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Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.
2 Corinthians 9:15
A Joy Filled Season

It is the time of year for joy. We come away from November with thanks in our hearts to our Lord for all he has done. Often a time together with our family and church spent in worship and thanks to God for his provision. Our thoughts quickly turn to the Christmas celebration.

While for many this is a wonderful time of year, we also recognize that it is not a happy time for all. There will be memories of ones gone on before that may bring sadness. Loneliness is felt keenly by those not able to be with their loved ones due to distance. Lack of resources can leave some feeling empty.

During this time, we are reminded of the free gift the Father provided. The Christ, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in the manger. It transcends time, is available anywhere, and free. Opening this gift brings pure joy. A joy that isn’t constrained by our circumstances and flows through us to others without running out. A joy that is available to all the world. So in this season, choose joy, praise God (pg. 47), and thank him for his unspeakable gift to all (2 Cor. 9:15).

In Christian love,
Rick and Michelle Kaisner, Silver Lining Editors

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We Freely Give as We Have Freely Received

“We Freely give as we have Freely received.” 1 “Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither.” 2 “I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.” 3 “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” 4 We could easily fill this article with these passages and similar scriptures. Collectively they call for a radical change in the believer’s relationship with property. It is not so much that property is abolished, but we no longer possess property as a means of security, or as a source of pride or power. Rather we hold all that we possess (including our lives) as stewards to be freely given in service of our Creator God. “Moreover, it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.” 5

From its inception, this radical relationship to property has characterized the church. 6 In a sharply vertical Roman world, which flaunted extraordinary wealth in juxtaposition to crushing general poverty, a central emphasis of the Christian communities of the first centuries was care for the poor. The church took seriously the Apostle Paul’s instruction “Let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.” 7 So much so that according to some scholars, countercultural charity was the single most important catalyst for the church’s growth. 8 And so it is entirely appropriate, even essential, that our Mission and Guiding Principles affirm that we “offer loving, humble deeds of service to fellow believers and all people in the name of Christ.” We give, not as an afterthought, but as an essential part of the fabric of the communal life within the church. This pattern emerges from the realization that all that we have belongs to the Lord, that we can trust him, and that the Holy Spirit compels us to give in love.

Perhaps one of the most fundamental facts we must embrace is that we are not our own. As the Psalmist puts it, “Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.” 9 As we come to understand that “every good and every perfect gift,” 10 including our very being and all that we possess, are the gracious gifts of the Father, we gradually realize that we are indeed stewards. As stewards we have a fiduciary duty, or relationship of trust, to the Father. Christ devotes tremendous energy to teach us about this duty. Consider cumulatively the narrative of the parables: The Good Samaritan, A Fruitless Figtree, Talents, Two Sons, Good Stewards, etc. It is not an exaggeration to say God wants us to come to deeply understand this! We give because all that we have is his.

But it is important that we give from a place of trust, not fear. Recall the parable of the Talents. Fear paralyzed the servant given one talent, and his consequent neglect resulted in his tragic destruction. 11 Rather we rest in the love of the Father, knowing that he cares for us. As Jesus so poignantly teaches, “Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?” 12 In Christ’s instruction, we hear echoes of the Psalmist, “Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thine altars, O LORD of hosts, my King, and my God.” 13 Can we simply meditate on this: having found a home with the Lord, can we not learn to trust him and release our grip on our earthly possessions? We give because we trust him.

Finally, our giving springs from the love of Christ implanted within us through the gift of the — Please turn to pg. 55

December 2021   SILVER LINING  3
Good morning and Merry Christmas 2020. It’s a day that many of us have probably looked forward to with great anticipation. We come here with great joy in our hearts, smiles on our faces, and lots and lots of love. I’m thankful to be here this morning and to be able to share hopefully some encouraging thoughts as we center our minds and our hearts around the birth of Jesus Christ our Savior, our brother, our friend. What a warm place to be right now with my church family. Greetings in Jesus’ name to all that are here in the pews, those coming in the balcony, those at home, those in nursing homes, those in hospitals. Wherever you might be this Christmas morning, may I wish you a hearty greeting in Jesus’ name.

We’re going to look into God’s word because that’s where we want to find our message this morning. You’re welcome to turn to Revelation 1 for our first reading. We’ll read two verses.

Verse 8 says, and this is Jesus talking, “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.”

Verse 17: “And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last.” It’s so comforting to know Jesus Christ today, yesterday, and in days to come.

Verse 14 says, “Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and shall bring forth a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”

Let’s go to our Hymns of Zion, and I’d like for us to sing #80 All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name.

It was in 1843 when Charles Dickens published The Christmas Carol; Dec 19th to be exact. Many of us have seen movies, read part of that book, perhaps watched plays of the story, so we are familiar with The Christmas Carol, with Ebenezer Scrooge and Tiny Tim and Bob Cratchit. We’re familiar with the experience that Ebenezer Scrooge has. He is visited by three different ghosts: the ghost of Christmas past, the ghost of Christmas present, and then the ghost of Christmas future. We can read about a changed life and how he was changed by that experience. We’re not going to talk about the ghosts of Christmas past, present, and future, but we are going to talk about the Holy Ghost. We’re going to talk about the living God, and we’re going to think in terms of that story. I want to craft this message into three parts: Christmas past, Christmas present, and Christmas future. I want us all to focus in on Christ this morning.

I was thinking about this and also thinking what a year we’ve been through. Surely, in the past, Christmas was just maybe better than what it is today. I was convicted by that thought because I know it’s not true, but I wanted to think about Christmas past. What was it like at Christmastime long ago? I want to look into God’s word because that’s the ultimate authority. Let’s turn to Isaiah. I’ll be flipping a few different pages, and you’re welcome to keep up if you want. I’m turning to Isaiah 7. We accept God’s word in faith that it is true, it’s living, and is the ultimate authority on history and the plan of salvation. It’s a wonderful blessing.

This is even before Christmas even existed. This is approximately 730 years before Christ was born. These are prophecies, predictions that God gave men, about the first Christmas, and he said in verse 14 of chapter 7, “Therefore, the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive,
and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.” This is 730 years before Christ was born. “I will give you a sign, says the Lord, behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Emmanuel, God with us.” Seven hundred years before Christ was born.

Isaiah 9:6: “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” Seven hundred years before that event actually took place. I take great comfort in that.

Isaiah 28:16: “Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.” In other words, he that believeth shall not be in a great panic or have great anxiety. “I have laid for you a corner stone. He’s not going to be here for a while. He’ll be here 700 years later, but I’m telling you now. There’s going to be a day when a corner stone will be provided for you, and if you believe on him, you will not be stricken with fear. You’ll have peace.”

Turn with me to Micah. It might take a bit to find it. It’s a small book right after Jonah. Micah 5. Again, this is a little bit closer to the first Christmas – about 20 years closer. This is 710 years before Christ came. Micah 5:2 says, “But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.” Jesus the same today, tomorrow, and yesterday. God provided this information 710 years before Christ was born, and we are the benefactors of being on the other side of the first Christmas. Isn’t it good to go back and lay a foundation, lay that knowledge, that understanding to remember where Christmas really began?

Turn with me now to Matthew chapter 1. Starting in verse 18, we read, “Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.” (vv.18-21) That should bring a smile to our face for all of us that know Jesus Christ as our Savior. Isn’t that wonderful?

Flip over to Luke 2 if you would. Luke 2:1 says, “And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.” (vv.1-7) The first Christmas.

It was prophesied hundreds of years before, and in great detail, the time, the place, Jesus’
Ministry Program Updates

God Provides for VBS in Japan

God will provide. The words may roll off our tongues, but when we are put to the test, sometimes we might question if he really will. We want to be certain that we can do what we “set out to accomplish.” We wondered if it could happen. With a pandemic, emergency orders, travel restrictions, no visitors from America… could we really do a Bible school this summer with all the limitations? After all, Tokyo had been off and on under a state of emergency for most of the year. To actually host a Vacation Bible School ourselves seemed daunting, and yet there was an opportunity. We had a chance to share the love of Christ with those in our community.

VBS efforts in Japan began in 2015 when Sis. Javon Steffen came for a summer and helped to plan and host our first VBS at the Tokyo church. Bro. Frank and Sis. Kathy Sauder and their family were visiting Japan that summer and helped with VBS as well. Five to ten students attended each day. We experienced the joy of starting something that has continued to bless our church family and hopefully will bear fruit in the lives of all who attend. The following year, 2016, we hosted our first VBS team — more students attended than the previous year. Since then, we had teams in 2017, 2018, and 2019 with larger turnouts each year.

A New Way to Serve

En Gedi House - Jamaica Committee

For five years, En Gedi House has been taking in babies that were left at the hospital, or removed from unsafe family situations. They are brought into our home and into our family to love and nourish for as long as God allows. We do our best to get them healthy and strong to give them the best possible start after they leave us. We clothe and care for the little ones brought to us, but the past few years (especially with the start of COVID) we have been approached by the local government agency (CPFSA) to support those in our community and the communities around us with the very basics.

Often when a child is removed from an unsafe home life, there is a biological family member who is willing to step up and care for the child. The problem that arises is the financial burden this puts on the family member to care for the added child they take in. CPFSA (Child Protection and Family Service Agency) has started to reach out to En Gedi to help with basic needs (clothes, personal hygiene, diapers, food/ formula). Most kids come with nothing, and it can be a big expense to buy new clothes, shoes, diapers, personal hygiene items, etc. The biological family members are willing, but need help getting started. So we have started sending out “Support Bags” when a request is made. We pack in about a weeks’ worth of clothes, personal hygiene items,
In 2020, due to the pandemic, we could not hold VBS. While disappointing, it really was not a question as to whether or not we should.

This past summer, we questioned if we could really pull off VBS without the planning, energy and experience of an American team. With prayerful consideration, we decided to go ahead and host VBS for English and Sunday school students. Due to travel restrictions, only those living in Japan could attend this year. Although we missed having a VBS team from the States, we were incredibly blessed to see how God used local believers and friends to come together and work to achieve one of our most well-attended years of VBS.

It was a joy to witness friends and neighbors who often only casually participate, taking on active roles in planning and serving. Our craft team was two Japanese mothers who have a Christian background and attend church when they can. Another of the student’s mothers who also attends English class herself, offered to take pictures, and then print off pictures of VBS for the church bulletin board. Our teen and tween students stepped up in new ways to translate, babysit and be the welcoming committee to help students sign in when they first arrived. It is humbling to see how God provides. Sometimes when we feel that we are not equipped, God equips.

We aren’t sure yet what VBS may look like in 2022 and subsequent years, but we thank you for your prayers on our behalf. Thank you to each and every church who has prayerfully sent a VBS team member. Thank you for your ongoing prayers for Sis. Rachel Witzig and the English class efforts to spread the good news of Jesus. We look forward to seeing how the Lord continues to provide.

Ephesians 3:20-21 “Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.”

–by Anna Inoue

shoes/flip flops, food/formula (depending on the age of the child) and a small toy. We work directly with the local CPFSA so we know their requests being made are a real need. For the last few years, HarvestCall has been sending down the things needed on the sea containers and they are kept in our store room so we are ready to fill the support bags whenever requests come in. Sometimes a little extra help to get these kids the family, support, and demonstration of love is what they need most at a critical time.

–by Erin Davis, missionary at En Gedi House
Isaiah prophesied of the coming Christ child and named him Immanuel – God with us. Captured in this announcement is the humility of God. This attribute is knit into the character of God, and by his example at Christmas, we learn what humility means and are taught how to humble ourselves.

Upward mobility refers to the movement of an individual or group of people to a higher social status. This term is used by sociologists and economists to measure the opportunity for advancement among people in a society. The possibility for upward mobility lies at the heart of what we understand the “American Dream” to be. The dream that expresses the opportunity for success and advancement for anyone who wishes to pursue it. Upward mobility, in many ways, is understood to be the hope for humankind.

Jesus demonstrates something entirely different. And it is at Christmas time when we celebrate it directly. We celebrate Immanuel – God with us. Jesus underwent downward mobility. Paul puts it this way. 

*Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Phil. 2:6-8*

At every level, Christ demoted himself. He went from Heaven’s splendor to earth’s toil. He rejected his right to rule to accept his role to serve. He put aside his infinite form to put on a finite form. He let go his of immortality to become mortal. The apostle Paul calls us to adopt this same mind *(Phil. 2:5)*. The willingness to humble oneself by way of downward mobility.

The Scriptures call us to humble ourselves. But how do we do this? Most often we think humbling ourselves includes seeing ourselves in light of our weaknesses and failure. Such exposure
is characterized by humiliation and embarrassment. Indeed, this is one type of humbling. However, by paying close attention to the humility of Christ, we learn a very useful lesson in humility. Christ demonstrates for us a humility of a second type. Christ was not humbled because of any weaknesses on his part. Quite the contrary, Christ humbled himself by yielding his strengths.

Consider these two types of humbling side by side.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type I</th>
<th>Type II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Humiliation Humbling</td>
<td>Downward Mobility Humbling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeing myself as inferior.</td>
<td>Placing myself in an inferior position.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activated by confessing my need.</td>
<td>Activated by yielding my rights.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plays on my inabilities, weaknesses &amp; faults.</td>
<td>Plays on my abilities, strengths &amp; gifts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looks like esteeming others higher than myself.</td>
<td>Looks like esteeming others higher than myself by showing deference and practicing modesty, gravity, or submission.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

God might ask you to humble yourself in one of these areas. Here are a few examples. Perhaps you are a leader. Try taking a serving role in some area of your life. Perhaps you are a teacher. Sit under the teaching of another. Perhaps you have time. Consider volunteering. Perhaps you are good at engaging people in friendship. Be friendly with someone who has very few friends. In all these examples, the motivation of your heart is key. Are you willing to yield of your rights, esteem others better than yourself, and follow the example of Christ?

Both Peter and James tell us if we humble ourselves, the Lord will raise us up. We powerfully see this in Christ’s example. Because of His downward mobility to the point of the cross, he is raised far above all things (Phil. 2:9). Celebrate Christmas this season by following this pattern of humility: willingly humble yourself after the pattern of Immanuel, the one whose downward mobility was the hope of humankind.

What could this downward mobility look like in the life of a believer? It begins with introspection – where has God blessed you with strengths or gifts? Then prayerfully consider how God might ask you to humble yourself in one of these areas. Here are a few examples. Perhaps you are a leader. Try taking a serving role in some area of your life. Perhaps you are a teacher. Sit under the teaching of another. Perhaps you have time. Consider volunteering. Perhaps you are good at engaging people in friendship. Be friendly with someone who has very few friends. In all these examples, the motivation of your heart is key. Are you willing to yield of your rights, esteem others better than yourself, and follow the example of Christ?

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ACCFS thanks you for your continued prayers and support throughout the past year. You all have truly been a blessing to us, and we wish you God’s richest blessing during this holiday season. We are available to serve however we can. For resources and services, please visit our website at www.accounseling.org or contact us at 309-263-5536.
Apostolic Christian LifePoints
www.aclifepoints.org
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Ashlyn Gramm-Mission
Communication Coordinator
“Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.” 2 Cor. 9:15

We love the Christmas season here at LifePoints! Our residents love preparing for the holidays by decorating their homes with Christmas trees, ornaments, and other holiday crafts they have created. Outings have been planned to purchase their Christmas presents, watch Christmas shows, and eat their favorite holiday foods. Even with the changes that COVID-19 has brought, who can forget the Christmas parties our residents are always looking forward to?

The parties are such an exciting time for our residents for a number of reasons. Some of these parties are opportunities to reunite and spend time celebrating with their friends who live at different homes. Some of these parties are full of beloved family members who come to visit. Almost all of these parties include a special guest who has gifts to share with each of the residents! (Even last year when this special gift-giver couldn’t come inside our homes, he came to visit each of our residents outside of their bedroom windows.)

At each of these parties, you can hear the excited chatter of anticipation. When will this good friend arrive? What will he bring? As the evening continues with singing or snacks, heads start turning around, eagerly awaiting his arrival. The moment he enters the party with his bag full of presents, everything erupts. The room is filled with squeals of joy, elated shouts, and a rush to go hug the jolly old man. The excitement multiplies as he starts calling names and handing out the treasured presents. Wrapping paper is torn off, and the smiles grow bigger than you would think possible as the perfect gifts are revealed.

It’s impossible to ignore the effect this gift-giver has on our residents with the presents that he brings. There is so much love and joy surrounding these moments; it’s genuinely heartwarming. It makes you think of the events surrounding that very first Christmas that the ultimate gift-giver orchestrated. Mary spent nine months anticipating Christ’s arrival. The stable where Christ was born was probably full of a variety of noises (more so from the animals, rather than from shouts of excited people). The gift of Christ’s birth brought joy to the world, both then and to this day. The angels sang of God’s glory, and we continue to sing his praises.

As we approach the holiday season, let us give thanks for all God has blessed us with, and let us remember the ultimate gift he has given us through the life, death, and resurrection of Christ our Lord.

Gateway Woods Apostolic Christian Children’s Home
Mark Maibach — Chief Financial Officer

If only we could all be more like Uncle John…

Garrison Keillor, author of the nostalgic Lake Wobegon books and host of radio’s “A Prairie Home Companion,” recalled his childhood Thanksgiving dinners as the family gathered around the table and remembered the blessings of the past year. Uncle John usually gave the prayer, which caused everyone to squirm. As Keillor said,

“Everybody in the family knew that Uncle John couldn’t pray without talking about the cross and crying. Sure enough, Uncle John prayed, talked about the cross, and cried. Meanwhile, the rest of us shifted nervously from one foot to the other and longed for the prayer to end.” Then Keillor adds this powerful observation: “All of us knew that Jesus died on the cross for us, but Uncle John had never
gotten over it.” (from “Standing in the Light of the Cross” by Bill Bouknight, Good News Mar./Apr. 2002, p. 21.)

When we consider being thankful and receiving gifts, what are the gifts we are the most appreciative of? In my life, it is the ones I could have never gotten for myself. When it comes to the price of our salvation, the cost was so high the human mind can barely fathom it.

In Matthew 18, Jesus tells of the man who owed 10,000 talents and was forgiven, and then turned around and demanded payment from the person who owed him 100 denarii. Let’s do the math…

• One denarius was one day’s wage, so 100 denarii was 100 days wages.
• It took 6000 denarii to make one talent. How many work days is that?
• It would be roughly 20 years of wages to repay just ONE talent.
• That’s around 200,000 years of labor!

That’s an unbelievable debt that no one could ever hope to pay. And that’s the magnitude of the debt we owed for our sin in God’s eyes. That is a gift we should be overwhelmed with thankfulness about – I hope we never get over it!

As we go through this season of thanksgiving and gift giving, let’s never lose sight of The Gift that was given by God in the manger, and the Ultimate Gift given by Jesus on the cross. Nothing else compares.

Our salvation was purchased on the cross, and we get to spend our entire lives as a love gift back to him who saved us. Many times, I am struck by the wonderful gifts I have been given: a faithful wife and children who all love the Lord, a job I enjoy, and a church body that lives out the gospel.

The One Thing that makes all of these blessings possible is the Greatest Gift of All – JESUS.

News:

• We are thankful for yet another new baby on campus; Maisy Lanae (Bro. Kyle and Sis. Lindsey Isch).
• This winter, Gateway Woods will be launching a brand-new program called Professional Foster Care. This initiative will allow us to serve younger foster youth who have high behavioral needs and need a safe, stable and loving home. We will be converting one of our group homes on campus to serve these children. Please pray for us and the youth we will serve as we launch this new program.
• If you want to make a Kingdom impact by sowing seeds of hope for an eternal harvest, visit gatewaywoods.org/sowers-of-hope to learn more about our newly launched monthly giving program. Sign up today to receive a special gift as a reminder to be praying for the youth you are impacting.
• We currently looking for a Teacher, Houseparent Couple, Adoption Case Manager, Communications Administrative Assistant, GW Farms Assistant, and an Assistant Houseparent. For more information, please see our ad on page 54 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 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.ringer@gatewaywoods.org.
Alabama, Athens
Lisa Aschliman, Kristy Moore

“Thy mercy, O LORD, is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds.” Psalms 36:5

Fall is in the air, and we welcome the cooler temperatures. We have had several get-togethers with our church family and spent quality time talking and eating together. Hope for Athens was held the first Saturday of November and some of us were able to help at the event to pass out shoes, coats, groceries and to pray with those who came through.

We ask for continued prayers for Sis. Carolyn Lewis and Shawn Ray who have ongoing health issues and for our small church to be lights in our community.

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

“And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.” Luke 2:12

Have you ever wondered how swaddling clothes or laying in a manager would be a sign to the shepherds of a Savior? Following is a possible explanation. These shepherds were most likely temple priests, and the sheep they cared for were those reserved for temple sacrifice. (I understand this is the case again today, outside Bethlehem.) When lambs were born, they were carefully examined and the ones without blemish were set apart from the others. The shepherds would take strips of cloth and wrap their limbs and bodies to keep them from being injured or otherwise damaged. They were then laid in a place apart, where the shepherds could care for them and ensure their safety and purity until they were old enough to take to the temple for sacrifice.

Because there were many temple priests, they spent a relatively short time serving in the temple, and special garments were required for that service. Once their service was ended, the garments could not be used again. I have read that it was these garments that were torn into strips and used to wrap the lambs. Because Mary’s cousin was married to a priest, and he had recently completed his time of service in the temple, we can speculate that Elizabeth may have given Mary some of the strips of cloth from Zacharius’ priestly garments.

If Mary wrapped her little lamb in the scraps from the priestly garments, and then laid him in the manger, the shepherds would have seen a beautiful image of their perfect lambs similarly wrapped and set in a safe place in a rugged environment. What a powerful sign that would have been to those who understood it!

Jesus came the first time as Savior, and his sacrifice saves us from our sins. When he returns, he will appear as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. We will not need a sign that he is the One foretold. After thousands of years with no fulfillment of God’s promise of a Savior, there were still many people watching for Messiah to come. Those people were privileged to observe and some to even participate in his arrival. We are also instructed to watch for his coming, and a blessing is promised those who long for his appearing. Don’t be distracted or weary. Look up, lift up your heads!

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

Our Sunday school was able to deliver Thanksgiving meals to 30 African refugee families and 3 Hispanic families. We appreciate the opportunity to participate in making this happen each year, and the enthusiasm of our youth in working to help others. Our annual Sunday school picnic included many visitors from the Prescott and Tucson churches, and the fellowship with all our Arizona church family was a great blessing! We so appreciate the service of our visiting ministers, including Bro. Brent Kellenberger (Sis. Beth, Kansas City, MO), Bro. Dan Cargill (Sis. Stephanie), Bro. Stan Schambach (Sis. Norma) and Bro. Richard Manz (Sis. Audrey), all from Prescott, AZ, and Bro. Scott Wegman (Sis. Dawn, Taylor, MO). We were
blessed to assemble shoe boxes for the Project Christmas Child again this year and pray the blessings we enjoy can be shared to successfully demonstrate Jesus’ love to those less fortunate. From all of us here in the desert, we wish you a very Merry Christmas and blessed new year!

Arizona, Prescott
Autumn Rokey

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen” Matt. 28:19-20

We were blessed to see Sis. Sienna Furrer (Bro. Tim and Sis. JaNon) baptized. Surrounded by her church and family she shared how she accepted Jesus as her savior and the change he has made in her life.

We also were privileged to worship with Phoenix church one Sunday, enjoying the fellowship of a nearby church and encouraging each other in our walk with Christ.

Thankful for visiting Elder Bro. Lynn Fletcher (Sis. Ronda, Bluffton, IN) and Elder Bro. Herbie Knochel (Sis. Laurie, Phoenix, AZ).

Arizona, Tucson
Dean and Jackie Knobloch

Did you ever wonder why you are where you are or how you became to have the blessed heritage you have grown up in? Each of us could be homeless on the streets of Tucson, or embroiled in gangs in New York City, or using drugs and gambling in Las Vegas. We have the grace of God and the belief in the saving blood of Christ which is our anchor, because we all know what we would be without God and Jesus: LOST!

We want to thank Elder Bro. Ben Wiegand (Philadelphia, PA) for his efforts in being with us and teaching us God’s word. We always appreciate his willingness to serve us.

We also would like to thank the Phoenix church for hosting us for a day of worship and their annual Sunday school picnic. It was a blessing to fellowship with them and the Prescott church.

Arizona, Willcox
Annie Wulf

"Count your blessings, Name them one by one; Count your many blessings, See what God hath done." Count your Blessings, Hymns of Zion, #116

A darling little blessing has arrived at the home of Bro. Christoph and Sis. Angie Werner. Grandparents are Bro. Gary and Sis. Sandy Fehr. We welcome little Miriam Lynn.

We have been blessed with new attendees in church and are thankful for their presence.

Other blessings to count are visits from brethren from other congregations. Among those visitors we had ministering Bro. Earl Beery (Sis. Suzy, Rittman, OH) and Bro. Jay Knapp (Sis. Lisa, Tucson, AZ). Thank you to each one who came to worship with us in Willcox.

California, San Diego
Sarah Fulop

Despite the atrociously high gas prices this month, nothing can dampen the holiday spirit in the air! While pumpkin patches are over, people are sneaking Christmas wreaths before Thanksgiving. I think there is a collective sigh among everyone that holiday gatherings and friendsgivings are back in full swing (well kind of).

We are thankful for our local church body and welcome Blen, an Ethiopian student going to college in Escondido. She has been a blessing and we are anticipating some delicious Ethiopian food to come.

The building advisory committee met in San Diego this past month. Visiting ministers and impromptu picnics in our backyard completed the beautiful fall weekend.

After gathering with our loved ones for a plentiful feast, we are looking forward to Christmas caroling, wrapping presents and cookie decorating. We pray that our voices with be clear and full of joy for our annual children’s Christmas program.

May Christ fill your homes with peace and goodwill this holiday season!
**Colorado, Denver**
*Jenna Hartter, Rebekah Stoller*

We were sad to say goodbye this month to a few of our congregation as God led them to move elsewhere. In late October, Bro. Seth and Sis. Brooke Knapp moved to Georgia and plan to make Peachtree City congregation their new home. We love their cheerful smiles and will miss the way they’ve brightened our church family. After a few years in Colorado for school, Sis. Maria Steffen will also transition back to the Midwest this fall. Sis. Maria will be missed by all, especially by her young Sunday school students.

We were thankful to have Elder Bro. Brad Strahm (Sis. Michelle, Bern, KS) here recently to assist with the baptism of Sis. Kana Wiegand. It was a wonderful weekend and we appreciated seeing many visitors here to support Sis. Kana for this milestone in her walk with Christ.

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

As the new year approaches, what a blessing to know the Lord already knows what is coming and he will never give us more than we can bear.

This month our ministers were Bro. Dan Pfister (Bluffton North, IN) and Bro Jeff Waibel (Leo, IN).

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

**Florida, Fort Myers**
*Addison Steidinger, Carrie Steidinger*

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

Elder Bro. Jeff Streitmatter (Sis. Lynne, Sarasota, FL) served our congregation Holy Communion this month. We also enjoyed having Bro. Andrew Rassi (Sis. Sandy, Morton, IL) lead us in worship as they visited their family here in Fort Myers.

**Florida, Sarasota**
*Becky Funk*

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

Everyone had a wonderful time at our Sunday school Lakewood weekend retreat on November 5-7 in Brooksville, Florida. The visiting minister at the retreat was Bro. John Bradle (Sis. Jill, Roanoke, IL). The 2 topics for this year were Extreme Faith and How Does Technology Affect Our Faith? A wonderful uplifting message was brought forth. Many activities were a highlight for the kids, including a game room, zip line, archery, hayride and popcorn around the campfire. All were able to enjoy the great outdoors and recharge their spirits!

We are planning to have the minister installation service on November 21 for Bro. Chad Heiniger (Sis. Heather) and Bro. Ryan Stoller (Sis. Kori) into this beautiful opportunity to serve our church.

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

We were thankful that Bro. Tom Bolliger (Sis. Jane, Tremont, IL) visited and shared God’s word with us this past month.

Our congratulations are with David and Kristie Mangold (Bro. Mike and Sis. Renee Mangold) on the birth of their new son Patrick Glenn Mangold. We pray for many blessings for their growing family.

We are looking forward to our numbers climbing as visitors come for the warm weather and fellowship.

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

We were blessed to have Elder Bro. Greg Lehman (Sis. Mary Beth, Wolcott, IN) visit and share with us the Fall Memorandum. We also enjoyed the service and fellowship of Bro. Brad Gudeman (Sis. Teresa, Bradford, IL) and Bro. Mark Hoffman (Sis. Luella, Clarendon, VT). We pray they will be blessed for their efforts.

We want to express our love and sympathy to Bro. Paul Foote and his family in the recent passing of his brother-in-law, Leslie Moseley.
We’re blessed this month by Bro. James Koehl (Sis. Hilde, Morris, MN). We thank him for sharing the Word with us.

We are continuing our Sharing the Gospel Bible study this month. Helping one another learn how we can share the gospel to all that are searching.

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

Georgia, Peachtree City
Elise Funk, Brenda Stoller

During Thanksgiving and always we:

“Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.” I Thessalonians 5:16-18

We welcome Bro. Seth and Sis. Brooke Knapp to the Peachtree City area. We are so thankful that we can worship our God together and we are happy to have them. They moved from Denver, CO, so we appreciate them supporting another small church.

We were blessed this past month to have two visiting ministers; Bro. Curt Rassi (Sis. Kathy, Tremont, IL) and Bro. Matt Sauer (Sis. Marty, Minneapolis, MN). May God richly bless them for their servant heart and ministering to us in their travels.

Haiti, Les Cayes
Mike and Susie Walder

As the holiday season is upon us, I think of the lines of the following hymn:

“Angels with rapture announce it, Shepherds with wonder receive it; Sinner, O won’t you believe it? Wonderful story of love!”

Wonderful Story of Love, Gospel Hymns, #838

For so long I passed right over the part of the Christmas story of the angels bursting out in praise as they announced our Savior’s birth. They had knowledge of what man would struggle to understand: God had come down to earth in human form. With grace and truth, Jesus would show us the Father. With perfect humility he would give his life to ransom the world and defeat sin, death and Satan.

The shepherds believed the message, ran to see, and then ran to tell. It is a message of love and redemption for all men. As they, let us be quick to believe and quick to share this wonderful story!

Sis. Lydianne Metzger (Silverton, OR) has relocated to Les Cayes from Bonne Fin to assist with the guest house here. We are excited to have her share her talents and love for the Haitian people, and we pray she feels at home soon.

Please continue to pray for Haiti and for the havoc that the gangs with their warfare and kidnappings are causing. We also appreciate your prayers for discernment and protection. The missionaries here feel relatively safe away from the main upheaval that is occurring in the capital of Port-au-Prince, but what happens there always affects the rest of the country an awful lot. We are not called to be safe, but to be faithful. We don’t want to be foolish, but to be wise what the will of the Lord is.

Illinois, Belvidere
Darcy Steffen

This past weekend, I had the joy of putting together the floral centerpieces for my cousin’s wedding. I had spent months planning for this, picking out just the right greenery and flowers that would complement the wedding colors and season and making sure it fit into the budget. After the floral was delivered on Friday, I painstakingly opened up the boxes, cut the rubber bands, and placed it all in water. On Saturday, I worked for six hours straight putting everything together. I was not the only one who put immense time into planning this event that would last four hours. The wedding planner, venue coordinator, caterer, photographer, and mother of the bride all spent countless hours making sure everything was perfect. The wedding was beautiful, but it got me thinking. We put so much time and effort into events and coordinating our lives here on earth, that I wonder if our preparations for the ultimate wedding feast are taking a hit. Jesus’s parable of the ten virgins reminds us to always be preparing and watchful for the day he returns.

“And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with...
him to the marriage: and the door was shut.” Matt. 25:10

This seems easier said than done, but we are grateful for the ways God teaches us in a practical manner. This month, the ladies gathered together for our bi-monthly women’s Bible study. A few of our sisters had the opportunity to travel to Morton to the women’s mentoring evening put on by ACCFS. They took amazing notes and brought back the information to share with the rest of us! We also had the blessing to do an entire church Bible study on the topic: The Purpose of Church. This tied in beautifully with our second meeting about our vision and mission as the Belvidere congregation. Elder Bro. Duane and Sis. Bonnie Rocke came down from Minneapolis again to work through this with us. We are so grateful for their leadership and administration skills that they so freely offer us!

That same weekend, Bro. Duane and Elder Bro. Rick Plattner (Sis. MaryAnn, Fairbury, IL) read the Memorandum to us. We have been learning through these studies that one of the key components in our vision, mission, and purpose is to stay connected to the greater denomination, and we are so thankful for the Elders who put the Memorandum together for our benefit. This is one small way in which we can feel the connection to each other wherever we are.

We are also thankful for another visiting minister, Bro. Joel Troxel (Sis. Amy, LaCrosse, IN). Each and every visitor is a blessing to us!

Besides staying connected to the denomination, we need to find ways to stay connected locally. We are grateful that Gary and Sis. Doreen Moser resurrected their harvest party this year. It is always a day of delicious food, fun fall activities, and sweet fellowship with those we love.

**Illinois, Bloomington**

**Kinsey Dotterer, Lauren Zimmerman**

We enjoyed a blessed weekend hearing the testimonies and witnessing the baptisms of Bro. Simon Kaeb and Bro. Jonah Kaeb (Bro. Kory and Sis. Megan) and Bro. Ethan Leman (Bro. Darin and Sis. Jessica). We appreciated having Elder Bro. Randy Gudeman (Sis. Becky, Francesville, IN) as a visiting minister.

We mourn with the Nussbaum family upon the death of Sis. Leona Nussbaum. We also mourn with Sis. Ellen Farney (Bro. Ron) upon the death of her mother, Sis. Joyce Domnick. Joyce is also a grandmother to Sis. Haley Kieser (Bro. Tater). Our prayers are with them all during this time of loss.

We rejoice with Garrison Kaufmann (Bro. Matt and Sis. Rebekah) as he begins his walk with the Lord.

**Illinois, Bradford**

**Becky Endress, Lena Stoller**

We rejoice to welcome Bro. Isaac Stahl (Bro. Wendell and the late Sis. Linda) into the fold. Sharing his testimony with the church on Saturday evening, he was then baptized on Sunday, November 14. We thank Bro. Isaac’s uncle, Elder Bro. Craig Martin (Sis. Terri, Princeville, IL) for assisting our elder Bro. Bruce Endress.

We rejoice in victories won, at the same time mourning the loss of three dear brothers in faith. Bro. Wayne Guingrich was called home unexpectedly on October 21. It was special to have his nephew, Bro. John Cottrell (Sis. Gloria, Eureka, IL) conduct his funeral, with the closing prayer by retired Elder Bro. Chuck Hemmer (Peoria, IL) where Bro. Wayne made his home. We sympathize with his family which includes our Sis. Becky Pyles (Bro. Dennis).

Bro. Richard Frank and his daughters Susan and Karen were part of the Bradford congregation for some thirty years. While here, he served as church treasurer and recording room technician. In 2004, he moved to the Eureka Home where he passed away on October 24. Several from our congregation were blessed to reconnect with his family while attending his funeral in Eureka.

A few days after surgery, Bro. Gerald Kieser finished his earthly race, passing from this life on October 29 after a time of failing health. He is survived by
his wife Sis. Wilma, four sons, Joseph (Geraldine), Bro. Robert (Sis. Kelly), Bro. Matthew (Sis. Tracy), Bro. Bradley (Sis. Rachel), all of Bradford, three daughters, Sis. Barbara Fehr (Bro. Les), Sis. Donna Nenadov (Bro. Philip), both of Bradford, and Sis. Mary Ann Wettstein (Bro. Craig, Gridley, IL), 27 grandchildren, and 7 great grandchildren. Sis. Bertha Jean Herrmann, Sis. Jane Leman (Bro. Marvin), and Sis. Bonnie Kieser also mourn the loss of their brother. A dedicated church historian, Bro. Jerry served the church in many ways, most recently as church treasurer for 13 years.

Our hearts go out to Sis. Reneé Endress as her dear mother, Sis. Dona Grimm (Elder Bro. Roy, dec.), was laid to rest in Taylor, MO, and also to the families of Bro. Ralph Joos (Sis. Jenny) and Sis. Rebecca Joos (Bro. Robert, dec.) as their mother, Sis. Lorene Joos (Peoria, IL) finished her earthly race.

On October 29, Mikaela Endress (Bro. Bill and Sis. Reneé) became the bride of Jonathon Roth, son of Doug and Mikala Roth of Ft. Wayne, IN. We all wish them well as they settle in their first home in Citrus Heights, CA.

Best wishes to Brendan Endress and Misty Berchtold who have announced their engagement. Their parents are Bro. Bill and Sis. Reneé Endress and Dawn (and the late Jeremy Sr.) Berchtold of Wyoming, IL. An August 2022 wedding is planned.

Elder Bro. Trent Meiss (Sis. Lucy, Eureka, IL) spent a weekend with us when he came to assist Elder Bro. Bruce in reading the Memorandum.

On November 17, Bro. Lucas and Sis. Lynelle Herrmann welcomed a precious little girl whom they named Rosie Jo. She has two big brothers Oliver and Leo, grandparents Bro. Marvin and Sis. Lavonne Herrmann and Bro. David and Sis. Leann Berchtold, both of Princeville, and six great grandparents.

Convert Ryan Stahl (Bro. Bill and Sis. Kristal) has moved to Tremont for employment and plans to assemble with the brethren there.

Each week we enjoy viewing the progress on our church building expansion. We pray for safety for all the workers as the work proceeds.

Note of Thanks
From the family of Bro. Wayne Guingrich: Thank you for the love, prayers, and support during the recent passing of our dear brother and beloved uncle. At times like this we learn a new appreciation for our dear church family.

Illinois, Champaign
Brent Young

Our Sunday school students enjoyed several activities this month including a “harvest party” at the home of Bro. Brian and Sis. Wendy Waibel, a lock-in hosted by the Young Group, and the delivering of Thanksgiving food baskets. It is a tremendous blessing to have a large and active Sunday school! It is a blessing also to have so many willing to invest in our youth.

We are grateful to Bro. Nathan Rassi (Sis. Michelle, St. Louis, MO), Bro. Grant Herrmann (Sis. Hannah, Princeville, IL), and Bro. Curt Rassi (Sis. Kathy, Tremont, IL) for visiting and bringing us the gospel message from the pulpit.

The Old Testament records that Isaac asked, “Who will provide a lamb for the sacrifice?” The New Testament tells us that John the Baptist answered the question when he said, “Behold the Lamb of God!” As we enter the Advent season may these words echo in our minds:

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

Illinois, Chicago
Diana Eisenmann

Elder Bro. Brent Walder (Sis. Naomi, Rockville, CT) visited in November to help share the Memorandum. It was a blessing to gather and hear the encouraging message from the Elder Body and share fellowship over the weekend. We appreciated Bro. Brent and Sis. Naomi traveling from afar to be with us.

This past month has been eventful for our church family. Bro. Jim and Sis. Kathy Schlatter hosted their annual Wiener Roast. Bro. Chad Kaeb and Bro. Quinn Steffen visited on a Wednesday
night to share about Gateway Woods. We held a Saturday morning HarvestCall activity day to assemble school kits and first aid kits for Mexico. We also had a Women of the Word event to discuss and share about various transitions in our lives.

Parker John Westfall was born on October 31 to Bro. Brant and Sis. Audrey. Bro. Dave and Sis. Julie Westfall (Indianapolis, IN) are celebrating the arrival of a new grandson. We rejoice with their family and pray for God’s blessing on this new adventure.

Bro. Paul Leman (Sis. Milli, Dandridge, TN) passed away at the end of October. They lived in the Chicago area for many years before their recent move to Tennessee. We rejoice for his victory in Jesus and pray for peace and comfort for his dear family.

Illinois, Cissna Park
Denise Kaeb, Lou Ann Kaeb

As a church, we came together for a potluck meal for retired Elder Bro. Tom and Sis. Karol Stock to show our appreciation for the years he served us as elder. We are very thankful for his willingness to remain on the pulpit. The evening was finished with the joyful singing of praise to our Heavenly Father, who provides for us so abundantly above all that we deserve.

Sis. Bev Knapp had knee surgery this past month and we are thankful she is back assembling with us. Our prayer is for a complete recovery.

Our Sis. Marilyn Knapp, who has been residing at the Fairview Haven home in Fairbury the past two years, has been relieved of her earthly struggles and has gone to be with the Lord. Our prayers are with her family of our congregation, her sister, Sis. Lucile Knapp, residing at Fairview Haven, and her brother, Wes Knapp (Judy). May God comfort them with his love and mercy.

We rejoice with our converts, Andy Stock (Bro. Tom and Sis. Karol) and Micah Waldbeser (Bro. Mark and Sis. Janie) as they were announced for peace. We look forward to their testimonies and baptisms the weekend of December 4-5.

The second weekend of November was our Invite-A-Guest weekend. We appreciated all those who came to bless our day! Among them were visiting ministers, Bro. Darren Plattner (Sis. Sue, Champaign, IL), Bro. Paul Kilgus (Sis. Carmen, Fairbury, IL), and Bro. Zach Anderson (Sis. Karla, Congerville, IL). Thank you, dear brothers, for sharing God’s word with us! Such weekends as this are such a blessing, and a sure foretaste of what heaven must be like with sweet fellowship and worship.

Illinois, Elgin
Amy Gasser

We thank Bro. Brad Stoller (Sis. Amanda, Eureka, IL) and Bro. Earl Beery (Sis. Suzy, Rittman OH) for ministering to us during the past month. Special thanks also to Elder Bro. Dan Moser, who conducted an all-church topical presentation on Wednesday, November 3. His topic was on the first guiding principle from our church’s visioning effort: “Jesus Christ’s Love for Us is the Foundation and Motivation for Everything We Do.”
On Sunday, October 31, we sang a farewell hymn for Bro. Nathan Moser (Elder Bro. Dan and Sis. Anne). He has recently taken a new job and is worshipping with the brethren in Altadena, CA. We miss him in our Elgin congregation, but our love and prayers are with him as he relocates.

On Sunday, November 14, Elder Bro. Greg Lehman (Sis. Mary Beth, Wolcott, IN) spent the day with us and assisted Elder Bro. Dan with the Fall Memorandum in the afternoon.

Bro. Nathan Steffen underwent surgery recently and is currently at Highland Oaks. Sis. Kay Cargill (Bro. Jerry) had hip replacement surgery following a fall, and she is now recovering at home.

Jesse Leman and Courtney Welch were married on Saturday, November 6, in Hebron, IL. Their parents are Bro. Keith and Sis. Libby Leman (Peachtree City, GA) and Scott and Karrie Welch (Marengo, IL). We wish them God’s blessings in their new life together.

Illinois, Eureka
Debra Blunier, Lavonne Schumacher

The time change in November brings earlier darkness to our daily routines, and we often feel that it’s getting far too dark and cold for comfort. News broadcasts may depress us as well, as darkness and evil seem to spread throughout the world. But always, we must remember Psalm 27:1, “The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?” Spiritually, we are surrounded and guarded by light.

November 6 was our Invite-A-Friend Potluck and Singing. We shared numerous blessings in the fellowship with many from across the land, especially sweet because we haven’t been able to share a special weekend like this for a year and half. We were blessed also to have visiting ministers, and we thank Bro. Darren Fehr (Sis. Nora, West Bend, IA), Bro. Tom Bahler (Sis. Lanae, Rockville, CT), Bro. Warren Schlatter, (Sis. Cindy, Junction OH), and Bro. Kevin Fehr (Sis. Lonnie, West Bend, IA).

We were blessed to have Elder Bro. Mark Masters (Sis. Jeannine, Mansfield, OH) share the Memorandum with us, supporting our Elder Bro. Trent Meiss. Examining our hearts and motives is so necessary as we try to draw ever nearer to God.

We extend sympathy to the loved ones of Bro. Wayne Guingrich, (Peoria, IL) who died on October 21. His funeral was in the Bradford, IL, church. He was the brother of Sis. Judy Cottrell and the beloved uncle to many nieces and nephews, and great nieces and nephews.

We were also saddened by the passing of Bro. Richard Frank on October 24. Our sympathy goes to his siblings, Sis. Linda Frank and Bro. Don Frank, as well as his daughters, Susan Bursztynsky (Zenon, Ottawa, IL), and Karen Makela (Ron, Adel, IA) along with his seven grandchildren and two great grandchildren. What a comfort with both of these brothers in faith, that they turned to the Lord, were converted, and were baptized many years ago.

Rosie Jo was welcomed by her sister Callie and parents Jacob and Ashley Leman. Grandparents are Bro. Ed and Sis. Ruth Leman and David and Sandra Steffen, (El Paso, IL).

Rachel Zimmerman and Tim Wynkoop, Eureka, have announced their engagement, and a January wedding is planned. She is the daughter of Bro. Dale and Sis. Sue Zimmerman and he is the son of Harold and Kim Wynkoop (Galesburg, IL), and Jim and Vickie McQuellan (East Peoria, IL). We pray for God’s leading in their walk together.

Illinois, Fairbury
Kati Meiss, Trish Steidinger

Our Bible Class hosted Akron, OH and Elgin, IA Bible Classes for a fun and memorable weekend. Ministering Bro. Paul Zimmerman (Sis. Loretta, Forrest, IL) and Bro. Mark Dotterer (Sis. Kate, Eureka, IL) were with us to partake in the weekend of fellowship. We pray new friendships were formed and old ones renewed as these students spent time together.

We were also privileged to host two Sunday evenings of ACYF
recently. It is wonderful to see the energy and vitality of youth as they sing to the Lord! We pray that all that were involved received a blessing.

Two couples were blessed with new bundles from Heaven. Kylie Jean was born to Bro. Philip and Sis. Lila Hartman. Big brother Carson, along with grandparents Bro. Ryan and Sis. Lori Hartman and Bro. Harlan and Sis. Jean Knapp (Forrest, IL), welcome this little one home. Bro. Ross and Sis. Julie Steidinger, along with Lacey and Lane welcomed Claire Renee into their family. Grandparents are Bro. Martin and Sis. Trish Steidinger and Bro. John and Sis. Janice Rufener (Smithville, OH).

Our sincere sympathy goes out to those that have lost loved ones. We pray for Bro. Don Bazzell (Sis. Carol) on the loss of his brother, Gerald Bazzell. Our love and prayers also go out to Sis. Lori Hartman (Bro. Ryan) and Bro. Ivan and Sis. Cinda Fehr on the loss of their brother and son-in-law, respectively, Bro. Brad Brown (Sis. Shannon, Forrest, IL). Our sympathies to Sis. Erica Moser (Bro. Walter) and Sis. Kara Blunier (Bro. Dave) as their grandpa and uncle, respectively, Bro. Jerry Kieser (Sis. Wilma, Bradford, IL) passed away. We also think of Sis. Betty Wiegand in the loss of her daughter, Barb Schaffer. May the Lord comfort these dear ones with his love and care.

As the Christmas season is upon us and we reflect upon the birth of the Christ Child, may we take some time to slow down and really let the miracle of Jesus Christ sink into our hearts. We have so many lessons we can learn from Jesus; from the humble birth to his servant heart to his ultimate sacrifice on the cross for all mankind! God bless you all this Christmas!

**Illinois, Forrest**

**Jessica Gerber, Marsha Lanz**

As we enter the winter months, it can bring anxieties, less sunshine and long evenings and perhaps a first holiday without a loved one. As the world around us seems to grow darker, both in what we see and what we feel, getting a glimpse of a bright spot becomes all the more meaningful. Maybe that’s what helps to make remembering Christ’s birth such a time of hope!

Sharing the message of redemption and hope with us this past month were Bro. Kurt Plattner (Sis. Joan, Goodfield, IL), Bro. Todd Stoller (Sis. Pamela, Latty, OH), and Bro. Michael Schneider (Sis. Jodi, Junction, OH). May God bless their willing service.

The gift of new life was given to several families this month. Aspen Lynn was welcomed home by Bro. Josh and Sis. Amber Coffey, along with big brothers Lyndon, Layton and Liam. Grateful grandparents are Bro. Kevin and Sis. Denise Coffey and Bro. Reuben and Sis. Devra Stork. Myles Arlo blessed the home of Bro. Reuben and Sis. Karla Kaeb, joining older brothers Easton and Asher. Thankful grandparents are Bro. Karl and Sis. Bethany Edelman, Morris Kaeb, and Chuck and Brenda Mueller.

Looking forward to the joy of baptism are two dear converts, Tristan Zimmerman (Bro. Adam and Sis. Rachel) and Carson Leman (Bro. Arlen and Sis. Denise). May God’s peace surround them as they commit their lives to serving him.

Bro. Reuben Leman (Sis. Krystle) and Bro. Lucas Nussbaum (Sis. Raya) were called to share the message of salvation in Sunday school. May God give them wisdom to guide the tender hearts towards him.

Sharing a testimony of God’s provision for their lives, Bro. Matt Edwards and Sis. Jessica Gerber were announced for marriage. We rejoice with them as they anticipate joining their lives with the three-fold cord of God’s love.

Our love and prayers go out to Sis. Shannon Brown and children Blake, Molly and Derek, in the loss of their dear husband and father, Bro. Brad. May God also comfort his parents, Gary and Jane Brown, along with siblings Sis. Lori Hartman (Bro. Ryan, Fairbury, IL), Bro. Joel (Sis. Lana), Tami Aberle (Shawn) and Bro. Troy (Sis. Leann) and grandmother Sis. Eleanor Honegger. While on
this side Bro. Brad lost his battle with cancer, on the other side he gained eternal rest and victory over death.

Illinois, Goodfield
Amy Hinrichsen, Judy Knapp

“Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.” Psalms 95:2

At the end of October, Elder Bro. Ted Witzig Jr. (Sis. Donna, Morton, IL) shared with our church on the topic of “Compassion without compromise.” We were thankful for the reminder to show love to others and share the gospel like Christ did, no matter a person’s lifestyle.

We are excited for our dear Sis. Gerri Hinrichsen and Bro. Mark Wuthrich (Morton, IL) who were joined in Holy Matrimony on Sunday, November 7! It was a beautiful wedding day, and we are thankful to see God bring two lives together! Bro. Keith Hinrichsen (Sis. Tammy, Phoenix AZ) ministered to us in the morning and Bro. Dennis Rassi (Sis. Diane, Austin/Bastrop, TX) in the afternoon on that special day. Bro. Jon Zeller (Sis. Christi, Morton, IL) had the wedding service in the later afternoon.

We also enjoyed having Elder Bro. Gerry Hertzel (Sis. Ellen, Sabetha, KS) and Elder Bro. John Lehman (Sis. Carol, Bern, KS) visit for the day!

The second weekend in November, we had testimonies and baptisms for Anna Wiegand, Claire Wiegand, Larisa Wiegand, and Sophia Meister. Sis. Anna is the daughter of Bro. Nathan and Sis. Laura Wiegand. Sis. Claire and Sis. Larisa are the daughters of Bro. Erik and Sis Carrie Wiegand. Sis. Sophia is the daughter of Bro. Dan and Sis. Susan Meister. Bro. Tim Wiegand (Sis. Christa, Leo, IN) ministered to us during the afternoon. We are thankful and prayerful for these four sisters in Christ as they continue their Christian walk.

Our dear Sis. Loretta Hess (Robert, dec.) passed away on November 9. She is survived by her three children and their families. We are prayerful for them and for her sister, Sis. Vi Wagner of Goodfield. May they feel God’s comfort.

Our prayers are also with Sis. Carol Hohulin (Bro. Harold) who recently lost her brother, Bro. Wayne Guingrich (Peoria, IL) and Sis. Lydia Hohulin (Bro. Bill) who lost her brother, Bro. Paul Leman (Sis. Milli, Dandridge, TN, formally of Chicago, IL).

As we celebrate Thanksgiving and think of all the blessings God has given us, we are especially thankful for the gift of salvation and our merciful Savior, Jesus Christ. Wishing you all a joyful holiday season!

Illinois, Gridley
Perry Klopfenstein

We are happy to report the birth of Wyatt Matthew Wellwood on October 26. He is the son of Bro. Jonny and Sis. Shelby Wellwood. Grandparents are Jim and Jackie Wellwood, Gridley and Ryan and Lori Steidinger, formerly of Fairbury, and now of Florida. Siblings of Wyatt are Addison, Emma, and Owen. We surely offer our best wishes to this couple as they raise this newborn son, and his siblings.

Bro. Don Gramm (Sis. Rosie) has moved to Fairview Haven Home in Fairbury.

We offer our sympathies to Sis. Mary Ann Wettstein (Bro. Craig) over the passing of her father, Bro. Jerry Kieser, (Bradford, IL).

Hospital patients this month have been Bro. Bill Funk, Bro. Henry Finck, and Sis. Shelby Wellwood.

I have been inspired by the following hymn:

"I have a Saviour, He’s pleading in glory,
A dear, loving Saviour, tho’ earth friends be few;
And now He is watching in tenderness o’er me,
And, oh, that my Saviour were your Saviour, too.”

I Am Praying For You,
Hymns of Zion, #31

Illinois, Morton
Annette Tanner

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

We have surely seen this verse played out in our congregation this month.

Four dear families, although in their time of sorrow, are thankful that their loved one has
gained their Heavenly reward. We extend our sympathy to Sis. Geri Neukomm (Bro. Al) whose sister Sis. Dona Grimm (Bro. Roy, dec., Taylor, MO) passed away. She was also the grandmother of Bro. Drew Leman (Sis. Amanda). Bro. Corey West’s mother, Kimberly West (Chris) passed away. Our sympathy to Bro. Jeff Neihouser (Sis. Sue) as his father, Bro. Andre Neihouser (Sis. Lois, Francesville, IN) passed away. Our Sis. Joyce Domnick (Bro. Dale, dec.) leaves to mourn her passing Sis. Gerry Kruse (Bro. Doug), Dale Domnick (Nancy), Sis. Kathy Rithoaler (Bro. Jim), Jan Hohulin (Mark) all of Morton and Sis. Ellen Farney (Bro. Ron, Bloomington, IL).

Three families are thankful for the safe arrival of new babies to love. Carson Nathaniel was born October 22 to Bro. Nathaniel and Sis. Tressa Leman. His big brother is Mathis, and his grandparents are Bro. Tim and Sis. Beth Leman (Morton, IL) and Bro. Mark and Sis. Elsie Sinn (Silverton, OR). Bro. Steve and Sis. Lynn Roeschly welcome twin granddaughters Ida Rae and Irene Charlie born to first-time parents Brian and Gabrielle Sauder of Chicago on October 25. Their other grandparents are Marv and Mary Sauder (Morton, IL). Also welcoming their first child are Bro. Philip and Sis. Whittney Huette with the birth of Piper Rae on October 26. Her grandparents are Bro. Doug and Sis. Jill Huette, (Morton, IL) and Bro. Craig and Sis. Jacki Stickling, (Peoria, IL).

Our congratulations go to Bro. Mark Wuthrich and Sis. Gerri Hinrichsen who were united in holy matrimony on November 7 in Goodfield, IL. We wish them and their families God’s blessings as they begin this new phase in their lives. We welcome Sis. Gerri into our Morton church family.

Our thanks go to three visiting ministers who brought us the word of God: Bro. Nathan Wiegand (Sis. Laura, Goodfield, IL), Bro. Jonathan Hodel (Sis. Megan, Roanoke, IL) and Elder Bro. Scott Schafer (Sis. Gigi, South Bend, IN).

Our November Family Worship Night was on the topic “Be Ye Thankful”. Bro. Andrew Rassi (Sis. Sandy) reminded us that God owns everything, and we are stewards of his possessions. We should always have an attitude of gratitude.

Although delayed because of COVID-19, a retirement dinner and singing was held in honor of Elder Bro. Ted Witzig, Sr. (Sis. Cindy) and Bro. Jon Zeller (Sis. Christi). We thank these dear brothers and their wives for the many years of service to the Lord and our Morton congregation.

It seems like the theme this month has been one of thankfulness. As this is being read, we will have gathered with family and friends to celebrate Thanksgiving. We look forward to the activities celebrating the birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The most important reason to be thankful.

“Thank ye the Lord! Give thanks to the Lord, For He is gracious, His mercy It endureth evermore. Bless ye the Lord, O bless ye the Lord! My soul, remember His goodness and His gifts bestowed on thee; His is the pow’r, Almighty is God! He ruleth wisely, He manifests His favor ev’ry day. Great is the Lord, yea great is the Lord! His name is holy, Throughout the world His honor doth abound. Worship the Lord, O worship the Lord! With sacred rever’ence Respectfully We speak His holy name. Sing to the Lord, yea, sing to the Lord! In joyful chorus, for graciously He hears our song of praise.”

Psalm of Praise, Hymns of Zion, #245

Illinois, Peoria

Bonnie Bach, Crystal Wettstein

The kickoff to the holidays is in full swing. May we remember Jesus is the true reason for the season. Bro. Craig and Sis. Jacki Stickling are enjoying a new granddaughter, Piper Rae, born October 26 to Bro. Philip and Sis. Whitney Huette (Morton, IL).

The circle of life has ended for three souls. Bro. Wayne Guingrich went to be with the Lord. He was a quiet prayer warrior who leaves behind
the heritage of a large family. He is survived by sisters Sis. Carol Hohulin (Bro Harold, Goodfield, IL), Sis. Judy Cottrell (Eureka, IL), Sis. Becky Pyles (Bro. Dennis, Bradford, IL), and brothers Norman (Cheryl, Braxton, MN), Daniel (Sandy, Indianapolis, IN) and David (Peoria, IL). He was preceded in death by three brothers, Larry (Sandy, MI), Bro. Richard (Nancy, Peoria, IL) and John (Gwen, Spring Branch, TX).

Bruce Johnson, who attended with us for many years, has also passed away. Sis. Lorene Joos is now reunited with Jesus and her husband (Bro. Bob, dec.). She was a steadfast sister that could always provide an encouraging smile. She resided at Skylines nursing home the past several years and is survived by son Bro. Ralph (Sis. Jenny, Bradford, IL), sister Norma Gronewald (Chillicothe, IL) and was preceded in death by sons Bro. Robert (Sis. Becky, Bradford, IL), Bro. Ronald (Sis. Christy, Bloomfield, IA), brothers Claude and Vernon Rummerfield, sister Millie Dobbins and one great-grandson.

The annual auction for Skylines nursing home was another success, raising money for remodeling rooms in the Galilee hallway.

Harold and Marilyn Stickling have moved to Carlock, IL to be closer to their children and grandchildren and are attending the Bloomington, IL church. We will greatly miss them and hope they visit often.

Bro. Cody Waibel brought us the message on Family Night as part of the Sharing the Gospel bible study our church was doing. We have since concluded the nine-part study and hopefully are better prepared to share the good news of Jesus to the lost world around us!

A hymn sing was held featuring the pre-K through 2nd grade Sunday school children.

Many prayers have been said on behalf of those dealing with health issues and we are comforted knowing God is all-wise.

**Illinois, Princeville**

**Ruth Herrmann, Cherie White**

“Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus Laid down His sweet head;
The stars in the sky Looked down where He lay,
The little Lord Jesus, Asleep on the hay.”

_Away In A Manger, Hymns of Christmas, #5_

The greatest gift to all mankind!  
“A time to be born.” Eccl 3:2

Bro. Tim and Sis. Denise Kieser welcome another granddaughter, Maisy Lanae, born to Bro. Kyle and Sis. Lindsey Isch (Bluffton, IN). Big brother Murphy looks forward to a future playmate. Paternal grandparents are Bro. Jeff and Sis. Karen Isch (Bluffton, IN).

Bro. Lucas and Sis. Lynelle Herrmann, (Bradford, IL) are thrilled to welcome their first daughter, Rosie Jo born November 17. Brothers Oliver and Leo now get to learn about the “sister” world. Grandparents are Bro. Marvin and Sis. Lavonne Herrmann and Bro. David and Sis. Leann Berchtold.

“A time to die.” Eccl 3:2

Sis. Jane Leman (retired Elder Bro. Marvin) and Sis. BerthaJean Herrmann said goodbye to another brother, Bro. Jerry Kieser, (Sis. Wilma, Bradford, IL). Also surviving is sister-in-law Sis. Shirley Kieser.

“A time to heal.” Eccl 3:3

Sis. Jane Leman (retired Elder Bro. Marvin) and Sis. Arlene Martin had to undergo surgery. We lift them up in prayers for strength to sit still as they wait and hope for a full recovery.

“The tongue of the wise useth knowledge.” Prov 15:2

Our congregation hosted Invite-A-Guest. Among the many visitors were ministering brothers Bro. Ned Bahler (Sis. Anna, Fairbury, IL,) Bro. Trent Gasser (Sis. Molly, Akron, OH) and Bro. Jay Steffen (Sis. Melinda, Congerville, IL). We also thank Elder Bro. Ted Witzig Jr (Sis. Donna, Morton, IL) who came to help with the reading of the Fall Memorandum.

**Illinois, Roanoke**

**Judy Sauder, Barb Schwind**

We have been studying the book of Matthew on Sunday afternoons. On October 24, Elder Bro. Frank Sauder (Sis. Kathy) expounded on chapters 4-7, including Christ’s temptation in the wilderness and the
beginning of his ministry where he announces the arrival of God’s kingdom. The kingdom is central to his teaching because Matthew mentions it over fifty times. Bro. Frank also discussed Jesus’s first sermon, the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus describes a new kingdom which is different than the kingdoms of the world. It is a kingdom where hearts are transformed, and people love God by loving their enemies.

Bro. Jonathan Hodel (Sis. Megan) continued our study of Matthew with chapters 8-11 on October 31. God’s kingdom is comprised of people from all nations. The power of God’s kingdom is greater than any power on earth, enabling Jesus to have control over death and the environment. We can expect opposition if we are an active participant in the Kingdom. “And he said unto them, Go.” Matt. 8:32. Bro. John Bradle (Sis. Jill) encouraged us to “GO”, to “go” forward with the gospel and respond to “opportunities to share the gospel with others.

Bro. Sam Bertschi (Sis. Marjorie) continued our study of Matthew on November 7. He explained the parables contained in chapter 13. Bro. Sam also related about Jesus sending his followers to encourage John the Baptist, who was in prison. Bro. Sam gave the great invitation: “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.” Matt. 11:29

On November 14, Bro. Nate Hodel (Sis. Jamie) spoke on Matthew 14-18. “Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.” Matt. 18:3. Bro. Nate encouraged us to display the attributes of children. In general, children have a tender conscience, are humble and willing to grow, and have no personal means of providing for themselves. They are not consumed with the past or the future, they are uncomplicated, and don’t hold grudges.

“Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” Matt 18:4.

Our ministers shared the Memorandum with us on November 3.

On October 31, Bro. Matt Feucht (Sis. Jennifer) discussed current supply chain issues and the difficulty in obtaining various products. He reminded us that because of Jesus’s shed blood on the cross we can have a direct connection or supply chain to Jesus, our high priest. We no longer need an earthly high priest to enter the holy of holies to offer continual sacrifice for our sin. We thank all our ministers for their timely and convicting messages and for their humble service to our church.

Roy Yergler (Lavonne, Mesa, AZ), passed away on October 10. He was a brother-in-law to Sis. Christa Moser (Bro. Glen). Sis. Dona Grimm (Taylor, MO) went to be with the Lord on October 19. She was the mother of Sis. Jeanne Leman (Bro. Bill). We pray for our Lord’s comfort for these dear families in their loss.

Bro. Steve and Sis. Linda Pfister welcomed another grandson, Titus James, born to Tim and Jamie Wyne (Madison, WI) on October 22. Vivian Paige arrived to bless the home of Tory and Annie Wentworth (Carlock, IL) on November 12. Her thankful grandmother is Sis. Joyce Hodel. We pray for God’s blessings on these dear families as they raise their children in the ways of the Lord.

Our young group was gracious to once again host a Harvest Party at the Fellowship Hall for our youth on October 30. Our other youth groups (Scripture Memory, HOPE, and ACTIVE) have been serving our church by raking leaves, assembling “care” baskets for the elderly and shut-ins, and making get well cards for those who are ill. We thank our youth for the many ways they serve our church.

Bro. Harold Roth celebrated his 105th birthday on November 5. We are so thankful for Bro. Harold and wish him God’s continued blessings as he journeys through life.

Bro. Ed and Sis. Boni Stoller, Michael, and David, who live in Colorado, visited family in Illinois for about a week. It was so good to be with them.

Our church helped with worship services at the Peoria Rescue Mission on November 7.
Also on November 7, our Bible Class juniors and seniors and their parents hosted a Harvest Dinner to help with expenses for their upcoming work trip to Tennessee next spring. The students will be helping with food distribution, VBS, and doing a small building project. After the meal, the students sang a few hymns. It was a beautiful evening of fellowship, worship, and building relationships.

The Fairbury, IL, church hosted ACYF for our Bible Class students on November 14.

Our church recently approved a major remodeling project to include new carpeting, church benches, painting, and repairing wood paneling among other things. Our church building has served us well for the past 55 years. We want to preserve and maintain it for future generations. We pray for God’s blessings upon this undertaking.

We look forward to hearing the testimonies and witnessing the baptisms of Ethan Hodel (Bro. Eric and Sis. Gina), Natalie Hodel (Bro. Jason and Sis. Rena), and Riley Beer (Bro. Neal and Sis. Jessica) on November 20-21. We are also thankful for and rejoice with Jackson Beer (Bro. Neal and Sis. Jessica) and Josh Feucht (Bro. Matt and Sis. Jennifer) who have begun their walks with the Lord. May God bless each of these loved ones in their journey of faith.

We want to lift up Bro. Jim Leman (Sis. Annie), Sis. Cheri Janssen (Bro. Fred), Bro. Dave Schwind (Sis. Barb), Sis. Kim Luginbuhl (Bro. Andy) and her sister Amee Meinhold, in prayer for our Lord’s continued healing mercies.

   “And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up.” James 5:15

**Illinois, Tremont**

**Debbie Aberle, Lucy Kaiser**

   "And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician: but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” Luke 5:31-32

   Elder Bro. Randy Beer (Sis. Deb, Milford, IN) was here to help with the testimony and baptism of our new brother, Bro. Samuel Baer. Samuel is the son of Bro. Kerry and Sis. Kelly Baer. We were also thankful for the visits of Elder Bro. Trent Meiss (Sis. Lucy, Eureka, IL) and Bro. Dean Steffen (Sis. Carol, Belvidere, IL) that weekend. We appreciated Elder Bro. Jon Schmidgall (Sis. Julie, Mediapolis, IA) helping with the reading of the Fall Memorandum and ministering once again to us on Sunday. We certainly appreciate the efforts of our local ministers going through the Bible Study of “Reflecting God’s Love.”

   Bro. Philip and Sis. Mary Steiner welcomed Christina Rose into their hearts and home. Bro. Todd and Sis. Val Steiner are also thankful for their new granddaughter.

   Our prayers this month have been with Sis. Glenna Sauder, Sis. Nancy Sauder, and Bro. Bill Huette as they spent time in the hospital. We are also praying for young Kate Huette (Bro. Brad and Sis. Sarah), who is currently hospitalized. We sorrow with Sis. Erika Koch (Bro. Dirk) and her family with the loss of her brother, Zolton Molnar.

   “Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:” Phil 1:6

   We are certainly thankful for a safe and fruitful harvest in our area. May we always start each day with a thankful heart!

**Illinois, Washington**

**Lillian Pfaffmann**

Here it is, fall again, with Thanksgiving just days ahead. Truly every day should be one of gratefulness, yet it seems with our country’s present-day culture, it’s more necessary, even crucial, to appreciate the freedoms and blessings we take for granted! Following 2 Chron. 7:14, let us diligently pray for forgiveness and then, search how he can use us to further his presence in our nation to accomplish this!

A precious blessing is welcomed by Bo. Seth and Sis. Chelsea Teubel! Little Claire Louise Teubel was born on November 2. May they feel God’s presence as they teach her about his love and the importance of obeying his word!

Our Washington congregation appreciated Bro. Joe Klotzle (Sis. Sue, Altadena,
CA) serving us on the pulpit once again. The Holy Spirit used him to give us valuable insights into living more in his likeness, so we are more usable in his service.

**Indiana, Bluffton**  
*Suzie Fiechter, Liana Reinhard, Olivia Steffen*


Our thanks is extended to Elder Bro. Damon Knobloch (Sis. Stephanie, Morris North, MN) and Elder Bro. Bob Dotterer (Sis. Laura, Sardis, OH) for serving us communion and blessing us with their presence.

We are praising God that Travis Gerber (Bro. Dean and Sis. Jaci) is publicly claiming Christ as his Savior! A special thanks is given to Sis. Cordin Koch (Bro. Logan, Leo, IN) and several others from Gateway Woods who gave a presentation for Orphan Sunday.

Our prayers are with Bro. Jeff Isch (Sis. Karen) as he has been diagnosed with colorectal cancer. We also lift up Nancy Hill (Dave) as her cancer has returned.

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

**Indiana, Bluffton North**  
*Deanna Brinneman, Rhonda Maller*

“O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.” Psa. 107:1

The Lord’s mercy was the ‘theme’ of our Wednesday night song service recently. The Bluffton North leaders shared scriptures and thoughts and led our Bluffton congregations in songs about God’s incredible gift of mercy. It was a blessing to all.

Another blessing is our active and thriving Sunday school. They recently held their annual pancake and sausage breakfast fundraiser. What a treat to be served by our youth. They are also participating in their annual Christmas collection for our local food bank, collecting toys and coats for those in need.

“Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.” Eccl. 12:1

On Sunday, November 14, Sis. Ella Stettner and Bro. Klint Edelman (Bloomington, IL) were united in marriage. Their parents are Bro. Graig and Sis. Corinne Stettner and Bro. Alan and Sis. Wendy Edelman (Bloomington, IL) We rejoice with them and pray God’s blessing upon them as they walk together in his service.

November also marks one year since our congregation has joined Bluffton Country in an intercessory prayer endeavor, which has resulted in everyone listed in the church directory being covered in prayer each week. What an incredible blessing and building of our body of believers.

“Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.” I Thess. 5:16-18

**Indiana, Francesville**  
*Jacki Huber, Connie Linback*

“God is our refuge and our strength, a very present help in
trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah." Psal. 46: 1-3

Thank you, Lord, for the beauty and the bounty that you have provided this fall. We are richly blessed.

On a Wednesday evening we enjoyed a delicious soup supper provided to us by eager Active and Kingdom Kids. What joy and energy these young ones have for the Lord.

Our congregation held a farewell singing for Bro. Steve and Sis. April Young, and daughter Mirabel, as they have moved to Lafayette, IN, and Bro. Ben and Sis. Christa Stoller and sons Teddy, James, and Harvey. They are attending the Junction, OH, church.

We extend sympathy to all the family of Pam Vogt, especially to her husband Don and Sis. Kristie Gutwein, Pam’s sister.

Our prayers are with Bro. Earl Anliker (Sis. Elizabeth) who has been in the hospital this month. Bro. Earl recently sent greetings and his family is grateful for the past and continued prayer support.

We were blessed with several visiting ministers this month: Bro. Jeff Neihouser (Sis. Sue, Morton, IL), Bro. Blair Neihouser (Sis. Natalie, West Lafayette, IN), and Bro. Jim Meiss, (Sis. Candy, Austin/Bastrop, TX). Elder Bro. Nick Gutwein (Sis. Suzanne, West Lafayette, IN) was here to help with his uncle, Bro. Andre Neihouser’s funeral service.

Our sympathies are with the family of Bro. Andre: especially his dear wife Sis. Lois and his sons, Bro Brad (Sis. Barb, Francesville, IN), Bro. Jeff (Sis. Sue, Morton, IL), and daughters Michelle (Tom, Glenview, IL), and Andrea (Darin, Hamden, CT). We also extend sympathy to his siblings, grandchildren and many relatives.

Joyful news has been received of a new little boy born to Bro. Jesse and Sis. Victoria Wuethrich. Graeson Alan is welcomed to the family by his sister Sage. Grandparents are Bro. Bruce and Sis. Kathy Wuethrich and Bro. Roger and Sis Mary Stoller (Gridley, IL).

**Note of Thanks**
The Elvin Nuest family sent thanks to the church for the prayer support given while he was in the hospital.

**Note of Thanks**
Bro. Les and Sis. Christine Kaeb extended thanks for the many prayers during their recent trip to and from Haiti.

**Indiana, Indianapolis**

**Valerie Kipfer**

Thanksgiving is a truly American holiday. It was instituted by President George Washington by a Proclamation on October 3, 1789, setting aside November 26th as a National Day of Thanksgiving.

It commemorated the first Thanksgiving, where our forefathers gathered to celebrate God’s blessings on our non-yet-formed nation. Presidents have continued the tradition to this day (now the fourth Thursday in November), reflecting on the year, the bounties it brought, and giving thanks to Almighty God. In our own way, every family gathered together this day participates in this solemn reflection as they celebrate their bounty, their families, and their God. We are so grateful to live in a land where we can openly give thanks unto the Father for our many blessings!

WE ARE THANKFUL that on the Wednesday evening before Thanksgiving, we have our annual Thanksgiving program, a time of sharing and song to give thanks for our continued blessings.

WE ARE THANKFUL that we have had visitors this past month. Bro. Sam Bertschi (Sis. Marjorie, Roanoke, IL), Bro. Les Kaeb (Sis. Christine, Francesville, IN), and Elder Bro. Nick Gutwein (Sis. Suzanne, West Lafayette, IN) brought the Word to us recently. We thank them for giving of their hearts to us.

WE ARE THANKFUL that Bro. Les Kaeb challenged us to know our enemy. Do we identify at times a “people group” as our enemy? A person as our enemy? He said that spiritual warfare is from Satan. Always know who the enemy is—it is Satan! And it
is our responsibility to tell people about Christ. Teach them the TRUTH so that they all may know him!

“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?” Rom. 10:13-14

WE ARE THANKFUL Bro. Ezra and Sis. Rebekah Fritz welcomed little Agnes Naomi Sue into their family on November 9. We rejoice with this dear family as our Indianapolis congregation continues to grow and grow.

WE ARE THANKFUL for our visitors. Currently, Indianapolis church Sunday schedule is as follows: 9:30 a.m. is Family Worship service, followed at 10:45 a.m. by the second service and Nursery/Sunday school. Lunch is served after the second service. We welcome anyone in the Indianapolis area to come and worship with us.

Indiana, LaCrosse
Meagan Frank, Sharla Messner

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

It seems that the pace of life accelerates, and the need for flexibility increases as the holidays approach. We have had several changes in our little church this past month that bring many emotions. How thankful we can be that God gives grace for every season in life!

Sweet Claire Eliana was born to the Nelson family on November 1. Her parents, Bro. Dean and Sis. Alyssa, and big siblings Brayden and Emma are rejoicing in her safe arrival!

Bro. Elvin Nuest (Sis. Jan) recently had surgery and a prolonged hospital stay. We are thankful he is now home, but continue to pray for God’s will and healing hand.

Our dear Sis. Shirley Frank will soon be moving to a new home and attending our church in Remington, IN. Her gentle presence will be greatly missed, and we look forward to welcoming her visits back “home”.

We are so excited to welcome Bro. Scott and Sis. Arika Kieser to LaCrosse! They formerly attended church in Latty, OH, but have recently found employment in our area. We pray they will soon feel at home and a part of our church family.

We thank Bro. Paul Zimmerman (Sis. Loretta, Forrest, IL) for joining us on a small Sunday and ministering God’s word.

Our Sunday school children enjoyed shopping and packing boxes for Operation Christmas Child. We pray the children receiving the gifts are blessed with as much joy as ours had in putting them together!

Indiana, Leo
Leanne Fischer, Jan Beer

As Thanksgiving approaches, we find many things to be thankful for! We are thankful for harvest bounty and for spiritual bounty. A very big part of our spiritual bounty is our beloved ministers who share God’s word and minister to us in many other ways throughout each week.

October 29 was our Minister Appreciation Evening. For the first time we gathered on Saturday evening for this annual event and enjoyed family games, dinner, and a short program.

It was announced that Lauren Schwab is proclaiming her faith in the saving blood of Jesus, and her desire to be baptized and walk in fellowship with us. She is a sister to Sis. Stefanie Beer (Bro. Shane) and Sis. Marissa Bahler (Bro. Eric). Lauren moved to our area after she graduated from college, and we welcome her to Leo Church.

We are also thankful to welcome the daughter of Bro. Kyle and Sis. Lindsey Isch. Maisy Lanae was born on October 27 and joins her big brother, Murphy.

Bro. Bill and Sis. Cheri Blunier are thankful for the safe birth of their grandchild, Everly Jean (Emily and Isaac White) on October 22. Everly was in the NICU initially, but the happy and grateful grandparents say that all are at home and doing well. Bro. Jason and Sis. Wendy Williamson are “smitten with their newest little love bug”. Their granddaughter, Claire Louise, was born November 1 to Bro. Seth and Sis. Chelsea Teubel (Washington, IL).
Service projects this month included a C.A.R.E. project for International House in Fort Wayne. Gifts were purchased and wrapped for the children of refugee families. Also, the Leo young group met on a Saturday morning to rake leaves for several church families.

Elder Bro. Frank Sauder (Sis. Kathy, Roanoke, IL) ministered to us on October 31. Elder Bro. Tom Klotzle (Sis. Jody, Altadena, CA) joined Elder Bro. Lynn Stieglitz on Sunday, November 21 to share the Fall Memorandum with us. Communion was shared on November 17.

Our remodeling continues apace. We are thankful for the Remodeling Committee and our Trustees for the time, thought, effort and work that they have put into this project.

Indiana, Milford
Heidi Beer, Anne Wilson

In the past month we added another family to our small church congregation. God’s provision in this addition has been sweet. Bro. Seth and Sis. Jodi (Beer) Gerber have returned home from serving in Magdalena, MX at CVE. We are so grateful to have them here with us including their three children Osi, Jorge, and Raelyn. Our prayers and love are certainly with them as they begin a season of transition and change for their family.

Our friend, Claire Beer, was baptized at the beginning of November, and we treasure yet another reason to celebrate and witness God’s presence through her testimony and new journey. Her parents are Bro. Brent and Sis. Pam Beer. Bro. Gary Sinn (Sis. Paulette, Latty, OH) blessed us by coming to assist with the baptism weekend.

We also appreciated Bro. Sam Schlatter (Sis. Linda, Junction, OH) giving his time and coming to minister to us.

Praise God Bro. Bill Troup (Sis. Anne) has returned home after he experienced some health issues that required a hospital stay earlier this month. We love and appreciate his positive spirit and pray for a complete recovery.

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

Indiana, Remington
Jenni Honegger, Marcella Tyler

We are thankful to this month’s visiting ministers Elder Bro. Lynn Stieglitz (Sis. Leonda, Leo, IN), Elder Bro. Greg Lehman (Sis. Mary Beth, Wolcott, IN), Elder Bro. Nick Gutwein (Sis. Suzanne, West Lafayette, IN), Bro. Ryan Schock (Sis. Melanie, Bloomfield, IA), Bro. Chad Aschleman (Sis. Claudia, West Lafayette, IN), Bro. Matthew Wulf (Sis. Tara, Morris, MN), and Bro. Brian Huber (Sis. Jacki, Francesville, IN). We appreciate each brother and the message of hope and love he shared from the pulpit. Some were here to help with the reading of the Memorandum; some were here for our recent Invite-A-Guest weekend. We also had a representative from ACCFS give a talk on a Wednesday night about safe technology use for the whole family. What a blessing to have so many visitors in one month!

We are blessed and thankful to announce that Bro. Joel Putt (Sis. Wendy) will be joining our team of ministers. It is such a special time for the church to pull together as brothers and sisters and pray for an answer to the need for a new minister. What a blessing to be able to trust the Holy Spirit to make himself known and be confident in his leading! We pray that God will be near Bro. Joel and Sis. Wendy and their five children as they adjust to their new roles.

Bro. Joel is the son of Bro. Brian and Sis. Tami Putt (Francesville, IN) and Sis. Wendy is the daughter of Bro. Don and Sis. Suzie Fiechter (Bluffton, IN).

We are also blessed and thankful to have two new converts who have turned their lives over to the Lord and expressed a desire to turn from sin and live for Jesus! Sam Getz (Bro. Jason and Sis. Sara) and Isaac Bahler (Bro. Tim and Sis. Lynnette) have both taken this step of faith and we are rejoicing with the angels for their humble hearts! Please pray for these young men as they begin their new life journey with God as their guide.
Please pray for Bro. Rex Clauss (Sis. Tammy) and Bro. Elmer Bahler (Sis. Marilyn) as both have spent time in the hospital this month. May they each feel the healing power of God and the love of the church.

The Christmas holiday is approaching quickly! While Mary was eagerly awaiting the birth of Jesus, she told Elizabeth in Luke 1:46-49: “My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior. For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name.”

Indiana, West Lafayette
Abbie Gramm
This month we were excited to host some of our recurring events once again: Ladies’ Retreat, YoPro weekend, and Purdue Singing. We had many visitors for these events, and it was refreshing to see some old friends. It helps to break us out of our “ho hum” routines. Visiting ministers included Bro. James Emch (Sis. Gina, Phoenix, AZ), Bro. Jonathan Pratt (Sis. Sharon, Valparaiso, IN), Bro. Dana Nieman (Sis. Lea, Remington, IN), and Bro. Nicholas Waibel (Sis. Sandra, Francesville, IN). We appreciate their support in sharing the pulpit ministry. Additionally, we held the baptism of Sis. Alivia Pritts.

As we move from a time of thanksgiving to reflecting on our 2021, I’ll pose a mini assignment that I learned from the author Emily P. Freeman. Write 5 lists. First, make a list of what you are grateful for. Second, make a list of what you have learned. Last, make a list of unanswered questions that you carry with you. Reflect on and pray over your lists and meditate on how they might inform any decisions that you need to make. How might you use the information you wrote down to implement any needed changes in 2022? As you process this snapshot of your life, may it move you to living more meaningfully and joyfully in your new year ahead.

Indiana, Wolcott
Brittany Gerber, Luann Gerber
“Seeds of goodness we are sowing
In the hearts of man today
Bless it, Lord, that it may prosper,
And bear fruit for harvest day.
Children come the grain to gather,
While the morning sun doth shine;
And ere long, beloved brethren,
It will be your harvest time.
Now the field is ripe for harvest;
Let us then all garner in;
For if we should stand here idle,
Who would bring the sheaves of grain?
He who gathers not at harvest,
Will a beggar be at last,
Therefore rise today and labor,
Consecrate to God your heart,
Say this day unto your Savior,
“Lord, I’ll gladly do my part!””
Golden Harvest, Hymns of Zion #46
This time of year is so beautiful as the temperatures cool down a bit and the harvest begins! We are thankful for the harvest of food, but we also pray for a bountiful harvest of souls turning their lives over to the Lord!

Bro. Ryan Bertsch (Sis. Jessica, Bluffton North, IN) was here the Sunday we hosted Indiana Junior High ACYF. May God bless his words and we welcome him again!

It was a gorgeous fall day for the wedding of Sis. Erin Bahler (Bro. Mike and Sis. Jody) and Bro. David Lehman (Elder Bro. Greg and Sis. Mary Beth). Visiting brothers serving us on the pulpit that morning was Bro. Joe Klotzle (Sis. Sue, Altadena, CA) and Elder Bro. Frank Sauder, (Sis. Kathy, Roanoke, IL) uncles of the groom. Bro. Ron Isch (Sis. Jane, Lamont, KS) grandfather of the bride and our Elder Bro. Greg performed the wedding ceremony. Our hearts were overflowing as we watched them become one in the Lord and pray, he will richly bless them as they walk the path of life together.

We were blessed to be able to come together with our Remington congregation on a Saturday evening to hear the Memorandum shared. We were thankful that Elder Bro. Nick Gutwein (Sis. Suzanne, West Lafayette, IN) could join us. The following day we enjoyed a potluck and singing together as well.

We rejoice with Lauren Schwab, (Sis. Sherri Schwab), as she has decided to become a part of our faith in our Leo church.

**Iowa, Bloomfield**

*Kendra Wettstein*

Congratulations to Harrison Birkner (Bro. Jeff and Sis. Angie) and Jaryn Froah (Matt and Shari Froah) on their engagement! We wish them God’s blessings as they prepare for marriage.

We were blessed to have Bro. Joshua Martinez (Sis. Keyna, South Bend, IN) share God’s word with us and then tell his story leading to salvation this past month.

We share our sympathy with the Joos family as their mother-in-law and grandma, Sis. Zelma “Lorene” Joos (Peoria, IL), has passed on to her eternal reward. We also extend our sympathy to Bro. Don Frank whose brother, Bro. Richard Frank (Eureka, IL), passed away. May God grant comfort to both families in their time of sorrow.

Our prayers go out to Sis. Shirley Wuthrich and Bro. Jeff Birkner as they have both underwent surgery. We pray God will grant healing according to his will.

Peace on earth will come to stay when we live CHRISTmas every day. May God richly bless each one throughout this holiday season and throughout the new year.

**Iowa, Burlington**

*Marilyn Anderson, Angela Steiner*

There’s a song that our family often sings titled “Together.” Verse three and the chorus reads: “As the bread created from a thousand kernels, we are broken, blended by a love divine. By the crimson river flowing down from Calvary, in his blood united, we are living wine. We are joined together in a common union. We are knit together by the cords of love. We will work together with a single purpose. We will walk together to that land above.”

It was beautiful to have our single group host an Iowa church invite and blend together by a love divine. It’s always such a blessing to have a full church of young enthusiasm for Christ.

As a church family, we greatly anticipate welcoming Sis. Harmony Sauder (Bro. Verle and Sis. Christa Sauder, Morris, MN) as she is engaged to Bro. Jacob Schulz (Bro. Gary and Sis. Melody). We pray that God will be with them as they prepare to be knit together by cords of love and commitment.

As our year fades to a close, may we remember our eternal goal and strive to walk on together.

**Iowa, Elgin**

*Maria Rocke*

Bro. Greg Fehr (Sis. Denise, West Bend, IA) visited this month. We thank him for ministering to us, and we trust God will bless him.

Another Christmas season is here, and we reflect on our Lord’s humble birth that took place that silent night many years ago.
Though a tiny baby, Jesus was filled with all the love and hope this cold world would ever need. And still, today, he pours these gifts into any soul that would come to him in faith. May you be blessed this Christmas with his presence in your heart.

Iowa, Garden Grove
Laura Funk

We are experiencing a range of temperatures and weather this fall season. The bountiful harvest is coming to a close. Do we consider all the blessings God gives us every day? It is sobering to realize the population that have only the clothes they are wearing. Those loved ones are thankful for a pair of socks, our drawer has many socks to choose from.

"Come, ye thankful people, come, Raise the song of harvest home; All is safely gathered in, Ere the winter storms begin; God, our Maker, doth provide For our wants to be supplied Come to God’s own, temple, come, Raise the song of harvest home.”

Come, Ye Thankful People, Come, Gospel Hymns #823

Bro. Tim Roecker (Sis. Diane, Peoria, IL) and Bro. Ryan Schock (Sis. Melanie, Bloomfield, IA) shared the Word with our congregation this month. Bro. Tim challenged us with the question, “Do we realize how many times God is right beside us in a situation?” He related some of the times God had intervened in his life and physically saved him!

Our congregation has enjoyed two potlucks at Bro. Leland and Sis. Kathy Metzger’s home. A hayride was included in October. Thank you Bro. Leland and Sis. Kathy for sharing your acreage with us.

Iowa, Iowa City
Diana Butikofer

We were blessed by the testimony and baptism of our new brother Wyatt Butikofer (Bro. Jim and Sis. Diana). We appreciate the service of Elder Bro. Jon Schmidgall (Sis. Julie, Mediapolis, IA) during the proving and baptism, as well as Bro. Jon and Bro. Kent Getz (Sis. Betty, Elgin, IA) sharing the Word from the pulpit on Sunday.

Other visiting ministers this month included Bro. Fred Witzig (Sis. Nancy, Washington, IL), Bro. Brian Metzger (Sis. Angie, Lester, IA), and Bro. Ned Stoller (Sis. Heidi, Alto, MI). Thank you to each of these brothers for their labors of love for us.

I forgot to mention last month that when Jonny and Kyla Reinhard got married, they also moved to Ohio and are worshiping with the Junction congregation. Since then Kyla started her repentance, for which we are very thankful, and pray she will continue to feel the Lord’s grace and blessings.

Christmas is almost here, and we are looking forward to caroling, programs, and family gatherings. While we enjoy the various traditions of the season, let’s also strive to imagine the awe of the parents, the shepherds, Simeon and Anna, and experience it ourselves as we try to comprehend the redeeming grace Christ brought us.

"Silent night! holy night! All is calm, all is bright ‘Round yon virgin mother and Child! Holy Infant, so tender and mild, Sleep in heavenly peace, Sleep in heavenly peace. Silent night! holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight! Glories stream from heaven afar, Heav’nly hosts sing Alleluia; Christ, the Saviour, is born, Christ, the Saviour, is born. Silent night! holy night! Son of God, love’s pure light Radiant beams from Thy holy face, With the dawn of redeeming grace, Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth. Amen.”

Silent Night, Hymns of Zion, #42

Iowa, Lester
Kristi Knobloch, Lois Mogler

Five precious little babies have arrived this month. Mia Jo Bergman arrived in the home of Brad and Paula Bergman and siblings Miles and Marlee. Bro. Tony and Sis. Pam Bosch are her grandparents. Bro. Trent and Sis. Sadie Loger welcomed Elynn Jane. Her brothers, Boden and Tate along with grandparents Bro. Dan and Sis. Jeanie Knobloch also welcomed her. Another little girl, Blaire Isla, arrived at Shay, Rhett and Bro. Sam and Sis. Nicky Meyer’s home. Bro. Denis and Sis. Jill Meyer and
Mike and Sis. Donna Barber are her grandparents. Bro. Dan and Sis. Jeanie Knobloch welcomed another granddaughter when Ivie Lu arrived in Bro. Neil, Sis. Mattie and Statler Metzger’s home. Bro. Rodney and Sis. Polly Metzger are also little Ivie’s grandparents. Lastly, one boy joined this birthday group, Lucas Edward Matthiesen was welcomed home by sisters Nora and Mara, parents Jed and Deann along with grandparents Bro. Greg and Sis. Lori Popkes.

Sis. June Knobloch (Bro. Delbert) and Sis. Florence Knoblock were hospitalized with health concerns. Bro. Terry Knoblock (Sis. Elaine) and Bro. Bruce Metzger (Sis. Harriet) were surgical patients. May they each feel strength return as they heal.

Micah Bajema (Bro. Rod and Sis. Sue, and late Sis. Twyla) has announced his engagement to Nikki Rushing. We wish them many blessings as they make plans to spend their lives together.

Elder Bro. Gerry Hertzel (Sis. Ellen, Sabetha, KS) was here to help our Elder Bro. Rod Bajema make known to us that Bro. Brian Metzger (Sis. Angie) had the support to become our ordained deacon. We also gathered to hear the reading of the Memorandum. Elder Bro. Randy Beer (Sis. Deb, Milford, IN) was here for that occasion. Our thanks and appreciation go to both Bro. Gerry and Bro. Randy for their time spent on our behalf.

With two weekends of company, one for single group invite, the other for Invite-A-Guest we are grateful for the following brothers who shared God’s word with us. Bro. Larry Bahr (Sis. Julie, Ft. Scott, KS), Bro. Dan Walden (Sis. Pam, Cissna Park, IL), Bro. Dave Hartter (Sis. Beth, Sabetha, KS), and Bro. Mitch Fehr (Sis. Abbie, Morris, MN).

Christmas is before us and it’s challenging not to get caught up in the glamor and noise of worldly celebrations. In the quietness of God’s word, we are reminded to no longer conform to this world but be transformed by remembering Christ birth, death and resurrection.

“Tell me the story of Jesus,
Write on my heart every word;
Tell me the story most precious,
Sweetest that ever was heard.”

*Tell Me the Story of Jesus*,
Tabernacle Hymns, #197

**Iowa, Mediapolis**
**Laura Kunz, Janet Lanz**

The Christmas season is full of activities and plans. In the busyness of all our preparation, perhaps it is good to, “sit and pause awhile, my spirit”, and contemplate the most precious gift of the season. Even though God sent his Son to the earth long ago, we still feel the immeasurable impact of that humble entrance. Never in the history of the human race, has there been a gift of greater worth. Focusing on that great gift really is the most essential part of our holiday efforts.

We are always thankful when a soul has made peace with God and man and no longer feels the condemnation of sin. Tammy Sharp (Gary) was announced for peace, and we look forward to her upcoming testimony and baptism. May God be praised that he still hears our prayers and answers them so faithfully.

Freshly sent from heaven above is sweet little Alivia Rose Waldrup. Her parents are Luke and Rose Waldrup and thankful grandparents are Bro. Aaron and Sis. Luann Schmidgall. We wish them God’s richest blessings as they raise their precious little girl.

In a topical presentation on Biblical Meditation by Bro. Mark Schmidgall, the importance of prioritizing our individual time with God each day was shared with us. We appreciate the consideration given to this topic, as we are living in a world filled with so many distractions.

We were richly blessed to have visiting ministers with us this past month. We thank Elder Bro. Tony Manz (Sis. Denise, Junction, OH), Bro. Jim Manz (Sis. Elizabeth, Junction, OH) and Bro. Fred Dietz (Sis. Shaena, Elgin, IL) for sharing the Word with us. We felt the moving of the Spirit, encouraging us along in our pilgrim journey.

**Note of Thanks:**
We would like to thank all who remembered us with cards, memorials, words of sympathy.
and other acts of love shown to us since the passing of our dad and grandpa. Each act of kindness was appreciated and has touched our hearts. May God bless you for sharing your love with us.

The family of Bro. Hartzell Schmidgall

Iowa, West Bend
Jenny Banwart, Karen Schmidt

We appreciate the encouragement we received from Bro. Matthew Wulf (Sis. Tara, Morris, MN) and Bro. Dan Beer (Sis. Deb, Milford, IN). We were reminded that when we have faith in God, as David had when he faced Goliath, we too can attain the victory.

Bro. Larry and Sis. Marvella Wickman are relocating permanently to their home in Phoenix, AZ. We will miss having them in West Bend during the summer months and wish them God’s nearness always.

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

“For the word of the LORD is right; and all his works are done in truth.” Ps. 33:4

We are thankful for the Lord’s goodness and trust that he remains faithful through all seasons of life. We mourn with Sis. Marie Inoue at the passing of her brother, Bro. Andre Neihouser, (Sis. Lois, Francesville, IN). We are grateful for the promise of resurrection, that Sis. Marie was able to return to America for a few weeks for the funeral, and that she was able to spend time with her family in America. Sis. Marie became ill for a short period of time while in the States and stayed in the hospital briefly. We are thankful for God’s provision and that she was able to return safely to her family in Japan.

Thanksgiving is approaching, and we are thankful for the opportunity to share a meal with families from the Tokyo and Shioda congregations as well as members of the nearby communities. For some of our Japanese friends who plan to attend, it will be their first time experiencing this American holiday. We look forward to the opportunity to express our gratitude for the many gifts the Lord has given us, and as always, we are thankful for the prayers of our loved ones for our outreaches.

Bro. Akihiro Ito (Shioda) joined the Tokyo ladies’ Bible study to share insight on 1 Thess. 5. It was a timely message for the upcoming Thanksgiving celebration and a reminder to remain grateful and joyful.

Kansas, Bern
Leigha Rokey, Rita Menold

Greetings! The weekend of October 23-24 our single group enjoyed hosting an Invite-A-Friend weekend. It is a beautiful blessing when the bond of Jesus can bring friends from across the states together.

It was an exciting day for us when we heard the engagements of two couples! Sis. Haylie Meyer (Bro. Richard and Sis. Joni) and Bro. Bruce Ogalat (Bro. Tim and Sis. Amber Lehman, Taylor, MO) are looking forward to a January wedding! Sis. Amy Rokey (Bro. Mike and Sis. Sue) and Bro. Travis Haerr (Bro. Shon and Sis. Peg, Taylor, MO) are making plans for a wedding in February! Bros. Bruce and Travis are both from our Taylor, MO church, and we look forward to their visits!

Bro. Travis and Sis Leah Rokey (Lamar, MO) became first time parents to a sweet bundle of pink! Ellie Kay was born on October 28, and we are thankful for her safe arrival. Happy first time grandparents are Bro. Todd and Sis. Sheila Rokey.

The weekend of October 30-31, we were blessed with the Detroit Choir worshiping with us through song! We are thankful they were willing to travel the many miles and share with us their gift of music. What an inspiration!

That same weekend Bro. Randy Gasser (Sis. Sue) and Bro. Jesse Bedolla (Sis. Bonnie), from our Detroit, MI church, shared the message of salvation from the pulpit. We also appreciate Bro. Scott Aberle (Sis. Dorine, Washington, IL) and Bro. Aaron Luthi (Sis. Maria, Lamont, KS) worshiping with us.

Blessings to each of you through the holiday season!

Kansas, Kiowa
Janice Bahr, Millie Frieden

“Meekness is the noblest virtue, Ev’ry Christian’s honor bright; It adorns the youthful member...”
And the aged with its might
Though it does not stand in favor
Yet 'tis more than precious gold,
More than fame and wealth untold.
Behold Jesus, He was humble;
He exalted not Himself;
He was gracious, loving, gentle,
Asked no honor and no wealth;
So He calls to me and thee:
“Learn humility from Me!”
He who exercises meekness
Is belov'd by ev'ryone;
He who does not vaunt his knowledge
God will honor in His Son.
Humbleness to God is pleasing,
And to all in grace increasing,
Who go with God hand in hand,
And in Jesus' love do stand.”
Humility, Zion's Harp, #186

I recently read the following article shared by a lady named Karen Huang in the Our Daily Bread booklet. It touched my heart, and I hope it will touch you too.

“When Anita passed away in her sleep on her ninetieth birthday, the quietness of her departure reflected the quietness of her life. A widow, she had been devoted to her children and grandchildren and to being a friend to younger women in the church. Anita wasn’t particularly remarkable in talent or achievement. But her deep faith in God inspired those who knew her. 'When I don’t know what to do about a problem,' a friend of mine said, 'I don’t think about the words of a famous preacher or author. I think about what Anita would say.' Many people are like Anita, ordinary people living ordinary lives. Their names will never be in the news, and they won’t have monuments built in their honor. But a life lived with faith in Jesus is never ordinary. Some of the people listed in Hebrews 11 were not named (vv. 35-38); they walked the path of obscurity and didn’t receive the reward promised to them in this life. (v. 39) Yet, because they obeyed God, their faith wasn’t vain. God used their lives in ways that went beyond their lack of notoriety (v.40). If you feel discouraged about the seeming ordinary state of your life, remember that a life lived by faith in God has an impact throughout eternity. Even if we’re ordinary, we can have an extraordinary faith.”

We had the privilege of having Elder Bro. Jay Luthi (Lamont, KS) and Elder Bro. John Lehman (Sis. Carol, Bern, KS) in our midst this month. Then on another Sunday, we had Bro. Gerald Wagenbach, Jr. (Sis. Bonnie and family, Mediapolis, IA) worship with us. We enjoy so much meeting and greeting those of like mind and faith who come to share fellowship and the word of God with us. We pray the Lord will richly bless them for their labor of love in traveling to be with us.

‘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

Our Sunday school, and everyone who wanted to come, joined together to put together 180 Shoeboxes that are sent to children all over the world to show our love, and the love of our God, Savior and Holy Spirit, who deeply cares for these precious little ones. It is such a special time to get together to enjoy this occasion with our children and grandchildren and learn what joy there is in giving, not just receiving. As Matt. 25:40 says; “And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”

With Thanksgiving coming may we always remember I Thess. 5:18; “In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”

Kansas, Lamont
Maria Luthi

Recently, I heard someone say that the easiest way to tell a Christian from a non-believer is that the Christian will be thankful. As those who have been redeemed by the precious blood of our Savior, we truly do have the ultimate blessing and an abundance of things for which to give thanks! May our hearts be filled with gratitude this Thanksgiving season and all year long.
Here in Lamont, we want to extend thanks to Elder Bro. John Wiegand (Sis. Jane, Silverton, OR) for ministering to us and helping read the Memorandum. It was a blessing to be with them. An Invite-A-Guest weekend was also held which was enjoyed by all and a sweet time of fellowship and connection. We are blessed to be able to travel and meet with other believers who encourage us in our walk of faith!

Kansas, Sabetha

Leanna Hartter, Whitney Hartter

Greetings of love from Sabetha!

It was a blessing to have ACCFS with us the weekend of October 30-31. There were three separate topics presented to us. The first was “Sexual Purity” for the men on Friday evening, Saturday morning Sis. Katie Miller shared “Finding Joy in a Difficult Journey” for the ladies, and Saturday evening we enjoyed an all church potluck that was followed by a presentation on “Safe Technology Use for the Whole Family.” Presentations were also shared with the junior and senior Bible classes on Sunday morning. Bro. Arlan Miller (Sis. Katie, Gridley, IL) and Bro. Matt Kaufman (Sis. Rebekah, Bloomington, IL) shared from God’s word on Sunday. We appreciate their many labors of love.

Bro. Scott Aberle (Sis. Dorine, Washington, IL) also shared with us from God’s word this month.

We rejoice with our two new converts, Logan Metzger (Bro. Jared and Sis. Carla) and Brendan Strahm (Bro. Troy and Sis. Dawn). May they feel the Lord’s grace as they forsake their old lives and become new creatures in him.

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” 2 Cor. 5:17

We had three hospital patients this month, Justin Wenger (Bro. Wayne and Sis. Jean), Sis. Jean Wenger (Bro. Wayne) and Will Harker (Bro. Jed and Sis. Whitney). We pray the Lord will continue to grant healing for each one.

It was a blessing for our church family to gather for our annual Thanksgiving meal. It was a special time to be together and to be reminded of all we have to be thankful for.

We rejoice with Bro. James and Sis. Sandy Hartter as they welcomed a baby granddaughter, Christina Rose, daughter of Bro. Phillip and Sis. Mary Steiner (Tremont, IL). We also rejoice with Bro. Jared and Sis. Carla Metzger as they also welcomed a granddaughter, Ellie Kay, daughter of Bro. Travis and Sis. Leah (Lamar, MO).

With Christmas upon us, we are reminded of Jesus Christ, our most precious gift.

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

Mexico, Ixtlán

Ruth Gerber

“I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do.” John 17:4

This past month we had Bro. Kevin Wulf (Sis. Annie, Willcox, AZ) and Bro. Ernie Wiegand (Sis. Lana, Bradford, IL) visiting for the fall school board meeting. It was an encouragement to fellowship and to have their input for the school administration. Bro. Kevin shared at our midweek service from John 17. We were reminded of the purpose which God has for each of us as believers and motivated to share our hope with those around us.

We have recently started getting a group of children together on Friday evenings for a time of games and singing. Some are church families, others are enrolled in the church school, and others are community children that join us. We pray it will be a way to glorify our Lord and also a blessing to the families involved.

Thank the Lord for each of the visitors that have encouraged us and for each one that prays for the work here!

Mexico, Magdalena

Laura Aviña

From Magdalena, we wish you the peace of God this Christmas!

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful,

Jesus is our Prince of Peace. And who of us doesn’t long for peace? What comes to mind when we think of peace? Tranquility, security, perhaps. A basic definition of peace is the absence of conflict. However, the biblical definition also includes ideas of restoration, wholeness, and completeness. As I’ve read Bible verses about peace, I’ve discovered three categories.

There is the peace we find as a result of forgiveness and a reconciled relationship with God. “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Rom. 5:1

There is the peace we find by resting in the care of our heavenly Father. “Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Phil. 4:6-7

There is also the peace with one another that we work to maintain. “If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.” Rom. 12:18

The complication with peace is the fact that we have so many relationships, with God, with ourselves, and with others that all seem to be in fluctuation and in need of maintenance. Often the harmony in one relationship disrupts the harmony in another. However, I believe the simplicity of peace comes through trusting that God is sovereign, he is our father, and he will carry us. I cling to this promise. “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.” Isa. 26:3

Though conflicts and confusion storm our hearts daily, may we also be brought back daily to the rock in which we are anchored... Jesus Christ, our Prince of Peace!

**Michigan, Alto**

**Michelle Oesch**

“Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.” Psa. 116:15

“The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous: the right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly... Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go into them, and I will praise the LORD: This gate of the LORD, into which the righteous shall enter.” Psa. 118:15, 19-20.

We are grieving the loss of a special friend to all of us. Harry Erickson recently passed into the arms of his dear Savior. He rarely missed an opportunity to be in church when the doors were open, and always had a smile and a story to share. His strong faith and presence will be so missed! He leaves his three daughters Pam Price (Rick), Brenda Erickson, and Barb Erickson, his special grandchildren and great grandchildren. We pray they feel God’s strength and comfort as they miss their dad and grandpa.

Our prayers are with those who are struggling with sickness and spent time recently in the hospital: Laura Pardo, Dan Schrenk, Bro. Lyman Feldman (Sis. MaryAnn), and Bro. Curt Kaeb (Sis. Luanne). A few other families have been home sick with COVID-19, so we continue to lift them up in prayer also.

As we look forward to celebrating Thanksgiving with family and friends, may we remember the many blessings God has so bountifully provided us with! “O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.” Psalm 118:29

**Michigan, Bay City**

**Sarah Knochel**

We rejoice with Sis. Marlene Ramseyer in the birth of another great-granddaughter, Brynn Shirley Hoag. Brynn’s parents are Nick and Taylor Hoag and grandparents are Dave and Wendy Hoag.

A fall gathering was held in late October for the church.

**Michigan, Detroit**

**Krista Wieland**

Hello to all! I was thinking recently about pure, unadulterated joy and those things that bring real laughter, gratitude, awe and wonder. Maybe it’s the miracle of repentance. Maybe it’s the miracle of childbirth or watching a flower open up. Maybe it’s a family memory. Or laughing
with friends. Holding a pet. Holding a newborn baby. The ocean. Someone coming to be with us when we need them most. A baby’s first attempt at words. Music. A sunrise or a sunset. This is the stuff that makes the eyes and the heart light up with joy in a way that no amount of money, achievement, grades or our social media status ever can, or will do. We did not help God out the first seven days of creation to create these wonderful things that bring true joy and wonder.

We were able to get a glimpse of this recently when our daughter received a kitten as a surprise for her birthday. Her utter shock and joy were so inspiring and unusual to watch. We didn’t create in her a desire for a kitten to hold and we certainly did not create the kitten. God’s creation caused our daughter to shine with pure unadulterated joy that day.

Saturday morning, spend time in worship and fellowship with the Bern congregation and then fly back on Sunday night. We are so appreciative of the kindness and hospitality shown to us by the Bern church during our short but memorable visit. Many thanks to all those involved in the weekend. It was a tremendous blessing for all of us.

Elder Bro. Matt Manz (Sis. Deanne, Toledo, OH) came to share in the reading of the Memorandum with our Elder Bro. Lucas Frank. We appreciate the words of love and care from the elder body and their loving encouragement to continually anchor ourselves in the Word of Truth. It was a very uplifting evening to be together as a church family.

What a blessing to have visiting minister Bro. Glen Steiner (Sis. Rachel, Winthrop, MN) share God’s word on a recent Sunday. We hope they come back again soon!

Our love and prayers are with those hurting at the loss of a loved one or those who physically need the healing hands of Jesus. He knows each and every name.

Minnesota, Minneapolis
Brenda Messner, Renee Messner

Season’s greetings as we approach Thanksgiving and Christmas. We are most grateful to our heavenly Father for all the blessings he bestows; his unending love, mercy, and grace. We look forward to celebrating the precious birth of Jesus, our Lord and Savior!

Sunday school families and teachers gathered for a night of fellowship, crafts, and pizza. They also assembled boxes to be donated to Operation Christmas Child.

Our hearts are happy to welcome Sis. Heather Steiner, as she has moved to the Minneapolis area.

Minnesota, Morris
Peg Wellendorf, Brianna Wulf

Greetings brothers and sisters from the prairie winter wonderland. God’s hand is at work in the ever-changing beauty of the seasons here in Morris. Today we see blue skies, crisp gold leaves, bright sunshine and green grass covered with patches of white still lingering from last week’s snowfall. Such a gift it is to live here.

We pray for peace for the family of Sis. Chrystol Luthi whose funeral service and burial were held on October 23. Visiting ministers sharing the Word were Bro. Kent Mogler (Sis. Mary, Minneapolis, MN), Bro. Fred Witzig (Sis. Nancy, Washington, IL), Bro. Doug Moser, (Morris North, MN), and Bro. Adam Zeltwanger (Sis. Christy, Morris North, MN).

Our sympathies to Bro. Jim and Sis. Peg Wellendorf on the passing of Peg’s uncle Raymond “Bud” Ziemer. May the love of God comfort his wife of 69 years, Suzy, and to his family who mourn his passing. Services were held on October 30 in Hoffman, MN.
Our friend Ashlee Koehl (Bro. Jim and Sis. Hildy) is engaged to William Jahner of Plymouth, MN. A June 24, 2022 wedding is being planned at the Morris Fellowship Hall. God bless them as they prepare their hearts for marriage.

We wish the best to Troy and Crystal Madsen as their family moves to North Carolina. May God’s grace be abundant as this new chapter of life unfolds for them and their precious children. Their time in Morris has certainly been a blessing to us as they shared their faith and values. May their hearts and home be filled with happiness in the years to come.

Thank you to the visiting ministers who shared the Word this past month. Bro. Troy Metzger (Sis. Gwen, Lester, IA) and Bro. Adam Zeltwanger (Sis. Christy, Morris North, MN) provided encouragement and instruction to strengthen our faith. It is a special gift to have friends in faith both on the pulpit and as fellow worshipers. We are grateful for each one who has joined us for church and for fellowship this month.

Our hearts are joyful to announce the engagement of Sis. Harmony Sauder (Bro. Verle and Sis. Christa) to Bro. Jacob Schulz (Bro. Gary and Sis. Melody Schulz, Burlington, IA and the late Sis. Karen Schulz). May God bless them as they prepare to live their life as one in the Lord.

“

Than when to Thee, O Saviour,
Our lives we consecrate?
We live in blessed nearness,
To Thee, Lord day by day,
As if our eyes beheld Thee
And joy attends our way.
Our lips may be in silence,
Yet prays our heart to Thee;
Our thoughts are e’er ascending
To heaven constantly.”

Living in Faith, Hymns of Zion, #266

We are thankful to be able to have relationships with our local food shelf to be able to help them in their times of need.

In closing, holding our annual tradition of serving Thanksgiving Lunch on the Sunday prior to Thanksgiving week makes us thankful to be able to resume our regular annual traditions.

Minnesota, Morris North
Ginny Stoll, Dixie Messner

October 22-23 brought the HarvestCall board members here for their regular board meeting. We were very thankful to have them and get to meet some of them. Unfortunately, we had some cases of COVID-19 in our church family so we had to cancel the potluck and presentation.

Elder Bro. Mike Leman (Denver, CO) stayed for Sunday and willing shared the Word with us. We also had Bro. Scott Aberle (Sis. Dorine, Washington, IL) with us one Sunday in October.

Pam McMaster moved here after she was dismissed from the hospital. Thankfully, two of her sisters were able to fly down to Mississippi and drive her back. She is thankful to be back with her family and is growing stronger every day. Welcome back “home” Pam.

Sis. Barb Mattes laid her husband, Pat, to rest. He was suffering from severe dementia for a long time but was able to express his desire to let Jesus into his heart during a short time of
being coherent. Sis. Barb and her family were very thankful for this. He is also survived by three children, Chad (Patty, Mankato, MN), Tonja Wolf (Andy, Amery, WI) and Heidi Hernandez (Ivan, Phoenix, AZ) and 5 grandchildren.

Our Sunday school prepared a delicious dinner for our church. It used to be an over 55 dinner, but we are so few any more they included everyone. We were asked to respond to some very thought-provoking questions to give the children some insight to the past lives of our older members and friends.

Bro. Jerry and Sis. Brenda Messner were both in the hospital. We are thankful to report they are both home and getting stronger. Bro. Jerry was in for over two weeks and is still very weak.

Bro. Ed and Sis. Ginny Stoll are rejoicing with the birth of another grandchild. Quinn Ruby is the miracle baby of Bro. Josh and Sis. Victoria Eberhardt (St. Louis, MO).

**Note of Thanks**

Thank you so much for the prayers, cards, food, calls, texts, love and support shown to us during our illness/hospitalizations. May God’s grace and blessings be upon each of you!

In Christ, Bro. Jerry and Sis Brenda Messner

**Missouri, Kansas City**

Andrew Kellenberger, seven-year-old son of Bro. Brent and Sis. Beth Kellenberger, thankfully is recovering well from a major surgery in Cincinnati, OH. Lord willing, Andrew can soon return home free of the tracheal tube/ hole he has had since birth.

The congregation enjoyed an all-church fall Sunday afternoon/ evening wiener roast which has been an on-going tradition since 1991. The Lord blesses the time we spend in assembling together, whether in a sanctuary setting or around a camp fire.

The Delta variant of the COVID-19 pandemic, which moved strongly into our local area in August, has began to decrease and prayerfully we can soon return to a pre-pandemic worship service.

Exhortation for prayer was given over the pulpit for the kidnapped Ohio based Christian Aid Ministry missionaries, of whom 15 are still being held in Haiti.

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

We thank visiting minister Bro. David Hartter (Sis. Beth, Sabetha, KS) for his willingness to be used in the ministry of the Word.

**Missouri, Lamar**

**Leah Rokey**

Greetings of love this holiday season!

As we enjoy this fall season, we are reminded we have much to be thankful for! We have enjoyed the fellowship of many visitors over the past month! Visiting ministers included Bro. Zach Anderson (Sis. Karla, Congerville, IL), Bro. Scott Wegman (Sis. Dawn, Taylor, MO), Bro. Vince Pfister (Sis. Brandy, Bluffton, IN), and Bro. David Huette (Sis. Susan, Tremont, IL). We appreciate the willingness of each one as they shared the Word with us.

Elder Bro. Jay Luthi (Sis. Jane, Lamont, KS), Elder Bro. Duane Rocke (Sis. Bonnie, Minneapolis, MN), and Elder Bro. Bruce Frank (Sis. Bonita, Cissna Park, IL) shared the Memorandum with us. That weekend we were also able to gather and discuss the bolstering effort being done here. It was good to be reminded of perseverance as we trust in God’s timing and plan for our congregation!

Bro. Travis and Sis. Leah Rokey feel abundantly blessed as they welcome Ellie Kay into their home and family. Thankful grandparents are Bro. Jared and Sis. Carla Metzger (Sabetha, KS) and Bro. Todd and Sis. Sheila Rokey (Bern, KS).

**Missouri, St. Louis**

**Michelle Rassi**

“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” 1 Cor. 1:10

“When we all work together, How happy we’ll be!”

Church cleaning and yard work was a wonderful opportunity to labor together.

“When we all sing together, How happy we’ll be!”
Singing together brings such joy and encouragement. We enjoyed a singing at the Rassi home one Sunday evening.

“When we all play together, How happy we’ll be!”


We love it when young people invest in the lives of our children. A huge “THANK YOU” to Bro. Michael Yoder who has served our congregation on the traveling VBS team. This month he brought Bro. Blaine and Sis. Alyssa Aschliman (Bluffton, IN) to St. Louis and spent time with our oldest Sunday school students eating dinner and going to an Escape Room.

“When we all read together, How happy we’ll be!”

We are thankful to our faithful ministry team here in St. Louis. It is also refreshing to have visiting ministers who read and meditate on God’s word for us. Bro. Greg Beutel (Sis. Mary, Tremont, IL) visited on October 31.

“When we all pray together, How happy we’ll be!”

Missouri, Taylor
Eleanor Yackley

John 14:1-3 was a favorite scripture passage of Sis. Dona Grimm who passed from this life to eternity on October 19. A brief obituary was included in last month’s report, but her impact on the lives of so many people deserve a few more words! Sis. Dona made it a priority to meet everyone in church each Sunday. She graciously hosted guests at her table and provided overnight accommodations. She sent greeting cards to encourage others and wrote wonderful notes which showed that she truly cared for others. We would all do well to follow her example.

We had two engagement announcements on Sunday, October 24. Bro. Travis Haerr and Sis. Amy Rokey are planning a February 20 wedding. Their parents are Bro. Shon and Sis. Peg Haerr and Bro. Mike and Sis. Sue Rokey (Bern, KS).

Bro. Bruce Ogalat’s engagement to Sis. Haylie Meyer (Bern, KS) was also announced. Bro. Bruce has become a part of the family of Bro. Tim and Sis. Amber Lehman. Sis. Haylie’s parents are Bro. Richard and Sis. Joni Meyer (Bern, KS). A January 2, 2022, wedding is planned.

Bro. Greg Stieglitz (Sis. Lisa, Indianapolis, IN) was our visiting minister on November 14. We appreciated his inspired message on Jeremiah 5 and Ephesians 2.

Even though Thanksgiving Day is November 25 this year, every day should be a day of praise and thanksgiving for a child of God! Let’s spend more time in praying and praising than we spend in complaining and worrying.

“A man may go to heaven without health, without honors, without learning, without friends; But he can never get to heaven without Christ!” (author unknown)

We extend our condolences and wishes for God’s comfort for the families of Sis. Lorene Joos (Peoria, IL) who gained Eternity on November 14. Her granddaughter and family, Chuck and Tamara, Sierra, Alexis, and Courtney Lucie, assemble in Taylor. Her son, the late Bro. Ron and his family, lived at Taylor for several years.

New York, Croghan/Naumburg
Anna Stoller

As fall nears an end and Thanksgiving approaches, we want to take time to think back on God’s blessings. Our foliage was beautiful this year, but now the landscape appears somewhat dreary. However, we know that God is faithful and we look forward to the beauty of winter!
Bro. John Farney is thankful for a new granddaughter. Taytum Ann was born November 5 to Ben and Crystal Oles. Also welcoming him are brothers and sisters Lemuel, Case, Charlie Adah, Tessa, and Hadie. Elder Bro. Duane and Sis. Karen Farney have a new great-granddaughter! Jacob and Brianna Meyer welcomed Kinslee Sue November 14. Older siblings are Brynleigh, Paisley, and Bryce. Grandparents are Todd and Danielle Farney.

We were thankful to have Bro. Ron Palitto (Sis. Lynelle, Akron, OH) with us recently. May God bless him for traveling to visit and minister to us.

Bro. John Farney spent time in the hospital this past month. We are thankful he is doing better and wish him God’s healing and blessings.

Ohio, Akron
Joelle Indermuhle

“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.” Gal. 6:2

Our prayers have been with those who have been hospitalized this month, including Sis. Vera Demrovsky (Bro. Andy) and the family of Sis. Donna Dotterer, as they have had illness and hospitalization due to COVID-19.

We are thankful to have had many visitors this past month and wish to especially thank Elder Bro. Duane Farney (Sis. Karen, Croghan, NY) for serving us spiritually.

Rejoicing in the birth of a new son and brother, Zane Anders, are Bro. Ryan and Sis. Coleen and Lela, Mila, and Ryan Jr. Gasser. Loving grandparents are Bro. Fred and Sis. Mary Gasser (Rittman, OH) and Bro. Andy and Sis. Vera Demrovsky.

Ohio, Columbus
Nancy Banks

Greetings from the Columbus church! We said hello to our first sign of approaching winter with a covering of snow last night. It brings to mind that the holiday season is approaching very quickly. Many warnings of the backlog of the supply chain and the unpredictable nature of the shipping of gifts fill the airways. If we can hold fast to understanding the real reason for the Christmas season, we can anticipate a lovely holiday season worshiping our Lord and Saviour, singing praises to his name and spending time with those we love.

We are truly blessed to welcome visiting ministers to our congregation. Sharing the pulpit this month with Bro. John Grimm was Bro. Mike Kaisner (Sis. Mindy, Peoria, IL), Bro. Tyler Joos (Sis. Tonya, Bradford, IL), Bro. Nathan Walder (Sis. Denise, Cissna Park, IL) and Bro. Bryon Palitto (Sis. Lisa, Akron, OH). Thank you to each and every one.

Ohio, Junction
Karen Schlatter

We were blessed to have Elder Bro. Tom Waldbeser (Sis. Sue, Peachtree City, GA) visit us and share in the reading of the Memorandum. We were also thankful for the visit of Bro. David Maibach (Sis. Larisa, Smithville, OH) as he ministered to us on a recent visit.

We rejoice with Kyla Reinhard (Jonathan) as she has made the decision to repent of her sins and serve the Lord. May this be a blessing to her as she learns to put her faith and trust in him.

Bro. Ben and Sis. Carolyn Manz shared the excitement of having a new grandchild. Eliza Rose was born to Dan and Sis. Angie Manz (Rittman, OH) on November 6. She has several older siblings to welcome her home.

Our congratulations to Aaron and Kristin (Barker) Manz on their recent wedding. Aaron is the son of Sis. Virginia Manz. They are currently living in Kentucky as he is stationed in the US Army. Their plan is to move here after his time in the service is completed.

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“nothing.” He shared that God created the world from “nothing.” He gave us laws in which there is “nothing” unjust. There will be “nothing” to comfort sinners in hell. We as believers have “nothing” in which to boast, save in Christ. We as believers have “nothing” to fear in eternity. I have to admit, those few sentences really did something to my heart! One word meant to be funny was turned into a complete sermon for nothing is impossible with God!!

Ohio, Latty
Angie Klopfenstein,
Carmen Stoller

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

May the Lord be with us all throughout this Christmas season. Let us reflect on Jesus’s purpose in coming to earth: to be born, save us from our sins, and rise again so we can live with him eternally!


We rejoice with Juliah Manz (Bro. Marvin and Sis. Jennifer) as she has found peace with God and awaits baptism.

Our prayers are with Sis. Renee Sinn (Bro. Walt, dec.) and her family with the passing of her brother, Bro. Andre Neihouser (Sis. Lois, Francesville, IN).

Ohio, Rittman
Mardel Dotterer, Julie Steiner

Striving daily to be more like God is one of our wishes. However, we tend to notice ourselves growing more like ourselves. Though we are each gifted with unique and beautiful gifts, these traits are not designed for our own pleasure. Rather, our Father has made us each special so we can uniquely share his love with others. Then, we will become more like God. May we seek to daily find ways to bless others.

Eliza Rose Manz was born October 6, to parents Dan and Sis. Angie Manz. This precious girl will receive care from her older siblings, Jacob, Dylan, Olivia, Alex, Noah, Caroline, Felix, and Henry. God fills us with wisdom to bless our children with love, wisdom, and care. Zane Anders Gasser, born November 9, is welcomed by parents Bro. Ryan and Sis. Colleen Gasser (Akron, OH), siblings Lela, Mila, and Ryan Jr., and grandparents Bro. Fred and Sis. Mary Gasser.

On October 24, Bro. Austin Dotterer (Bro. Steve and Sis. Amy, Smithville, OH) and Sis. Tori Ingold (Bro. Doug and Sis. Joanna) were married. Then, on November 21, Bro. Reed Steiner (Bro. Rod and Sis. Jill) and Sis. Allison Steiner (Bro. Joel and Sis. Katrina) received the pronouncement of “husband and wife”. We wish them God’s blessings for this new step in life.

John Riggenbach passed away on October 23. John will be missed by his wife Thelma, and siblings here Sis. Ruth Steiner (Bro. Ron), Sis. Ellen Gasser (Bro. Jerry), and sister-in-law Sis. Karen Riggenbach, and many loved ones. Bro. Walt Baltic died at the age of 100. He will be remembered by his many family members, including nieces Sis. Nettie Baltic, Sis. Mary Gasser (Bro. Fred), and nephew Bro. Dan Baltic (Sis. Betty). May they feel God’s comfort during this time of loss.

Several of our loved ones have spent time in the hospital. This is a difficult time for these families. We offer prayers for Bro. Jeff Hartzler (Sis. Bev), Bro. Ron Christian (Sis. Joann), Sis. Marie Gasser, and Bro. Blake Maibach (Sis. Tresa). We rejoice in God’s faithfulness for each new day.

Visiting ministers here in Rittman this past month include Elder Bro. Tony Manz (Sis. Denise, Junction, OH), Elder Bro. Vic Bauman (Sis. Brenda, Smithville, OH) who assisted with sharing the Memorandum here, Bro. Jason Dotterer (Sis. Lynn, Forrest, IL), Bro. Gary Maibach (Sis. Mary Ann, Smithville, OH), Bro. Marvin Zollinger (Sis. Pam, Smithville, OH), and Bro. Bryon Palitto (Sis. Lisa, Akron, OH). Also, Rittman was privileged to host the Eastern Regional Elder Meeting on November 6. As these brothers willingly share God’s word, let’s pray for the Holy Spirit to teach us what we need.
Ohio, Sardis
Matt & Dawn Brake

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

Thanksgiving is a good opportunity to remind ourselves of what the Bible says about giving thanks. I often find myself coming to God with only needs and requests pouring out. This Psalm reminds me that when I come before God, my first words should be of thanks and praise. Doing so not only lets my heart worship, but reminds me of who God is and adjusts my heart attitude before bringing my requests and needs to him.

I am thankful for the awesome privilege of coming before our God in prayer. We as a church family have been bringing before our Lord Bro. Rob Figel and Sis. Doris Miller as they are both experiencing significant health concerns and setbacks, and also Bro. Ed Beard who has been laid up for a time.

A number of families from our church enjoyed a weekend of camping together at a local campground. We praise God for the fellowship and the beautiful creation that reminds us of his majesty!

We are also thankful to our Elder Bro. Bob Dotterer for sharing the Fall Memorandum. It was good to be reminded of the complete reliability and inspiration of the scriptures and that God’s word is unchanging, filled with timeless truths.

Ohio, Smithville
Sharon Gasser, Marcy Stoller

Our congregation has been blessed to receive a new minister, Bro. Aaron Beery (Sis. Lynne). We are thankful for their willingness to do the Lord’s work.

Encouragement was brought to us through a Renew Fellowship event hosted by Bro. Nathan and Sis. Lynn Steiner and Bro. Layne Steffen (Congerville, IL). Elder Bro. Matt Manz (Sis. Deanna, Toledo, OH) talked on Applying God’s Word in a Changing World. He also assisted Elder Bro. Vic Baumann with the Memorandum the following Sunday.

Also visiting this month was Elder Bro. Wayne Hartzler (Sis. Camille, Rittman, OH), Elder Bro. Todd Graf (Sis. Joy, Akron, OH), Elder Bro. Ben Wiegand (Sis. Michelle, Philadelphia, PA) Bro. Clark Stoller (Sis. Cindy, Gridley, IL) and Bro. Brian Wenninger (Sis. Mackenzie, Leo, IN).

Bro. Austin Dotterer (Bro. Steve and Sis. Amy) and Sis. Tori Ingold (Bro. Doug and Sis. Joanna, Rittman, OH) were joined in marriage. We look forward to more weddings as two new engagements were shared. Bro. Austin Wilson (Jack and Carol) was announced to Sis. Sadie Sinn (Bro. Tim and Sis. Marlene, Latty, OH) and Bro. Brian Tomic (Bro. Tim and Sis. Melanie) was announced to Sis. RoseMary Stoller (Bro. Scott and Sis. Charlene).

We had several loved ones in the hospital this month, including Sis. Heather Katanic (Bro. Mike), Sis. Lois Maibach (Bro. Bruce), Bro. Lyman Feldman (Sis. Mary Ann), and Bro. Art Riggenbach (Lynne). We are keeping them in our prayers.

Bro. Art Riggenbach (Lynne) and Bro. Don Riggenbach (Sis. Gail) lost a brother and Sis. Luella Stoller lost a brother-in-law at the passing of John Riggenbach. Sis. Gail Riggenbach (Bro. Don) also lost her sister, Bonnie Slicker this month. Sis. Inez Ramsier (Bro. Bob, dec.) and Sis. Dorothy Ramsier (Bro. Jim, dec.) lost their brother-in-law Bro. Wally Ramsier (Sis. Helen, dec., Mansfield, OH). Our hearts go out to them during this time of grief.

Ohio, Toledo
Brooke Harmon, Sharon Rager

We were blessed to have three visiting ministers this month. Bro. Seth Beard (Sis. Faith, Sardis, OH), Bro. Mark Ramsier (Sis. Alice, Sardis, OH) and Bro. Matt Saurer (Sis. Marty, Minneapolis, MN) shared the Word of Life with us. We thank them for being willing to be used of God to feed his flock.

Bro. Aaron and Sis. Whitney Masters welcomed sweet little Adalyn Loraine born on November 3. Kendon, Nolan and Lainey are happy to have a baby sister. The boys agreed before her birth that this baby should be a girl so Lainey would have a sister! Adalyn’s grandparents are Elder Bro.
Mark and Sis. Jeannine Masters (Mansfield, OH) and Bro. Blair and Sis Julie Metzger (Lester, IA).

Our prayers have been with Sis. Geralyn Beard (Bro. Dave) while she recuperates from hip replacement surgery. We also remember Sis. Janet Stoller (Bro. Gale) in prayer as she is taking treatment for chronic lymphocitic leukemia. May God bless our two dear sisters through this time.

We were happy to hear of the engagement of one of our college students, Sis. Sadie Sinn (Bro. Tim and Sis Marlene, Latty, OH) to Bro. Austin Wilson (Jack and Carol, Smithville, OH). May God bless them as they plan their wedding and marriage.

“O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever.” 1 Chron. 16:34

As we gather together with family and friends, may we thank God for all he has done for us. Happy Thanksgiving!

Oregon, Silverton

Lorraine Kuenzi, Teresa Sinn

We were able to enjoy a Gateway Woods presentation this month that gave us insight into the daily lives of the house parents as well as the residents. We appreciate Bro. Todd and Sis. Kara Strahm and Bro. Ed and Sis. Deb Graf from Leo, IN for sharing the presentation with us and spending time with our congregation.


Please continue to pray for healing and recovery for Ron Lichty (Sis. Ginge). He recently underwent extensive back surgery and continues to act as the main caregiver for Sis. Ginge.

Clinton Kuenzi (Ellie) and Gabe Dietrich (Brian Dietrich and Sis. Amanda Dietrich) have professed faith in Christ and desire to pursue a relationship with him! We’re thankful for God working in their hearts and pray they will grow close to him.

Our prayers go out to the missionaries in Haiti at this turbulent and uncertain time there. May God keep them safe. We also pray for healing for those sick with COVID-19.

The Christmas season is almost here, and we wish every one blessings of peace, good health, and time with loved ones as we celebrate the birth of our Savior.

Pennsylvania, Philadelphia

Laura Isch

“The King of kings lay once in lowly manger, in all our trials, born to be our friend; He knows our need, to our weakness is no stranger, Behold your King, before Him lowly bend.”

O Holy Night, Gospel Hymns, #876

This is such a joyous time of year! What a blessed thought that Christ was born to be our friend! May we each take the time to get to know our friend better and to thank him for the great sacrifice he made for us.

We were blessed to hear the reading of the Memorandum this month. We appreciate Elder Bro. Lucas Frank (Sis. Crystal, Detroit, MI) being with us and helping in this work.

May God bless each one with a joyous Christmas season!

Tennessee, Nashville

Jillian Bradbury

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

We have been blessed with great fellowship this month. We have been greatly served by Bro. Mark Roth (Sis. Tammy, Congerville, IL), Bro. Marvin Zollinger (Sis. Pam, Smithville, OH), Bro. Troy Metzger (Sis. Gwen, Lester, IA), Bro. Brian Wenniger (Sis. Mackenzie, Leo, IN), Bro. Kevin Schrock (Sis. Rachel, Congerville, IL), Bro. Justin
Koch (Sis. Marcia, Washington, IL) and Elder Bro. John Lehman (Sis. Carol, Bern, KS).

We had a blessed weekend of serving together as a church with the Church of Christ in Waverly, TN. They were recently hit by an awful flood and the work team that came to help them do repairs were amazing! The work team consisted of brothers and sisters from numerous congregations, so much so that we lost count! We were blessed by a local family here in Dickson, TN that opened their home to us for a singing. It lifted our hearts and encouraged us.

We were amazed by the turn out and helping hands from other congregations that came to help with preparation and serving meals for the work weekend. We also had a wonderful talk given to us by Bro. Justin Koch (Sis. Marcia, Washington, IL) titled “Your sinful nature, What does God do with your shame?” This gave us a lot to consider and ponder in the following days.

We have also started prayer meetings on Sunday morning. It is amazing to feel the Spirit as we seek guidance from the Lord. Our hearts are focused, and our petitions are before a Mighty God. God is good.

We are continuing to meet at an alternate location. If you plan to visit, please contact: Bro. Jordan and Sis. Emily Fritz, 615.852.1490, jordanmfritz@gmail.com; Bro. Jeremy and Sis. Jillian Bradbury, 765.914.0134, jillianbradbury2004@gmail.com; Bro. Jeremiah Stoller, 615.761.7033, jeremiahleestoller32@gmail.com.

Texas, Austin/Bastrop
Candy Meiss

Greetings of love from Austin/Bastrop Texas. What a beautiful time to be in Texas! We are so thankful for our visitors and for those who came to serve. We were blessed by hearing the pure word of God by Bro. Jeff Leman (Sis. Val, Bluffton, IN).

Where two join hand and heart, we find a threefold cord, not lightly rent apart. Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labor. Many from our church in Texas were able to attend the wedding of Sis. Gerri Hinrichsen to Bro. Mark Wuthrich in Goodfield, IL. We wish them God’s blessings as they begin this new journey together.

During the past year many of us have met with changes and challenges that a precious friend, Sis. Olivia Steffen compared to being part of a bag of potatoes. She gave me permission to share this meditation of her heart.

“**Oh, to be nothing, nothing,**
  Painful the humbling may be,
  Yet low in the dust I’d lay me
  That the world might my Saviour see.

Rather be nothing, nothing.
To Him let our voices be raised.
He is the Fountain of blessing,
He only is meet to be praised.

**Oh, to be nothing, nothing,**
Only to lie at His feet,
A broken and emptied vessel,
For the Master’s use made meet.”

May we all look to our Savior for guidance in our daily walk.
Texas, Dallas-Ft. Worth
Sheena Pelsy

“I will give thanks to the LORD because of his righteousness; I will sing the praises of the name of the LORD Most High.” Psalm 7:17

The Dallas church was grateful to have Bro. Tim Ramsier (Sis. Joni, Rittman, OH) and Bro. Jim Meiss (Sis. Candy, Austin-Bastrop, TX) for services. It was very fitting that both ministering brothers talked about being thankful and remembering God’s goodness as we approach Thanksgiving Day. Bro. Tim preached in Jeremiah where we see God teaching the Israelites many lessons that would draw them closer to him. But over generations, the Israelites started to forget about God’s providence and fell further away from him and his commandments. A similar occurrence took place back when the Israelites were wandering through the wilderness. Bro. Jim preached about the Israelites in Numbers and how quickly they turned from being thankful to complaining.

In both situations we see God working in ways that grab the Israelites attention and reveal their need of repentance. What a great reminder for us today to let our mouths be constant in praising God and not complaining to God. Let our eyes be turned to Jesus this Thanksgiving and our mouths be full of praise and thanks for all our Saviour has done for us.

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

This fall has brought many visitors to our area. We have been blessed with fellowship from those we have known and those we have met for the first time. We have felt loved, supported and encouraged! Ministering brothers that came and served us this month were: Bro. Doug Wagenbach (Sis. Lillian, San Diego, CA), Bro. Joe Klotzle (Sis. Sue, Altadena, CA), and Bro. Jeff Gerber (Sis. Carole, Rockville, CT). Elder Bro. Dan Kilgus (Sis. Jenna, Remington, IN) served us on October 24 and we were blessed to share Holy Communion together. We wish God’s blessings on all those who came to serve us. At the end of October, some of us were able to attend a meeting in our neighboring church, Rockville, CT, where our Elder Bro. Kevin Ryan gave a presentation on ways that our small church can be strengthened. We are thankful for the love and support we have received from them in the past and look forward to working together in the future.

Joy To The World!
Hymns of Christmas, #19

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King;
And heav’n and nature sing,
And heav’n and nature sing.

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!
Let men their songs employ,
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make his blessings flow
Far as the curse is found,
Far as, far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace
And makes the nations prove the glories of his righteousness
And wonders of his love,
And wonders of his love.
The News and Notices section of The Silver Lining provides a way for qualifying non-profit entities to make the brotherhood aware of church-related events, opportunities, needs, and services that would be of special interest to Apostolic Christian Church of America members and regular attendees. Email us at editor@acsilverlining.org for a copy of our advertising policy, which specifies who may advertise, sizes, file formats and deadlines.

News and Notices

AC Central: a growing hub of Apostolic Christian Content

Be sure to download the latest update to get the newest features
Check Google Play or the App Store

Shape the future of AC Central
Submit feedback, report bugs, and vote for suggested features at accentral.userecho.com

Help us improve the app and build new features
Software development is expensive. Donations for AC Central are greatly appreciated and can be made at onwardmedia.org or by scanning this QR code.

Bible Distribution:
Sharing His Word in Love

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

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

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

SAVE THE DATE:
AC Medical Fellowship meeting is scheduled for Saturday, April 30, 2022 at Goodfield, IL Fellowship Hall

Registration will begin at 8:00 a.m. and presentations at 8:30 a.m. and will continue until 5:00 p.m. with a light breakfast and box lunch. Spouses are welcome.

If you are on the HarvestCall Health Care Provider registry, you will receive an email in a few months with a formal invitation and registration form. There will also be a Facebook posting.
Save the Date to Register and Attend ALive 2022

Planning is underway for the Athens, Alabama congregation to host ALive 2022 over the Memorial Day weekend, May 27 – 30!

We're looking forward to spending another year at the Vision retreat center in Huntsville, AL (www.visionministry.org) as we create and cultivate cross-generational relationships through fellowship, worship, and teaching centered on the gospel. Elder Bro. Nick Gutwein (West Lafayette, IN), Bro. Randy Gasser (Detroit, MI) and Bro. Matthew Moore (Athens, AL) plan to be the speakers at this year’s event (Lord willing).

Registration for the event will go live February 1, 2022.

If you’d like more details, visit our website (www.ALiveAlabama.com), the Facebook page (@ALiveAlabama), or send an e-mail to info@alivealabama.com. Additionally, new this year - we have an email subscription service on the ALive website so anyone can sign up to get future emails for the event. (Note: Those who attended past events and are already receiving emails do not need to re-register.) Links for event registration will be available from all of these sites beginning February 1.

As the Committee continues planning for this year’s event, they ask for your prayers that ALive 22 can be an uplifting event where relationships can be strengthened, the body is unified and above all that God is glorified.

NEW MONTHLY GIVING PROGRAM

Vulnerable youth like Rosie are waiting on YOU to make a move. By signing up to be a monthly giver, you can be all the difference they need.

As a Sower of Hope, giving what you can every month, you will receive regular communications that will keep you connected to the mission of Gateway Woods and gain a deeper understanding of how your support makes an eternal difference. Sign up today to receive a special gift as a reminder to pray for the youth you are impacting.

Scan the QR code or visit: gatewaywoods.org/sowers-of-hope for more info and to start sowing seeds today!
## Awareness Tours - Haiti

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

Upcoming trips are as follows: Our next Awareness Tour is: TBD. To learn more, Email or Call:

**Rich Bertsch**, hospitallumiere@harvestcall.org, 309.467.2351

**Rick Wuethrich**, rick@wuethrichfarms.com, 219.863.4163

### HarvestCall Team Schedule - Haiti

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Team Type</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Capacity</th>
<th>Leader/Church - Contact Information</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Les Cayes</td>
<td>MEBSH/Haiti Support</td>
<td>Jan 7-14</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Akron, OH n/a</td>
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<tr>
<td>Les Cayes</td>
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<td>Jan 21-28</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Rittman, OH n/a</td>
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<tr>
<td>Les Cayes</td>
<td>MEBSH/Haiti Support</td>
<td>Feb 4-11</td>
<td>Silverton, OR Harvey Kuenzi <a href="mailto:hkloanoak@msn.com">hkloanoak@msn.com</a> 503-932-3128</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Les Cayes</td>
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<td>Feb 18-25</td>
<td>TBD (8) n/a</td>
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<tr>
<td>Les Cayes</td>
<td>MEBSH/Communion</td>
<td>April 2-9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Jon Zeller <a href="mailto:jczeller1972@gmail.com">jczeller1972@gmail.com</a> 309-266-9009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Les Cayes</td>
<td>MEBSH/Maintenance</td>
<td>April 16-16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Jon Zeller <a href="mailto:jczeller1972@gmail.com">jczeller1972@gmail.com</a> 309-266-9009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Les Cayes</td>
<td>MEBSH/Haiti Support</td>
<td>April 23-29</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Jon Zeller <a href="mailto:jczeller1972@gmail.com">jczeller1972@gmail.com</a> 309-266-9009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Les Cayes</td>
<td>MEBSH/Haiti Support</td>
<td>Apr 29- M 6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Jon Zeller <a href="mailto:jczeller1972@gmail.com">jczeller1972@gmail.com</a> 309-266-9009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Les Cayes</td>
<td>MEBSH/Haiti Support</td>
<td>May 6-13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Jon Zeller <a href="mailto:jczeller1972@gmail.com">jczeller1972@gmail.com</a> 309-266-9009</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Awareness Tours - Jamaica

If you would like to meet the missionaries and see the ministries of CCCD, Deaf Can! Coffee and En Gedi House in person, but do not have the desire to participate on a short-term team, please consider an Awareness Tour. This is a quick trip that gives interested parties the opportunity to meet our missionary families, learn more about our Jamaica ministry as well as other outreach supported by HarvestCall. The trip will be over a weekend and include worshiping with a Deaf congregation. Our next Awareness Tour is: TBD

To learn more, Email or Call: **Loren Dettwyler**, lmdettwyler@gmail.com or 503-580-9629

### HarvestCall Medical/Dental Team Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Team Type</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Capacity</th>
<th>Leader/Church - Contact Information</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Haiti: n/a</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico: n/a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Missionary Service Opportunities
in Haiti, Jamaica and Mexico

HAITI

MECHANIC
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

ASSISTANT FARM MANAGER
As the Dairy program continues to grow, HarvestCall is seeking a full-time missionary to assist in the efforts at Good Vision Farm.
- Torbeck, Haiti

JAMAICA

DISCIPLESHIP & CHILDCARE
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 DISCIPLESHIP
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

MEXICO

BUSINESS DISCIPLESHIP
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 DISCIPLESHIP
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.

For additional details for these exciting and worthy service opportunities contact:
Amber Miller - Missionary Care Director Email: amiller@harvestcall.org or Phone: 765.250.4295 x108
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HarvestCall Child Sponsorship is a way that you can help a child reach their full potential.

Your support provides basic education that is necessary for them to learn and grow into productive adults. A Christ-centered curriculum allows sponsored children to learn of the hope and love of Jesus and eventually to know his saving grace.

To learn more and choose a child to sponsor, visit harvestcall.org/childsponsorship. Current sponsors may check their payment status and set up automatic payments.

OR - Fill out this form and send to the office. You'll be assigned a student or school and sent further information.

Name __________________________
☐ Mr.  ☐ Mrs.  ☐ Miss
Spouse _________________________
Address _________________________
City __________ ST ___  Zip_________
Phone __________________________
☐ Home   ☐ Cell
Email ___________________________

Please check student preference:
☐ Haiti Student   ☐ Jamaica
☐ Haiti School   ☐ Guatemala
☐ Mexico   ☐ Zambia
☐ Wherever Needed

If possible, I prefer:
☐ Boy - Age _____
☐ Girl - Age _____
☐ No Preference

Send to:
HarvestCall Child Sponsorship
PO Box 36
Morton, IL 61550
Phone: 309-266-6080
Fax: 309-266-5281
childsponsorship@harvestcall.org

APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN
HarvestCall.
Is God calling you?

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We currently need an Assistant Houseparent, Communications Administrative Assistant, Houseparent Couple, GW Farms Assistant, and a Teacher. Will you be the beautiful feet that come and labor to share Christ?

For more information: gatewaywoods.org/careers 888-443-4283
Holy Spirit. The source of our giving is critical because we do not “give our bodies to be burned” in a form of spiritual asceticism, but rather we burn with a holy love as our “reasonable sacrifice” in response to God’s love toward and within us. Thus, while we do battle with the flesh and must purposefully step out of self-love and into self-gift, this movement from rebellion into virtue is rooted in yielding to the Holy Spirit who calls us into the love of God. From this place, our giving can become cheerful, even joyful, just as Christ endured incomprehensible suffering for the joy set before him. Through the working of the Holy Spirit, we can become emissaries of Christ lovingly offering a cup of cold water to those in need. We give because the Holy Spirit in love compels us.

Shifting the dialogue somewhat, it can be helpful to apply a simple diagnostic to ascertain whether we are growing into Christ’s likeness. God is characterized by his love which is generative (life giving), including in creation itself. Would someone generally characterize my life as generative (that is in giving and generating life in those around me) or consumptive (that is in consuming those around me as objects for my pleasure)? From this context, we see that the principle of freely giving should not be confined to a particular aspect of our lives, such as in tithing, but as a defining characteristic of the lived faith of a son or daughter of the King. A child of the King:

• Serves others, seeking to do all for God’s glory and not our own.
• Responds to the Holy Spirit to joyfully give and humbly receive in response to physical, financial, emotional, and spiritual needs.
• Supports our fellow brothers and sisters in the work the Holy Spirit has given them through prayer, counsel, and resources, without comparing ourselves among ourselves.
• Performs and receives service and hospitality as part of nurturing relationships with others and bearing each other’s burdens.
• Does good to all people, even as Christ did to us while we were yet sinners.

At different points in our lives, we may find different forms of giving (e.g., time, money, emotions, etc.) to be more or less difficult. But regardless of our circumstances, to live a generative life will require us to step prayerfully and purposefully into self-gift as faithful stewards, trusting in God’s care and walking in his love.

"[Holy virtue] is rich in gifts to others
Not too sensitive, or vain;
Has a heart that shares sincerely
Every human ill or pain."
Holy Simplicity, Zion’s Harp #246

Endnotes
1   Matthew 10.8
2   Job 1.21
3   Philippians 4.11
4   Acts 20.35
5   1 Corinthians 4.2
6   While the pattern of communal living in Acts 2 was abandoned, the radical new relationship to property persisted. In 2 Corinthians 8.8-15, the Apostle Paul urges the Corinthians to give generously so that there might “be equality” within the Church, such that “He that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack.”
7   Galatians 6.10
9   Psalm 100.3.
10  James 1.17
11  Matthew 25.24-30
12  Matthew 6.26
13  Psalm 84.3
14  1 Corinthians 13.3; cf. Micah 6.7
15  Romans 12.1
16  2 Corinthians 9.6-7
17  Hebrews 12.2
18  Matthew 10.42
19  Cf. 1 John 3.16-24
name. What a blessing it is to be able to read in God’s word and to remember that and to understand at a deeper level the foundation of what Christmas day is.

As I was thinking about this, I wondered what Christmas day was like not quite so far back in time. So, I asked a brother for some CDs of Christmas services, and I went through a few of those. Okay, 15 years ago in 2005, what was Christmas like? What was your life like 15 years ago? I’m thinking ‘Christmas 2020, what a year it’s been!’ Surely, it was so much better in 2005.

In 2005, YouTube was launched in the United States, Hurricane Katrina made its landfall, and here in our local church, 25 people were baptized. We had 10 weddings in 2005; great joy in our church 15 years ago. Also, great hardships; think about those that lost lives in Hurricane Katrina. I also read that almost a thousand soldiers lost their lives in Iraq in 2005. Over 900 families celebrated Christmas without loved ones who had been fighting for our country and for others across the globe. Even within my own family, my grandma passed away Dec 17, 2005.

I listened to the Christmas message from that year and thought how interesting the things he said in 2005 were and how they can be applied to today. I have a few quotes from it that I want to read and permission from the speaker to do so. These are quotes from the Christmas Day service in 2005.

“Change comes into our lives. No matter if we are young or if we are old, if we are married or if we are single, if we have children or if we don’t, change comes. It’s part of life. You don’t have to fear it.” The main theme of the message was Fear Not. Fear not in 2005. I’d like to borrow that and say ‘Fear not in 2020.’

He also said, “Life brings change, hard times, struggles, joys. Children have been born. Blessings have come. Seasons have come and gone.” He said, “A lot of us could not have predicted the changes that have come this past year. Some of them wonderful and glorious and happy changes and some of them difficult and trying changes; but life brings change. We are facing changes. We pray through them. We stay in prayer whatever God brings into our lives. Whatever unfolds, God hears our prayers, and we can be assured of that, comforted by that, that he hears our prayers. We can trust in those prayers. Changes will come, and changes will go. If we trust and if we pray, we will abide with God, and he will bring us wonderful blessings and a home eternally in heaven.”

I was blessed by that. I hope you could be blessed by that too. Fifteen years seems like a long time ago. I was 21 years old, just finishing up my schooling at Ball State, and Amy and I had just celebrated our first anniversary. It seems like a long time ago. I just thought it was interesting that we were encouraged then to fear not. So, I say that same thing today, “Fear not.”

We’ve got a beautiful foundation in God’s word. Seven hundred years before Christ was born, God said to man, “Fear not. I’m laying a corner stone for you. I’m going to provide you someone who will take away your fears, who will give you confidence, who will bring you into relationship with me.” It is his only begotten son, Jesus Christ, whom we are here to celebrate today on Christmas day, so let’s talk about Christmas present.

Wow, what a year. Christmas today gives us context to help us apply and analyze what we have already learned. We’ve got a
foundation laid of Christmas in the past, and now, here, we have some context today to live out what we have learned, to work out those things. I’d like for you to Romans 8. Beginning at verse 34, thinking about our present-day Christmas, let’s read.

“Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.”

We have today a living Savior. The first Christmas was celebrated when Jesus, the Son of God, was born of a virgin in a stable or cave, and he was laid in a manger. It was such a meek and simple way to bring about the greatest change the world had ever seen. Has life on this planet ever been the same since Jesus Christ was born? We celebrate that today, and we read verses in Romans 8 encouraging us that Christ is still alive. He lived 2000 years ago for only about 33 years, and then, he was crucified on a cross. If that’s where the story ends, Christmas day 2020 would be a depressing day. It would be a memorial. It would be like truly just celebrating Christmas past. But we serve a living God and a living Savior, and because he died for our sins, we can be here today to celebrate Christmas present.

“Who shall separate us,” it continues. Paul writes just like it’s first-person. It’s like he’s telling us today, now, this year. “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?”

(v.35) Is there anything you might have experienced in this year – any hardship you might have endured, any loved one that has passed on, any sickness you have encountered – that would separate you from his love? Can anything separate you from the love of Christ?

“As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter” (v.36). It’s kind of strange to say it this way, but we should kind of expect that this is not going to be a perfect life. Yes, for those of us who have repented, we are found in Christ, and we can celebrate Christmas like never before. I drive my kids crazy when I take them to school in the morning. I say, “Hey, this could be the best Tuesday of your life. There’s nothing stopping it.” My daughter says, “Dad” and just shakes her head. This could be the best Christmas day of your entire life. There’s nothing stopping it. I really believe it because nothing will separate you from the love of Jesus Christ.

Verse 37 gives me goosebumps when I read this, “Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.” We are more than conquerors. We can celebrate Christmas today, feel the Spirit’s indwelling, experience a changed life and renewed minds. Old things are passed away, and behold, all things are new because of Jesus. We are more than conquerors because of him that loved us.

“For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (vv.38-39)

What a Christmas message!

The Christmas of this year has gifted us the opportunity – actually many opportunities – so we can look at 2020 in a couple ways. We’ve got choices. I pray that we can see with 20/20 vision because God has given us amazing blessings this year. He has seen us through amazing hardships this year. He has carried us through the most difficult times this year. But we can see with 20/20 vision. I pray that could be said of all of us today.

— Please turn to pg. 58
— Continued from pg. 57

It’s given us the opportunity to see our need. I think it’s given me the opportunity to see my need in a greater way. I need hope. I need to be aware of my brothers and sisters and to show more empathy for what you are going through. This year has taught me that. Has it taught you that? I know it has because I’ve seen the Christmas video of our church family. I’ve seen the church in action. I’ve seen the way you love and you live for Jesus and for each other. I’ve heard your prayers. This year has helped has gifted me the need to be more empathetic.

It’s also given me this renewed need to understand redemption. We can redeem this year. I remember one of the ministers, probably in Aug or Sept, said, “Let’s redeem what we have left of 2020.” This year has given me the opportunity to think about that in a deeper way. How can I redeem this time? How can I redeem the times I’ve been through this year? How can you redeem the times God has seen you through this year? Nothing can separate us from Jesus Christ’s love.

It’s also gifted perspective. I think about this year and the perspective I have gained. I’ve gained the ability, probably in a better way though not perfectly, of seeing life through other people’s eyes.

I’ve been given the gift of perspective on time. Amy and I talked about it. We were quarantined for almost the entire month of Nov, and even earlier in the springtime when we were all home, hunkering down. I thought this could really pay dividends for our family in ten years. This time we have, now, in this home, in this place, can really pay dividends in 20 years. We are living life together as husband and wife, as a family of five, and this time that we are putting together now, we can redeem. It gave me new perspective on time and how time can also be fleeting. I’m sure there are people here, or hearing my voice today, that would never have thought their loved one would be in heaven on this Christmas day. But God said, “I am alpha, and I am omega. I am the beginning and the end. You don’t have to fear. You don’t have to make haste. You don’t have to be in panic mode. I’ve laid for you a foundation in Jesus Christ.” I pray that you feel that foundation under your feet today.

It’s given me a perspective on health and what it means to be healthy. It’s given me a perspective on my blessings, to be more eternally minded, to have that 20/20 vision of my heavenly father, and what blessings truly are. I can think about that, meditate on that, and praise God for that today.

This year has gifted me release. It’s gifted me the idea of release because, in this year, I have found that I have little control over things I thought maybe I did control. I had to release that to someone or something. You probably had to release some control of your life and the decision-making you had to something or someone, and I pray it was to our heavenly father. We had to release loved ones into the everlasting arms of our father. We had to release some comforts, some desires, some wish list items. We had to release those, and perhaps, in doing that, we’ve been purified more. We’ve been sanctified more. We’ve grown more in our faith. We’ve grown more in our trust in God.

This year has also gifted me choice, a greater sense of choice. We’ve had opportunity to choose our attitudes almost on a daily, or even hourly basis. I’m not perfect by any means, so don’t think I’m saying I chose a perfect attitude all the time, but I’ve been gifted the opportunity to choose my attitude. I pray that
my attitude has been mostly, at least by God’s grace, a Christlike attitude to my brothers and sisters, to my church family, to my community, to my coworkers, to the kids I work with at school. I pray that I’ve made good choices with my attitude by his grace.

I’ve had an opportunity for choosing my behavior. How did I act in this year? Every day when I would wake up, I had to choose ‘How will I live this life?’ How will I live in this year? I got to choose my effort, anything I put my hand to, and I pray that God will continue to give me grace to make good choices on those things.

We’ve been gifted choice, and I thought about the thief on the cross. Actually, there were two thieves on the cross. In Luke 23, we read about those men. They were nailed to crosses, and they were guilty. They were on either side of Jesus Christ.

One of them said, “If you are the Christ, save me and save yourself.” He chose that attitude. He chose selfishness. He chose behavior that was unbecoming of a Christian, you might say.

What did the other one choose? He said, “Don’t say that. We’re here because we’re guilty. This man is here, and he’s innocent.” Then, he said, “Remember me when you go into your kingdom, Lord.” Jesus said, “I will remember you, and today, you’ll be with me in paradise.” Is there any greater contrast in attitudes and in choosing of your attitude, behavior, and your mindset than those two men? Someday, you may have the chance to talk to that thief on the cross. I just pray that you talk to the right one.

So, this might be our last Christmas. Who knows? Only God knows time. We’ve talked about the foundation he has laid in times past, and we talked about what Christmas has gifted us in present time. Let’s think about more of a future mindset just for a bit. Turn with me to 2 Peter.

As we think about Christmas future, let’s read in 2 Peter 1. “Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises.” (vv.2-4)

Think of those promises that were made in Isaiah, years and years and generations before, of this coming Messiah, this coming Christ. God is a God who keeps his promises. His word is pure as gold.

He has given us these “great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.” (2 Peter 1:4-7) We’ve got some work to do. We’ve got some opportunities to embark on. We have been given a beautiful gift.

We have been given an indescribable gift in Jesus Christ. We celebrate Christmas day this morning, and we can do so with smiles, our countenances beaming with joy, because of these sacred, precious promises that are true, helping us endure. God does not want us to sit back on our laurels and to say, “Lord, I’m ready. Take me home.” He might do that according to his will, but he wants us to continue to abide. He wants us to continue to be found ‘so doing’. “Blessed is the man that, when the master comes, he finds his servant so doing.”

— Please turn to pg. 60
We read about the first Christmas when Jesus Christ came to this earth. There’s going to be a second coming, and we want him to find us ‘so doing’. Christmas future – who knows what that will be like. I’m not here standing before you as some prognosticator, some fortune-teller, some street fair guy who’s going to tell you your future, but I know who holds the future.

I’ve got this little snow globe in my office at school. I worked at Bluffton high school for 11 years, but now I’m at Bluffton elementary school. I have this one student who will grab that globe – we know we’re joking – and pretend it’s a crystal ball. “Will I have a good day today?” I grab it, and I say, “Yes, you will.” I’m not here to be a fortune-teller. I don’t have a crystal ball, but I know who holds our future.

He wants us to be about his business and to add to our faith all of these virtues, continue growing in our faith and walk with Christ. In doing so, we can celebrate Christmas every day. We can bring gifts to others because of our countenance, because of how we make decisions, how we do life, how we show joy, how we endure struggles, and how we continue to walk on the foundation of Jesus Christ.

I had an interesting experience when I was contemplating this service. You know, sometimes at probably 2 in the morning, God will just knock on the door of your heart and tell you something. Have you had that experience? I’ve had that experience. It’s like out of the blue, the Holy Spirit just tells you something. So, I suddenly woke up in the middle of the night, and God said to me three words. He said, “Keep on fishing.” I’m thinking, ‘I mean, I kind of like to fish.’ He said, “Keep on fishing.” That got my attention. I think he’s telling me to keep on fishing for Christmases future.

Let’s turn back quickly to John 21. I want to read this. Think about this: Christ came 2000 years ago. He walked with men. He had twelve disciples and apostles, and he sent them out, saying, “do my work and heal and fulfill the great commission. Then, he died, and there was this perplexing time for about three days. We read in John 21:1, “After these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise shewed he himself. There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples. Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing.” (vv.1-3) I need to be about this business of fishing.

“They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing” (v.3). How discouraging that could be to have these unmet expectations. How discouraging it could’ve been to look back on this year and say what a horrible year that was. I pray that you don’t say that. I pray that you say, “look at how God manifested himself in this year.” But we are human, and we are prone to unmet expectations. We have to be ready for that.

“But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No. And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find.” (vv.4-6) Suddenly now, Jesus enters the equation, and so self-pity goes out the window. The disappointment of unmet expectations is now put into perspective, in greater detail, when Jesus comes in. He says, “Just try it one more time.”
“They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes” (v.6).

Keep on fishing. Going into the future – after the service is over, keep on fishing. I say that to myself, but I also say it to my brothers and sisters: keep on fishing for lost souls. Keep on fishing by praying for those who need prayers, for interceding for people that maybe we’ve never even met. God responds to the call of prayer as people intercede for ‘that guy I’ve heard about but never met’.

Keep on fishing in your families. Husbands, keep on fishing and love your wives. Encourage them. Say, “Wow, you did a great job this Christmas. Wow, you are an amazing wife. I’m so thankful for you. Thank you for marrying me.”

Keep on fishing, wives, and support your husbands. Encourage them and say, “Life is hard. I know it’s hard, but you’re doing a good job. Keep leading our home in prayer. Keep setting standards by God’s word.”

Keep on fishing. Raise your kids. Teach Sunday school. Do these things not because you want to have some good reputation. Do it because you want others to see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. Keep on fishing in Christmases in the future.

We started in Revelation, and now, we’re going to end in Revelation. Turn with me to chapter 11. Now, we’re going way Christmas future. Revelation 11:15: “And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.”

Turn to Revelation 19.

Thinking about Christmas way in the future, perhaps, let’s read verse 1. “And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven. “This is John. He’s writing down this revelation that God has given him of this future time of Christ and his return, of Christ in his glory, the King. This is the Jesus that we celebrate as a baby today on Christmas. He’s going to return. John heard “a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God” (v.1).

That’s the Jesus we celebrate today. Yes, he came as a baby, but he also fulfilled the great command of his father by dying for our sins, and he rose from the grave. We want to be part of that great company of voices praising God, saying, “Alleluia, salvation, and honor, and glory and power forever and ever.” We want to be part of that choir.

That’s the Jesus that we can look back to the Old Testament and say, ‘what a foundation we’ve been given.’ These promises of God, of the coming Messiah, he fulfilled in every detail. He came and was born in Bethlehem just like it was foretold.

Two thousand years later, we have 20/20 vision, and we see what life is like now. We know that Jesus is our King if we’ve repented of our sins, and someday out yonder, someday by and by, there’s going to be choir singing. I pray you could be there. I pray you could be part of that heavenly choir and sing “glory and honor and power and salvation to the KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.” It might just sound a little something like this: [www.bit.ly/hallelujah_chorus_mp3].
Remembering Our Spiritual Heritage

Worship - A Clarification
In the recent series of articles on the history of our church, the article in the November, 2021 issue, reference was made to “worship patterns” with a focus on ministers opening the Bible, reading the texts, and preaching. This reference intended to say, “The Bible is opened by the minister at random and meditated upon without specific premeditation.” In a typographical error, the word “with” was shown instead of “without” in explaining that ministers reliance on the Holy Spirit in not preparing their messages.

Worship and Liturgy
Liturgy is the form/sequence of public worship. Our pattern, over the years, has been one that is very God- and Word-centered. In the church history, Marching to Zion,” page 560 begins a section on “History of Worship and Liturgy,” and the introductory paragraph states, “Since the church’s beginning in Europe in the 1830s, the worship service has always been characterized by simplicity, dignity, reverence and Spirit-filled preaching. Ceremony, ritual and detailed liturgy, which can often detract from the truth of the gospel, have been noticeably absent from Apostolic Christian worship. A dual principle deeply associated with worship is that the Lord is an unseen guest at every service and nothing should be done that might draw attention away from Him. Rather, all emphasis is meant to glorify His high and holy name.”

On page 561, the following is written: “Preaching is conducted only by ministers of the church who are selected by the local congregations. Delivery of sermons is extemporaneous as revealed by the Holy Spirit. Although sermons are not prepared beforehand, ministers give themselves daily to much prayer and studying of God’s Word.”

With respect to standing up to preach, it is often mentioned that our ministers, largely, don’t prepare their sermons, they prepare their hearts (ahead of time). In this, they can rely on the Holy Spirit to reveal the proper text, and from this they can then yield to the Spirit to speak words that will accrue to the listener’s needs, which God knows far better than the preacher. In humility, the minister bows to divine direction.

Silver Lining - The First Issue
Just recently, I pulled out the very first issue of The Silver Lining. It was cited as Volume I, Number 1, and published October 15, 1943. Originally, it was intended for servicemen of the Leo, Indiana congregation to send them news from home. Later, the scope was enlarged to become a church-wide publication. The first issue was four pages long. It contained a sermon by Elder Bro. Henry Souder, delivered on October 8, 1922 on Matthew 7. Also, the names and addresses of church boys serving in World War II were listed. It also contained news items “from home.”

The stated purpose of the new publication was, “For your interest, and enjoyment, and to keep us in closer touch with each other. Further, to bring you information of happenings at your home Sunday School and Church and also messages of hope, cheer, and comfort.”

A feature of the first edition was a message to servicemen entitled, “What Has The Future To Offer Our Young Men?” It was written by Minister Joe A. Getz, Morton, Illinois. This article was written five years before he was ordained as Elder in 1948. It is our intention to include Bro. Getz’s message in the next two issues of The Silver Lining, Lord willing.

-by Perry A. Klopfenstein
The Light of Hope

Radiating Our Renewal in God’s Image

Lying swaddled in a manger, Jesus, the express image of God’s person (Hebrews 1:3), invited focus from responsive shepherds (Luke 2:8-20). These eyewitnesses publicized the heavenly birth announcement and accompanying “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” Imagine: a Savior who reinstates God’s image for living peaceably with good will for his glory! Impressing all their wondering hearers, the transformed shepherds exemplified lives of glorying praise. Their witness beckons image-bearers of the Word today. The Lord is ready to be our restful embrace of soul-nourishment, reshaping everyone who surrenders self to promote his glory!

Let’s trace the story from creation through the fall, redemption, sanctification, and on to eternity. After God created man in his triune image, the serpent beguiled Eve into conceiving lust for knowing good and evil. The Lord’s crowning creatures no longer mirrored his orderly dynamic of headship, submission, and interconnected fellowship. Sorrowfully shattering God’s very good imagery, mankind changed God’s incorruptible glory into graven images. Yet, the Lord would not give his glory to another or share his praise (Isaiah 42:8). His Son honored three captives’ refusal to worship Nebuchadnezzar’s image by walking with them in the powerless fire. David vowed to behold his Lord’s face in righteousness and anticipated the satisfaction of awaking with divine likeness (Psalm 17:15). Hosea (3:4-5) foretold that Israel’s children would abide without an image before returning to seek the Lord and fear his goodness. Seeing the likeness of the LORD’s glory appear, Ezekiel (1:26-2:10) heard a voice that sent him to prophesy fearlessly despite opposition.

Where the flesh-weakened law failed, God sent his Son to condemn sin in the likeness of sinful flesh. He fulfilled the law’s righteousness for flesh-forsaking, Spirit-followers (Romans 8:3-4). Being in the invisible God’s form and image, Christ Jesus humbly served in human likeness as our pattern of self-crucifying obedience. Thus, we engage with trembling fear for God’s salvation work in us to will and do his good pleasure (Philippians 2:5-12). When we crucify and baptize the old, sin-serving body into Christ’s death, we yield obediently as righteous instruments who walk with new life in his resurrected likeness (Romans 6:2-16)! Working all things together for good to God-lovers called according to his purpose, God foreknew to ordain our conformity to his Son’s image among many brethren (Romans 8:28-29). Together, we’ve put on the new man, which we knowledgeably renew after our Creator’s image (Colossians 3:10). With liberty that accompanies the Lord’s Spirit, he transforms believers into the same image as our open faces behold the Lord’s glory in mirror-like fashion (II Corinthians 3:17-18). Overcoming Eden with the empty tomb, Paul contrasts the first man Adam with our last Adam. Christ’s incorruptible, glorious resurrection-power can quicken us to bear the image of the heavenly (I Corinthians 15:42-49)!

Do the radiant beams from Christ’s holy face prompt redeeming grace to dawn in our beings? Will we allow God to restore his image and Christ’s likeness in us as modern shepherds, who walk invitingly in the Spirit’s fruit? Let’s go now even unto Jesus to see these things come to pass, making known what the Lord offers. Cut off our graven self. Unwrap the manger’s life-bread. Rise with Christ to reflect God’s glorious image for all to acknowledge!

Supplemental Hymns - Texts: Zion’s Harp #164, #57, and Thomas O. Chisholm’s “O to Be Like Thee”

-by Sam Manz
"...And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees..."