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Behold, I stand at the door, and knock...
Revelation 3:20
Reactivating Motherly Faith

When winter thaws into spring, we anticipate the month of May to focus on cherishing motherly influences. While we’re wise to express thoughts of Mother’s Day gratitude, Jesus invites a deeper manifestation of love. His acceptable evidence of abiding love is keeping his commandments (John 14:15, 21; 15:10). Applying Christ’s teaching to our motherly influencers, we show true love by reflecting their godliness in our lifestyle choices. Indeed, to honor our “mothers” means to revere, respect, and treat them (or their legacies) with deference and submission, performing relative duties to them (Webster, 1828). So, we confirm honor by reactivating their unselfish standards through mirrored fruit-bearing. Love Mom? Use God’s grace to live like Mom!

“I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth (3 John 4).” For our May 2022 issue, we invite your submission on the topic “What lessons, benefits, and inspirations have you carried forward from having a godly mother (or mother-figure) in your life (2 Timothy 1:5)?” Send your contribution (600 words or less) to features@acsilverlining.org by March 15, 2022. How is her unfeigned faith dwelling in you?

Amplifying the Spirit’s “call to remembrance,”
Sam Manz, Silver Lining Features
Partakers of the Divine Nature

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

The essence of the gospel is contained in this simple sentence written by Peter through the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. The importance of these concepts cannot be overstated. These exceeding great and precious promises enable us by faith in Jesus to be born again and become partakers of God’s divine nature.

Exceeding Great Promises

Before the world was made, the Creator saw the need for a redeemer and ordained Jesus to the task, a promise implicitly given to men. Isaiah records God’s promise that he would send his servant to be a light to the Gentiles, giving sight to the (spiritually) blind and setting free those who were imprisoned by sin. God promised that his spirit would be upon this servant. In short, God promised that he would redeem mankind through Jesus and empower the redeemed by sharing the Holy Spirit. These two promises are reiterated and expanded throughout the Old Testament and fulfilled in the New.

Jesus assured the disciples that they would be endued with power from on high after his departure. This gift of the Holy Spirit made all the difference in the disciples. The Peter who had denied the Lord now preached powerfully and unashamedly. James was empowered to suffer death for the sake of the gospel. Stephen did great wonders and miracles and was also killed for his faith and died forgiving as Jesus forgave. The promise of God was not mere words, nor was it mere miracles. The greatest fulfillment of the promises of God was the transformation of self-centered men and women into meek and righteous souls willing to serve others. Sinful men were no longer sinners but rather partakers of the divine nature.

The Divine Nature

That men can be partakers of God’s divine nature seems mystical. Is it possible that flesh and blood can be partakers of that which is spirit? Perhaps we can understand it better by examining how God made the physical world. It seems that many earthly things (perhaps all) were given men as a pattern to understand heavenly truths. Moses was commanded to make the tabernacle and all that pertained to it after the pattern God showed him on Mount Sinai. Further, we can see in the pattern of the tabernacle that it reflects our physical bodies as the temple of the living God. Marriage is designed to teach us of the intimate relationship between Christ and the church.

By examining the process of conception and birth we can comprehend how to become partakers of the divine nature. The Lord Himself taught Nicodemus (and us) that spiritual life requires us to be born again.

We understand that bearing children requires a father and a mother. We can also observe that, “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.” In a very real sense, Jesus was begotten by the Holy Spirit. Jesus was a partaker of the divine nature to the fullest extent. It is no wonder that Jesus referred to God as his father. We also know that Jesus was born of Mary and carried flesh and blood. We read that he was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Jesus carried this tension between flesh and spirit within him but was able to overcome the flesh at all times.

— Please turn to pg. 59
Greetings to you in the name of Jesus Christ our Savior. It's a joy to gather together around God's word. It's always an inspiration to us to take his scriptures and feed upon it. His word gives us strength and endurance in our fight against the enemy. It also gives us courage in order to serve our Lord faithfully. I appreciate your prayers this evening and always. This is a work of the church together through the Spirit.

I have here before me the book of Isaiah Chapter 33. The hymn that came to mind as we read those final verses is Hymn #32 (Zion’s Harp) which is actually based upon a psalm and echoed in this scripture. Who Shall Abide:

"Lord who livest in thy dwelling
Who stays on thy mountain high
He who in the truth abideth
Stays afar from every lie
And with all his heart is striving
Seeking truth all good reviving
He will in the church abide
And in Salem’s hall reside."

Let’s sing this hymn with a prayerful heart for God’s strength to continue to abide in him that we would not forsake his covenant. Hymn #32.

The last couple of verses in this scripture really touched my heart. It says, “The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites” (v.14). We are called as believers in Christ to the fear of the Lord, but it is an awe and a respect for his holiness. The sinners have a different type of fear. They have the fear of the Lord’s vengeance upon their souls. They have the fear of the future. They don’t have a god that they can trust in to carry them into the future.

“Fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites” (v.14). The hypocrites are people who trust in their own wisdom, who try to feign themselves to be just men and spiritual, and yet, they do not have the power and the righteousness of God to uphold them in their walk. Fear takes hold of their hearts. This is not the type of fear that should take hold of our hearts for we have a God who loves, a God whom we trust.

“Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?” (v.14) When you have a fire that you are tending, it must have constant wood in order to continue to flame up. Beloved, in our souls, the Lord desires that there be a constant burning and yet sometimes burning fades away like the coals of fire in the morning which need to be blown upon in order to come back to life. The Lord desires that our hearts are on fire with his love.

“He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly;” (v.15). The Lord calls us to righteousness in our walk. He calls us that we may speak truth to one another and also to our neighbors around about us. “He that despiseth the gain of oppressions,” (v.15). Are we after gain and wealth? Are we after the glory of God in our lives?

“That shaketh his hands from the holding of bribes” (v.15). We don’t let others influence our will. We have a will that is set on serving the Savior, not on serving man alone.

“That stoppeth his ears from the hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil;” (v.15) Do we find ourselves captivated by violence around about us when we read the news or when we take in visual media that is all around us? It’s full of violence. It’s full of blood. We are to be people of peace, those that are called to share peace with our fellowman.

“And shutteth his eyes from seeing evil” (v.15).
Beloved, this is a call to us: when we are faced with evil around us, when our eyes are tempted to behold evil, do we shut our eyes? Do we turn away? Do we call on God for strength to overcome?

"He shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks:" (v.16) The Lord desires for us to hide ourselves within his holiness, to find a crevice in the rock of our salvation, and to hide ourselves in his strength.

"Bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure" (v.16). The Lord desires to feed us each day with the manna of his word and with the water of his Holy Spirit. Are we taking in the nourishment that he gives to us? Are we drinking deeply from the wells of salvation that he offers to us? Are we relishing the gifts, the bread of life, that he shares with us by communing with our Savior? Beloved, without the water and the bread from God, we will be famished, and yet his manna, his word, his Holy Spirit is sufficient to keep us in him.

We talk sometimes about the fear of forsaking God, the fear of turning away from him, and it is true that we can leave our Savior. We can flee from his presence by our own free will, but his love draws us into his presence, and his grace keeps us in his presence.

Who shall abide in the dwelling of the Lord in the tabernacle of the most high? Who shall stay in that dwelling? It is these attributes of a godly man that keeps us in him. We need to take strength and courage in his strength. He will help us to stay true to him. He will keep us in his salvation when we trust in his grace.

I have here before me St. John Chapter 7.

When we think of the Lord Jesus Christ and the short life that he lived on this earth – 33 short years, and only three which were devoted to public ministry – we marvel at the great good that he accomplished. How is it that Jesus Christ served so diligently, so faithfully, to the Father? Yes, he was part of the trinity, part of the living Christ, the Son Jesus Christ, and yet, he walked in flesh just as you and I do. So, how is it that he can serve God faithfully as the Son of God clothed in flesh? It was because he maintained a closeness to the father, a commitment to him, and it is the same for us.

Jesus knew that his time was short in this world. Do we also receive that truth into our lives? We are only here for a short time. Are we living all our days to the glory and praise of God?

At the end of my workday today, I went into the room of a lady who found out today that she only has a few months left in her life. You don’t know her so I will use her first name, Joy. As I approached her room, I expected to see that she was discouraged, but when I walked in, I saw a radiant smile on her face. We shared together a little bit about life and death, and she said to me that, “this is the end for all. It is going to come to us all.” She’s 70something years old. She said, “how can I expect it to be any different for me?” and I sensed in her eyes and in her spirit that she was going to do her best to live the end of her race with joy.

It reminded me that my life too is just for a short time. We are only here for a little while. Are we glorifying God with the time that he has given unto us? Beloved, each one of us lives our lives for something. Do we live to the glory of God or do we live our lives to impress others? Jesus lived his life knowing that he was going to go back to the father soon, and he desired to bring with him as many people as he could save. He desired to teach us the truth that we too could be saved by the love and the salvation of Christ.

"Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto him that sent me” (v.33). We are only here for a little while.

As Jesus prepared to go up to the feast, the disciples came unto him and encouraged him to show himself unto the people there at the feast of the tabernacles. I marvel that he desired instead to go up in secret. What did he tell the disciples? He said, “You go ahead of me. My time is not yet come: but your time is always ready” (v.6). Do we recognize that time is a gift, a present, that the

— Please turn to pg. 60
Ministry Program Updates

Haitian Leaders Make Ministries Work  *Haiti Committee*

In the last several years, HarvestCall ministries in Haiti have been challenged by many factors. While Haiti has always struggled with needs that many of us have never known, recently their problems have increased. Political and social instability have taken a heavy toll, a Haitian president has been assassinated, street gangs have taken over some neighborhoods, and fuel and material shortages have become acute. And to add to the difficulties, a major earthquake struck the southern peninsula of Haiti in August 2021, bringing destruction to many cities and villages, leaving many homeless and resulting in significant loss of life.

Compounding the challenges of the recent events for HarvestCall’s ministries has been the suspension of some visiting work teams during the pandemic of 2020-2021 and the lack of missionary personnel to fill key positions in some ministry programs.

However, in spite of the challenges, the HarvestCall ministries continue to be blessed. The ministry activity has continued, bolstered by Haitian leaders that have stepped up to take positions of responsibility. These Haitians are Christian believers dedicated to proclaiming the gospel message as they serve their communities.

A regular crew of eight Haitians works with the Citi Lumiere HarvestCall missionaries to engage in daily devotional discussions before the work day. They enjoy the fellowship of visiting work teams as they visit remote villages and install roofs on schools and churches for the communities. But because of unrest and the pandemic, visiting US work teams were restricted from travel to Haiti. Nevertheless, the Haitian crew continued the construction schedule, and they now plan, schedule, and execute the work with oversight by HarvestCall missionaries. (They are looking forward to more visiting US work teams in the future, as the number of construction projects has increased as a result of the earthquake.)

In the past year, key Haitian personnel were brought on board by HarvestCall to be a part of the management of Hospital Lumiere in Bonne Finn. In the aftermath of the Aug. earthquake, many Haitian employees rose to the occasion and organized and implemented recovery efforts as the hospital patients were moved to safety and treated. Today, a new management team of primarily Haitians is operating the hospital, continuing the

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The Language of the Heart  *Jamaica Committee*

There is a concept in missions and bible translation that can often get overlooked, especially by those of who live in places dominated by a common language. This concept is “heart language.” Heart language is often someone’s first language and is the language in which they process life, emotions, and issues of the heart. This is the language in which they often best learn and most easily relate with others.

This concept is critical because we serve a God who has given us his word through which his spirit speaks in our lives. In Jamaica, the HarvestCall team ministers among the Deaf. Sign is their heart language. Knowledge comes from the brain, but worship flows from the heart. Therefore, the sharing of the gospel and the ministering of God’s word among the Deaf of Jamaica needs to be in sign.

This creates a couple of unique opportunities. First, the scriptures are not yet in Jamaican Sign Language. Second, there are not enough Deaf churches available. The Word of God needs to be accessible in a language that can be understood, but it also needs to be accessible in a way that inspires worship and a deeper
quality medical care and Christ-centered ministry for the sick and injured in southern Haiti.

One of HarvestCall’s newest ministries in Haiti, the Gospel Centered Community Development program, has been implemented and is administered by a Haitian pastor. Training sessions in Creole have been conducted for key community leaders to organize their neighborhoods around biblical principles in developing their communities.

Other HarvestCall ministries, namely the Haiti Water Aid, Haiti Dairy Program, and Haiti Trade Schools have relied on Haitian employees to implement the programs, with occasional U.S. visits for maintenance and program oversight. These programs would not be possible without the involvement of Haitians contributing their knowledge and discernment and taking an active role in managing the ministry.

With the increasing involvement by Haitian nationals in the management and operation of the HarvestCall ministries, these employees have become community leaders and valuable partners in the development of the ministries and development of their national economy. And they are becoming leaders that are ambassadors for Christ.

There will continue to be a need for U.S. missionaries, visiting HarvestCall teams, and HarvestCall management involvement in the Haiti ministries. However, the challenges of the last two years have demonstrated the value of Haitian management and importance of a working partnership. Those interested in becoming involved in this partnership, or learning more about it, please contact Haiti Country Director, Rick Wuethrich rwuethrich@harvestcall.org.

–by Rod Wieland

relationship with God and fellow image bearers. We are called to spread the gospel to all “nations,” and what better way to do that than bringing the Good News to them in their own language of the heart? God commissions us to go out and share his word/truth in language and action based on love.

At Pentecost we see the Kingdom of God inaugurated through the pouring out of the Holy Spirit bringing about the promised regeneration and new creation. The first action taken by these born-again servants is to share the good news that the Kingdom is launching and the king is Jesus. This was told in story form, and each person heard the gospel story in their own heart language. This is how the church started back then, leading to deep transformation. Today, we believe that God still desires people to receive the gospel in the language in which they may best understand and to be made new!

Therefore, the team in Jamaica is seeking God’s direction in both Bible translation and church planting among the Deaf. Please pray with them for God’s continued leading. If you have additional questions, please contact info@harvestcall.org.

–by Jamaica Missionary Team
How Emotional Pain Impacts Us

Pain comes in many forms, such as emotional pain and physical pain. While physical pain is often recognized and validated, emotional pain is often minimized or even missed all together. While dismissing emotional pain might be helpful in the short-term, this approach will lead to increased suffering in the long-term. No matter the form, the pain we experience has an impact on us. As emotional pain often impacts us and those we love in a negative manner, awareness of emotional pain can often bring increased compassion and reduce long-lasting negative impacts. Properly addressed emotional pain can become the catalyst to cultivating growth and beauty even when challenges continue.

Acknowledging emotional pain and its impact is a critical first step in working through the internal pain we experience. One way to define emotional pain is “experiencing emotions that are unpleasant, such as sadness, anger, rejection, or loneliness.” Emotional pain just like physical pain can be measured in both the level of intensity and duration of the pain. Low levels of emotional pain for a brief period have minimal impact whereas high intensity for an extended time have a significant impact. It is important to keep this in mind as you think about the emotional pain you have experienced as well as the emotional pain someone else has experienced. Emotional pain will impact an individual in at least three ways: physically, relationally, and spiritually. Pause for a moment and consider how the emotional pain of discouragement may have impacted Paul (2 Corinthians 4:6-11), the emotional pain of loss may have impacted Naomi (Ruth 1), and the emotional pain of suffering may have impacted Job (Job 6:1-10).

Physical Impact of Emotional Pain
God has created us as very complex, interconnected beings. One of the ways we see this is the connection between emotional pain and physical pain. Emotional pain impacts our body in many ways, from how we breathe to the functioning of glands such as adrenal glands. Emotional pain impacts our breathing as it makes us to take shallower breaths. Shallow breaths then impact our oxygen levels and when our bodies lack oxygen, many important processes in the body are disrupted. Along with impacting our breathing, emotional pain can also increase muscle tension. Muscle tension can act like a vice that locates and enflames physical pain. This physical pain then loops back and increases frustration, irritation and other painful emotions leading to a vicious cycle where emotional pain leads to physical pain which continually increases emotional pain.

Once this cycle is recognized, one of most important things we can do is move into identifying and then validating the emotional pain. To be sure, these are often difficult steps. However, without knowing what emotions we are experiencing, it is very difficult to consider and work through our emotions. This often leads to emotions festering and potentially causing more suffering in the long run. Along with identifying emotions, we can benefit from validating those emotions. Validating can be thought of as letting the emotion be present rather than trying to make it go away. Letting emotions be present does not mean liking the emotions or purposefully keeping them close. Rather it means engaging them with truth rather than trying to force them away. Trying to force our emotions away often leads to internal dialogue such as “I shouldn’t feel this way”, “I hate this feeling …”, or “This is more than I can bear.” If this internal dialogue is not followed with truth and is stuck on “repeat” in our mind, it can increase our suffering. A helpful strategy is to speak truth while validating the difficulty. It might sound something like “This is so difficult, and I know the Lord is with me” or “I don’t know if I can bear this pain and I will seek to trust the Lord in it.” A helpful ACCFS resource to consider is Our Negative Thinking versus


Relational Impact of Emotional Pain
Relationships are often complicated and mixed with great joy and great sorrow. Emotional pain adds another layer of complexity to relationships and can easily lead to being hurt, feeling hurt, or hurting someone else. Consider for a moment how sadness, anger, fear, worry, or frustration impacts how you interact with or receive someone else’s interactions with you. While it may be obvious that emotional pain impacts relationships, it is often something we forget during or even after painful relational interactions. When we do not recognize how emotions impact our perceptions of events and the actions we engage or avoid, we will come to inaccurate conclusions. For some, they are convinced no one cares about them or they are not worth caring about, and they disengage from those who desire to be in relationship with them. For others, they believe lies that everyone is against them, or they have an entitled mindset that leads to anger and bitterness. For example, we may attribute wrongdoing to others when there was none, or we may justify our own wrongdoing. In slowing down and recognizing how emotions are impacting us, we will be better able to assess how our actions or perceptions may be affected by our emotional pain. Proper assessment can then lead to helpful action. Sometimes this might mean recognizing and, if appropriate, confessing our emotional pain was the driver of our response rather than what another person did or did not do (James 5:16). Sometimes corrective action might mean recognizing the other person’s response came from their emotional pain so we can be quick to forgive and extend care toward their hurt rather than holding onto our own hurt (Ephesians 4:32). While emotional pain will impact us, it does not have to end with us being isolated or scary to be around.

Spiritual Impact of Emotional Pain
When we experience pain, it impacts our relationship with God. It often leaves us feeling painful emotions such as confused, abandoned, fearful, or weary. These are understandable, and we are not alone in feeling these emotions. Consider Psalm 42 where the psalmist is experiencing a great deal of emotional pain, stirring very difficult and honest questions. One of the difficult things about emotional pain is the questions and thoughts that it brings. These questions and thoughts may scare us or feel foreign to what we believe or desire. Psalm 42 gives us a helpful template for being able to recognize, acknowledge, and speak truth into these thoughts and questions. Emotional pain will move us to seek relief. Sometimes relief comes quickly and naturally, and other times relief never seems to come no matter how hard it is pursued. It is important for us as God’s children to recognize we too will be moved by emotional pain. Those we love and care about will also be impacted by emotional pain. While we may not always be able to remove the pain, we can recognize, validate, and speak truth into our pain and the pain of others. In doing so we can become a shelter for the hurting that points hurting hearts, including our own, to the One who will one day wipe away our tears once and for all (Revelation 21:4). Until that day may the Lord grant us grace, wisdom, and strength to recognize and work through the negative impacts of emotional pain.

ACCFS has numerous resources to assist someone who is going through a wide range of hurts and emotions, from the pain of loss to worry, loneliness, anger, stress, and others. Each resource, either created by or reviewed by ACCFS staff, can assist in identifying the challenges of these powerful emotions and in bringing our thinking into obedience to God’s Word. For these resources, please visit our website at www.accounseling.org/category/hurtsandemotions.
As we exit the holiday season, we may find relief from the busyness of cleaning house, entertaining, and spending time with relatives that we do not often see. In settling back into the normalcy of life, we might find ourselves giving thanks for our immediate family and those individuals we hold closest to our hearts. We strive to love them as Jesus commands, even as family changes through marriages, births, and deaths. But as we focus on loving our own individual families, let us not forget those who might be without.

Just as we all come from different family backgrounds and have varying family dynamics, the same can be said of our LifePoints residents. Some of our residents have very strong relationships with their families and are blessed with family members who engage with them regularly through visits, phone calls, letters, and gifts. Many of our residents went home for the holidays to spend time with their families. Some did not. Some of our residents no longer have relatives around to call their own. All of our residents had families who loved them enough to let them begin living at LifePoints, and this is where the blessing of staff can truly be observed.

The day a resident moves into one of our LifePoints locations, they invite our staff into their lives. As we care for them on a daily basis, we have the privilege to show each resident that they are deeply loved. If the resident has very involved family members, our staff build relationships with the family through our mutual love for the resident. When a resident does not have relatives, staff members step in and fill that void - becoming more than caretakers, but family. Residents who did not go home for the holidays were not left alone; they were surrounded by their LifePoints family and spent time with staff who love them and whom the residents love. As staff and residents form these familial bonds, both are fulfilling Christ’s call to love one another.

Let us all remember how important it is for each of us to feel loved by someone else. Let us be challenged to love our families and love others, as God has loved us. Let us be encouraged to pray for residents and staff at LifePoints, that they may experience Christ-like love on a daily basis. And let us thank God for his love and the opportunities he has given us to love others.

Gateway Woods Apostolic Christian Children’s Home
Dan Sparling-Director of Child Placement

Has God ever used someone else’s situation to change your way of thinking? Has he ever used a child to show you he’s still working miracles today?

After working in the foster care system for nearly 20 years, it saddens me when I think about all the kids with serious medical conditions who need a home where they can heal. I have seen far too many kids go into foster homes where the parents aren’t able to care for them, only to be moved from foster home to foster home. Or, worse yet, go to juvenile nursing homes because no one is willing to meet their needs, whatever that takes. I have seen the worst that the foster care system does to kids who are in hopeless situations.

Four years ago, I started working at Gateway Woods and met kids who had similar high medical needs. My thought at the time was, “these foster-to-adopt placements sound great, but they won’t last.” That was my
experience and that was the easy way to prepare myself for what I thought was the inevitable end.

Then, I met Ruby. Ruby was a little girl who was not only developmentally delayed, but she had several serious medical concerns that required a very specific and high level of care. I thought I knew the routine: she'll survive, but there is no hope for her to thrive. She can’t truly have a good quality of life.

Through Ruby, God completely changed my heart. I witnessed a foster family take her in and love her unconditionally. I saw their church family pray for her and support her foster parents. I saw a family who said “whatever it takes, we are committed to her.” This was a girl who wasn’t born into their family - she was a stranger they chose to pour their love into.

Four years later, I can truly say, with full confidence, that I have seen miracles. This same little girl - a baby when I met her - was so fragile and so vulnerable. I didn’t think she would ever enjoy life, and now she is laughing and playing the way most kids do. She was adopted by a family through Gateway Woods and is so loved by them. She is in a church community that accepts her for who she is and lifts her up in prayer faithfully.

I praise God that he used this one little girl to change my mind.

Today, when I see kids like Ruby go into Gateway Woods foster homes, I pray for them and think about what God can do in their lives. Because when families bring kids into their homes, choose to love them unconditionally, and the entire family is surrounded by prayer and support, miracles DO happen.

God promises to give hope to the hopeless and strengthen the weak. God can also work through families and churches to perform miracles. Are you willing to be part of what God is doing for children who are in seemingly hopeless situations? Are you ready to pour into those who are weak physically, emotionally, and spiritually and watch God work?

News:

- We are looking forward to hosting our 2022 Annual Rep Meeting on Saturday, March 5.
- Gateway Woods recently launched 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 have converted one of our group homes on campus to serve these youth. Please pray for us and the youth we will serve as we launch this new program.
- If you would like to seize a great opportunity to impact the lives of the youth, consider applying to be the Summer Volunteer Coordinator for 2022. Contact Bro. Keith Schambach at keith.schambach@gatewaywoods.org for more information.
- If you would like to gain some real-life classroom experience while impacting our residents, consider applying to be the Summer Education Intern. Contact Bro. Brock Williamson at brock.williamson@gatewaywoods.org for more information.
- If you would like to work directly with residents as you plant and harvest bountiful gifts from the garden, consider applying to be the GW Farms Summer Intern. Contact Bro. Eric Bahler at gwfarms@gatewaywoods.org for more information.
- If you want to make a Kingdom impact by sowing seeds of hope for an eternal harvest, visit gatewaywoods.org/sowers-of-hope to learn more about our newly launched monthly giving program. Sign up today to receive a special gift as a reminder to be praying for the youth you are impacting.
- We are currently looking for a Teacher, Houseparent Couple, Adoption Case Manager, Communications Administrative Assistant, GW Farms Assistant, and an Assistant Houseparent. For more information, please see
our ad in this month’s edition of The Silver Lining or visit the Careers page on our website at gatewaywoods.org/careers.

You are an important advocate to help us spread the word about God’s work at Gateway Woods. Please continue to lift us up in prayer, check our website gatewaywoods.org and our Facebook page at facebook.com/gatewaywoods often for updates, and make sure that you are on our mailing list. If you would like 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 visit our website or email jon.ringger@gatewaywoods.org.

Many in our small congregation went to be with family during the season and we had small attendance some Sundays. We are all looking forward to what God has for us in this new year and we hope to be his hands and feet in our communities.

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

February is the month we celebrate love! It is interesting how society both defines and celebrates its version of love. That definition seems to be based more on emotion than action as defined by God in his Word. The Bible is filled with examples, illustrations and parables that serve to instruct us about the love of God. Even with all the information he gives us, we are not able to comprehend it fully. Love abides. It is forever (1 John 4:8). It is unconditional (Gen 3:8-9,15; Hosea; John 3:16). The one most people overlook - it is sacrificial. Even though we are limited in our understanding and ability to express love, we are given a longing for it and a recognition of it. We can never fully comprehend love, any more than we can comprehend eternity, or God himself. Still, he has revealed himself through his Word, and the more we engulf ourselves in Scripture, the more we will know of God and his love. And one day our knowledge will be complete, and we will know as we are known.

God reveals himself, his love, through many different means. We can observe the care involved in creating and maintaining this world. Fallen though it is, there is great beauty and perpetual provision in his creation. He not only provides what we need, he presents it in a beautiful manner, pleasing to all our senses. He works through his people to express his love to us. Through strangers or close family members, love in relationship seems as close as we can get to a knowledge of love - of God.

Love is the power that raised Jesus from the dead! That love inhabits our hearts by the Holy Ghost (Rom 5:5). And the Father grants us, according to the riches of his glory (think about that!), to be strengthened by his very Spirit, that Christ may dwell in our hearts to give us an idea of the dimensions of his love (Eph 3:14-19). This is experiential knowledge.

February is also the month of my dad’s birth and his and my mom’s wedding anniversary.
They are both gone, but the love they shared with me (as I have shared here before) will be with me forever, and with every person whose life they touched. That is the legacy of love. From God the Father through Jesus Christ his Son, and the indwelling Holy Spirit, we are blessed with true Love - eternal, unconditional and sacrificial, with which we are then able to bless others.

This demonstrates another characteristic of love. “Love isn’t love ‘till you give it away!” (Oscar Hammerstein) Sometimes the world gets it right, after all.

“No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.” 1 John 4:12

Our winter visitors are returning, and we are blessed with many happy greetings of those whose presence we missed, including our visiting ministers. We were served by Elder Bro. Nick Gutwein (Sis. Suzanne, West Lafayette, IN); Bro. Neil Ramseyer (Sis. Sharon, Bay City, MI); Bro. Dan Cargill (Sis. Stephanie, Prescott, AZ); Bro. Art Mueller (Sis. Marlene, Belvidere, IL) and Elder Bro. John Lehman (Sis. Carol, Bern, KS).

Our local Relief Committee continues to cut blankets to distribute to the homeless in our community and food packing for our Food Pantry is well under way again. Our Bro. Victor Krstec continues to battle his way back to good health, and our Sis. Louann Klopfenstein is struggling with extreme pain, and we ask you to join us in petitioning our loving Father for their benefit. We bid a fond farewell to our Bro. Daniel and Sis. Lexi Knochel, and wish them Godspeed as they begin a new chapter of their lives together in Illinois. We trust they will return to visit often!

**Arizona, Prescott**

*Autumn Rokey*

We are thankful for visiting ministers Bro. Keith Hinrichsen (Sis. Tammy, Phoenix, AZ) and Elder Bro. Marvin Dotterer (Sis. Nancy, Forrest, IL).

**Arizona, Tucson**

*Dean and Jackie Knobloch*

I think we all have wanted to start the new year with hopes of having COVID-19 restrictions behind us and plans of everything returning to normal. Our plans are not necessarily God’s plans. We continue to keep all who are ill in our prayers. We are especially prayerful for Bro. Larry Wickman (Sis. Marvella), Bro. Gene Denick and Bro. Bob and Sis. Carole Haas. They have all had serious health issues and we know they are coveting our prayers for their well-being.

Our visiting ministers this month include Elder Bro. Ben Wiegand (Philadelphia, PA), Elder Bro. Tim Funk (Peoria, IL) and Bro. Kurt Plattner (Sis. Joan, Goodfield, IL). We appreciate their efforts in preaching the true Word.

We are enjoying some wonderful sunny days here and welcome all visitors who wish to escape some of the snow and ice elsewhere.

**Arizona, Willcox**

*Annie Wulf*

We enjoyed hearing the story of Jesus’s birth on Christmas Eve. The story never grows old! New Year’s Eve makes one think about what happened throughout the past year. Surely, there were times of sadness, struggle, joy, and happiness, and we are thankful that God was by our side through all the ups and downs.

Snowbirds have started to fly in. We are thankful to have them gathering with us along with other visitors who choose to make Willcox part of their vacation plans.

Bro. Darin Massner (Sis. Twila, West Bend, IA) along with two of their children and Bro. Scott Aberle (Sis. Dorine, Washington, IL) with two of their children came to minister to us in January. We are thankful for their willingness to bring forth the word.

**California, Los Angeles/Altadena**

*Kali Sauder*

The new year has held some slim gatherings for our small local church family. Some services we were so split between online and in-person worshipers, we even had ministers teaching remotely to the congregation gathered at church. While this is not ideal, and we miss a full church together on a Sunday morning, God is always present with his people.
“For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” Matt. 18:20

Meditating on this promise, I ask myself, what does it mean that God is present with us when we gather in his name? God’s presence was powerfully “in the midst” of his followers at Pentecost when his Spirit came upon them in tongues of fire. The result was thousands coming to faith in Christ and “…they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.” Acts 2:46-47

Having received the Holy Spirit in us bringing salvation and sanctification, I pray we also seek God’s Holy Spirit on us, like at Pentecost, furthering his mission to spread his kingdom as we are empowered to share the good news with those around us.

Colorado, Denver
Jenna Hartter, Rebekah Stoller

We rejoice with Sarah Braun as she became a grandma on December 16. Baby Isaac James Blunier was born to Bro. Clayton and Sis. Dominique (Taylor, MO). We’re thankful for his safe arrival and for the love of family that stretches across the miles between us.

As many from our local congregation travel for the holidays, we are thankful for visitors that included Denver in their travel over Christmas and New Years. Our visitors this year included Bro. Scott and Sis. Doreen Aberle (Washington, IL) and their family, who shared Christmas Day services with us.

District of Columbia, Washington
Henrietta Meyer

"He giveth snow like wool.” Psa. 147:16

As I look out the window, instead of working on this article, the snow is coming down. I remember a few times when our visiting minister would leave town on Saturday afternoon or Sunday morning to avoid getting caught in a snowstorm. Another blessing of Zoom, we can have services without concern about traveling great distances on snow covered roads or stranded in an airport.

This month our ministers were Bro. Jerry Meeks (Sabetha, KS) and Bro. Tim Lehman (Taylor, MO).

If you are planning to visit Washington, D.C. area for vacation or business, please contact Sis. Henrietta Meyer at 703.217.0576, hmeyer2831@gmail.com or Sis. Doreen Steffen at 302.540.6574, or bdsteff@yahoo.com for assistance, to let us know how many to expect for Sunday services and to find out when and where services are to be held.

Florida, Fort Lauderdale
Renee Mangold

We were grateful to have several visiting ministers this past month. Visiting were Bro. David Prevo (Sis. Tara, Bloomington, IL), Bro. Troy Metzger (Sis. Gwen, Lester, IA), Bro. Dan Beer (Sis. Deb, Milford, IN), Bro. Stephen Baner (Sis. Donna Lou, Gridley, IL) and Bro. Joel Troxel (Sis. Amy,
LaCrosse, IN). We pray they will be blessed for their service.

“And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake. And be at peace among yourselves.” 1Thes 5:12-13

We have resumed our Wednesday evening services at 7:15 p.m. during the winter months.

“Pray without ceasing.” 1Thes 5:17

We are admonished to pray without ceasing. Let us not forget to be as diligent in giving thanks to God. So for those of us that were able to visit family and friends over the holidays, we were thankful for God’s traveling mercy that kept us safe and able to share the celebration of Christ’s birth with our loved ones. We are also thankful that he kept his healing hands on all those we lifted up to him in prayer.

Florida, Fort Myers
Addison Steidinger, Carrie Steidinger

“Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;” Heb. 1:3

Our faith family has enjoyed a journey through the book of Hebrews. We have been encouraged as we learn of Christ’s sovereignty in his offices of Prophet, Priest, and King. How foolish we would be to neglect such a great salvation!

Bro. Curt Rassi (Sis. Kathy, Tremont, IL) and Bro. Dennis Rassi (Sis. Diane, Austin/Bastrop, TX) were with us for worship this month. We thank them both for their service to our congregation.

Florida, Sarasota
Becky Funk

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

We have certainly seen the above verse played out in our congregation this month. We extend our sympathy, prayers and love to Sis. SueEllen Kaeb (Bro. Virgil) whose father, Bro. Don Ott (Goodfield, IL) passed away on Christmas eve and to his brother Bro. Glen Ott (Sis. Mardell). We also mourn the loss of Sis. Lola Steffen (Bro. Henry, Fairbury, IL). Lola was a sister to Bro. Glen Ott (Sis. Mardell) and an aunt to Sis. SueEllen Kaeb (Bro. Virgil). Our prayers are with these dear families.

We have been enjoying our numbers increasing as visitors return for the warm weather and sweet fellowship. We were blessed by Bro. Daren Metz (Sis. Rita, Gridley, IL) Bro. Jason Huber (Sis. Joy, Leo, IN), Bro. John Cottrell (Sis. Gloria, Eureka, IL) and Bro. Curt Rassi (Sis. Kathy, Tremont, IL). We were moved by their inspirational sermons.

We held our annual business meeting on January 12.

Georgia, Peachtree City
Elise Funk, Brenda Stoller

We were thankful to have visiting minister Bro. Mark Klaus (Athens, AL) this month. May God bless him for coming and ministering the Word of life to us.

“In days of youth seek ye the Lord, His love and truth with one accord, Go offer Him thy youthful days and walk within the Savior’s ways.” Youth, Hymns of Zion #135

We rejoice that Jude Gasser has given his life to the Lord. Our prayers are with him and may God bless his walk with his Savior.

Illinois, Belvidere
Darcy Steffen

“Heavenward, e’er heavenward
Let us wend our way!
What the righteous seek is there
Found without delay,
But not on earth.
Joy here alternates with woe;
Lift on high from earth below
Thy heart and mind!”
The Heavenly Mind,
Zion’s Harp, # 91

We have had quite the month in our little church, and we saw both the joy and the woe. We are thankful for hymns like these that remind us to keep a heavenly mindset!

Bro. Karl Braun (Mitzi) had knee surgery this month. We are so thankful that he is healing.

Bro. Rich Hanson (Sis. Amy) had
a stroke recently. He was released from the hospital, but faced challenges with getting in to see the neurologist. We pray that he continues to heal, and that they both feel God’s nearness and the love of the brethren during this difficult time.

Joy has also filled our local church body as we gladly welcomed two new babies! Bodie Emmanuel was born to Randall and Aubrey Vongvanith. Three older brothers, Theo, Kit, and Silas welcome him home. Bro. Ted and Sis. Heidi Schock are thankful grandparents. Claire Lanae was born to Bro. Grant and Sis. Emily Anliker. Big brother Rollie and grandparents Bro. Brian and Sis. Peg Anliker and Elder Bro. Wayne and Sis. Camille Hartzler (Rittman, OH) are thrilled to welcome her into their hearts.

We are blessed as we look forward to hearing the testimonies of three of our dear converts: Leah Anliker (Bro. Brian and Sis. Peg) and Robert and Mary Williams. As the elder body met at the forum in Chicago, we pray that the Holy Spirit blesses their efforts as they work tirelessly on behalf of us all. Since we are so close, we have the benefit of welcoming some of these brothers to Sunday service on their way home. We thank Elder Bro. Duane Rocke (Minneapolis, MN), Elder Bro. Wayne Hartzler (Rittman, OH), and Elder Bro. Doug Schock (Sis. Clara, Bloomfield, IA) for sharing the Word of God with us.

Illinois, Bloomington

Kinsey Dotterer, Lauren Zimmerman

Kove Theodore Gudeman was born December 21 to Bro. Luke and Sis. Natalie Gudeman. Grandparents are Elder Bro. Randy and Sis. Becky Gudeman (Francesville, IN) and Elder Bro. Lynn and Sis. Leonda Stieglitz (Leo, IN). Kove joins siblings Mikel, Brimm, and Teo.

Please pray for Bro. Paul Klopfenstein as he recovers from knee replacement surgery.

We enjoyed “A Night of Prayer” to start the new year off right in intentional prayer with our church. It is so important to be reminded of the power of praying for our church body. We are also looking forward to starting back up our Revelation Bible Study as we begin this new year.

“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.” Jer. 29:11

Illinois, Bradford

Becky Endress, Lena Stoller

On a cold wintry January day, we said goodbye to our dear Sue Eberle following a long battle with cancer. Along with her husband Ronnie, Sue worshiped with us for many years. She leaves behind her husband, three sons Kevin, Kreig, and Kurt (Amy), and four grandchildren. Her funeral service took place January 10 in Princeville with burial in the Princeville church cemetery. Sue is remembered as a kind, helpful person who loved people. We deeply sympathize with the Eberle family in their loss.

We sympathize with Sis. Marilyn Tanner (Bro. Richard) in the loss of her brother, Bro. Steve Wiegand (Sis. Mary Ellen, Goodfield, IL) and Sis. Wilma Kieser (Bro. Jerry, dec) whose sister Sis. Lois Schock (Bro. Frank, dec., Elgin, IL) has passed away. As we grow older, our siblings become even more precious to us!

Bro. Ned Stoller (Sis Heidi, Alto, MI) brought his family to visit, and as always, we appreciated his serving us from the pulpit. We also thank ministering Bro. Fred Dietz (Sis. Shaena, Elgin, IL) and family for their recent Sunday visit.

Bro. Bill Ringger was confined to his home for a time following double knee surgery, and Bro. Jordan Elsasser was hospitalized for a few days. We are glad to see them both back in church.

Our church remodel is progressing nicely with interior framing completed and electrical work underway. Thanks to the Lord for his provision and to our many willing volunteers.

Illinois, Champaign

Aaron Walder

We are grateful to our recent visiting ministers, including Elder Bro. Ben Wiegand (Sis. Michelle, Philadelphia, PA), Bro. Grant Herrmann (Sis. Hannah, Princeville, IL), Bro. Brian Blume (Sis. Cherise, Detroit, MI), and Bro. Scott Mangers (Sis. Shayna,
Altadena, CA). For his second reading on January 2, Bro. Scott opened to Luke 18. He asked us to come up with one word to describe what it takes to be saved. He considered “believe” and “faith” but settled on “humility.” It was a timely reminder that pride is not the pathway to God and that humility is central to the gospel. As the Word teaches in 1 Cor 15:3, our sin is the reason Christ died. Is it possible to be saved without humility, without admitting we can’t keep the law? In Luke 18, the rich young ruler was seemingly too self-righteous to admit his guilt. How thankful we can be if the LORD God has accepted us into his family, even while we are the very reason Jesus died on the cross.

We sorrow with Bro. Jesse and Sis. Kirbi Fischer in the passing of Bro. Jesse’s grandmother, Sis. Anna Marie Reutter (Roanoke, IL). Even as we ponder the reward that awaits those that have been redeemed by the shed blood of Jesus, it is a comfort to know that our suffering will not be eternal. Just like Jesus’s suffering, ours will have an end too, and we will also be able to utter, “…It is finished…” John 19:30.

We rejoice with our Sis. Courtney Plattner on her engagement to Bro. Caleb Sauder (Morton, IL). Sis. Courtney’s parents are Bro. Darren and Sis. Sue Plattner. Bro. Caleb’s parents are Bro. Todd and Sis. Wendy Sauder (Morton, IL). We trust the Lord will richly bless their future together and are thankful for God’s provision in their lives.

“Love, I give myself to Thee, Thine to be eternally. Love, that ever shall continue Step by step doth gently lead; Love, that sayeth: “Peace be with you,” And for me doth intercede; Love, I give myself to Thee, Thine to be eternally.”

Love Begets Love, Zion’s Harp, #80

Illinois, Chicago
Diana Eisenmann

We extend thanks to our visiting ministers from the past month. The holidays brought Bro. Andrew Rassi (Sis. Sandy, Morton, IL) and Bro. Nathan Rassi (Sis. Michelle, St. Louis, MO). The annual Elder Forums brought additional visitors in January. We appreciate Elder Bro. Kevin Ryan (Clarendon, VT) and Elder Bro. Ted Steffen (Alto, MI) for joining us for Sunday services while here for the forums.

We are grateful for those who have accepted open positions for the new year. Bro. Skip Nemecek will serve as Trustee, Sis. Jaron Montgomery as Assistant Treasurer, and the new Stewardship Planning Team members are Bro. Matthew Rassi and Sis. Kasey Messner.

Carl Rassi married Maddie Matthews on January 8 in Columbus, OH. Carl is the son of Bro. Matthew and Sis. Bridget Rassi. We rejoice with their family on this joyous occasion.

Our prayers are with Sis. Carla Rassi (Bro. Greg) in the loss of her brother, Weldon Vierling (Morton, IL), in early January.

Illinois, Cissna Park
Denise Kaeb, Lou Ann Kaeb

Luke 15:7 tells us “I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth”. We are rejoicing with the angels in heaven that our convert, Audrey Kaeb (Bro. Todd and Sis. Val), has found the grace to recognize she was lost and needed a Savior! We wish her much grace in her walk of faith.

The afternoon of December 19, we listened as our Sunday school students brought us the familiar story of the birth of Christ in song, scripture, and poem. As familiar as the story is, let us never cease to be amazed at the love of God for us, fallen man, that he would send his only Son, Jesus, to this earth with the mission that he would sacrifice his life in place of ours. Thank you, Jesus, for being willing to do that so we could have a close relationship with the Father.

We are thankful for family holidays that tend to bring us visitors. We thank Elder Bro. Dan Moser (Sis. Anne, Elgin, IL) for spending New Year’s Day weekend in Cissna Park and sharing God’s word with us.

We are thankful Sis. Judy Edelman was able to settle in at Fairview Haven as she will be closer to family there. We are so thankful for the care given at our church nursing homes. We pray Sis. Judy can feel the love and
prayers of her church family and know we miss seeing her. Our dear friend, Diane Hofer, was hospitalized due to complications with COVID-19. Many prayers went up on her behalf and we are thankful to report she was dismissed and is now residing at Fairview Haven to fully recuperate. She is very thankful to be there and doing better.

We rejoice with Bro. CJ and Sis. Bonnie Francisco in the birth of little Ruby Jo. We wish them God’s blessings and grace as they raise their little family to know the Heavenly Father and his son, Jesus. Her siblings, Oliver, Ivy, and Violet, are excited to have a new baby in their home. Ruby’s grandparents are Bro. Tom and Sis. Karol Stock and Marilou Hislop (Long Beach, CA).

As in the past, we have topical Bible presentations on the third Wednesday evening January through April. Bro. Tom Stock presented us with the topic of Trim Your Lamp. Using the story of the 10 virgins in Matt. 25:1-13, he likened the oil in the lamp to the Spirit of God and to us being the vessel. He challenged us to check if our vessel is full of the Spirit of God. May we all trim our wick, keep our vessels full of God’s spirit, and let our lights shine for him so we are all ready for Christ’s return!

**Illinois, Congerville**
*Tory Currier, Krista Wieland*

Our sympathies and prayers go out to Bro. Glenn Ott (Sis. Mardell) and Sis. Mary Lou Ott as they said farewell to their brother, Bro. Donald Ott (Goodfield, IL), and their sister, Sis. Lola Steffen (Bro. Henry, Fairbury, IL). May the family feel God’s peace during this time of loss.

We appreciated Bro. Seth Leman (Sis. Renee, Sabetha, KS) and Bro. Brent Kellenberger (Sis. Beth, Kansas City, MO) sharing God’s word with us.

**Illinois, Elgin**
*Amy Gasser*

We thank Bro. Art Mueller (Sis. Marlene, Belvidere, IL) for ministering to us recently.

We extend sympathy to retired Elder Bro. Nate Steffen in the passing of his brother, Fred Steffen, on December 25. Sis. Lois Schock passed away on January 15 at Lincolnshire Place in Sycamore. Our prayers are with these families during their time of loss.

Everett Lyle was born to Brian and Kaitlyn Kellenberger on January 8. His big sister is Scarlett, and his grandparents are Jim and Barb Papen (Wonder Lake, IL) and Bro. Daryle and Sonia Kellenberger.

Bro. Tom Schambach (Sis. Connie) had knee replacement surgery, and Bro. Dave Rinkenberger was a medical patient. We pray for their continued recovery.

**Illinois, Eureka**
*Debra Blunier, Lavonne Schumacher*

“Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.” *Psa. 27:14*

As we wait for the current spike in COVID-19 cases to pass (hopefully), we pray for God’s relief from this pandemic, which is going on longer than many of us ever thought it would. Yet we can read in the Bible of many cases of followers of God who continued to be faithful for much longer than two years – and eventually saw God’s deliverance. We might not expect courage to come from words on a page, but with God’s Word, it can be so!

Looking back on 2021, we realize that we experienced many joys, and some sorrows. We welcomed four babies into our midst. We were thankful for two converts and four baptisms. We had four weddings and three funerals. Through all this, we are grateful to those who served our church family so willingly this past year.

We extend our sympathy to Sis. Elsie Zimmerman (Bro. Earl, dec.) on the death of her brother, Bro. Bill Kaufman (Morton, IL). Surely, waiting on God and trusting in him in the time of grief is our best comfort.

We welcome Lexi Grace, born December 23 to Bro. Tracy and Sis. Rachel Leman. Grandparents are Bro. Scott and Sis. Phyllis Leman and Bro. Phil and Sis. Diane Koch (Tremont, IL).

We thank Elder Bro. Duane Rocke (Sis. Bonnie, Minneapolis, MN). Bro. Kent Getz (Sis. Betty, Elgin, IA), Elder Bro. Tony Manz (Sis. Denise, Junction,
OH), and Bro. Kevin Schrock (Sis. Rachel, Congerville, IL) for bringing us the Word. Hearing visiting ministers is one of the special blessings that binds our churches across the land, and we were thankful to have many other visitors as well to celebrate the special Christmas season.

**Notes of thanks:**

We want to thank each one for all the prayers and deeds of kindness shown to us during Tom’s illness and at his passing into his heavenly home. - Sis. Edie Stoller and family

I want to thank all for remembering my 98th birthday – the cards, candy, flowers, and many good wishes. May God bless you all! - Sis. Elizabeth Blunier

**Illinois, Fairbury**

**Kati Meiss, Trish Steidinger**

We are saddened at the passing of our Sis. Lola Steffen (Bro. Henry), but thankful her victory has been won. Sis. Lola brought so much life to our Fairbury church in past years and we are thankful for her blessing. Our sympathies go out to Bro. Henry and their children, Sis. Tami Bahler (Bro. Neil), Tricia Steffen, and Bro. Troy Steffen (Sis. Rebecca).

We rejoice with the families of three souls that were able to give their testimonies and be baptized. We welcome Sis. Madi Roth (Bro. Nic and Sis. Lori), Bro. Eli Meiss and Sis. Twyla Meiss (Bro. Kevin and Sis. Kati) into our church family. Elder Bro. Bruce Frank (Sis. Bonita, Cissna Park, IL), Elder Bro. Marvin Dotterer (Sis. Nancy, Forrest, IL), Bro. Jason Dotterer (Sis. Lynn, Forrest, IL) and Bro. Josh Zimmerman (Sis. Molly, Forrest, IL) shared in the weekend with us and we thank them for serving us.

We also thank Elder Bro. Duane Rocke (Sis. Bonnie, Minneapolis, MN) for visiting and serving us in the past month.

Our prayers are with Sis. Jeannette Bahler (Bro. Ralph, dec.) as she recovers after a hospitalization and with Sis. Anna Schmidgall (Bro. Bill) as she is recovering from surgery. We pray God will grant them healing and that they may feel his nearness during this time.

We were blessed to have the Fall Memorandum read to us recently on a Wednesday evening. We thank our Elder Bro. Rick Plattner for expounding upon the Elder Committee’s letter in areas of making our calling and election sure, embracing meekness, a Biblical approach to navigating change, and finally, the unchanging Word of God. We appreciated the encouragements and exhortations on these very timely subjects.

**Illinois, Forrest**

**Jessica Gerber, Marsha Lanz**

In today’s time, it can be a challenge to sort through the mounds of information coming at us through social media, news outlets and other sources. What a comfort to know God’s Word is never changing and always true!

We thank our visiting ministers who shared this truth with us this month: Bro. Adam Luginbuhl (Sis. Jami, Philadelphia, PA), Bro. Clint Dotterer (Sis. Rebecca, Denver, CO), Bro. Matthew Kaisner (Sis. Jodi, Fairbury, IL), Bro. Matt Zimmerman (Sis. Kim, St. Louis, MO) and Bro. Leland Plattner (Sis. Mary, Zapata, TX).

We also thank our Bro. Kevin Slagel and Bro. Kent Edelman for their years of service in Sunday school, sharing God’s truth with our children. May their efforts of planting the seed bring forth a bountiful harvest of souls.

We rejoice with Bro. Reagan and Sis. Faith Mueller and big brother Zion as they welcome home Cedar Alan. Thankful grandparents are Bro. Ron and Sis. Vicki Mueller and Bro. Dave and Sis Kara Blunier (Fairbury, IL).

Our prayers are with Sis. Lou Ida Steffen (Bro. Richard) in the loss of her brother, Bro. Hartzell Kaisner (Sis. Mary, Detroit, MI). May God be a comfort to her and all of his dear family during this time of loss.

No stranger to hospitals, our dear Sis. Alisa Ricketts (Bro. Allen) once again underwent surgery in her on-going battle with Crohn’s disease. May God continue to uplift her and her family and keep that beautiful smile on her face!

**Illinois, Goodfield**

**Amy Hinrichsen, Judy Knapp**

“Another year is dawning, dear master let it be…”
Another Year is Dawning, 
Hymns of Zion, #150

As we leave the manger and head to the cross, let us ever be thankful for the continued love and mercy of our heavenly Father.

“Another year of service…”

Christmas day brought Bro. Rick Kaisner (Sis. Michelle, Chicago, IL) and family ‘home for the holidays’ and we appreciate him taking us from the manger and birth of our Lord to the ultimate sacrifice on the cross.

New Years eve brought Bro. Mike Grimm (Sis. Amber, San Diego, CA) and family ‘home’ as well and we thank him for a very timely service on the transitions in our lives as we enter the new year.

Bro. Mike also shared a service on Sunday, January 2 and gave us an update on HarvestCall USA ministries and an encouragement on missional living. Thanks to both of these families for visiting and sharing the Word with us! Elder Bro. James Fehr (Sis. Brenda, Tremont, IL) was with us on January 9 to encourage and exhort us as we prepare to add to our pulpit ministry team. Some very good advice and encouragement was shared with us, and as we pray and consider this very important matter, we ultimately pray that God’s will might be done and that he will be glorified through it all.

“Another year of training…”

Wednesday, January 12 at the Fellowship Hall, Bro. Matt Kaufman and Bro. Arlan Miller visited from ACCFS and shared with us an overview of Sexual (biblical) purity and specific tools and programs to help combat this.

“Another year of gladness…”

The first Family Hymn Sing of 2022 was held at the Fellowship Hall on Sunday, January 9 and enjoyed by all who were able to attend.

A sweet little one has joined the hearts and home of Bro. Nate and Sis. Haley Hartman. Miss Lillian Rae was also welcomed by loving grandparents, Bro. Ben and Sis. Shelley Rokey and Bro. Jim and Sis. Ree Hartman.

“Another year of mercies, of faithfulness and grace…”

Several in our church family have needed our prayers as they face medical situations. Bro. Art Wiegand (Sis. Pam) had shoulder surgery, and we are thankful to report that much of his pain is gone. Bro. Don Bauman (Sis. Marge) had a stroke but has also made some good progress for which we are thankful. Our sweet Sis. Christy Wiegand has some serious medical issues at this time, and we are praying her through her appointments and tests as they determine how to treat and proceed from this point on. She has a very positive attitude and is very open with her feelings and thoughts so we can know how to best pray for her. She is the daughter of Bro. Ron (Sis. Barb, dec.) and Sis. Kary Wiegand.

On December 24, Bro. Don Ott gained his eternal crown and woke up in heaven where his dear wife, Sis. Carolyn was waiting for him. Bro. Steve Wiegand went to be with the Lord on Sunday, January 16. We extend our love and prayers to his dear wife, Sis. Maryellen and his children and their families, Bro. Brad and Sis. Karen, Bro. Greg and Sis. Jenny, Bro. Doug and Sis. Lynn, and Sis. Beth. Bro. Roy Wyss (Sis. Shirley) said farewell to his brother, Bro. Carl Wyss (Sis. Lydiann, Washington, IL). Our dear Sis. Mabel (Mae) Kelly passed away recently. She came to our church just a few years back with Bro. Bill Koepnik and gave her testimony and was baptized. She stated in her testimony that she had longed to go to church but had no one to bring her, and that’s when Bro. Bill reached out and said he would take her. She had a marvelous faith, and even though she was unable to see us, she was always so upbeat and positive to visit with.

“Another year is dawning, dear master let it be, on earth, or else in heaven, another year for thee.” Amen

Illinois, Gridley
Perry Klopfenstein

Sis. Brenda Wabers had surgery this month and is recovering, thanks to many prayers. Bro. Henry Finck and Bro. Steve Stortz have health issues. Bro. Henry has a heart ailment, and Bro. Steve had a fall.

We are sorry to report the death of Sis. Anna Marie Reutter of our Gridley congregation. She was originally of Cissna Park but moved to Gridley after the death
of her husband, Bro. William Reutter in 1990. She lived at Sunrise Manor in Gridley for 20 years and then moved to our church home in Roanoke. She is survived by two daughters, Cheryl Nardoni (Ray, Bismarck, IL); and Sis. Annette Fischer (Bro. Kevin, Roanoke, IL); one son, Bro. Duane Reuter (Kay, Tolland, CT); seventeen grandchildren, twenty-five great-grandchildren, and three great-great-grandchildren. In addition to her husband, she was preceded in death by six brothers, three sisters, one grandchild, and one great-grandchild. Sis. Anna Marie was a cheerful presence in church, and she was well known for her ongoing pattern of sending cards to others.

Visiting ministers were Bro. Craig Stickling (Sis. Jacki, Peoria, IL) who spoke here on a Wednesday evening topical presentation entitled, “My Awesome God.” Also ministering here were Bro. Jeremy Leman (Sis. Shara, Forrest, IL), and Bro. Jeff Leman (Sis. Val, Bluffton, IN) We surely thank these brothers for their efforts in meditating on God’s word for the furtherance of salvation.

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Illinois, Morton
Annette Tanner

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” Heb. 11:1

We thank the following brothers who served us this month: Elder Bro. Scott Schafer (Sis. Gigi, South Bend, IN) shared the pulpit on Christmas Day, Bro. Scott Wegman (Sis. Dawn, Taylor, MO) spoke on December 26, and Bro. Greg Rassi (Sis. Carla, Chicago, IL) brought us teachings from God’s word on January 12. We always appreciate it when these brothers and their wives come to visit family in Morton and are willing to be used in the pulpit ministry.

Besides being Christmas, December 25 was also a special day for our Bro. Caleb Sauder and Sis. Courtney Plattner, (Champaign, IL) as their engagement was announced. Their parents are Bro. Todd and Sis. Wendy Sauder, and Bro. Darren and Sis. Sue Plattner, (Champaign, IL). We wish this young couple God’s blessings as they make plans for their wedding day and life together.

Three families have laid a loved one to rest. On December 25, Fred Steffen, (Elgin, IL) passed away. He was a brother of our Sis. Lorna Schrock (Bro. Don). Finishing his earthly life on December 28 was Joshua Schoenbein. He was the grandson of our Sis. Irene Kaiser (Bro. Lester, dec.) On January 3, Weldon Vierling, brother of Sis. Gloria Leman (Bro. Howard) entered eternity. We extend our deepest sympathy to these dear families and pray that God will comfort them now and in the days ahead.

Our first Family Worship Night of the year was held on January 5 with a different format than usual. The topic was “Faith in the Fire”. We were inspired and encouraged by the testimony and faith of a special “older” brother and sister in our Morton congregation. They told us of the sorrows and miraculous joys they have experienced during their married life. We thank them for sharing these times with us and reminding us of God’s faithfulness to them. To God be the glory.

We press forward into 2022 dealing with the challenges of the times in which we are living and sometimes wondering “what’s next”. May we put our faith in God who knows “what’s next” and will be there to meet us with his love and grace each day.

“Though great dangers oft surround us
Passing through life’s stormy sea,
Where the clouds of gloom and darkness Hover over our heads, and we Through the tempest must keep rowing, In distress and scarcely knowing Whether we the poor unknown, Of our Lord are left alone.
Yet the Lord is ever near us, He doth guide our vessel’s course; He would test our love and firmness, Giving storm and wind their course. That our faith be shown in clearness, Seemingly He hides His nearness; If we plead with fervent will, He will bid the sea be still. Therefore, trusting in God only, Place your confidence in Him; He is near, though we feel lonely, Help delays and light grow dim. Be consoled and trust in Jesus,
In this rock your strength increases;  
Let your faith rest in His blood,  
Fearing neither storm nor flood.»
The Ship of Faith, Zion’s Harp #94

Illinois, Peoria
Bonnie Bach, Crystal Wettstein

It is with joy we announce Bro. Jerry and Sis. Marie Hoerr were baptized and know the angels are rejoicing in heaven also. We pray for the Lord’s leading in their walk.

“Haste and seek your soul’s salvation,  
heed the word of God today.”
Repent Ye!, Zion’s Harp, #52

Bro. David and Sis. Rachel Sauder welcomed a new first grandson on January 13, little Brian Joseph born to Caleb and Emily Sauder.

“How sweet to hold a newborn baby  
and feel the pride and joy he gives.  
But greater still  
that calm assurance,  
we can face uncertain days because he lives.”
Because He Lives by Bill Gaither

We thank Bro. Brad Baurer (Sis. Sandy, Tuscon, AZ) for ministering to us around Christmastime while here visiting family.

Our hearts go out to the families of those who have lost loved ones recently. Bro. Melvin Plattner finished his earthly race, and we think of his wife Sis. Mardell, son Kevin (Karen), sister Sis. Betty Wieand (Bro. Richard, dec., Fairbury, IL), and sister-in-law Sis. Edith Plattner (Bro. Kenneth, dec.). Bro. Melvin was such a kind, godly man with a contagious grin.

Bro. John Hoerr (Sis. Dot, dec.) and Sis. Ev Hoerr (Bro. Carl, dec.) have said goodbye to his sister and her sister-in-law, Rosemary Barkley.

Sis. Miriam Messerli was welcomed home by Jesus and her husband, Bro. Dan. Miriam was a sweet, gentle sister in Christ and will be missed. She is survived by her six daughters, Linda Wales, Diana Emerick, Brenda Block, Debra Hart (Bill), Ronda Patterson (Jason) and Kayla Messerli.

Bro. Leon Kaisner (Sis. Eunice) laid to rest his brother, Bro. Hartzell Kaisner (Sis. Mary, Detroit, MI). Grief is tempered when we know we will see our loved ones again in heaven.

“Safe in the arms of Jesus,  
safe on his gentle breast,  
there by his love o’ershaded,  
sweetly my soul shall rest.”
Safe in the Arms of Jesus,  
Hymns of Zion, #218

Illinois, Princeville
Ruth Herrmann, Cherie White

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

“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness;  
but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.” 1 Cor. 1:18

We were blessed to be encouraged in the Word by visiting Elder Bro. Brad Eisenmann (Sis. Cindy, Chicago, IL).

“For I reckon that the sufferings of  
this present time are not worthy to  
be compared with the glory which  
shall be revealed in us.” Rom. 8:18

Our thoughts and prayers are extended to loved ones Sis. Luann Endress (Bro. Jerry) and Austin Herrmann (Bro. Ben and Sis. Ann Herrmann) who have had surgery and Sis. MaryAnn Herrmann (Bro. Howard) who spent time in the hospital. We’re trusting they feel the hand of God for comfort and healing during this time of recovery.

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given…” Isa. 9:6

Rejoicing parents welcomed another blessing into their family circle. Rob and Larissa Burroughs had a son, Orion Dean and a future playmate to big sister, Wakely. Grandparents are Bro. Roger and Sis. Darlene Herrmann and Bob and Penny Burroughs, Germantown Hills, IL. Bro. Cody and Sis. Maria Blunier and daughters Raelynn, Adelynn and Katelynn are smitten to have a son and brother Cody Melford Jr born December 30. Grandparents are Bro. Darin and Sis. Keri Blunier and Bro. Keith and Sis. Kristine Steidinger (Fairbury, IL).

“Who comforteth us in all  
our tribulation.” 1 Cor.1:3

Just as new life has been brought into this world, we say goodbye to another life. Sue Eberle (Ron, Bradford, IL) passed away after a battle with cancer. She is a sister-in-law to Marvin and Sharon Eberle.

Illinois, Roanoke
Judy Sauder, Barb Schwind

Several in our church have lost loved ones in the
past month. Bro. Don Ott (Goodfield, IL) went to be with the Lord on December 24. He was the father of Bro. Jim Ott (Lorna). Bro. Carl Wyss (Sis. Lydiann, Washington, IL), brother of Sis. Madelyn Rothgeb, passed away on January 8. Sis. Anna Marie Reutter went to her eternal home on January 16. She was the mother of Sis. Annette Fischer (Bro. Kevin) and resided at our Country View apartments for several years. Sis. Anna Marie lived in various locations throughout her life, and wherever she went she established meaningful relationships centered on the Lord. We extend our love and deepest sympathy to these dear families in their loss and ask for our Lord’s comfort upon them.

Walter Paul arrived to bless the home of Bro. Brian and Sis. Rebekah Schwind on December 27. His older brother and sisters are Jordan, Riley, and Blair, and his thankful grandparents are Bro. Fedi and Sis. Ruth Davidovics (Peoria, IL) and Bro. Dan and Sis. Donna Schwind. Sis. Joan Swartz became a grandmother again on January 7 with the birth of Lydia Nicole to Seth and Myia Swartz (Metamora, IL). May God richly bless these dear families as they raise their children in the ways of the Lord.

Bro. Sam Bertschi (Sis. Marjorie) had our Christmas Day service. “My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior.” Luke 1:46, 47. Bro. Sam related that the advent of our Lord and Savior brings much joy. And it was “for the joy that was set before him” that our Savior “endured the cross.” Heb. 12:2. We rejoice in the day that our faith becomes sight.

Bro. John Bradle (Sis. Jill) read Deuteronomy 27:1-8 as part of our New Year’s Eve service. Bro. John reminded us that after the Israelites safely crossed over the Jordan River into the Promised Land they built an altar of stones to worship the Lord for his deliverance. He also read Joshua 3-4 where Joshua instructed one man from each of the twelve tribes to gather stones from the Jordan River bed, which Joshua then placed in the midst of the Jordan River where the feet of the priests that bore the Ark of the Covenant stood. Bro. John encouraged us to reflect on what the Lord has done for us and commit to worshiping him in new ways this year.

Bro. Jonathan Hodel (Sis. Megan) encouraged us to have a Bible reading/study plan as we go into the new year. This will help us deal effectively with the onslaughts of the world and its teachings.

And on January 5, Bro. Matt Feucht (Sis. Jennifer) talked about weariness, especially for all those who are directly dealing with the effects of COVID-19. He read in Exodus 17, where Aaron and Hur held up Moses’ arms so the Israelites would prevail against Amalek. Bro. Matt read where Jesus entreats “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 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. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” Matt 11: 28-30. There is rest when we are yoked with Jesus.

Elder Bro. Frank Sauder (Sis. Kathy) gave us a brief update after the recent Elder Forum. He quoted one of the elders: “In our time spent together the spirit knocked down emotions and brought great gentleness and tenderness.”

On January 9, Bro. Nate Hodel (Sis. Jamie) read from Mark 12, where the widow cast all that she had into the treasury. He encouraged us to invest in the Kingdom, because our heart tends to follow wherever we place our time and resources. We thank all of our elders and ministers for their encouraging exhortations and their ongoing service to our church.

Bro. Brent Hodel traveled to Haiti to help with the agriculture work there. He will also be assisting Bro. Danny and Sis. Sarah Bertsch and their children who will be moving back to the States. We pray for safety and for a peaceful time of transition for the Bertsch family. We also ask for God’s continued blessing on all those who serve in Haiti and in all the various mission fields, including Bro. Fred and Sis. Jodi Leman and their family who work in...
Bible translation in Papua New Guinea. We also ask that God would continue to bless and provide for Bro. Josh Moser as he works in Antarctica.

We want to welcome a number of individuals and families who have begun attending our church over the last several months. They are: Joyce Aeschleman Smith; Bro. Luke and Sis. Natalie Baker and their children: Mercedes, Jade, and Leo; Cody and Kim Barth and their children: Reece and Maelee; Judie Bittner; Dani Chiotti; and Andy and Rebekah Wettstein and their children: Aylee, Mya, and Lincoln. We are so thankful for each of them and hope they feel “at home” here!

We are so happy for Beckie Hodel (Bro. Jim and Sis. Connie) and Jorge Marquez of Virginia Beach, VA, who are engaged to be married. Jorge’s mother is Cynthia Marquez of Tecate, Mexico.

Gracie Knepp (Bro. Jason and Sis. Ali) and Keenan Kennell of Roanoke, son of Jim and Sharon Kennell of Sarasota, FL, have recently announced their marriage engagement. We wish each of these couples God’s blessings as they look forward to marriage.

We want to lift up Sis. Lynne Martin, Sis. Kim Luginbuhl (Bro. Andy), Andy Wettstein (Rebekah), Carter Mangold (Ben and Nelly), Bro. Fred Janssen (Sis. Cherri), Bro. Marv Braker (Sis. Michaleen) and Bro. Dave Schwind (Sis. Barb) in prayer for our Lord’s healing mercies. He is the Great Physician.

**Illinois, Tremont**

**Debbie Aberle, Lucy Kaiser**

We certainly appreciated Bro. Dennis Rassi (Sis. Diane, Austin/Bastrop, TX) coming home to visit over the Christmas season, and for his encouragement to us “And God goes before us, he’s at our right side, and he is behind us. He was, he is and will be! Jesus is present in our lives!”

Many in our congregation attended the wedding of Bro. Jacob Kaiser (Bro. Tim and Sis. Ruth) and Sis. Natalie Meiss (Elder Bro. Trent and Sis. Lucy, Eureka, IL.) We welcome Sis. Natalie and pray she will feel our love as she worships with us. We also welcome Bro. Larry and Sis. Jeanie Kaufman as they have moved into Chestnut Place just south of our church, we are thankful to have you worship with us!

Over the Christmas season we enjoyed the many opportunities to sing and listen to Christmas carols, through caroling, our Sunday school program, and our local choir.

Bro. Phil and Sis. Diane Koch are excited to welcome a new granddaughter, Lexi Grace Leman (Bro. Tracy and Sis. Rachel, Eureka, IL.)

Our prayers this month have been with Sis. Carolyn Bolliger as she was hospitalized, and has been moved to AC Restmor in Morton.

We rejoice with Sis. Luci Koch with the adoption finalization of A’laya and Robert. We are happy to have them with us!

Our congregation closed out the year saying farewell to Bro. Todd Stuber, rejoicing in the hope that we will be together again in Heaven. We extend our love and prayers to his family, Sis. Beth, Sis. Heather Rassi (Bro. John), Bro. Troy (Sis. Anne), Amber Nohl (Doug), Travis (Elizabeth), and Bro. Trent (Sis. Emily), and grandchildren.

“And, Lord, haste the day when the faith shall be sight, The clouds be rolled back as a scroll, The trump shall resound and the Lord shall descend, Even so—it is well with my soul.”

*It is Well with my Soul, Hymns of Zion #55.*

Beginning the New Year, Sis. Sheri Allen’s mother, Carol Bolliger won her victory of faith, and we sorrow with Sis. Sheri, Chris and their children. Carol was a sister-in-law to Bro. Dean Bolliger (Sis. Trudy). We also sympathize with Bro. Bob and Sis. Jenny Koch as her family laid to rest Jenny’s grandfather, Bro. Carl Wyss (Sis. Lydiann, Washington, IL).

We thank Bro. Ned Stoller (Sis. Heidi, Alto, MI) for his willingness to speak to our Jr High girls and their dads, and to minister to us the following day. May God richly bless him for his labors of love.

**Illinois, Washington**

**Lillian Pfaffmann**

Our patriarch, Bro. Carl Wyss (Sis. Lydiann), age 96, died and went to be with the Lord.
It was with mixed emotions, thankfulness for Carl’s victory and sadness for the family’s loss, that Bro. Carl was laid to rest.

“Safe in the arms of Jesus, Safe on His gentle breast, There by His love o’er shaded, Sweetly my soul shall rest.” Safe in the Arms of Jesus, Hymns of Zion, #218

His children are Sis. Karen Kellenberger (Elder Bro. Randy, Kansas City, MO), Bro. Ed (Sis. Kathy), Sis. Rita Klopfenstein (Bro. Loren, Leo, IN), Bro. Fred (Sis. Dianne), and Sis. Lori Leman (Bro. Herb). May our Heavenly Father be a comforter to Sis. Lydiann and the family, easing the pain of separation. They want to extend the note of thanks at the end of the column.

Being human, we are subject to the weakness of the flesh. Our dear Sis. Marie Wagenbach (Bro. Don) was hospitalized and is now home recuperating. Our prayer is for her to gradually regain her strength!

Washington was privileged to have Bro. Doug Wagenbach (Sis. Lillian, San Diego, CA) and Bro. Brent Kellenberger (Sis. Beth, Kansas City, MO) on the pulpit with us, allowing the Holy Spirit to teach us how to better live our lives in obedience to him. Elder Bro Brad Eisenmann (Sis. Cindy, Chicago, IL) came to speak on the Church Vision Statement.

As the year 2022 has begun and the culture around us continues to darken, may we strive to live each day in accordance with the Bible, living in truth, with love and compassion towards those who are blind to it.}

**Note of thanks:**

We would like to thank each one who supported us with cards, meals, thoughtful deeds, love, and prayers during Dad’s hospitalization and passing. We appreciate each one. May the Lord bless you.

- Lydiann and the Carl Wyss family

**Indiana, Bluffton**

*Suzie Fiechter, Liana Reinhard, Olivia Steffen*

We are rejoicing with two new converts this past month. Drew Neuenschwander (Bro. Rex and Sis. Becky) and Saige Rinkenberger (Bro. Luke and Sis. Jamie) are both seeking the Lord in repentance. We praise God for working in their lives!

A special thanks goes to our visiting ministers. We’ve been blessed by the presence of Bro. Joe Gerber (Sis. Heidi, Champaign, IL), Elder Bro. Lynn Stieglitz (Sis. Leonda, Leo, IN) and Elder Bro. Kevin Ryan (Clarendon, VT)

Our prayers are with those who are grieving the loss of a loved one. Bro. Richard Kaehr passed away. We extend sympathy to his wife, Sis. Karen, and their children, Sis. Sandy Lichtle (Bro. John, Indianapolis, IN), Bro. Doug (Sis. Tami, Bluffton North, IN) and Bro. Greg (Sis. Amy, Bluffton North, IN). Bro. Bill Carrico (Sis. Heidi) is mourning the loss of his dad, Patrick Carrico. Our prayers are with their family. Bro. Hartzell Kaisner (Sis. Mary, Detroit, MI) went to be with the Lord. We remember his daughter, Sis. Joanne Gerber (Bro. Ked) during this time. Our sympathy goes out to Bro. Nate Zollinger (Sis. Hannah), Sis. Tara Reinhard (Bro. Grayson) and Sis. Rosemary Gerber (Bro. Les) on the loss of their grandmother and sister, Sis. Marge Zollinger (Smithville, OH), respectively.

Our youth have been busy with a variety of activities. In December, there was a roller skating party. We also had a family ice skate. Both were blessed opportunities to enjoy being together!

The Bluffton and Bluffton North congregations are doing a church-wide Bible study for the months of January and February over the topic of “Reflecting God’s Love”. We have also newly introduced a podcast called the Bluffton BibleCast that is a supplement to our church-wide reading plan through the first five books of the Old Testament throughout 2022.

Bro. Danny, Sis. Sarah, Summer, Sawyer, Tucker, and Tanner Bertsch are moving back to Bluffton after spending several years at Hospital Lumiere in Haiti. We pray for safety on their travels and adjustments back into the states.

“Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.” Eph. 5:1-2
Indiana, Bluffton North
Deanna Brinneman, Rosemary Mounsey

“Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: Isa. 42:9.


Bro. Jesse and Sis. Janelle Frauhiger are the new Sunday school Superintendents. We are praying for you as you assume these new responsibilities and extend a sincere thank you to the outgoing teachers and Superintendents. Thank you for your work on behalf of the Kingdom.

Drew Neuenschwander (Bro. Rex and Sis. Becky, Bluffton Country, IN) began his repentance 10 years ago, and now desires to have membership and be baptized at Bluffton North. We are praying for him!

We are holding up Sis. Myra Ringger (Elder Bro. Steve) in prayer, as she was recently diagnosed with lymphoma, and is undergoing treatment.

Our love and sympathy goes to the family of Bro. Richard Kaehr (Sis. Karen), as he passed away on December 26. He was a much-loved husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather. In addition to his loving wife, he is survived by a daughter, Sis. Sandy Lichtle (Bro. John, Indianapolis, IN), two sons; Bro. Doug (Sis. Tami) and Bro. Greg (Sis. Amy), four sisters; Sis. Carole Meyer (Alto, MI), Sis. Mary Jo Troxel (Bro. Bob), Joy Birch (Fort Wayne, IN), and Sis. Sharon Imel, nine grandchildren, nine great-grandchildren, and a brother-in-law, Bro. Arlen Gerber.

Our church-wide Bible study, Reflecting God’s Love, began in January. It has been edifying to go over the Vision, Purpose, Mission, and Guiding Principles of our church.

“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 alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.” Matt. 28:19-20

Indiana, Francesville
Jacki Huber, Connie Linback

We welcomed in the new year on New Year’s Eve by holding a special service and program at the Fellowship Center. The evening began with a prayer followed by a pleasant meal. Sis. Kaleigh Kaeb (Bro. Ryan) shared a poem regarding our flight into, and through 2022. Songs of praise, hope and joy were shared throughout the evening.

Congratulations are extended to Luke Neihouser and Tessa Thomas for their wedding at the end of November. Parents are Bro. Brad and Sis. Barb Neihouser and Bill and Dani Thomas (Brookston, IN).

Our prayers go out to Bro. Chris and Sis. Sharon Huber and work teams for safe travel and God’s help during their three-month HarvestCall Winter Rebuild mission in the Lafayette, Louisiana area.

We extend prayers to those who have been dealing with health issues this month.

Answered Prayers - the missionaries who were held hostage in Haiti have all been set free. May God be praised.

We send sympathy to the family of Dean Pelsy on his recent passing. Dean was the son of deceased Bro. Vernon and Sis. Evelyn Pelsy.

We appreciated visiting Elder Bro. Dan Kilgus (Sis. Jenna, Remington, IN) as he assisted Elder Bro. Randy Gudeman (Sis. Becky) in the reading of the Memorandum.

“And said, Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted; and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” Matt. 18:3

Elder Bro. Randy Gudeman and newly Ordained Deacon Bro. Les Kaeb (Sis. Christine) officiated at the testimony and baptism of Camille and Brie Leman. They are the daughters of Bro. Phil and Sis. Amber Leman. Their grandparents are Bro. Doug and Sis. Margaret Leman and Bro. Roger and Sis. Sandi Ward. We are especially thankful that Bro. Roger was able to attend this baptism, as he has been battling cancer for the last 18 months.

Notes of thanks:

Bro. Ben and Sis. Christa Stoller and family sent thanks to
us regarding the recent farewell
given them and for the help we
gave them while they lived here.
A thank you was received from
Sis. Liz Anliker and family for
the prayers, cards and help given
their family during the recent illness
and passing of Bro. Earl Anliker.
Sis. Carol Overmyer (Bro. Daniel, dec.) sent thanks for
prayers extended on behalf of her
son Daniel. Daniel’s health is
much improved.

Indiana, Indianapolis

Edie Bollier, Valerie Kipfer

“So teach us to number our
days, that we may apply our
hearts unto wisdom.” Ps. 90:12

This verse seems a fitting prayer
for the new year. We so want the
Lord to help us apply our hearts
to seeking him as we realize the
brevity of life. We’ve been studying
Titus and Philemon and will now
begin a study of Hebrews and
Deuteronomy and continue our
walk through the Psalms.

There has been sadness in our
church as two dear families in our
congregation lost loved ones in
December. Our hearts grieve with
Bro. Jerry and Sis. Doreen Leuthold
and Bro. Ben and Sis. Suzanne
Graham in the loss of their brother
Bro. Brandon Graham (Princeville,
IL). Bro. John and Sis. Sandy Lichtle
also said goodbye on this earth to
their dear father Bro. Richard Kaehr.
We will miss the visits of these
dear brothers who had visited our
church many times while visiting
their families. We pray for God to
comfort the ones left behind.

We pray for our dear Bro.
Denny Meyer (Sis. Kathy) as he
begins chemotherapy treatments
for his recent Lymphoma diagnosis.

We are happy to welcome
a young man, Matthew Lester,
who recently took a job near
Indianapolis and will be attending
our church. Matthew grew up in
the Garden Grove, Iowa church.
It is always a blessing to have new
young people join our fellowship.

Indiana, LaCrosse

Meagan Frank, Sharla Messner

“For unto us a child is born,
unto us a son is given…and his
name shall be called Wonderful,
Councellor, The mighty God,
The everlasting Father, The
Prince of Peace.” Isa. 9:6

As we came through this
Christmas season, we were again
blessed to have our Sunday school
children present the Christmas
story. The excitement they feel,
and the joy on their faces is always
contagious! We want to thank
each of them for their joy in the
retelling of ours Savior’s birth.

We were blessed to be able to
go Christmas caroling this year.
Though the evening was cold and
windy, our hearts were warmed
by the joy on the faces of those we
caroled for! And we always enjoy
warming up back at church with a
hot meal and hot cocoa.

We wish to thank our visiting
ministers, Elder Bro. Scott
Schafer (Sis. Gigi, South Bend,
IN), Bro. Jim Butikofer (Sis.
Diana, Iowa City, IA), Bro. Josh
Zimmerman (Sis. Molly, Forrest,
IL) and Bro. Mark Wettstein
(Sis. Karen, Lamar, MO).

As we begin another year, may
each of you be blessed!

Another year is dawning,
Dear Master, let it be,
In working or in waiting,
Another year with Thee.”
Another Year Is Dawning,
Hymns of Zion, #150

Indiana, Leo

Leanne Fischer, Jan Beer

After a refreshing period
of special events, family times,
remembering the birth of our Lord,
and looking forward in the new
year, life is back to normal. How
thankful we are that we can trust
in God’s promises in this sin filled
world as we look to not only the
new year of 2022, but a glorious
home in heaven when our time
here is done. Even though we look
forward to our real home, as we
are pilgrims here, we miss with
heartfelt anguish those who go
before us.

Sis. Rita Klopfenstein (Bro.
Loren) and children, Austin, Sis.
Abby, Sis. Alyssa, Sis. Kacey,
and Bro. Kray and their families
experienced that deep sense of
loss and separation with the death
of Rita’s father, Bro. Carl Wyss
(Sis. Lydiann, Washington, IL).
Sis. Michelle Wyss Braker and
her family share in that loss of
her Grandpa. Our Sis. Corrie
Schlatter (Bro. Andrew) lost her
uncle, Mike Federspiel due to
complications of COVID-19.
His loss will be felt deeply by his
family as well as our community.
Philip Scheitlin, (Bro. Steve and Sis. Marsha, dec.) moved to a new group home in Fort Wayne on December 29. Philip has a condition called hip displaysia and may soon have surgery. He is having trouble walking. We continue to pray as Bro. Steve, Jacob and Philip face challenges and adjustments after their dear Marsha’s passing.

We thank Sis. Abby Stieglitz for her service coordinating the Sunday morning nursery for the past several years. Our new nursery coordinator is Sis. Jenny Sauder. Interestingly, Jenny began the nursery ministry as a service for young mothers residing at Gateway Woods, so they could attend Sunday school or church while their children were being lovingly cared for. We thank her for beginning and continuing the Leo church nursery.

Baker Waibel (Bro. Jeff and Sis. Margo), Emma Laukhuf (Bro. Mick and Sis. Lisa), Jacob Sukup (Bro. Steve and Sis. Chris), Karinne Klopenstein (Bro. Mike and Sis. Denise) shared their testimonies with the church on the evening of January 8. The following Sunday we were privileged to witness their baptisms. Visiting ministers Elder Bro. John Jackson (Sis. Peggy, Bay City, MI) and Bro. Randy Gasser (Sis. Sue, Detroit, MI) proclaimed the gospel. Bro. John had a message on baptism and its significance for the Christian. He stressed that in the baptismal water we demonstrate our identification with Christ’s death, burial, resurrection, and the new life we now walk in. “... now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light.” Eph 5:8

January 12 was our annual business meeting. We thank all those who have served so willingly in the needed practical work of keeping the church functioning, and we thank those willing hearts who were on the ballot for needed positions. It was a blessing to hear from various committees and funds how many have been blessed in Christ’s name through our church. We were updated on the remodeling project. The second half of the project has been delayed by the supply chain problems and labor issues that have been affecting our country.

The annual Winter Retreat for our junior and senior students, young group, and Sunday school teachers is scheduled for February 4-6. May we be diligent in prayer for all those involved that it will be a time of refreshing, spiritual blessing, and growth, as well as a time for building relationships.

Indiana, Milford
Alyssa Beer, Anne Wilson

Here we are entering into a new year, yet we still serve the same sovereign, good, grace-extending Lord. We have so much to be thankful for. Our little congregation had the privilege of having Bro. Chris Laukhuf (Sis. Rachel, Latty, OH), Bro. Brett Lanz (Sis. Renee, Rittman, OH), and Elder Bro. Scott Schafer (Sis. Gigi, South Bend, IN) minister to us on New Year’s Eve/Day.

Our prayers are with Bro. Travis and Sis. Anne Wilson and their family of three little boys. After a recent surgery and hospital stay, it was discovered that Travis has stage three colon cancer. We will continue to lift them up in prayer as he begins treatment in the near future. We are thankful that God has a perfect plan for Travis’s life.

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

Indiana, Remington
Jenni Honeyger, Marcella Tyler

Bro. Mark and Sis. Anna Waibel welcomed a new little girl into their family this month! Indie Alan was born on January 8 and we are thankful for her safe and healthy arrival. Big sister Charleston and grandparents Bro. Tim and Sis. Lynnette Bahler and Bro. Bruce and Sis. Jody Waibel are thankful as well. We pray that Bro. Mark and Sis. Anna will be blessed as they raise their children to know and serve God.

Elder Bro. Dan and Sis. Jenna Kilgus became grandparents again to grandson Wilder Daniel, born to Bro. Stuart and Sis. Sarah Kilgus (Rockville, CT). We pray a blessing on this new little one and his family as well.

Sis. Shirley Frank has moved to the area and joined our congregation. We are thankful for Sis. Shirley’s friendly face and look forward to getting to know her better. We pray she
feels a loving welcome from our Remington church.

We have several in our church who have health concerns, including Bro. Dan Stoller (Sis. Deb) who is recovering from surgery. Please keep them all in your prayers.

We recently held our annual business meeting and elected new officers for several positions. May God bless the ones who have finished their terms for their service, and may God guide the newly elected as they begin their new duties. What a blessing to have so many give cheerful service in order to keep the church running efficiently and effectively!

We also want to remember the elders in prayer as they will soon hold their winter conference. May God guide their hearts and minds and grant them wisdom to lead the church in ways that he would like us to follow.

Indiana, South Bend
Joshua Martinez

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

We ended 2021 with a New Year’s Eve church service and snacks. We do not know what the new year will hold, but we have been given all that we need to overcome by God’s grace. Even if we fail, God’s grace is sufficient every day. And best of all: God will come through on his promises! Let’s pray that this year many more souls will see the wonders of our Lord and Savior, and live forever to praise his name!

“Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.” Isa. 43:19

Indiana, Valparaiso
Sherry Meiss

Our verse for the month is: “This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein; for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.” Josh. 1:8

We were blessed with a very motivating New Year’s Eve exhortation given to us by Bro. Tim Bucher. Let us be the person that knows Christ and strives to know him better. By spending more time in his word and less time on things that consume too much of our time while not providing significant benefits. We need to keep our eye on the prize being Christ Jesus, through discipline we will receive a crown that will last forever.

On Wednesday evenings we have had an evangelism Bible study. Last week we were reminded in 2 Cor. 5:18–19, that our ministry is to reconcile the lost to Christ! Let them know he no longer counts our sins against us and gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. “Come back to God!”

Sis. Connie Knobloch from the LaCrosse church peacefully passed into eternity on January 3. Though she will be missed here on earth we can be assured she is no longer in pain, and we will get to see her again.

Let us keep praying for Bro. Bob Hoerr (Sis. Marguerite, dec.), Sis. Carol Bucher, Drew and Diane McClanahan, and Diane Moser. Little Liam Braham, grand-son to Bro. Joe and Sis. Jackie Feller had surgery and it was a success. Thanks to you all for your prayers!

Indiana, West Lafayette
Abbie Gramm

In the latter half of December, we were excited to hold our first Sunday school program since prior to COVID-19. As a Sunday school teacher, it was meaningful to experience this event as a rapport building opportunity with my students. We also were able to sing Christmas carols at a few homes which always adds to our Christmas festivities.

We extend our congratulations to Bro. Paul and Sis. Talitha Huber at the birth of their son, Peregrine Atlas.

Bro. Jeff Bahler (Sis. Heidi, Wolcott, IN) visited and shared at our midweek services.

As I have begun this year, I have been meditating on the time Elijah helped a prophet’s widow. She was facing the threat of having her sons sold into servanthood/slavery. Tough circumstances to say the least. All she had in the house was a bit of oil. Elijah told her to borrow vessels from the neighbors and fill them all with oil. She obeyed, in the privacy of her own home, and the oil kept...
coming until there was not another vessel to be found. She was able to sell the oil, pay her debts, and live on the remainder.

If you are going through a time where it feels that you have nothing left to give, trust that the Lord can multiply whatever it is you have left into something bountiful. He can bless in unexpected ways and not necessarily for others to even see. On days it seems you are coming up empty, remember that our hope is in the Lord!

Indiana, Wolcott
Brittany Gerber, Luann Gerber

We were thankful to have Bro. Brian Blume (Sis. Cherise, Detroit, MI) as a visiting minister this past month.

Our children shared the Christmas story to us through their pieces and songs at our Christmas program. The evening was a blessing to all!

Our hearts go out to Benjy and Brittany Lehman and their girls as they are all recovering from a car accident. Benjy’s parents, Bro. Rob and Sis. Beckie, are in our prayers as well as they all work together to help the family down the road to recovery!

Joshua Wagenbach (Bro. Michael and Sis. Erica) graduated from Purdue in December. Congratulations Joshua! We are praying for God’s guidance in his life as he moves forward!

We gathered for our annual meeting recently. We are so thankful for the willing hearts of so many who have served our church family in various roles in the past and for those who were newly elected for different roles! We are reminded once again that we have many roles to play, and all are important to fulfill the needs of the body! We are so thankful for the diverse talents and interests of our church body to accomplish our needs!

“But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body.” I Cor. 12:18-20

Iowa, Bloomfield
Kendra Wettstein

We were thankful to have Bro. Brad Funk (Sis. Laura, Garden Grove, IA) and Bro. Kevin Fehr (Sis. Lonnie, West Bend, IA) as visiting ministers this month. We appreciate their efforts in bringing forth the Word.

We rejoice with those who are engaged. Josh Teubel (Bro. Paul and Sis. Charlotte) is engaged to Erin Samples. Hannah Teubel (Bro. Paul and Sis. Charlotte) is engaged to Seth Horney. Also, Bro. Chet Schlatter (Ken and Pam) is engaged to Sis. Sarah Bauman (Bro. Jerry and Sis. Martha, Rittman, OH) and we look forward to their wedding in March.

We sympathize with the Wuthrich family as Bro. Carl Wyss (Sis. Lydiann, Washington, IL) passed away. We also sympathize with the Schock family as Bro. Dale Schock (Sis. Teresa) and Elder Bro. Doug Schock’s (Sis. Clara) mother, Sis. Lois Schock (Elgin, IL), passed on to her eternal reward. May God grant comfort to both families in their time of sorrow.

We have been prayerful for Sis. Lori Wuthrich (Bro. Kenny) as she underwent surgery and is doing well. We have also been prayerful for Bro. Lloyd Wettstein (Sis. Carol) as he suffered a stroke and has made excellent recovery.

Iowa, Burlington
Marilyn Anderson, Angela Steiner

“Another year is dawning, Dear Master, let it be, in working or in waiting, another year with Thee.” Another Year is Dawning, Hymns of Zion, #150

Some embrace the new year with fresh goals to attain, others embark with anticipation for the unknown to unfold, and still others wait with silent questions, unable to see how God is currently working. However, we step into 2022, may it find us walking with him beside us, guiding our paths as our closest companion.

For Bro. Titus Steiner (Bro. Mike and Sis. Ivy) and Sis. Holly Massner (Bro. Troy and Sis. Joni, Mediapolis, IA), stepping into a new year also meant stepping into a new marriage covenant together. The following weekend, Bro. Jacob Schulz (Bro. Gary and Sis. Melody) and Sis. Harmony Sauder (Bro. Verle and Sis. Christa, Morris, MN) also joined hands
in marriage and began a new walk as one. May God bless and keep each of these new couples as they establish homes built on the foundation of Jesus Christ. May he make his face shine upon them as they learn to love and respect as Christ and the Church.

“Another year of progress, another year of praise, another year of proving Thy presence all the days.”

Another Year is Dawning, Hymns of Zion #150

Whatever the next weeks and months hold, we can rest in his divine presence, knowing that he has our best interest in mind. Praise God!

Iowa, Elgin

Maria Rocke

Bro. Jim Butikofer (Sis. Diana, Iowa City, IA) visited and shared the message from God’s Word. May he be blessed for his labors.

Joshua Moore, age 39, son of Gene (Tami) Moore and Julie (Scott) Torkelson, passed away tragically on January 8 as a result of an auto accident. Our prayers are with his dear family, that God would provide them with his comfort and strength.

Note of thanks:

We want to thank all who so kindly remembered us with sympathy cards, memorials, gifts of love and prayers after our dear sister Millie went home to be with the Lord. It was all very much appreciated.

-Bro. Paul Butikofer, Bro. Tim and Sis. Kathy Butikofer and family

Iowa, Garden Grove

Laura Funk

Greetings from snowy, cold, blustery southern Iowa. Is your/my heart warm from the Son?

Visiting ministers this month include Bro. Ron Bollier (Sis. Edie, Indianapolis, IN) and Bro. Mark Zimmerman (Sis. Cheryl, Eureka, IL) We were challenged: Are we learning what God is trying to teach us? Are we willing to learn?

Our Christmas caroling was done over the phone this year. The listeners enjoyed the singing without being exposed to COVID-19 and the cold. We then enjoyed fellowship and soup.

In a devotional book I have, I read this message which caused some thinking and soul searching. Faith is the key to unlocking unexpected blessings.

Iowa, Iowa City

Diana Butikofer

We enjoyed two opportunities to carol in the Cedar Rapids area. One night we visited various people we had helped with storm cleanup in 2020, and another night we sang to residents of a mobile home park. We also provided a chili supper for those in the park who desired to join us.

We pray the carols sung and fellowship enjoyed will remain a blessed memory.

We rejoice with Anthony Gerst (Bro. Tim and Sis. Melissa), who has found peace with God and man and looks forward to baptism.

Iowa, Lester

Kristi Knobloch, Lois Mogler

With the holiday’s past, we begin a new year remembering the fifteen births, seven deaths and two baptisms in our congregation last year. Our winter HarvestCall projects have started, and many thanks go to those who coordinate those activities.

Bro. Mark Schmidgall (Sis. Sally, Mediapolis, IA), Bro. Drew Schmidgall (Sis. Lanna, Morris, MN), Bro. Josh Walder (Sis. Tina, Congerville, IL) and Bro. Larry Bahr (Ft Scott, KS) willingly shared God’s word with us over Christmas weekend.

A precious baby boy, Elliot Eugene Metzger was born to Grant, Becky and big sister Alethea just after Christmas on December 27. His loving grandparents are Bro. Jerome and Sis. Jana Metzger.

We continue to pray for those with earthly and bodily struggles. Sis. Joyce Metzger (Bro. Glen) was hospitalized in Sarasota, FL with COVID-19. Bro. Marti and Sis. Martha Knoblock’s foster son, Zane, spent several nights in the hospital due to ongoing medical needs. Sis. Ruth Nester spent time in the hospital recovering from a fall. Bro. Delbert Knobloch (Sis. June) is also recovering from surgery. Our hope is they all can regain needed strength.

We extend our sympathy to Sis. Estelle Leuthold’s family on her death January 20. Her
quiet and faithful demeanor will be missed by her children, Sis. Sandra Feucht (Ron), Jerry (Sue), Sis Pam Bosch (Bro. Tony), Lois, Alan (Lois), Dennis (Diane), Stuart (Rochelle) and Melissa Bass (Jeff). She also leaves siblings, Bro. Frank Moser, Sis Evelyn Metzger (Bro. Roy, Bloomfield, IA), Sis. Janet Wysong and sister-in-law Elsie Leuthold.

“O Father hand, that guides me so securely, O Father eye, that watches over me! O Father heart, that hears my pray'r so surely, And thinks of me in love and charity! Conduct me further on my pilgrim journey, The narrow way that leads to heav'n above; And make me worthy of that life eternal, A like in sore distress, in peace and love.”

Father, Son, And Holy Ghost, Zion Harp, # 180

This song came to mind as I think of how I wish to live in the new year. Instead of making numerous goals and resolutions, it’s easier and more peaceful for one’s heart and mind to have a simple quest in serving our Lord.

Iowa, Mediapolis
Laura Kuntz, Janet Lanz

With a new year stretching out before us, it does us well to reflect on the events of the past year and contemplate the faithfulness of God. Often times, when we are struggling through a hard time, it is only upon reflection that we can see how God with certainty was taking care of each detail and growing us in our walk of faith, even when we weren’t aware.

We were blessed with visiting ministers during the Christmas season. We thank Bro. Aaron Frank (Sis. Sharla, Elgin, IA) and Bro. Greg Fehr (Sis. Denise, West Bend, IA) for bringing forth the Word and the precious message of Hope.

The statistics for the Mediapolis Church for 2021 were: Six births, seven baptisms, one marriage and six deaths. Such a concise list to sum up so much emotion. God in his tender mercies has given us a wonderful support group to help us through life events. What a blessing it is to be in a multi-generational church family, where we can share each other’s joys and sorrows and help each other along on this journey we are traveling.

Though the weather was cold, the snow sparkled in the sunlight on January 9, the wedding day of Sis. Holly Massner (Bro. Troy and Sis. Joni) and Bro. Titus Steiner (Bro. Mike and Sis. Ivy, Burlington, IA). We pray the Lord will bless this happy couple as they establish their new home, and as Sis. Holly joins the Burlington congregation. Visiting ministers from Burlington for the occasion were: Bro. Dallas Massner (Sis. Christy), Bro. Phillip Schulz (Sis. Kelli), and Bro. Seth Hartter (Sis. Brenda). May these brothers be blessed for their labors of love.

We received word of the passing of two of our “home boys” who attended church here and still have family ties in the area. They are Jim Anliker (late Bro. Richard and late Sis. Luella) who currently lived in Arizona and Larry Heiniger (late Bro. Harvey and late Sis. Leola) who was living in Russia at the time of his death. We extend our love and sympathy to their families, as well as to those in our church family who have recently lost loved ones. Sis. Norma Massner (Bro. Eric, dec.) recently laid to rest her sister-in-law, Dorothy Hillyard (Burlington, IA). Sis. Patty Stoller (Bro. Ed) has lost a brother-in-law, Rick Little (Texas), and Selena Gerst (Bro. Kevin) has said goodbye to her father, Roger Noble (Wapello, IA). We are thankful that God is our refuge and our strength as we go through the valleys of life.

Iowa, West Bend
Erica Knobloch, Karen Schmidt

May God’s blessings be with Ashlyn Banwart (Bro. Marc and Sis. Jami) and Thad Fogarty, and also with Luann Gerber (Bro. Manuel and Sis. Mary) and Nick Moran as they are joined in marriage.

We were inspired and encouraged by our visiting ministers, Bro. Dallas Massner (Sis. Christy), Bro. Phillip Schulz (Sis. Kelli), and Bro. Ryan Schock (Sis. Melanie, Bloomfield, IA).
“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

Having felt God’s direction to move to Silverton, OR., Bro. Nolan and Sis. Kiara Grimm and Ryan have relocated and are adjusting to their new home many miles away. We trust they’ll feel God’s nearness always and will come back to visit often.

We are thankful that Bro. Jim Wirtz, Sis. Lezlee Leman, Verdell Fehr and Mike Banwart have been able to return home after spending time in the hospital. May the Great Physician grant healing according to his will.

Japan, Shioda & Tokyo
Anna Inoue, Rachel Witzig

“Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered.” Psa. 40:5

God’s masterful plan continues in Japan, and we are thankful to be invited into it. On December 26, our Tokyo congregation was blessed to share Christmas dinner together with friends from the community and families from English classes. For some families, it was their first time to partake in a Christmas celebration. Over a potluck dinner, we were thankful for a time of sharing Bible verses, and we discussed the Lord’s work during 2021 and his expected faithfulness in 2022.

In mid-January, sisters from the Tokyo congregation were grateful for the opportunity to begin an English-speaking Bible study with ladies from the community in order to help them practice their English and, more importantly, share the Gospel. We began with the very basics of Christianity, such as the belief that there is one God and he created the world, as well as a foundational knowledge of how to read the Bible. For example, the difference between “chapters” and “verses.” We are excited that, Lord willing, the Bible study will continue in the months to come and that the attendees asked many excellent questions. We appreciate the prayers of our loved ones for this endeavor.

Kansas, Bern
Leigha Rokey, Rita Menold

Greetings! We are well into a new year, and with God as our Father, we look forward to living another year under his guidance.

It is always a joy when the holidays bring families back home. We appreciate Elder Bro. Wayne Hartzler (Sis. Camille, Rittman, OH), Bro. Aaron Luthi (Sis. Maria, Lamont, KS), and Bro. Kaleb Beyer (Sis. Angela, Washington, IL) for ministering to us this past month.

Sis. Haylie Meyer (Bro. Richard and Sis. Joni) and Bro. Bruce Ogalat (Bro. Tim and Sis. Amber Lehman, Taylor, MO), were joined in marriage on January 2! We wish them many blessings as they establish a home built on Christ! It was special to have Bro. Tim, as well as Elder Bro. Kent Heimer (Sis. Jan, Taylor, MO) spend the day with us on the pulpit!

We are thankful our neighboring Elder Bro. Gerry Hertzal (Sis. Ellen, Sabetha, KS) was willing to spend a Sunday afternoon with us to share the Memorandum.

May God be near you, with you and dwell in each of your hearts.

Kansas, Ft. Scott
Janelle Wuthrich

Lately it seems as though one thing we can plan on is that plans will change. In these times of uncertainty, may our faith be the one thing we are sure and certain about. Our God is still the same, yesterday, today and forever. What a blessed assurance!

We were once again blessed to have Bro. Justin Moser (Sis. Robin, Altadena, CA) with us for our New Year’s Eve service, and we thank him for his efforts on our behalf.

Our dear Sis. Carol Carter passed away on January 1. She was a quiet light in our Fort Scott church for many years. We rejoice for her victory in Jesus and pray for peace and comfort for her family.

We also extend our sympathy to Darcy Sinn (Doug) in the loss of her father, Larry Neville.
We pray their family feels God’s strength and comfort as they miss their dad and grandpa.

Sis. Debbie Banwart (Bro. Lon) is back home after a lengthy hospital stay, and we are so thankful for the Lord’s healing mercies as she continues to recover.

Several of our congregation as well as some from Lamar gathered on a Monday evening to hear about the new programs and changes happening at Gateway Woods. We thank Bro. Chad Kaeb (Leo, IN) for his presentation and spending the evening with us.

We would like to extend a warm welcome to Sis. Ashley Grimm (Bro. Darin and Sis. Marci, Sabetha, KS) as she is attending college in Fort Scott. We are blessed to have her join our congregation!

Kansas, Kiowa
Janice Bahr, Millie Frieden

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day." Gen. 1:1-5

One Sunday soon after the New Year, my Sunday school class were looking through our work books to find a lesson that had not been worked. Hudson and Adam found that the beginning page was not worked, so we decided to work it as it was the beginning chapter of Genesis, and what better way to start the New Year than “In the beginning God.” God, (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are perfect) his creation was and is perfect. Our class discussed the step-by-step process of creation: This beautiful World; the glorious beauty of the skies, the life-giving air we breathe, the sun, moon, stars and planets in the heavens; the rivers, oceans, seas, creeks and ponds; the land with its grass, trees and flowers; the creating and naming of all of these plus the animals, birds, and fish. Then, last but not least, the intricate details of our human bodies, which God formed with his own hands from the dust of this earth. Our God has the ability to see and know every living creature, and to love and care for each one individually all at the same time. I truly pray that we all realize what a blessed people we are to have our God, our Lord, and the Holy Spirit to lead us through this coming year.

"Another year is dawning, Dear Master, let it be, On earth, or else in heaven, Another year for Thee. Amen". Another Year is Dawning, Hymns of Zion, #150

We had the privilege to have Bro. Chad Kaeb in our midst one Wednesday evening this past month to share with us what is happening at Gateway Woods in Indiana. We are so thankful for those who give of their time and lives to give love and guidance to those less fortunate than many of us in our upbringing. May we continue to hold all of them up in prayer to our wonderful God who loves all children and wants none to be forbidden to come unto him.

Kansas, Lamont
Maria Luthi

"And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace." John 1:16

Our cups are full and running over and still our Savior continues to lavish his gifts upon us.
Our church observed the birth of Christ and the dawn of 2022 this past month with special services. It’s a blessing to see families home for the holidays and be together with the family of God. Bro. Quinn and Sis. Sandi Steffen (Latty, OH) traveled to put on a presentation for our church about Gateway Woods. We appreciate their willingness to share this information about the ministry there!

Our annual meeting was held and we thank all those who are leaving offices and pray for those who are taking new positions.

We congratulate Ilene Rogers on her retirement this month from her many years at Newman Regional Health and pray God will be with her in this next season of life. We also extend our deepest thanks and appreciation to Bro. Ron and Sis. Jane Isch for their years of service to our church in the ministry. In his last service before retirement, Bro. Ron shared how he will still be doing ministry, just not from the pulpit any longer. We were so encouraged by his sincere words of encouragement to us and trust God will continue to use him and Jane in his vineyard.

Kansas, Sabetha
Miranda Grimm, Leanna Hartter

Greetings of love from our Sabetha congregation!

We were thankful to have Bro. Justin Moser (Sis. Robin, Altadena, CA) minister the Word to us on Christmas Eve. May the Lord bless him for his labors of love.

We rejoice with Bro. Dave and Sis. Beth Hartter as they welcomed another granddaughter, Ruby Grace, daughter to Loren and Lena Grimm.

It was a blessing to gather as brothers and sisters to hear the reading of the Memorandum. May we each examine our hearts and grow in Jesus Christ in the year ahead.

Kansas, Wichita
Niklaus and Sara Schrader

Our church congregation enjoyed many festive activities during the holidays. Christmas caroling is always great fun and a blessing to all involved to get out and spread the true meaning of Christmas in song. It was nice to be able to provide Starter Bags for the Firm Foundation Halfway House in time for the holidays.

Our Christmas program was followed by a lovely Christmas lunch provided by Sis. Kenzie Meyer’s family. The Sunday school kids did a great job proclaiming our theme: “I need, You need, We all need Jesus.” The program included the song “The Babe of Bethlehem” which reminds us in verse 3:

"Be not content this babe to know,  
Nor stay at Bethlehem,  
But go with Christ to Calvary’s brow,  
Beyond Jerusalem.  
’Tis there men learn to know the Christ,

For there He bore man’s sin.  
Then open wide the door of heart,  
And let the Saviour in.”  
The Babe of Bethlehem,  
Hymns of Zion, #36

Soon after Christmas our small congregation was hit with many COVID-19 cases. At times like these, we realized that praying for one another is essential and very uplifting. Due to this situation, we returned to Zoom services.

Bro. Cory Metzger was able to attend the Elder/Deacon forums in Chicago, IL. We were richly blessed by what he shared from this conference. We are thankful for the efforts of our ministering brothers to meet and prayerfully consider how we should live in the current times.

Recently we’ve been studying Matthew and Matthew 8:17 reads, "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himsell took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.”

Praise God for his Son Jesus who is there for us in all the trials that we face in this life.

Mexico, Ixtlán
Ruth Gerber

“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.” Eph. 3:20-21

Our vision is so limited; whether we are looking at our
local church, our home, or our community. We can pray and dream, but God’s purposes are higher than we could imagine.

Some of the requests we’ve been bringing before him are health needs. Sis. Lidia Rosas continues to endure debilitating pain and various health issues. Andres Ugalde (Bro. Lalo and Sis. Silvia) was in an accident and underwent surgery on his foot. Some are mourning the loss of loved ones. Sis. Mely Garcia lost a beloved nephew and niece to COVID-19 in her home state, and though comforted in the fact that they were believers, she is praying for their orphaned children.

And then there is the question of when the church can gather again, with COVID-19 cases on the rise. In all the uncertainty we go back to the knowledge of his power and ability to keep his church and to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.

We have reason to give thanks as we see the love of the believers and the care expressed in notes, phone calls, prayers, and so many ways.

His power is working in us and unto him be all glory!

Mexico, Magdalena
Laura Aviña

One Saturday a month we have been having a women’s Bible study focused on the fruit of the spirit. This month we studied “Joy” and read the story of Paul and Silas as they sang from their prison cell in the middle of the night. “And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.” Acts 16:25. Later, they were able to share the gospel with their jailer and baptize him and his family.

We talked about how so often in difficult situations our first response is not to praise God for his goodness, but to cry, “Why? Why me?” May God strengthen our faith to see his greater purpose and fill our hearts with song even when the way is hard.

We are thankful that after a season of much travel and illness, the chairs in church are filling up again. Our prayers go out to those who are still sick and in quarantine.

Michigan, Alto
Michelle Oesch

“Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the LORD his God: which made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that therein is: which keepeth truth for ever: Which executeth judgment for the oppressed: which giveth food to the hungry. The LORD looseth the prisoners: The LORD openeth the eyes of the blind: the LORD raiseth them that are bowed down: the LORD loveth the righteous: The LORD preserveth the strangers; he relieveth the fatherless and widow: but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down.” Psa.146:5-9

As I read this Psalm, it impressed on my heart not only how God loves and takes care of us, but how truly he is the only one we have to turn to when things just don’t make sense! So many of us have experienced feeling this way in the last year. So much sickness that doesn’t care if you are young or old, it has taken a toll physically, emotionally and even spiritually. I love how this Psalm encourages us that we can still be happy and have hope, because God is our help!!

Many have been sick here the last couple months, and we have been in prayer especially for Sis. Renee Steffen and Marvin Blough (Liz) who have been in the hospital and rehab for an extended time from COVID-19. We truly have seen God’s provision and answers to many prayers. Bro. Wes and Sis. Sue Daniels were also very sick and we are so thankful to see them back in church! Our hearts are in prayer for Steve Schutte (Sis. Sandy) as he recently received a hard diagnosis. May God be with them and carry them and their family on the wings of prayer in this journey.

We rejoice with Bro. Aaron and Sis. Laura Kaeb as they welcome sweet little Bria Laree to their family, big brothers Kellan and Adler just love her!

Note of thanks:
To my precious church family, First and foremost I would like to thank every single one of you, for every single prayer that you’ve said or are still saying on my behalf. Truly I am a miracle and to God be the glory for a
great thing he has done for me. If you have talked to me, you will know I’m a different person now. I’ve been touched in a way that is so miraculous. We are in spiritual warfare! Satan is trying so hard to draw everyone away and we can’t let him. I also want to encourage everyone to lift all hospital staff up in prayer. They are exhausted. They are so loving, compassionate and giving with a servant heart, but are running out of steam and need our prayers, our love, and support. Your least servant in Christ, Renee Steffen

**Michigan, Bay City**  
*Sarah Knochel*

We continue to pray for those of our church family suffering from illness in the past weeks. We pray that God would continue to heal and strengthen each one. Those who spent time in the hospital recently include Randy Wackerle (Jane).

Our prayers and heartfelt sympathies are with the family of Sis. Dolores Munsel and Jennifer Curtis as they mourn the loss of these two loved ones. Sis. Dolores was Jennifer’s grandma. Their surviving family members are Dolores’ children, Bro. Kurt, Bro. Greg (Sis. Lynette), and Laurel Curtis (Jim). Jennifer is remembered by her parents Laurel and Jim and siblings, Bro. Shawn (Sis. Kelly) and Michelle Ellison (Greg).

We are thankful that Bro. Jesse Bedolla (Sis. Bonnie, Detroit, MI) and their family spent a Sunday with our congregation recently. We always appreciate their visits and wish Bro. Jesse the Lord’s blessings for preaching the Word to our congregation.

**Michigan, Detroit**  
*Krissa Wieland*

Greetings to all.

We are happy to have Luke Mason (Sis. Ann-Marie) back with us. The excitement was short lived as soon after Luke’s return, he was run over by a truck as he was riding a bike. This could have been fatal, obviously. How grateful we are that it was not. He suffered from face lacerations, and a couple broken vertebrae which will take time to heal and for the pain to decrease. Nonetheless, he did show up Sunday and it was so good to see him!

Our church had quite a few people ill this past month from COVID-19 but to my knowledge, most have recovered or are doing better.

We also have people in our congregation who experience daily discomfort due to advanced age or whatever, and it always amazes me how they smile so big when I ask how they are doing and they do not complain, asking about my family. What a great example these people are to me!

We wished Bro. Ernie and Sis. Mary Weigle farewell as they headed to warmer weather for a few months, as they do yearly.

We welcomed Bro. Quinton Young back as he moved back to our area, hopefully long term.

Amber Rauhe has made public her desire for repentance and baptism. Her parents are Bro. Jason and Sis. Carrie. We are happy for their family!

Our dear Bro. Hartzell Kaisner (Sis. Mary) passed away after a period of declining health. Hartzell was 98 years old and leaves behind a plethora of memories to all who knew him. His family has a legacy of his desire for the lost, being constant in prayer, and love for Jesus that will never be taken from them.

We send our sympathy and prayers to the immediate and extended family. He will be sorely missed.

Visiting minister, Bro. Rick Kaisner (Chicago, IL) traveled and participated in the service for his uncle, and we are thankful to him for his love.

**Minnesota, Minneapolis**  
*Brenda Messner, Renee Messner*

Greetings of love in the name of Jesus.

Callum Martin Mogler was born to Seth and Brooke Mogler on January 4. Big brother Sam and sister Brynn were very excited to welcome him into their family! His thankful and loving grandparents are Bro. Kent and Sis. Mary Mogler, along with Marti and Annette Janecke. May God bless and keep them all in his care!

Our love and prayers go out to Bro. Rick and Sis. Brenda Messner. They moved to the Mankato area to be closer to their son Tyler and his family. They
now plan to worship in Winthrop and make that their home church. All of the Minneapolis brethren are so very grateful for their years of selfless, loving service. We will certainly miss them!

"Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us." 1 John 4:11-12

We remember our friend Terry Greiner who passed away January 7. Funeral services for Terry were held January 11 at the Morris Church. His sister, Ilene, remembers Terry as her protector, a caretaker and for his big heart. We pray that God will comfort his siblings; Richard, Robert, Jim, Joyce and Ilene as they mourn his passing.

"Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me." Matt. 18:4-5

Blessings to all in the new year.

Minnesota, Winthrop

Ginny Stoll, Dixie Messner

We were thankful to have Elder Bro. Ron Messner (Sis. Pam, Washington, IL) with us December 19.

Bro. Clint Schmidt (Sis. Magdalena) and his son, Tristan Schmidt (Raelin) have suffered from excess pain this month. We are thankful that Tristan is doing better after surgery on his elbow that he injured from a fall and with a little rest, Bro. Clint’s pain in his back is improving.

Also, last month we reported Russell Miller’s back surgery. He is home and doing better but still has some bad days with pain in his eyes, arms and chest. He would like to thank everyone for the prayers they have offered on his behalf. Sis. Dorothy Jacobson spent a few days in the hospital. We are thankful she is home again and doing better.

On New Year’s Eve, Elder Bro. Paul Messner announced that we have had three baptisms, two babies and three deaths in...
2021. It is always interesting to review the past year.

As the new year began, we heard the sad news of our friend, Vernita Messner’s (Bro. Melvin, dec) death. We always enjoyed visiting with her when she came to church before COVID-19 started. Unfortunately, she was not able to come to church in the last couple of years. I am thankful we could sing Christmas carols to her in December though.

Last Sunday we were thankful to hear that Bro. Rick and Sis. Brenda Messner are going to make Winthrop their church again. They attended Winthrop many years ago before making Minneapolis, MN their home church. Welcome back Rick and Brenda!

Missouri, Kansas City
Betty Sinn

We are thankful for a new year, even though the COVID-19 crisis seems to be continuing. During this time of the pandemic, we still have many reasons to be thankful for what God has done for us. We must continue to put our trust in God and know that he is with us. I am often reminded of the following hymn:

“When we walk with the Lord
In the light of His Word
What a glory He sheds on our way!
While we do His good will,
He abides with us still,
And with all who will trust and obey.

Not a shadow can rise,
Not a cloud in the skies,
But His smile quickly drives it away;
Not a doubt or a fear,
Not a sigh nor a tear,
Can abide while we trust and obey.
Not a burden we bear,
Not a sorrow we share,
But our toil He doth richly repay;
Not a grief nor a loss,
Not a frown nor a cross,
But is blest if we trust and obey.”

Trust and Obey, Hymns of Zion, #186

We were thankful to have had Bro. Scott Aberle (Sis. Dorine, Washington, IL) recently minister to us. May God richly bless him for his services to our congregation.

We want to express our love and sympathy to Sis. Karen Kellenberger (Elder Bro. Randy), as her father, Bro. Carl Wyss (Sis. Lydiann, Washington, IL) recently passed away. Our love and sympathy is also extended to Bro. Brent Kellenberger (Sis. Beth) and family as Brent is a grandson of Bro. Carl.

We enjoyed a recent visit of Bro. Quinn Steffen (Sis. Sandi, Latty, OH) and hearing him give a presentation of the services offered by Gateway Woods. Many of us think of Gateway Woods as the ‘Leo Home’; however, Bro. Quinn shared with us that in addition to the basic residential services, Gateway Woods also offers schooling, Gateway Farms, adoption services, foster care services, LARC, and Willowbrook.

LARC (Linking to Attain Responsibility and Community) helps to connect unsupported youth to the community. Willowbrook is transitional housing that helps youth to transition from Gateway Woods to full independence. The mission of Gateway Woods is: ‘To honor and obey God by providing help and healing to troubled children and families who then may bless others.’ Bro. Quinn mentioned that Gateway Woods could always use volunteers and financial support, but first and foremost, he asked for our prayers.

“Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.” Isa. 41:10

Missouri, Lamar
Leah Rokey

Greetings!

We have once again been blessed by the ministering brothers that serve on our behalf. We appreciate the willingness of Elder Bro. Bob Dotterer (Sis. Laura, Sardis, OH), Bro. Bill Wettstein (Sis. Heidi, Eureka, IL), and Bro. Neil Wider (Sis. Kris, West Lafayette, IN).

We always enjoy the fellowship of those traveling in the area! If you are visiting the Branson area over Spring Break, please consider stopping in Lamar for the weekend!

May the peace of God abide in each of you in the year ahead!
Missouri, St. Louis
Michelle Rassi

For this month’s HarvestCall night we assembled Valentine’s Day bags to be distributed at a post-prison ministry and homeless shelter.

Many in our congregation travel the month of December since most of us grew up somewhere other than St. Louis. It is always exciting to gather back together in January as a church family and share of God’s goodness and his working in each of our lives.

Missouri, Taylor
Tami Pflum

Bro. Clayton and Sis. Dominique Blunier became first time parents with the birth of precious little Isaac James on December 16. Grandparents are Sarah Braun (Denver, CO), Paul Lasnier (Denver, CO) and Bro. Darin and Sis. Keri Blunier (Princeville, IL).

Sis. Deb Sutter (Bro. Steve) has been in our thoughts and prayers since the loss of her dad, Bro. Don Ott (Sis. Carolyn, dec., Goodfield, IL) on December 24.

Winter weather prevented many of us from being able to travel to celebrate with Bro. Bruce Ogalat (Bro. Tim and Sis. Amber Lehman) and Sis. Haylie Myer (Bro. Richard and Sis. Joni) as they were united in marriage on January 2 in Bern, KS, but we rejoice with them as they begin life together. We have been so blessed by Bro. Bruce’s presence at church the past few years and are excited to welcome Sis. Haylie to our area.

Hospital patients this month included Sis. Marian Pflum (Bro. Lyle, dec.), Sis. Judy Huber (Bro. Vernon, dec.) and Sis. Kathy Haab (Bro. Paul). We lift each one up to the Great Physician and ask him to bring healing according to his will and way. Our thoughts and prayers are also with those who care for them regularly.

The annual business meeting was held January 12. Listening to the financial and trustee reports is a good reminder just how many hands and feet it takes to care for the physical building and upkeep.

We didn’t have any visiting ministers this month so will take this opportunity to extend a special thank you to all our “home” ministers who tirelessly share the Word in season and out. We are so grateful for all they and their wives give of themselves on behalf of our church family.

New York, Croghan/Naumburg
Anna Stoller

"Another year of progress,
Another year of praise,
Another year of proving
Thy presence all the days."
Another Year Is Dawning,
Hymns of Zion #150

Greetings from New York! As we enter the new year, we all see potential changes ahead. Our congregation was reminded in the Fall Memorandum to approach change with wisdom. I was encouraged by the thought that the most important change is to be conformed into the image of Christ as we grow spiritually. While to some extent change is inevitable, we can respond with wisdom and growth with God’s help. May God grant us all grace to become more like Christ!

On December 19 we enjoyed the Sunday school Christmas program. The children shared songs and pieces reminding us of God’s gift to us through his son Jesus Christ. May God bless the efforts of the children and the teachers for all the work they put into the program. How thankful we are for the children and the joy they bring! Each one is such a blessing!

Bro. John Farney and Sis. Polly Farney are currently home from the hospital recovering. We want to keep them in our prayers as they continue to trust God day by day.

I neglected to report that Bro. Jeff Gerber (Sis. Carole, Rockville, CT) ministered to us in November. May God bless him for serving us.

Ohio, Akron
Joelle Indermuhle

We are thankful for our visiting ministers this past month, who include Bro. Nathan Rassi (Sis. Michelle, St. Louis, MO) and Bro. Dana Neiman (Sis. Lea, Remington, IN). May God bless their efforts!

Our hospital patients this month have been Sis. Barb Graf (Elder Bro. Dave) and Sis. Beth Steidl. Many prayers have been offered up for their healing.
Sympathy has been extended to Sis. Nan Steidl (Bro. Don) in the passing of her brother, Tom Shurance, as well as to Sis. Esther Emich in the passing of her son-in-law, Bro. Todd Stuber (Tremont, IL).

Ohio, Columbus
Nancy Banks

Sending our love and greetings from Columbus, Ohio. We are wishing everyone a blessed new year.

We are thankful for the many ministers willing to serve us this month: Bro. John Lehman, (Sis. Tamara, Wolcott, IN), Bro. Tim Ramsier, (Sis. Jonell, Rittman, OH), Bro. Greg Rassi (Sis. Carla, Chicago, IL) and Bro. Andrew Rassi, (Sis. Sandy, Morton, IL) We appreciated their help this month as the COVID-19 virus has depleted our church attendance. We offer our sincere thanks to Bro. Greg and Bro. Andrew who took over the ministering duties and Bro. Matthew and Sis. Bridget Rassi (Chicago, IL) who served lunch when our church attendance was at its lowest.

Congratulations to Carl and Maddie Rassi (Bro. Matthew and Sis. Bridget, Chicago, IL) as they were recently joined as one in marriage. Carl is an OSU graduate, and they are making their home in Columbus. We wish them God’s richest blessings.

Ohio, Junction
Karen Schlatter

Elder Bro. Tony and Sis. Denise Manz welcome their first grandchild, Sawyer Daniel, born on December 27 to Bro. Troy and Sis. Heather Hartzler (Rittman, OH). We wish these new parents and grandparents much grace as they are such an important influence in the lives of these precious little ones.

We are thankful for Ethan Manz (Bro. Scott and Sis. Sara) as he has found peace with God and is planning to give his testimony of faith and be baptized in the near future.

Our sympathy to Bro. Pete Hurd (Sis. Helen) as he recently lost his brother Don. It is always hard to lose a loved one. I know Bro. Pete and Sis. Helen often traveled to New York to visit his family.

We appreciate Bro. Trent Gasser (Sis. Molly, Akron, OH) visiting us recently and ministering to our congregation.

We had two positions filled at our New Year’s meeting. We support Bro. Alan Manz (Minnie) as he will take on the position of Assistant Cemetery Clerk and Bro. Fred Manz (Sis. Kayla) as he will take on the position of Song Leader in Charge. A thank you to Bro. Will Manz (Sis. Joanna) and Bro. Chris Manz (Sis. Erica) as their terms have come to an end.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Bro. Dave Manz and his family as he has been hospitalized with heart problems.

I read a story recently where a pastor challenged his congregation on what words from the Bible he should read if only allowed to read five. Some possible suggestions given were:

“Ye must be born again” John 3:7
“Be ye reconciled to God” 2 Cor. 5:20
“In every thing give thanks” 1 Thess. 5:18
“Stand fast in the faith” 1 Cor. 16:13
“Even so, come, Lord Jesus” Rev. 22:20

I ask you, what would be the five words you would choose?

Ohio, Latty
Angie Klopfenstein, Carmen Stoller

“And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.” Col. 3:23-24

Greetings of love and blessings to you in 2022! As we begin a new year, we would like to support those with new offices. They include: Bro. Mark Sinn (Sis. Diane), Bro. Jon Stoller (Sis. Alexis), Sis. Mindy Stoller (Bro. Caleb), and Sis. Laura Steffen (Bro. Sam) as Sunday school teachers, Sis. Amy Rosswurm (Bro. Bruce) and Sis. Joy Stoller (Bro. Ross) as kitchen committee members, Bro. John Rosswurm (Sis. Sierra) and Bro. Colin Klopfenstein (Sis. Kelly) as church/fellowship hall trustees, and Bro. Dave Gerber (Sis. Patty) as Country Inn and Villa trustee. May God bless each and every part of our body as we serve the Lord together.
On the weekend of January 8-9, we were blessed to hear the testimony and witness the baptism of Juliah Manz (Bro. Marvin and Sis. Jennifer). Elder Bro. Tony Manz (Sis. Denise, Junction, OH) helped our Elder Bro. Gary Sinn with this special work and we appreciate their efforts. May God bless Sis. Juliah as she lives her life of service to him!

We were blessed over the holiday season and our baptism weekend to have several visiting ministers. Thank you to Bro. Brian Wenninger (Sis. Mackenzie, Leo, IN), Bro. Marvin Hartzler (Sis. Sue, Rittman, OH), Bro. Matt Saurer (Sis. Marti, Minneapolis, MN), Bro. Warren Schlatter (Sis. Cindy, Junction, OH), Bro. Jim Manz (Sis. Elizabeth, Junction, OH), and Bro. Ryan Bertsch (Sis. Jessica, Bluffton, IN) for ministering the Word to us.

We rejoice with Crystal Klopfenstein (Bro. Jerry and Sis. Cherry), as she has found peace with God and man! We are also very thankful to have two new converts, Maria Stoller (Bro. Ben and Sis. Kendra) and Ryan Wenninger (Bro. Randy and Sis. Joni). May the Lord richly bless and guide each of them.

Our prayers are with Bro. George Keysor (Sis. Sharon) with the passing of his sister, Noreda Hoaglin. We are also mourning with Sis. Ann Plummer and her family with the passing of her daughter, Beverly.

God has blessed our congregation with two new babies. On December 22, Luke Jay Reichert was welcomed into the family of Taylor, Sis. Audrey, Kollin, Kolby, Karlee, and Lydia. On January 18, Bro. Travis, Sis. Ann, Cheyanne, and Savannah Stackhouse welcomed McKenzie Renae. May God bless these young families as they raise their new blessings.

No matter where God takes us this year and throughout our lives, let’s serve him with our whole heart!

Ohio, Mansfield

Katie Miller

We thank Bro. Matt Feucht (Sis. Jennifer, Roanoke, IL) for preaching a Christmas message. Let us continue to praise our Christ Lord in song.

“O worship the King, all-glorious above,
And gratefully sing
His wonderful love;
Our Shield and Defender,
the Ancient of days,
Pavilioned in splendor,
and girded with praise.”
O Worship the King, Hymns of Zion #5

We have been praying for Lois Schoenman during her hospitalization. We are thankful to have her back at church. There have been many others who have experienced illness, and we praise God that he is able to be everywhere at all times. Our hearts go out to those in the middle of struggles. May God continue to reveal to his children the precious promise that they are “no, never alone”.

Ohio, Rittman

Mardel Dotterer, Julie Steiner

Believing in God’s call to repentance, we rejoice with Trevin Hartzler (Bro. Tom and Sis. Diane) as he seeks God’s will for life. As souls step out in faith, God is waiting to receive them with open arms.

God has called Sis. Sarah Bauman (Bro. Jerry and Sis. Martha) and Bro. Chet Schlatter (Ken and Pam) of Bloomfield, IA to serve him together. May he guide them as they prepare for a March 27 wedding.

As sickness continues making its rounds, many of our loved ones have experienced times of suffering this past month, including Bro. Nelson Ramsier, Sis. Margaret Winkler (Bro. Stan), and Bro. Andy Winkler.

Many ministers have blessed our pulpit recently, and we thank them for visiting Rittman…Elder Bro. Brad Eisenmann (Sis. Cindy, Chicago, IL), Elder Bro. Ben Wiegand (Philadelphia, PA), Elder Bro. Vic Bauman (Sis. Brenda, Smithville, OH), Bro. Todd Stoller (Sis. Pam, Latty, OH), Bro. Nathaniel Ramsey (Sis. Michelle, St. Louis, MO), Bro. Matt Feucht (Sis. Jennifer, Roanoke, IL), and Bro. Dana Nieman (Sis. Lea, Remington, IN).

Lord willing, we anticipate testimonies and baptisms the weekend of February 26-27, for our three precious converts who have been announced for peace, Ryan Stoller (Bro. Gary and Sis.
Michelle), Christopher Schar (Bro. Nate and Sis. Linda), and Adam Baltic (Bro. Milan and Sis. Amy).

The births of three dear children were warmly announced this past month. Sawyer Daniel Hartzler (Bro. Troy and Sis. Heather), was born on December 27, the firstborn son. His grandparents here are Bro. Dan and Sis. Jennifer Hartzler. Then, on December 28, Claire Lanae Anliker was born to parents Bro. Grant and Sis. Emily Anliker (Belvidere, IL). She’s welcomed by big brother Roland, and grandparents Elder Bro. Wayne and Sis. Camille Hartzler. On January 3, Elias William Steiner was born to Aaron and Holly Steiner. Grandparents Bro. Matt and Sis. Gail Steiner welcome him, along with siblings Rebecca, Silas, Myra, Emma, Thaddaeus, and Mathias.

The Lord has chosen to call home many loved ones recently. Bro. Richard Miller passed away, leaving behind his children, Bro. Michael (Sis. Norene), Sis. Cheryl Indermuhle (Bro. Galen), Joan Indermuhle (Dwaine), Mervin (Dawn), and Max (Diane), plus 21 grandchildren, 58 great-grandchildren, and 16 great-great-grandchildren, and Sis. Barb Acker (Bro. Boyd), his sister.

The family of Sis. Ruth Beery said farewell to the matriarch of their family. Sis. Ruth is remembered by her children, Sis. Margaret Winkler (Bro. Stan), Kay Rufener (Ron), Alan (Pat), Beth Nelson, (Carl), Ralph (Cheryl), son-in-law Bro. Andy Winkler, her sister-in-law Sis. Marie Beery, 16 grandchildren, 30 great-grandchildren, and 8 great-great-grandchildren.

Sis. Marge Zollinger (Smithville, OH) passed away in December, leaving behind many siblings, including Sis. Verna Rufener, Elaine McCreary (John), Sis. Rose Gerber (Bro. Les, Bluffton, IN), Bro. John Hartzler, Sis. Jane Klotzle, and brother-in-laws, Bro. Henry Dotterer and Bro. Ed Zollinger (Sis. Shirley).

Bro. Bobby Cochran was called home this past month, and will be fondly remembered by his wife (Sis. Paulette), his son Bobby Cochran Jr, brother/sister-in-law Bro. John and Sis. Jodie Calame, and many other family members. We’re thankful Bro. Bobby could have received the gift of baptism approximately one year ago. Bro. Nathan Reutter’s (Sis. Miriam) grandmother passed away this month, Sis. Anna Marie Reutter (Gridley, IL). We extend our love and sympathy to each of these families.

Bev Riggenbach died January 9 in Texas, but was laid to rest here in our Rittman Cemetery. She was the cherished wife of Ralph Riggenbach, and is remembered by her children, Scott (Carmina), and Steven (Alicia), and her sister-in-laws Sis. Ruth Steiner (Bro. Ron), Sis. Karen Riggenbach, Sis. Ellen Gasser (Bro. Jerry), and many relatives.

Ohio, Sardis
Matt and Dawn Brake

Our thanks go to Bro. Adam Uhler (Sis. Ann, Smithville, OH) for being willing to be used by God in teaching us of Paul’s suffering through Acts. When we suffer, we often ask why. But when we’re in that spot, it’s right where God wants us. In order to see his glory, there’s an earthly price we must pay. We were challenged to see beyond the suffering and keep our eyes on eternity!

“Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honor come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name.” 1 Chron. 29:11-13

We praise God that Kolton Dotterer (Elder Bro. Bob and Sis. Laura) is ready to publicly confess his faith through baptism in obedience to our Savior Jesus! Our congregation is looking forward to hearing his testimony and witnessing baptism the first weekend in March.

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” Matt. 5:16

We had an encouraging New Years Eve gathering at our Fellowship Center. Our single group organized the evening with
the theme of ‘Light’. Bro. Mark Ramsier spoke about being salt and light to those we come in contact with every day. We were reminded that light drives out the darkness, and salt seasons its surroundings, but only if it is shaken out and applied!

Father, as we start a new year with many more opportunities to glorify your name, please give us the grace and wisdom to be that light every day in the darkness that surrounds us!

Ohio, Smithville
Sharon Gasser, Marcy Stoller

"Soon we’ll come to the end of life’s journey
And perhaps we’ll never meet anymore,
Till we gather in heaven’s bright city
Far away on the beautiful shore.
If we never meet again this side of heaven
As we struggle thru this world and its strife,
There’s another meeting place somewhere in heaven
By the side of the river of life;
Where the charming roses bloom forever,
And where separations come nevermore,
If we never meet again this side of heaven
I will meet you on that beautiful shore."

If We Never Meet Again, Heavenly Highway Hymns, #214

We lost many loved ones in recent weeks. We extend our sympathies to their families.
Bro. Bill Bauman (Sis. Monica) lost his mother, Sis. Delores Bauman (Marion, dec., Rittman, OH).
Bro. Ken Zollinger (Sis. Becky), Bro. Marvin Zollinger (Sis. Pam), and Mark Zollinger (Michelle) laid to rest their mother, Sis. Marge Zollinger (Bro. John, dec.).
Sis. Ruth Beery (Bro. Carl, dec., Rittman, OH) was survived by her sister-in-law, Sis. Marie Beery (Bro. Richard, dec).
Jim Glessner (Ricki) lost his father, Don Glessner (Ruth).
Marge Roades was saddened by the passing of her husband, Bill. Also mourning his loss are sisters-in-law Sis. Brenda Bauman (Bro. Vic) and Sis. Marilyn Uhler (Dale).
The death of Bev Riggenbach (Ralph) was grieved by in-laws Bro. Don Riggenbach (Sis. Gail), Bro. Art Riggenbach (Lynne), and Sis. Luella Stoller (Bro. Harold, dec.).

We were prayerful for those that were hospitalized, including Alison Bauman (Bro. Aaron and Sis. Becky), Sis. Lorene Blough (Bro. Elmer, dec.), Sis. Jeanette Blough, and Sis. Heather Katanic (Bro. Mike).

Bro. Matt Saurer (Sis. Marti, Minneapolis, MN) shared in our Christmas service. Bro. Jerry Bauman (Sis. Martha, Rittman, OH) also visited this month. We were thankful for their fellowship.

Bro. Steve and Sis. Jolene Hofacre traveled to Alaska for the wedding of their son, Ross to Erin Pfundt. We wish them the Lord’s blessings as they start their new lives together.

Ohio, Toledo
Brooke Harmon, Sharon Rager

Bro. Doug and Sis. Lanna Harmon welcomed another granddaughter into their family on December 4. Ellorie Irene was born to Linda and Edward Kudrycki (Big Rapids, MI).

After the New Year’s Eve service, Elder Bro. Matt Manz shared the Toledo statistics from the past year. We have had five babies born during the year. Roxanne Bray (Oliver and Meghan), Arie Harmon (Bro. Doug and Sis. Brooke), Drew Manz (Bro. Chet and Sis. Jenny), Adalyn Masters (Bro. Aaron and Sis. Whitney) and Westin Schlatter (Bro. Kent and Sis. Alisia). We had two Toledo members pass away. Bro. Howard Harmon and Sis Dorothy Stevens claimed their eternal reward. We also grieved the passing of Sis. Kathy Manz (Bro. Dave, Junction OH), mother of Bro. Matt and Bro. Chet. We had one high school graduate, Oliver Bray. Two of our college students were baptized this year, Sis. Livy Beard (Bro. Seth and Sis. Faith, Sardis, OH) and Bro. Jesse Schlatter (Bro. Warren and Sis Cindy, Junction, OH). Also, among our college students we had one engagement and one wedding.
Sis. Sadie Sinn (Bro. Tim and Sis. Marlene, Latty OH) was engaged to Bro. Austin Wilson (Jack and Carol, Smithville, OH).
Sis. Audrey Manz (Bro. Mark and Sis. Cathy, Junction, OH) married Bro. Trevor Putt (Bro. Brian and Sis. Tami, Francesville, IN).
Sharon Harris had surgery recently due to medical problems. She is home now, and we pray for God’s blessings for a complete recovery.

We appreciated the service of Bro. Randy Gasser (Detroit, MI) on our pulpit January 2 when illness kept both of our ministers home. He challenged us to read the entire Bible this year but also suggested that reading the New Testament may be more doable. Regardless of our goal for this year, we want to spend time in the Word daily. Bro. Michael Schneider (Sis. Jodi, Junction, OH) gave us Godly instruction in a recent midweek service. Also, Bro. Todd Stoller (Sis. Pam, Latty, OH) along with some visitors from Latty blessed us with his service and their fellowship. We have been so thankful over the last couple months for the pulpit support given by our neighboring churches when Elder Bro. Matt Manz was afflicted with Bell’s Palsy. We thank God for his healing and are happy to have Bro. Matt back on the pulpit.

Ontario, Kitchener
RoseLynn Metzger

“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.” Philip. 4:6-7

Greetings from Canada! We celebrate a new year and trust that God will provide in his miraculous ways in this coming year. Reflecting on 2021, there were good moments and hard moments. There are memories we think on with fondness and joy, and those we think on with a heavy heart. As we begin a new year, there is excitement to see what God has in store, but perhaps there is also some fear of the uncertainty of the year ahead. Philip. 4:6-7 has been a very encouraging verse for me lately, and I hope you find strength in it as well. In this new year, God is already ahead of us making a way, therefore, we don’t need to worry! He will fill us with peace that is incomparable to anything we have experienced. Let us welcome our God into this year, asking him to go ahead of us! The same God that walked with us in our valleys and mountaintops in 2021 is the same God who will walk by our side in 2022!

With us this month to bring us the Word were Elder Bro. Lucas Frank (Sis. Crystal, Detroit, MI), Bro. Brad Gudeman (Sis. Teresa, Bradford, IL), and Elder Bro. Greg Lehman (Sis. Mary Beth, Wolcott, IN).

Thank you again for your support and we covet your prayers as the COVID-19 situation continues in our country! Currently, there is some opportunity to cross the border again, and if you would like to visit, please reach out to Sis. Alma Gingrich (elmeralma4@gmail.com) with any questions, we would love to have you! As always, our zoom meetings are open for visitors as well. Blessings on you and your household this month!

Ohio, Dayton
Diana Delman

Oregon, Portland
Louisa Gallup

We are saddened by the unexpected loss of Carol Gigax (Brandt). She passed away January 7 in Springboro, OH where she and her husband Steve had moved from Oregon some years ago. She was 67 years old. Our heartfelt prayers go out to her daughters Brianna (Miller) Strahm (Brent, Postville, IA) and Rachel (Miller) Lundberg (Adam, Portland, OR). Our thoughts and prayers go out also to her twelve grandchildren and the Miller family. We have fond memories of Carol joining us for worship and fellowship over the years. She always was a kind and cheerful presence with a smile on her face.

Bill Cooper (Janet), son of the late Bro. Ray and Sis. Ginny Cooper, is in the hospital with COVID-19. He is on a ventilator and in very serious condition. Let us keep Bill and his family in our prayers as they are going through this trial.
There are many more COVID-19 patients in our crowded hospitals, let us not forget to pray for them too, as well as the medical personnel, who are no doubt overwhelmed with the heavy workload.

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

Troy and Taylor Hari had their first baby, Clark Mitchell, on December 24. Grandparents are Duane and Lela Hari and Randy and Kristie Teaney.

Bro. Loren and Sis. Marlene Dettwyler will be spending the next couple of months in Louisiana with the HarvestCall work team to assist with the rebuilding project there. We’re thankful for their work and pray that God will richly bless them!

Kenton Walder (Bro. Jesse and Sis. Kelsey) has surrendered his life to the Lord! We’ll be praying for grace and strength as he takes this step forward in faith!

Bro. Nolan and Sis. Kiara Grimm along with their daughter, Ryan, have recently moved to the area from West Bend, IA, and plan to make the Silverton congregation their home church. We’re thankful to have them here and pray for a smooth transition.

Sis. Kara Blomgren, (Lester, IA) will be attending the Silverton church for the next three months while going through a missionary program. We welcome her here and pray that God would continue to direct her in this path.

With joy we share the news of Bro. Kyle Schurter (Leonard and Cheryl) and Sis. Janelle Kuenzi’s (Bro. Harvey and Sis. Jennifer) engagement! What a blessing to see God work in their hearts; we pray that their love will blossom and grow.

Sis. Violet Kuenzi passed away January 16. She is survived by her children: Charlotte Zurbrugg, Cheryl Schurter (Leonard), Kathleen Maul (Michael), Jeannette Schurter (Lee), and Stuart (Sally) as well as many grandchildren and great grandchildren. It’s a blessing to know that Sis. Violet is now with her Savior and is truly at peace. Please pray for the family as they grieve for their loved one.

January 16, we had the opportunity to witness Bro. Braden Sinn (Bro Mark and Sis. Elsie) and Sis. Lanah Metz’s (Bro. Joel and Sis. Laura) wedding! It was a beautiful service and a good reminder for all of us that God displayed his love to us by giving us his son. We in turn should show our love by giving to others around us.

Pennsylvania, Philadelphia
**Laura Isch**

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

We wish Yoshi Allen (Sis. Rika) well as he will be studying abroad in Spain this semester. We pray he can feel the Lord’s nearness and love.

Texas, Austin/Bastrop
**Candy Meiss**

"I will love thee, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower. I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised..." Psa. 18:1-3

Greetings of love from Austin/Bastrop. It has been said that if you don’t like the weather today in Texas just wait until tomorrow. One night this month the temperature fell by 50° in five hours. We are enjoying cooler temperatures with mostly sunny days. It’s a great time to visit us! We are thankful for our visitors and for those who came to serve.

We were blessed by hearing the pure word of God by Bro. Dan Koch (Sis Julie, Tremont, IL) as he served us on the pulpit.

We are thankful for a group of young people from Rittman, OH and Lamar, MO who came in January. They worked on projects at church, including a coffee alcove that was funded by donations made in memory of our dear Bro. Mike Hinrichsen. They also worked on several projects in the community. It is heartwarming to see our young people performing loving deeds of service.

Our prayers continue for our dear Bro. Lincoln Brummitt as he was recently hospitalized for 10 days due pain/weakness in his legs and lower back. Following many tests, they have determined that he
has neuromyelitis optica “NMO”. We will continue to pray for his healing and recovery.

We were saddened to hear of the loss of Duane Reutter’s mother, Bro. Kirby Reutter’s grandmother, Sis. Anna Marie Reutter (Gridley, IL)

“We’re pilgrims on the journey Of the narrow road, And those who’ve gone before us Line the way.
Cheering on the faithful, Encouraging the weary, Their lives a stirring testament To god’s sustaining grace.
O may all who come behind us Find us faithful, May the fire of our devotion Light their way.
May the footprints that we leave, Lead them to believe, And the lives we live Inspire them to obey.
O may all who come behind us Find us Faithful.
Surrounded by so great A cloud of witnesses, Let us run the race Not only for the prize, But as those who’ve gone before us. Let us leave to those behind us, The heritage of faithfulness Passed on thru godly lives.
After all our hopes and dreams Have come and gone, And our children sift thru all We’ve left behind, May the clues that they discover, and the mem’ries they uncover, Become the light that leads them, To the road we each must find.” Find Us Faithful written by Jon Mohr.

**Texas, Dallas-Ft. Worth**

*Sheena Pelsy*

“So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. Return, O LORD, how long? and let it repent thee concerning thy servants. O satisfy us early with thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil. Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.” Psa. 90:12-17

Our beloved Beverly Riggenbach passed away on January 9. Originally from Rittman, OH, Ralph and Bev moved to Keller, TX back in 1979 and started a family. They have been a vital part to the small Dallas church and always made everyone feel loved and welcomed. Bev had a heart for serving others and a love for fellowship. She will be greatly missed by all of us. Our prayers go to Ralph and the Riggenbach family. May they find comfort in the Lord during their loss.

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 at 219.204.3106.

**Texas, Zapata**

*Mary Plattner*

We are thankful for our visiting ministers this month. We enjoyed visits from Bro. Arlen Leman (Sis Denise, Forrest, IL) and Bro. Jim Manz (Sis. Elizabeth, Junction, OH). We appreciated all our visitors that included Zapata in their travel plans. We have started our weekly HarvestCall projects for the winter season and gather at our fellowship hall for an evening of work and fellowship. Our Sheriff Department is grateful for the blankets we have been able to provide them as they have been very helpful in the distribution to the needy in our community.

Anyone traveling to South Texas is most welcome to visit us.

**Vermont, Clarendon**

*Sarah Wagenbach*

It was a quiet month in our church here in Vermont, as many of us traveled to be with family over Christmas. As the new year begins, we reflect on the past year and wish to thank all who have come to worship and fellowship with us. We feel blessed by each one that came. We look forward to the year ahead and extend a warm welcome to any who may be traveling in the Northeast.
As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:
Colossians 2:6
OUR VISION:
A body of believers bound together by our love for Jesus Christ and his Word, reflecting God's love, grace, and truth.

OUR PURPOSE:
To glorify God by loving as Jesus loves.

OUR 4-PILLAR MISSION:

Present the gospel
To present to the lost the gospel message of salvation based on faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ and repentance and conversion.

Preserve Sound Doctrine
To preserve sound doctrine by contending for the faith.

Nurture the Believer
To teach and nurture the believers toward a sanctified life and to faithfulness by God's grace and through his Word.

Serve One Another
To offer loving, humble deeds of service to fellow believers and all people in the name of Christ.

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

Jesus Christ’s love for us is the foundation & motivation for everything we do.
We seek to be like Jesus in thought, action, & character, & to live the entire counsel of his Word.
We follow the Great Commission, sharing the love & truth of Jesus Christ in our homes, churches, communities, & throughout the world as God calls us to serve.
We disciple & care for one another as a committed church body.
We apply spiritual discernment to our daily decisions based on the Bible, prayer, the Holy Spirit’s direction, & Godly counsel from fellow believers.
We see God’s value in each individual & joyfully reflect Jesus’ peaceful spirit.
We believe the Bible is true, timeless, & inspired of God.
We, as a church, contend for the teachings of Jesus Christ & his Word.
We freely give as we have freely received, recognizing our lives & resources belong to God.

Handout can be found at www.apostolicchristian.org/guiding-principles
WE LIVE in the most connected world ever, but people are lonelier than ever before. Dear friends, are we among those who haven’t always fit in at school, work, church, within our family, or our age group? Do we sometimes feel left out or lonely? Many of us could raise our hands. Some of us have scars from past rejection or hurts that we need to let God heal. If you are currently hurting, I would love to share a few thoughts with you.

As a primary question, who do we consider to be our best friend? Is it Jesus? Do we tell our every care and joy to him? Do we take time to bask in his presence and feel his comforting arms? Our world has somehow told us that we must all find “our group.” The world seems to say that being truly happy requires an amazing spouse, wonderful kids, a caring and close friends group, and a loving family. I have found that when we look to other relationships to fill the void that only Christ can fill, we inevitably will feel let down. This will cause us grief and hurt, and it may make us wonder what’s wrong with ourselves. But it doesn’t have to be this way. When we are first filling our emotional tank with our Lord’s wonderful presence and love, then we are able to put all things into perspective. We are able to face relationships with a full heart already, and to better handle life when others let us down or reject us. Another blessing is that when we are close to our Savior, he can show us more areas that need work.

Maybe there is a personality trait or habit that God wants us to improve. Let’s ask him how we can grow. Rather than seeking growth to gain the acceptance of others, let’s desire growth in order to be the disciples he wants us to be. If we are feeling brave, let’s ask a trusted parent, family member, friend, or spouse if there is anything they can see in us that could be hurting our relationships. Possibly we need to face an unpleasant side of ourselves, such as being too talkative or opinionated, too controlling of others, a poor listener, overly negative, etc. Maybe we tend to freeze when we are around others and don’t know what to say. Some ice breakers I’ve found valuable in building relationships are: What was the best part of your week so far? How can I pray for you this week? What’s your favorite verse lately? How has work/school/parenting been going lately? And then, let’s be willing to open up about ourselves too. There is something very beautiful about godly transparency.

There will still be times when everyone feels left out, however. It is so easy for us to be jealous of others and to feel sorry for ourselves when this happens. Many of us tend to make everything a competition. It’s easy for us to become bitter or
jealous when others seem to be more popular than we are. Instead, let’s remind ourselves of the friend who walks beside us every day, and that he is enough. Let’s avoid comparing ourselves to others. God didn’t give some of us personalities toward which others naturally gravitate. That’s okay. The same God who made us all unique has a specific path for each of us. He really has a purpose for everything and makes “…all things work together for good to them that love God…” (Romans 8:28) Have we ever stopped to realize that he said ALL? That even includes the things that hurt! When we give our circumstances to God and ask him to teach us what we need to learn, he will do amazing things through every little trial. He meant what he said. Instead of focusing on our hurts, we are wise if we seek to learn what he is trying to teach us through hard times. Maybe he wants us to ask: Can we be content wherever he places us? Is he enough? How are we treating others in our lives?

Remember that multitudes showered Jesus with adoration a week before everyone forsook him. Jesus knows that others’ approval isn’t worth a whole lot (John 2:23-25). He often was drawn to the lowliest humans and those who society scorned for their sins. Maybe Jesus wants to teach us to fix our eyes on different people than those who have had our focus. He looked for those who needed love the most. Possibly what we’ve gone through is part of his plan to let us see and care for those who desperately need a friend to come by their sides and show them care. Each of us may be the someone to show overlooked souls they are loved when others forget or reject them. So, let’s make sure to keep our circles open at church or other events. If we see others standing alone, let’s casually invite them into our conversations or get to them. Let’s sit with different people at church to avoid giving the impression that we stick with having a clique. Let’s be mindful of those in different settings who may be feeling uncomfortable or alone. Let’s start those relationships, and remember to keep them going. These potential friends are probably people we wouldn’t automatically pick out of a crowd. Let’s reach out to those who are homebound or in nursing homes, even if we are in the same boat! When we shift our mindsets off of ourselves, it is amazing what wonderful relationships God can help us develop.

I think about some of the loneliest times I’ve gone through, and also when I wasn’t very lovable. I can distinctly remember who reached out to me and showed compassion. They were like a hug to my soul, and remembering their kindness still brings tears to my eyes. I remember those kind deeds when I am tempted to gossip about others. I want to think that perhaps when someone could have gossiped about me, they decided to protect me instead – even when I didn’t deserve it. Remember, it’s vital to give grace to others when we feel mistreated. We all take our turns hurting others, and a grace-filled life is a beautiful life.

Dear ones, let’s remember that God shaped us and placed us with a purpose. Each of us is God’s very favorite version of ourselves, and nothing can ever change that! Let’s let him be our very closest confidante, and he can show us our place.

When we shift our mindsets off of ourselves, it is amazing what wonderful relationships God can help us develop.

Wanted: YOUR Input

- Share feedback on previous articles or suggestions for future articles.
- Are you willing to use your gifts as a writer? Let us know!
- Do others come to mind as potential authors? Encourage them to step forward!

Send reflections or writer availability to:

* features@acsilverlining.org [or]
* Silver Lining Features
18946 County Road 168, Defiance, OH 43512
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

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2022

APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN CHURCH SERVICES
CLYDE PARK, MONTANA

Saturday June 25th
Clyde Park Community Center
3:00 to 5:00 pm Registration and Fellowship
5:00 Evening Meal
Hymn Singing in Evening

For further information or to provide a count of those planning to attend by June 10th 2022, please contact one of the following Bros.

From Lester
Wes Moser 712-395-2025 wesmoser58@gmail.com
Bob Metzger 712-478-4647 bobcmet@alliancecom.net
or 612-963-0089 (mobil)

From Silverton
Greg Wackerle 503-873-7463 gregwackerle@msn.com
or 503-779-8803

Sunday June 26th
Clyde Park Community Center
Church Services
10:15 am and 12:30 pm

Accommodations available in or near Livingston, MT
Yellowstone River Inn & Suites (406-222-4400) has a block of rooms available under Apostolic Christian or Bob Metzger

There are a number of campgrounds and rental homes in the area.

It is helpful if those attending can bring their own: Bibles, Zion's Harps, and Hymn's of Zion
Free will donations serve to cover meal costs and facility expenses
A day tour of the area may be organized for those interested on Friday June 24th

Online registration link https://bit.ly/3H5ufl8
Register to 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 speak at this year’s event on the theme of Provision/Protection/Purpose centered on the scriptures in Romans 8:28-29.

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren."

Register to attend ALive 2022 by visiting the website at www.ALiveAlabama.com or the Facebook page @ALiveAlabama. If you would like more information, send an e-mail to info@alivealabama.com. You can also sign up to receive future updates about ALive by subscribing to our email list on our website.

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.

GATEWAY WOODS

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, 219.863.2351

We Need Your Help! Do you have Silver Lining issues from 1951 & 1952

Staff has been working to make all Silver Lining issues available to the Brotherhood from the time of conception of this beloved magazine. However, our filing system is missing all issues from the years 1951 and 1952. If anyone has copies of the Silver Lining from these years, can you send them to:

Onward Media | Attn: The Silver Lining 651 E Peoria St., Goodfield, IL 61742

Questions can be directed to Rachel at rschrock@onwardmedia.org. Your help is greatly appreciated.

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/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>
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<tr>
<td>Les Cayes</td>
<td>MEBSH/Maintenance</td>
<td>April 9-16</td>
<td></td>
<td>Jon Zeller  <a href="mailto:jczeller1972@gmail.com">jczeller1972@gmail.com</a>  309-266-9009</td>
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<td>Les Cayes</td>
<td>MEBSH/Haiti</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>
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<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>
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<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>
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HarvestCall Team Schedule - Jamaica

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<td>JDV</td>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>5-27/6-4/22</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Mark Lindberg  <a href="mailto:Lindbma@hotmail.com">Lindbma@hotmail.com</a>  815-641-9005</td>
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<tr>
<td>JDV</td>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>6/4-11/22</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Greg Eisenman  <a href="mailto:GEisenm2@gmail.com">GEisenm2@gmail.com</a>  815-954-3129</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you are interested in sponsoring a work team to Jamaica, contact Loren Dettwyler at: lmdettwyler@gmail.com

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 worshipping 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
Missionary Service Opportunities
in Haiti, Jamaica and Mexico

**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

**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

**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
A Bible-based curriculum on the foundational principles for offering loving, humble deeds of kindness to fellow believers and all mankind in the name of Jesus Christ.

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SKU 344 Teacher: $10.00

Grade 9-12
SKU 345 Student: $3.00
SKU 346 Teacher: $10.00

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Sale Ends 3-15-2022
Living in poverty deprives children of many things. Perhaps the saddest is the ability to reach their God-given potential.

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Partakers of the Divine Nature

— Continued from pg. 3

For us to be partakers of the divine nature, the Almighty must be our father also. We must be born again of the Spirit. This is the ultimate result of faith. Without new life from the Holy Spirit, we have no hope whatsoever. Once born again, we, like Jesus, live with the tension between flesh and spirit because we carry this treasure in earthen vessels. If we are the Lord’s, we too will crucify the flesh with its passions and desires. Jesus showed us that the Spirit is able to overcome the flesh.

Escaping Corruption

Our lives demonstrate characteristics of our parents. How often has someone identified you because you either look or act like one of your parents? If we are partakers of the divine nature, it will be unmistakably evident. James asked, “Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs?” And John is even more direct, saying, “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.” If we are born of God, we will do the works of God and not the works of the devil.

Many Christian teachers in our time identify Christians primarily as sinners, albeit saved by grace. Is such identification with sin healthy or scripturally sound? Is it possible to identify as sinners while simultaneously identifying as partakers of the divine nature? If you jog around the block once every year, does that make you a runner? Neither does committing a sin justify identifying oneself as a sinner. John notes that we cannot deny that we have sinned. He also calls us to walk in the light, confessing our sin, and trusting Jesus to both forgive and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Like a pig that is washed, we must not return to wallowing in the mire, or we will no longer be clean. If we identify first and foremost as a sinner, is it possible that we have become accustomed to living in a state of sin? What would be different if the label, “Partaker of the Divine Nature,” erased every other label we place on ourselves? Paul described it this way: “Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, male nor female, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.” We could add: conservative nor liberal, educated nor illiterate, rich nor poor, and on and on. What we must not add is “sinner.”

If we partake of the divine nature, we will find that our instinctive reactions are like the Father’s and it will be a rarity to do otherwise. The promise of God to those who are born again is that we will be given his limitless power to overcome the pull of our flesh and live in the Spirit – partaking of the divine nature. Over the next eight months, these articles will look at the divine nature in more detail.

“Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.”

Endnotes

1 2 Peter 1:4
2 1 Peter 1:20
3 Isaiah 42:1-9
5 Acts 2:14
6 Acts 12:2
7 Acts 6:8, 7:60
8 Hebrews 8:5
9 1 Corinthians 6:19
10 Ephesians 5:25-32
11 John 3:3-7
12 Matthew 1:18
13 Luke 1:35
14 John 3:34
15 Hebrews 4:15
16 2 Corinthians 4:7
17 James 3:12
18 1 John 3:9-10
19 1 John 1:8-10
20 2 Peter 2:22
21 Colossians 3:11, Galatians 3:28
22 2 Peter 1:10
Lord has given unto us? We are to use it for his glory. He sent his disciples ahead of him to the feast of the tabernacles. Sometimes in life, we are faced with something, and we desire to have the Lord’s nearness to get through a trial, to get over a mountain, or to work through something that is challenging in life, perhaps a great disappointment that we don’t understand. Then, the Lord turns to us, and what does he say? You go ahead of me. It is not that he doesn’t want to be there right beside us, but he knows that the walk through the trial will strengthen us. He knows that when we are alone or when we feel alone in the trial it will prompt us to call out to him, to cry out for his help, and ask for his grace and his truth.

“Go ye up to the feast: I go not yet up unto this feast; for my time is not yet come” (v.8). The Lord Jesus knew that there would be another feast coming in the near future that he would come to and end up in a trial place with soldiers all around and with the enemies accusing him of crimes that he did not commit. That would lead him to the cross, but he knew that his time for that death was not quite yet. He had his eyes set on our salvation – “for the joy that was set before him he endured the cross, despising the shame,” – but yet, he knew at this moment that the time was not yet come for him to die.

Is he sending you out into a trial? Is he asking you to go forth in faith not knowing what is ahead? Go with strength and courage. The Lord is not far behind you.

“But when his brethren were gone up, then went up he also unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret” (v.10). What trial have you endured lately that you felt the loneliness of the flesh? What thing have you gone through where it seemed that God was at a distance? The Lord desires to come into your trial gently, silently in such a way that you will be surprised by his presence, you will be surprised by his strength, and you will be surprised by the endurance that he gives you to get through the ordeal that you are facing.

“Then the Jews sought him at the feast, and said, where is he?” (v.11) Why is it that they were seeking him? They were seeking him to destroy him, to defame him, and to discourage others from following him. There are many people around us that would like to see us fall on our faces when they know that we love the Lord Jesus Christ. The enemy of the soul is around about us even if no one else who desires our harm and our hurt. The enemy desires to strip away our faith and to dissuade us from serving our master.

“And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?” (v.15) When we read the Holy scriptures, the words of Jesus, we need to step back and realize that these words are from the
very mouth of God. These words are given unto us to save our souls. Let us not rush through the reading. Let us take the word of God and dig deeply. Let us meditate deeply upon who Jesus is and the truths that he has shared with us. The Jews had a surface religion. We call it hypocrisy, and we need to make sure that we don’t fall into that same trap.

“Jesus answered them, [the Jews] and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me” (v.16). The doctrine of the teachings of Christ is breathed from the mouth of God. Do we hold these truths as precious? Do we see that they are for our salvation?

“If any man will do his will,” (v.17). Beloved, it’s not about what we know or think we know. It is not about how we can tie things together from the scriptures. It is about our obedience, our humble walk with Christ. The Lord desires the child-like in heart to follow him, not the proud one that thinks he or she has it all together.

“He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory; but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him” (v.18). Our lives are given as a gift that we may lay our lives upon the altar of God’s love. We may lay our few short years upon the altar of obedience to our master. It’s not about us. It’s not about our own glory. It’s about glorifying Jesus Christ. That is what he calls us to as his servants.

“He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory” (v.18). Are we using our words to lift up ourselves and to make excuses for our foolish behavior, or are we using our words to speak truth in love? “That he may seek the glory of him that sent him.” That is why Jesus was able to live a fruitful life. That is why he was able to save sinners. That is why he was able to lead people to communion with the Father: because he did not seek his own glory. He sought the glory of his Father, and we should be about his business in the same manner.

“Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me?” (v.19) It is easy for us to look at our motives and say, “I am not going against the Savior; I am not turned against him.” But if we are not following the Lord wholeheartedly with love and obedience, then are we turned against him instead?

“The people answered and said, Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to kill thee? Jesus answered and said unto them, I have done one work and ye all marvel.” (vv.20-21) What was the work that he did? He raised up a man on the Sabbath day, and the Jews turned against him and said, “He heals on the Sabbath day.” They were more focused on the old law than on the healing. We need to be thankful in our hearts that the Lord has healed us and made us right with him, and we need to continue to seek his glory with all of our hearts. We are given the gift of free will that we may make choices to obey him over and over within our days. We are given opportunities to serve and to obey our Savior, to turn away from evil, to shut our eyes against the enemy, and to look towards our Savior in obedience. The Savior did it, and he gives us grace to obey him as well.

“Then said Jesus unto them, Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto him that sent me. Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come.”(v33-34) How are we looking for the Savior? Today, he is right here with us. He is just a hand’s breadth away from us, an arm’s length away from us. He is reaching down to us desiring to hold our hand and to lead us through whatever he calls us to endure. Are we trusting him with our lives?

“If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink” (v.37) He is that living water that flows through our hearts, nourishing us, and giving us the nourishment that we can share with others. Are we letting the Spirit of God flow through us in our lives? Are we keeping him within the tabernacle of our hearts? He calls us to abide in him, and then, he says, “Abide in me, and I shall abide in you.”
Learning from our history

Remembering Our Spiritual Heritage

In the January 2022 issue of the Silver Lining, we carried a message of Joe A. Getz (then a minister at Morton, Illinois and later to become an Elder) to servicemen of our churches serving in World War II. This month we are including Part II of that message. It should be remembered that these service boys were either in training or in their assigned units in a war that was troubling, and with the outcome uncertain. The intent of the Getz letter was to give encouragement and direction in a perilous and dangerous time. Fear and uncertainty were of concern to these young soldiers. This letter appeared in the Silver Lining, dated October 15, 1943. This was the first edition of the Silver Lining.

Our Hope In Christ
Our only hope is in Christ. Christ for deliverance from the sins of the past, and Christ for the Deliverer when the temptation would be too much for us.

So the spiritual life that has been generated in us through the Word of God needs cultivation also. Even under the handicaps and under the pressure of much work we should devote some time in the reading of the Psalms and the Scripture, and spend some time in earnest prayer whereby we draw close to God and dwell in Him and He in us. Let us give the Lord His tithe in taking time to seek Him.

Listen To And Follow Christ
Paul gives us one of the best answers. Listen to Him talk in the Corinthians. (I Cor. 15:3) “For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.” He began with the crucified and risen Christ -- with the atonement and the resurrection.

The plan is just as fixed as are the stars in the Heavens. If one really holds to the right views concerning the atonement made by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ on the Cross at Calvary, he will sooner or later get right on every other question.

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Editor’s note:
The letter to the servicemen by Minister Joe A. Getz was a useful medium (of communication) to the scattered servicemen in many military camps. That a centralized church entity (the Silver Lining) could convey inspirational and encouraging comments to young soldiers who faced an uncertain and perhaps dangerous future was a positive endeavor. Over time -- since October of 1943 -- the monthly editions of the Silver Lining have been a binding agent of sorts that help bring a local identity to the various congregations in the broader, national denomination. As the Silver Lining grew in informational content, it became a means of the local congregations learning more about all the other local congregation that existed in our national brotherhood. All the congregation had a local reporter sending in monthly news.

So, too, is the church’s national “Minister’s Book,” officially entitled Apostolic Christian Churches and Ministers published every two years, and lists all the congregations, and the current Elders and Ministers. This booklet gives a sense of special cohesion as it provides local information across the national denomination, and enhances familiarity -- and further, a more enhanced brotherhood closeness which enriches organizational unity.

-by Perry A. Klopfenstein
Making Good through Obedience or Making Amends through Sacrifice

“For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.” Psalm 51:16-17

Gideon (Judges 6-8) worked as a wheat farmer, secretly thresholding wheat at the bottom of the wine press to avoid being caught and confiscated by the Midianites during the Israelites’ period of oppression due to their disobedience to God to destroy all idols and relationships that favored idolatry. The angel of the LORD appeared to Gideon, calling him a “mighty hero, the LORD is with you!” Despite his initial doubts and lack of confidence, he eventually became a mighty warrior conquering all enemies. His drawbacks were coveting the kingly royalties including the gold and building an ephod from the gold in his hometown, resulting in a spiritual divide and prostitution in his heart, household and, eventually, his hometown between God and idolatry.

King Saul (1 Samuel 15) was instructed to destroy the entire Amalekite nation for having opposed Israel and destroyed everyone and everything except for King Agag and the best of appealing things. When Samuel confronted King Saul about it, King Saul rationalized that he kept the best to make sacrifices to God. He was challenged with this question and its answer (verse 22): “And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.”

Jonah literally ran away in a totally opposite direction of Nineveh when the LORD instructed him to get up and go to Nineveh to announce judgment. After being disciplined in the belly of the great fish, he confessed that once he lost all hope, his thoughts turned once more to the LORD and he pledged to offer sacrifices to God with songs of praise and fulfill all his vows, for his salvation comes from the LORD alone. Yet upon being spat from the fish, God told him to get up and go, not to the temple in Jerusalem, but rather to go to Nineveh to deliver the message of judgment, and Jonah obeyed. He could have tried to make amends by sacrifice but this time he chose obedience to God despite his self-pity at the end when God extended mercy to repentant gentiles.

Each story teaches us something about making good through obedience or making amends for disobedience. What does God desire of us? And how do we respond to His voice? Do we obey or rationalize? In life, some choices and decisions may appear to be for greater good, but it is better to make good by fully obeying God when He gives instructions than act in opposition. However, if we oppose His way, true repentance is one which leads to a broken and contrite heart, a sorrow that leads to new life, not to death (2 Corinthians 7:10). May we pray together that we strive to remember God’s endless kindness, grace, and mercy towards us and accordingly exercise a higher calling and lifestyle of full obedience, prioritizing submission to His instructions above all else. And let us praise Him when His mercy is extended to those, we feel, that may not deserve it, as surely, we are also to be counted unworthy.

-by Tashi Widmer
His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow:

Matthew 28:3