, Paul had prayed. He had said, “Lord, if it could be thy will, please remove this. I feel like I could do better.” There’s a reason why Paul is asking for this to be removed, but the Lord responds through the Holy Spirit and says, “My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness” (v9).

He starts with ‘my grace’. That’s God’s grace, unmerited favor to you. We could put in a word there, and it could say, “My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in [your] weakness.” I’m adding the word your – your weakness. That’s truth that everybody is going through something. Some of those situations you have no control over; some of those situations are because of bad decisions, and, quite honestly, you are in the bed that you made. We must understand the things that we’re really addressing here. There are things that can happen and do happen that are not in our control. My spouse has cancer. My son is wayward. Whatever it is. We’re praying, “God, help them. Heal them. Protect them” or whatever it may be, but something happens. That’s what we’re addressing.

I’m going to give you another example because it just popped into my head. My dad is here, though I don’t see him. This is maybe a poor example, but here is an 18-year-old boy who gets drafted, goes to war, and is a believer. No doubt parents, church, and loved ones pray for his protection. He is out there being strong, and he gets shot in the leg. First his leg gets cut off, then it’s one tent hospital to another tent hospital that’s a little bit better, to back to the barracks, and finally back to the states. Place yourself there. I’d be thinking I was drafted and had no control over that. Now I don’t have a leg. I’m a young person. How am I going to get married, have a family, provide? What do I do with me? Those thoughts would be natural to have. Did my dad ever pray for a new leg to be grown out of his body. I don’t think so.

Just as Paul would pray and ask for this, we will have the tendency to say, “Lord why did this happen? Lord, how come I’m in this? Lord, you have the ability to make this better. Please fix this.” We must understand, when Paul penned this, he understood what he was going through and was still learning. There’s a reason why Paul asked three times because he was asking sincerely to remove it, but by the time he put pen to paper he understood the truth of God. God is — Please turn to pg. 60
We must understand the sovereignty of God. There is purpose as we read in Romans 11:36. In him, through him, for him are all things for his glory. His ways are higher than our ways. Forget trying to understand it. Have faith and accept it.

Now, Paul’s response is “Most gladly therefore” because he understood. Did he understand when he prayed three times? No. But when he wrote this letter to the Corinthians, he says, “Okay, now that I understand, most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” (v9) He’s understanding that God gets more glory and we see more transformation when there’s actually the rooting out of our weakness, allowing God to bring in strength, and asking in humility for God’s help and grace.

What if we were strong? As an example, think if there was a person sitting right here that thinks they are the object of perfection. Your faith may be shaken a little because, and you may ask questions why – why did you allow this to happen? I prayed for years for this person, and you allowed this to happen?

Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong” (v10). For the believer, the child of God, that is a very good phrase to memorize. Out in the world, that’s contrary. The employer says, “I want a confident, competent person to hire.” A child of God says, “when I am weak, I am strong.” When it’s not about me, when I cry out for God, like Paul says, I will choose to do Christ’s work.
I choose the power of Christ that it might rest upon me. For when I am weak, I am strong.

“I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing. Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.” (vv11-12). That was what Jesus Christ gave to the first church. We are no longer in those days, but they did do those things: signs and wonders and mighty deeds as credentials that they spoke with the authority and power of God.

We’re going to pause right there. That’s what I wanted, through the guiding of the Holy Spirit, to bring to you individually, to you, your family, and to us collectively that when we are weak, we are strong and that we cry to God because he allowed the infirmity. God allowed whatever it is that you are dealing with, maybe an actual flesh thing, or a heart thing, just pain. You don’t like it. I don’t like it. We cry out, “God, remove it.” What we should really do is say, “God, give me grace. Don’t remove it because I choose it, but give me grace that your power may rest upon me. May God bless what he’s given unto us this morning.

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**Grace Greater Than Our Sins**  
*Tabernacle Hymns, #48*

Marvelous grace of our loving Lord,  
Grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt,  
Yonder on Calvary's mount out-poured,  
There where the blood of the Lamb was spilt.

Sin and despair, like the sea-waves cold,  
Threaten the soul with infinite loss;  
Grace that is greater, yes, grace untold,  
Points to the Refuge, the mighty Cross.

Dark is the stain that we cannot hide,  
What can avail to wash it away?  
Look! there is flowing a crimson tide;  
Whiter than snow you may be today.

Marvelous, infinite, matchless grace,  
Freely bestowed on all who believe;  
You that are longing to see His face,  
Will you this moment His grace receive?

Chorus:  
Grace, grace, God’s grace,  
Grace that will pardon and cleanse within;  
Grace, grace, God’s grace,  
Grace that is greater than all our sin.
The series of “Our Heritage of Faith” continues and the focus now is on the development of the church in America. Our first foreparents in faith arrived on American shores in 1847. The report on America will be generalized with the intent of focusing on some of the high points.

**Early Days**

The movement which Samuel Froehlich began in 1831-1832 (in Europe) was established in America in 1847. Benedict Weyeneth, having just recently been ordained an Elder in the Evangelical Baptist Church in Switzerland and personally consecrated by Samuel Froehlich, landed on American soil. He was on a mission of profound importance. Rather than initiating a broadly-based program of evangelicalism for America, he was responding to a request from Joseph Virkler, a Lewis County Amish Mennonite farmer, to Samuel Froehlich for help in alleviating some spiritual problems which were besetting his group of believers in that area.

During a previous meeting of Virkler’s group one of them, a former member of Froehlich’s church in Europe, had recommended that the group write to Froehlich to see if he could either settle their differences or make other spiritual recommendations which might resolve their situation. It was their hope that Bro. Froehlich would come to America. Instead a brother meeting was convened and Benedict Weyeneth was sent to respond to Bishop Virkler’s needs.

**Benedict Weyeneth in Lewis County, New York**

Arletha Zehr Bender, in A History of the Mennonites in Lewis County, New York, describes Weyeneth as an “invited” Elder and says, “Attending the regular Sunday morning worship service, Benedict Weyeneth was granted permission from Rudolph Virkler to read a song from a book. The song being read after the conclusion of the regular meeting indicated the teaching of immersion (re baptism), it is thought. He presented to the congregation the importance of these doctrines and visited their homes reviewing for them the changes necessary for them to adopt.

His views were favored by Rudolph Virkler who became willing to leave his church and to associate with him (Weyeneth). Soon his family and many relatives left the Amish Mennonite Church and started a new church of their own. They taught that it was necessary for everyone to accept these new teachings and those who joined the new faith were rebaptized by immersion. Members of the church community continued to leave over a period of twenty-five years. Three out of every four were evangelized and left the old church to unite with the new group.”

**Croghan and Naumburg, New York**

While the Mennonite families united with Weyeneth in 1847, they did not “officially” establish a congregation until about 1850. They did so at “French Settlement,” which today is called Croghan. A few years later some of those families who attended the Croghan church but lived in the Naumburg area, established a church at Naumburg. Thus, these two congregations were the “first” churches of the Apostolic Christian Church to be established in America.

**A Marvelous In-gathering**

During the Eldership of Peter Virkler, one of the greatest “in-gatherings” of converts in the history of the church occurred. During the summer of 1881, 140 converts were baptized. On thirteen consecutive Sundays beginning on June 5, and ending August 28, 139 baptisms were performed. A few weeks later on September 18, one more soul was baptized.

*by Perry A. Klopfenstein*
Securing our Identity in God

“Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.” 1 Peter 1:2

Growing up as a deaf individual, my Dad and Mom, both being Deaf, were strong advocates for quality education for me and my two siblings, modeling Christ-centered faith in our home and leading in the local Deaf church. Consequently, I grew up with a full sense of security in my Deaf identity. One of my fond memories was growing up with a consistent message from my Dad who signed to me in Country Sign (the sign language developed by the Deaf who were never formally educated in our home town) that being deaf or perceived as a deaf person “who cannot hear or talk” by the hearing Jamaican society does not mean that I am unable to succeed but rather that I use my God-given brain, hands to talk and eyes to hear in my everyday communication and responsibilities. With that ingrained growing up, I had full pride and joy of being a deaf daughter of God. Dad was one of the most brilliant role models in my life, who constantly demonstrated that his deafness and lack of literacy did not limit him from succeeding as a farmer and construction expert or as a father. Dad was so committed to quality and meticulous construction in the community that he was in high demand for such projects; he completed at least 70 building projects his entire life before he became terminally ill with cancer.

Being in Deaf Education myself, I reiterate the same advice from Dad to all my deaf and hard of hearing students. The majority are in hearing homes that lack full language access and affirmation of deaf identity because they were not blessed, as I was, with parents who communicated in my own language and affirmed me for who I was. Therefore, in my work, I strive to motivate my students with the truths that they can bear God’s image just like their hearing counterparts, for it is in the paradoxical truth that simultaneously we are all made in the image of God, and each of us is also broken and in need of being changed into the image of the Son, Jesus.

In my own recent experience, I encountered a traumatic identity crisis due to a certain development in the Jamaican Deaf Community that caused me to face all the stress symptoms imaginable- insomnia, fear-induced anxieties, stomach issues, loss of appetite, muscle tensions, and heats throughout my body. It literally led to my intense self-doubt as a deaf person whether I was adequate, worthy, and capable of success in life. Diving into his Word and the study book on Elijah: “Faith and Fire” by Priscilla Shirer and intercessory prayer coupled with truth reminders by my beloved husband, family and close friends, I realized that I had based my identity on being Deaf first, and not as the daughter of God who happens to be deaf.

Therefore, the Source of our trust and identity, no matter who we are, must be secured in our Creator, while recognizing that all of us are unique and reveal different prisms of the ineffable Creator. I have been constantly reminded that I must trust him to redeem the Jamaican Deaf Community while I remain faithful to him, allowing his spirit to transform me and others. In 2 Kings 18:1-7, God deemed King Hezekiah pleasing because he trusted in God and obeyed all his commands. I wholeheartedly thank our Abba Father for creating us as his children, and also adopting us into his family.

My reader friends and fellow believers, may we always remember our identity as his children first.

“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” 2 Corinthians 3:18

-by Tashi Widmer
And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. ...

Genesis 1:31