The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him.

Nahum 1:7
Apt Communication

James says our tongues are an unruly evil, untamed by any human. That may lead some to conclude we should just always keep quiet, yet we are called to speak the truth in love and sometimes, that requires confrontation. It’s a challenge to get this balance right! Your input on this would be appreciated.

Our next special topic is: What has God taught you about loving and truthful communication? Please relate your experience and any wisdom gained about when to speak vs. listen, confront vs. forebear, etc.

Send your contributions answering that question to features@acsilverlining.org by July 15. Please keep them to no more than 600 words. This section will be published in September.

In Christian love,
Jeff Grimm and Greg Lehman, Counseling Elders
Loving as Jesus Loves – Following Jesus’ Example of Love in Obedience

“If you love me, keep my commandments.”

The simplicity of Christ’s statement has a sharpness that cuts, sometimes painfully, and calls us to carefully reflect on the nature of our love and obedience. Yet, at the same time, as we meditate on this passage, we begin to understand that Christ is inviting his children into the divine life. In other words, we are called into a life obediently patterned after the love of Jesus as we abide in him and so live out Christ’s call to love as he first loved us.

The Apostle John testifies of the love of God throughout his Gospel and Epistles, proclaiming that “God is love.” This profound statement can be deceptive because its depth lies in its simplicity. God is love, infinite love. Nothing more, nothing less. His love is pure, not mingled with pride or selfishness. All of God’s actions pour forth from this pure love where unmixed, unspoiled love is simply not possible.

Throughout the Gospel of John, Jesus is anchored in the love of God through perfect submission to the Father. In Chapter 15, we read: “If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love.” It’s in that same perfect unity in love that Jesus declares that “he that hath seen me hath seen the Father.”

The subjection of the Son to the Father is so complete, so perfect, that their image is inseparable.

God’s perfect love does not remain an abstraction but is commended (or demonstrated) to us through Jesus’ obedience “unto death, even the death of the cross.”

Calling his children to follow where he has first led, Christ gives us a radical new commandment. He calls us to a divine love that completely transcends human loves. “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.” Against Christ’s demonstration of divine love, the Russian novelist Dostoevsky captures the contrasting hypocrisy of human love in The Brothers Karamazov: “One can love one’s neighbors in the abstract, or even at a distance, but at close quarters it’s almost impossible.” As men, we dream about love, wax poetic about love, and crave love, but we find it impossible to fully enter into love.

We must obey, but how? How do I deal with the reality that my love falls short of Jesus’ perfect standard? Clearly, we must allow ourselves to be confronted by this passage. We must, as James puts it, look intently at the “perfect law of liberty,” rather than being satisfied with our natural face.

Here we learn our need of a savior and our dependence on His mercy, for without Christ’s love, even my good deeds tend to aim for my own gratification and become iniquity.

Keeping our need of Christ’s mercy and love in the forefront of our minds, let’s return to our opening passage, “If you love me, keep my commandments.” This statement in Chapter 14, and the second which is like it in Chapter 15, are each given in the context of an extended discourse about abiding in the Spirit, including the beautiful analogy that Jesus is the vine, and we, his followers, are the branches. Here, like the law of gravity, Jesus lays down a spiritual law: “I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.” Simply put, his commandments are impossible to
Monthly Sermon

Sermon by Bro. Dallas Massner, Burlington, IA
June 9, 2019

Nehemiah 2:11-20

Let’s look into God’s holy word such that we’d really try to hinge on every word that he says, and then also trust and pray for the word that as it would come forth through the ministers it would be truly inspired. I’m thankful that the inspiration of the Holy Spirit is in our gathering together, and that it’s not one direction. That’s the beauty of the inspired word of life. We gather together. We sing songs of praise together. We pray a silent prayer, and it all mixes up and ascends to God. He hears us each individually, but he also is going to collectively speak to us. As the word goes out, it’s going to be mixed in your heart with your faith, and also, it’s going to translate your struggles. It’s going to translate your thoughts to what you need. That’s the beautiful thing about preaching from the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, allowing God to truly speak to us.

I’ve opened to the book of Nehemiah. Ezra and Nehemiah were both very instrumental in re-establishing the little gathering that went back to Jerusalem from their exile. Remember, Nehemiah was the cupbearer, and God, through his position as a cupbearer, provided for his people. It’s kind of like when we were talking earlier today about how God worked through Esther. You might think in your life you’ve met some people today or even in the past and they shared something with you. You might think it could be inconsequential, but I think God is working and putting something in your heart for a later time and a later experience.

I often think of Isaac. Abraham and Isaac. Abraham was going to offer him there on Mt. Moriah. God asked him to. When Abraham got up there God tests his faith, and Abraham passed that test. But guess what was right there in the thicket that was going to replace that sacrifice of his son? Because of his faithfulness God prepared a ram the thicket. I’ve often thought when did that ram walk away and get separated from the flock? When did it wander up there? I think God works through natural processes. Obviously, he can do miracles, but I just had to think that in the believer, there’s no such thing as circumstance. It’s just happenstance that that’s what God had happen in our lives? Let’s thank him for his faithfulness and his goodness.

I’ve opened up to Nehemiah Chapter 2; verse 11 is where we’ll start. Nehemiah has come back to Jerusalem, and he didn’t want to wait to go out and inspect it so he’s going to go at night to check out the work that’s happening.

I’ve read to the 20 verse. I have hymn – #190 before me.

I’d like to make one more comment about our time of worship here. It’s truly a blessing to gather together and blend our voices in common words that we can understand and notes that are so beautifully put together. I know sometimes we don’t always sound the best or get it quite right, but when it comes from the heart and when we can identify with the message of the hymn, we can blend those together. It’s truly a blessing to have the time of worship. It’s not just the time when we gather together and hear a message. We’re active in this time of worship.

You know, there was a time in history – it’s kind of a sad time; we can read about it in Martyr’s Mirror and different books that speak about some of our forebears and how they were persecuted – when a lot of them went to church, the hymns were sung in Latin, the message was in Latin, and guess what? They didn’t know Latin. They could only be there and see the symbols. They could only hear...
the words, but it was in a foreign language to them. They couldn’t really experience the worship service like we can today, and I fear that it is kind of going that way again where we see that the message is a lot more intellectual. There are some that don’t have the intellectual capacity to follow the speaker.

They might have bands and choirs that don’t allow all the people to participate, not that when just you listen, it says you don’t get some value, but it still has that same semblance. I’m not saying that to disparage any particular one that uses that, but I think it’s maybe a sad commentary of where we start to become detached from the body. We gather together, and it’s a time when we really are a body. We have different members that need to participate in the worship service. We gain the most value when we all can participate in an active way.

So, we have this hymn #190 (Zion’s Harp), and the first verse reads:

\[
\text{Jesus Christ as king elected,} \\
\text{All things are to him subjected.}
\]

We’ve read about this already how God can use all things. Even heathen and pagan kings are going to be used to furtherance of the gospel and of his kingdom. Don’t lose sight of that, brothers, sisters, and friends, as we live in a country that continues to walk away from God. It really is the course of nature. We might think all is lost. We’ve got to remember what God said through Moses to Pharaoh: “For this cause I raised thee up that all the nations of the world would know that there’s a God in Israel.” At that time, Pharaoh was the supreme ruler of the most powerful country of the world and that’s what Moses said to him. We saw the outcome of that. Trust God. So, let’s sing together of the verses you choose of Hymn #190.

Perhaps, just another thought before we turn to the New Testament. As we read this together, what were your thoughts? You know, when we read an Old Testament scripture, sometimes our thought is, “Well, what’s this all about?” What did this even mean to them? What does it mean to us? What’s part of God’s plan and story? Why did he preserve this for us? Again, I think it’s the image of Christ and the image of God’s divine plan. It’s part of the whole narrative.

I just think of this – what must this have looked like to the people at that time? These exiles came back, and this city looked like a total disaster. They’re probably thinking, “Well, what’s the point?”, but they have such a reverence for that city. When we think of Jerusalem, we don’t think of it as the Jews today, as they care very much about the wall and the physical aspects of it. I think this goes beyond just this city. They’re trying to hearken back to time when they had God in their midst. They’re trying to reassemble that time when God was not only in the center but he lived among them.

When he brought them out of Egypt, he said, “I’m taking you.” Essentially, in a word “he took me to myself.” It’s marriage language. He says, “You’re mine, and I’m going to take you to myself.” He told them how to build their house; they sat down together. It’s almost like a couple would do if they were going to build a new house, having a conversation saying this is what our house is going to look like. He said, “I’m going to dwell in the midst of you; I’m going to be your God, and you’re going to be my people. You’re mine.” This is a marriage, a divine marriage.

If we don’t look at our relationship with Jesus Christ as a divine marriage, we’ve missed the point. It is a relationship. When God calls us out of sin and darkness, the price was paid. Jesus Christ was the bride price, and he paid a tremendous price to buy us to be his bride. As any newlyweds you see, they want to be around each other all the time. They want to know what the other one is doing all the time. We need to look at ourselves first. When we go places or we say things, would we want our spouse to know that? Do we have that kind of relationship where we

— Please turn to pg. 59
Peace in the Midst of COVID-19 in Haiti  
*Caribbean Committee*

COVID-19 has impacted the world in ways most of us would not have been able to imagine a short time ago. Those who work in the healthcare field or have fallen ill with the virus, have felt its impact most directly. At HarvestCall’s mission at Hospital Lumiere in Bonne Fin, Haiti, the global pandemic can feel like a building storm.

Each one of us can identify with these storms of life. Many times, we as Christians are tempted to emulate the disciples’ example when they were confronted with the storm on the sea. They were frightened and believed they would perish. The staff at Hospital Lumiere have faced similar fears as COVID-19 sweeps the globe. And many have simply stood on their faith prepared for the possibility of the coming storm.

Miss Nobadine Dessources is one such example. She has worked as a nurse at Hospital Lumiere for 10 years, rising to the role of Nursing Supervisor, in charge of the Clinic and Emergency Room staff. The defining thing one notices about her very quickly is that she is an advocate for the patients under her care. This is especially admirable in the Haitian culture so often described by the word “survival.” When the daily focus is “survival,” it is easy to overlook the needs of others.

Miss Dessources, however, exhibits daily a patient-first work ethic. She continually is on the look out for ways to improve the hospital and the care of patients. In Haiti, most bedside care (food, bathing, cleaning) is provided by patient families. It is not uncommon to have a patient in the hospital who either doesn’t have family with them or doesn’t have financial resources to provide food. Miss Dessources many times discretely makes this need known to administration, respecting the dignity of the patient, while making sure they are fed.

Christ-Centered Education in Ixtlán  
*Mexico Committee*

“Children are the future church” – a basic, yet profound truth which compels us to pour our energies into teaching our youth the gospel. Some of those children grow up to repent and join the body of Christ. What a miracle! We know that salvation is ultimately the Spirit’s work, and yet we carry a charge to “bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” (Eph. 6:4)

A Christian education opens young eyes to the truth of the Bible, which may not have been modeled at home. Some unbelieving parents allow their child to attend a school with Christ-centered education for the sake of a solid education, and along the way soft hearts take in spiritual truths.

Colegio de las Américas in Ixtlán, Mexico, provides this type of education. Twice a week each grade gathers around Bro. Matt Gerber or Bro. Lalo Ugalde to hear teaching from the Bible. For the younger grades, this entails hearing a Bible story and discussing it, much like Sunday School. For older classes, the values of Christian living are discussed.

Currently there are 182 children in Ixtlán enrolled in both primary and secondary, with about 63 still available for sponsorship. In this particular setting, because the school is owned and operated by the Apostolic Christian Church, each child is eligible to receive one sponsor.

The process for signing up to sponsor a child is simple. Visit harvestcall.org/sponsor-a-child. You will see a list of countries. Some countries have specific children’s names and profiles listed. For Ixtlán,
Since the onset of coronavirus in Haiti, the hospital staff has been focused on preparing to receive possible cases. Just like in the United States, Hospital Lumiere was not ready. The effort to prepare required the entire staff pitching in as services were moved to new locations to make way for the isolation unit. From our own lives, we know that change and stress often go hand in hand. But Miss Dessources maintained her calm and professional demeanor throughout the changes.

At a time when some staff members were fearful for their own health, Miss Dessources remained a steady presence. She readily accepted her role as supervisor for the COVID-19 care team. It seemed that she was constantly hearing the words of the Lord “Peace, be still.”

“It does not matter if a patient is sick with cholera or COVID-19 or another disease. If they don’t have medical care they could die. It is our job to give them care” she says. When asked how she can be peaceful in such times, Miss Dessources replied “I have faith that God will protect me here. We are called to give medical care to everyone. We want to give care with the love of God, the love of Christ. And so I believe he will protect me.”

What a wonderful example of faith we can see in Miss Dessources. It reminds us of the opportunity to pray for the HarvestCall mission at Hospital Lumiere as the staff relies on their faith to continue providing excellent and effective medical care with compassion and Christian love.

– by Rick Aberle & Carrie Stoller

individual students are not listed, so when you click on Mexico it takes you to a link called a “general sponsorship form.” On this form, you’ll specify the country and school.

Other ways to sign up are to fill out a paper form available at most congregations, or call or e-mail us at childsponsorship@harvestcall.org or (309) 266-6080.

For Colegio de las Américas, sponsorship is $35/mo. paid monthly, quarterly, or annually, depending on the sponsor. Students and sponsors are encouraged to correspond a couple of times a year, and there are opportunities for sponsors to send gifts for Christmas and birthdays. But perhaps the most important contribution of a sponsor is praying for the child.

If you feel moved, partner with a child at Ixtlán Colegio de las Américas to give them the gift of truth. A child’s life could be changed! – by Sarah Fehr
Lament: A Sorrow Expressed

We all experience pain. Deep pain comes in different forms: failing health, economic hardship, troubled children, strained relationships, loss of a loved one, terminal illness, unfair treatment, fearsome odds, pain without answers or pain without easy fixes.

Experiencing such pain gives us a kinship with a long list of faithful ones — Job, Hannah, Jeremiah, David, Habakkuk, Moses, Mary, Martha, Daniel, Jacob, Naomi to name a few. Pain is knit into the fabric of life here below and we will not leave this place without it.

Lament is a sorrow or pain expressed or a cry that springs from and proceeds to faith. This prayer should lead us to trust. It has both a shape and is shaping. Lament has often been used by our faithful forefathers and a well-worn pattern has emerged. It looks something like this: turn, complain, ask, trust.

First the grieving one turns to God. They direct their lament to the Father. God is the recipient of our sorrow. Next the grieving one complains. Full and unreserved protest is leveled at God. It's the honesty of our heart released. Third, the grieving one asks. Direct requests are made to God. Unabashed appeals are submitted. Finally, the grieving one trusts. A resignation is laid at the Father's feet. A “no-matter-what” reckless abandoned commitment to God results. The above represents the shape of lament, and this is the shaping it does in our souls. It takes us from pain to promise through the gut wrenching realities of brokenness.

Consider the current matters that trouble you. Would you fill in the prompts below and begin to lament?

- **Turn:** “Father, I bring the important matter of ___________ to you.”
- **Complain:** “Have you forgotten me? Do you not hear my frequent groanings? So often I have spoken to you about _____________ and it seems hope is lost. My heart grieves.”
- **Ask:** “Father, I boldly ask you to ____________. Speedily come to my defense. With your mighty arm, ____________________ toil under the weight of these circumstances? Because ___________ to the Father who understands our pain, and then may we, in turn, be shaped by these prayers of lament.
- **Trust:** “I resign _______________ to you Father. For where else shall I turn? Nowhere. My hope is in you.”

To support us in this raw reality, God knits something else into the fabric of our faith — Lament. Lament is a sorrow or pain expressed or a cry that springs from and proceeds to faith. This prayer should lead us to trust. It has both a shape and is shaping. Lament has often been used by our faithful forefathers and a well-worn pattern has emerged. It

Because laments are so practiced, rehearsed, reviewed and repeated in Israel’s history, they have imprinted themselves in the hymnody of the Hebrew culture. One out of every three Psalms is a lament. By this we learn that not only are laments personal, they are communal also. God intends the community of believers to lament with your
brothers and sisters in sorrow. Lamenting as a community is important when our abilities to help fall short or when our wisdom to fix is insufficient or when our capacity to “make it better” is overrun. Lament is what we can offer. And when we do, our hearts in a small way are aligned with God’s heart. In that moment we help carry the sorrow.

Consider the matters that currently trouble your community of believers or your close friends around you. Consider using prompts like the ones below and begin to lament together — listening to each other’s cries of pain and together turning these cries into trust.

• **Turn:** “Father, the brokenness of ________________ is urgent and dire.”

• **Complain:** “How long will ________________ toil under the weight of these circumstances? Because you do not ________________, people wonder if you are real. They wonder if you are trustworthy.”

• **Ask:** “Father, I ask You to mightily _________________.

  Show your glory by _________________.

  Silence the mocker by _________________.

  Win the faithless to you by _________________.

• **Trust:** “I will cling to your promises. I will never abandon you. The circumstances of ________________ will only embolden my faith whatever the outcome.”

God gave us lament because He personally understands grief. Jesus was known for His sorrows. Isaiah announces Him as a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief (Is. 53). Lament to Jesus is not just a nice idea. It is much deeper than that. Lament is the cry of truth. An honest heart’s cry rising from the seedbed of pain to God because the Father is real. After all, it was this honesty, this pain, this love of the Father that birthed Jesus’s famous lament on the cross... “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?” (Matt 27:46) May we as a body of believers be bold in our lamenting to the Father who understands our pain, and then may we, in turn, be shaped by these prayers of lament.

ACCFS has a host of resources on various topics to encourage a believer in their walk and growth in the Lord. They range from adapted Bible studies and discussion aids for groups to papers and handouts for individual study to presentations and seminars for the entire church family. These resources can be found on our website at www.accounseling.org/category/spiritualgrowth. If you would like more information, please contact ACCFS at (309)263-5536 or info@accounseling.org.
For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land. Song of Solomon 2:11-12

These past few months at LifePoints have certainly not been that which we ourselves would have planned. We are longing for in-person visits between families and residents. Residents are eager to return to their work programs with their friends and caring staff. We can’t wait for our Sunday school classes to start back up and to fellowship with our church body face-to-face again. Plans have certainly changed, but God has remained constant through it all.

As we experience the springtime weather, we are reminded of these verses in Song of Solomon. They bring us hope. Although some of these days full of rain and wind make us feel like we are back in the gloom of winter, we know that spring is coming into itself and days of sunshine are ahead. The springtime is full of newness and life, and we have hope because we know the One who gives all things life.

Typically, we use the springtime as a time of preparation. Fields and gardens are planted. Summer vacations are mapped out. Job applications are submitted. Many of us are still trying to make these preparations with the hope that there will be healing and health restored to those suffering in our country and the rest of the world. But there is uncertainty in our plans. So why do we still hope?

As Christians, we can hope for more than just things of this world. Our souls ache for heaven and the day we will see the Lord seated on his throne. We do not know everything that we will experience there, just as we do not know what each season of life will hold. But we have seen springs in the past, we have seen God work in our lives and in the lives of others, and we trust in him and in his Word. Praise God for his promises, for his love for all his children, for his saving grace, and for the hope he has given us of a new and greater future!

If you would like to read the most recent updates from LifePoints Administrators regarding our current status during COVID-19, please go to our website (www.aclifepoints.org). Thank you for your continued support and prayers for all those involved at LifePoints!

Gateway Woods Apostolic Christian Children’s Home
Rob Parker — LARC Director

Five years ago, God stirred Gateway Woods to begin the LARC initiative to create genuine connections between the community and kids coming out of the residential and foster care programs. In LARC, we strive to connect youth to the relationships and resources they need to become successfully independent. What an encouragement it has been to watch mentors, churches, job partners, and others in the community pour into these young people! But how can our kids continue to build skills and stay connected to the meaningful relationships they have built if they are forced back to old environments, with no safe or consistent place to live?

Enter WillowBridge: Gateway Woods’ new transitional living community. WillowBridge serves young adults who have aged out of the system and whose primary support comes from their connection to Gateway Woods. We have worked hard to create a safe place where young people can learn to work hard, care for their own apartments and learn to manage their lives, all while strengthening their community connections.

I have had the great pleasure of working with some amazing young people who are full of raw potential.
and unique giftedness. Many of them truly want to experience God as a Father and build a life that has meaning, they just don’t know where to start. WillowBridge is a place where these kids can go to grow in all of the areas that lead to successful independence. We are building on much of the foundation that was laid by the Gateway Woods residential and foster care programs as well as the LARC initiative. At this juncture, they are no longer being supervised, but instead, are receiving guidance and accountability while learning to make decisions and take responsibility for themselves.

WillowBridge has the capacity for four young men and five young women (one of whom may have a child). Much like house parents, the staff consists of a Community Advocate (CA) couple and a support team (CAS) who provide assistance and coverage for the CA during time off. Both couples have their own apartment at WillowBridge, though only the CA couple live there full-time.

Having been unsupported youths ourselves, my wife and I have a passion for serving these young adults, so we quickly signed on to be the first CA couple at WillowBridge. We now have a solid structure in place, a knowledgeable CAS couple, and some great young people here. The time has come for Sierra and I to hand the reigns over to whoever the Lord has prepared next. I will be stepping back into the leadership role of Director for both LARC and WillowBridge.

This is an opportunity to be a tangible representation of who Christ is. As Theodore Roosevelt once said, “to work hard at work worth doing”. If this stokes a fire in your heart, please see the CA job opening we have posted. Thank you to all of our faithful supporters who continue to encourage us as we fulfill the mission God has given us to provide help and healing to troubled children and families who then may bless others.

News:

• 2020 Auction: The Auction is converting to a virtual event! See our ad in this month’s edition of the Silver Lining for more information.
• We are thankful to announce that we hired Bro. Jesse Zimmerman as our new Housparent Manager.
• We also are blessed to have Sis. Kristi Baran as our newest counselor.
• We currently have these openings at Gateway Woods: Teacher, WillowBridge Community Advocate Couple, Assistant Houseparent, LARC Coordinator, Development Coordinator and Houseparent Couples. 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.

• We are searching for 2020 summer volunteers. Please contact Sis. Claire Berchtold, our 2020 Summer Volunteer Coordinator at vol.coordinator@gatewaywoods.org for more information. This is a great opportunity to impact the lives of the children on our campus!
• You are an important advocate to help us spread the word about God’s work at Gateway Woods. Please continue to lift us up in prayer, check our website gatewaywoods.org and our Facebook page at facebook.com/gatewaywoods often for updates, and make sure that you are on our mailing list. If you would like to be added to our mailing list, please contact us at 888.443.4283 or send an email to info@gatewaywoods.org. Finally, if you would like to receive a monthly email detailing how the work at Gateway Woods is bringing help and healing to those in need, please consider joining our Restoring Hope email list. You can do so at gatewaywoods.org/newsletter or by emailing jon.ringger@gatewaywoods.org.
Alabama, Athens
Lisa Aschliman, Kristy Moore

This past month we were blessed to be able to gather as a church family. It was so nice to be able to catch up with our brothers and sisters in person. We ask for continued prayers for Sis. Carolyn Lewis and her family as she continues her battle with cancer.

The ALive board met, and in light of many states still under restrictions due to COVID-19 and the restrictions on venues in Alabama, ALive 2020 has been cancelled. Our hope and prayer is that by next year there will be a good handle on COVID-19 and we will be able to resume with ALive 2021.

"Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you." Philippians 4:9

As always, if you are planning to pass through the area and need a place to stay, call Sis. Rebekah Klaus at 815.674.5411 for our guest house accommodations.

Arizona, Phoenix
Marge Lindenbaum

"Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust." Psalms 103:13-14

My dad loved his kids. He had ten and I remember him saying he wouldn’t take a million dollars for any one of us and wouldn’t give a plug nickel for another one just like us. There were a lot of things he said that remain with me and turned out to be quite true over the years. He was an honest man. I did not realize it until long after he was gone, but I believe he loved truth. He sought to be truthful in all his dealings, even when it cost him or put him at a disadvantage, which it sometimes did. It is a great gift to have been brought up with that kind of example. It is something of a lost art, and I must confess I did not love truth for many years. The Holy Spirit awakened me to the value of truth over time and caused me to realize how little regard I had for it. He moved me to pray for a heart that loved truth, and for my eyes to be opened to keep me from being deceived. It was not something within my own power to accomplish and was an earnest prayer. Very soon after I prayed it, I began to recognize the Holy Spirit working. The most profound example was a night I was invited to another culture’s winter celebration – near the time we celebrate Christmas. There was a large sign up on the stage with a word written in a different language. When I looked at it, I saw “EVIL” clearly spelled out on the sign. I thought it strange they would put that out on the stage and asked the people I was with if they saw it. None of them did, until they looked again, and then they could see it, but it was evident to me from the moment we sat down. I said a prayer of thanks and watched the program with what I believe was some additional insight from the Spirit.

We are living in a time when truth is not only valued little, it is generally mocked, vilified, and labeled prejudicial or intolerant. If a person professes to hold “absolute truth” (from the Department of Redundancy Department), there are plenty of voices proclaiming no such thing exists. 2 Thessalonians 2:10 refers to those who perish, “because they received not the love of the truth”, and even tells us God will send a strong delusion, so those people will believe a lie. There are many warnings about being deceived, and the only way to avoid being deceived is to love and seek out truth. Since Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6), to find truth, we need to seek out Jesus. We need to renew our passion for truth and pursue it at all costs. Our enemy is seeking to deceive and destroy everyone he can and will likely succeed with those who hold little regard for it. If we embrace truth, we will worship truly, be sanctified, guided by the Spirit, hear the voice of Jesus, and we will be made free. (John 4:23; 8:32; 17:17; 16:13; 18:37). If we reject it, it will be taken from us.

“...the father to the children shall make known thy truth.” Isaiah 38:19

The Phoenix church continues to observe the social gathering restrictions recommended by our government, although we have been authorized to resume in-person meetings. We have a committee looking into the best way to do so safely. In the meantime, we are blessed by online services from our local ministers and with song
from some of our members. We appreciate their willingness to serve us from an empty church.

Sis. Jan Haine passed away from complications of an infection and CHF. Her family was unable to see her for a month due to restrictions. It is heartbreaking to think of being alone when sick and dying, but exhilarating to consider waking up face to face with the One who loves you more than anyone. Sis. Jan joined our congregation late in life and brought joy and laughter for the time she was with us. We offer our condolences to her family and will keep them in our prayers.

Our local HarvestCall continues to operate, and is serving a local African refugee community with provisions of food, as they are experiencing supply chain issues. What a blessing it is to be able to help others in their time of need! Our prayers continue for all those who have been affected by COVID-19, for our leadership, and for the Holy Spirit to bring many souls to salvation during these unusual times.

Arizona, Prescott
Autumn Rokey

Congrats to Kate Koehl (Bro. Lane and Sis. Beth Koehl) on her High School Graduation! We know that the school year did not end the way she, or any of us expected. We can be reminded, however, in the small and big unexpected changes in life that God is with us. In the unknown, God’s answer to Job is always a comfort.

Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said…where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof: When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?” Job 38:1,4-7.

God created the earth. He created us, knows us, and knows what is to come.

Arizona, Tucson
Dean and Jackie Knobloch
Greetings to all! This verse has been a comfort to me in these uncertain times:

“Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from him cometh my salvation. He only is my defence; I shall not be greatly moved.” Psalm 62:1-2.

We held our annual business meeting via Zoom and elected offices for the coming terms. Bro. Dean Knobloch will continue as treasurer, Bro. Garth Knobloch will serve as trustee and Sis. Lisa Knapp will serve on the kitchen committee. We wish to thank Sis. Sandy Bauer for taking care of the kitchen committee the last 3 years. Further discussion was held on how and when to resume gathering in church and the ministers and trustees will be meeting to make a plan on how to proceed. As always we wish to thank Elder Bro. Ben Wiegand for his oversight and care of our congregation.

It would be an understatement to say all are ready to be reconvening in church, and so it is our prayer and hope that we will soon be able to gather as the laws of the land and the Elder Committee recommend.

California, San Diego
Sarah Fulop
The end of quarantine is in sight as San Diego has slowly begun opening some of its businesses this month. The state still has not approved gatherings so Zoom worship will continue for the time being. While many of us couldn’t wait for things to return to normal, now with normal schedules commencing, we are beginning to complain about the increasing traffic and the havoc on the economy.

As humans we tend to be easily impatient. We need to understand why things happen; we seek justice for injustices in our lives while desiring grace and mercy for our shortcomings. We can look at the pandemic with a scarcity mindset: we are stuck at home, church is cancelled, the government is restricting our freedoms. However, with the amazing technology of Zoom we were able to share a Sunday service with Altadena without driving 2 hours. It was very encouraging to share each other’s burdens and connect with fellow believers. Adopting this abundance mindset instead, we can begin to view this pandemic as a blessing: a time to refine us, to grow our trust in God and wake up the dormant aspects of our spiritual walk. Being uncomfortable forces us to reflect
on the things we place our security in, which at times can be in the fleeting things of this world.

This year, my own suffering lead to unfulfilled expectations and unmet dreams. It was easy to feel afraid and angry at situations that were beyond my control. But through prayer, mediation in the word and counseling with wise brothers and sisters I began see that God loved me deeply and the suffering was actually a blessing to grow my faith and trust in his plan. For a while, his plan didn’t make sense, but he was refining my heart to go through one of the hardest months of my life.

Just as the panic and uncertainty of the virus set in, my older sister had severe complications from childbirth. Two weeks later, amidst thousands of prayers on the behalf of our family, God called her home. My human mind can dwell on the unfairness of the situation especially since loss is not a new thing for our family. However, God has used this last year to mold my heart to trust him even when everything seems to unravel. Rather than being angry at the outcome, I found myself praying that God could use the painful situation for his glory. When a friend reached out commenting that our family’s humble requests for prayers not only encouraged her to pray but also rekindled a yearlong dormant relationship with God, I knew God was answering my prayers. A year prior, my heart would not have been in that state. On this side of heaven, I may never understand why my sister had to die or why there is a worldwide pandemic, but I do know that God uses these times to mold our hearts to trust in his provision. It’s through the crucible of suffering we learn how to have an abundant and overcoming life with Christ.

While the threat to physical health and financial fallouts are real fears, take heart that this world is not our home and our God is walking with us every step of the way. Like Job we can say, “...the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.” Job 1:21

"Behold I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.” Isaiah 48:10

"Fear none of these things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried, and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Revelation 2:10

Colorado, Denver
Tess Leman
We are thankful there are still things to celebrate during this unenjoyable time of limited interaction. Baby Stoller (due in July to Bro. Jared and Sis. Rabekah) was celebrated with a baby shower open-house style! Such joy the pending birth of life brings!

We are thankful there are still things to celebrate during this unenjoyable time of limited interaction. Baby Stoller (due in July to Bro. Jared and Sis. Rabekah) was celebrated with a baby shower open-house style! Such joy the pending birth of life brings!

Connecticut, Rockville
Heidi Beutel, Kim Schneider
We are thankful for the gift of new life as we rejoice in the birth of Cole Samuel Virkler. He was welcomed home by parents Bro. Sam and Sis. Amanda and big sister Avery. Cole’s grandparents are Bro. Phil and Sis. Michelle Bahler and Bro. John and Sis. Maureen Virkler.

We rejoice with Kayleigh Wiegand (Bro. Brad and Sis. Deanna) as she has surrendered her heart to the Lord and seeks to work out her soul salvation. May the grace of God be with her as she begins on this new journey.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Sis. Joanne Eleiott and her family, Zach, Annaliese (Adam Falkowski) and Rachel as well as her grandson Jaxson Falkowski, as they said goodbye to their dear husband, dad and grandpa, Rich. We are also prayerful for Sis. Charlotte Limberger and her family as they laid to rest her step-son David Limberger. He was the son of our late Bro. Walt.

District of Columbia, Washington
Henrietta Meyer
"For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live and do this or that." James 4:15.

My report usually shares news of our caretakers and visiting ministers. I know there have been caretakers and ministers that planned to come to DC, but things beyond their control said otherwise. As I write this, the District of Columbia and the close suburbs in
Maryland and Virginia, where we all live and the church is located, have not even begun Phase I.

The longer we are apart, the more we appreciate being able to join together virtually for services.

If you are planning to visit Washington, D.C. area for vacation or business, please contact Sis. Henrietta Meyer at 703 904-8301 or hmeyer2831@gmail.com for assistance and to let us know how many to expect for Sunday services.

**Florida, Fort Lauderdale**

**Renee Mangold**

There were no visiting ministers this past month for obvious reasons. The virus has affected us all.

It’s been a challenging time with lifestyles turned upside down. Certain areas of the US have been impacted differently and opinions on what’s right and what’s not, who’s right and who’s not, are apparent.

I know you can’t be wrong if you rely on the words of Jesus and trust them implicitly. He told us that no one would know when it was the end times and to just be prepared always. Believing that God has a plan for all of us and that we may not understand or see it at the time does not negate that. His plan is perfect and we are exactly where he wants us to be in this time of our life.

In the interim of not being allowed to gather in church, we have been meeting twice a week for Zoom meetings. It has been a blessing to see our loved ones and visit, have devotions and then mute everyone so our song leader can sing (it doesn’t work if we all sing).

Lastly, we want to send God’s blessings with Bro. Evan and Sis. Kristin Sinn as they move on to the next chapter of their life in Silverton, Oregon. We will dearly miss you, your youth and the enthusiasm that you brought to the Ft. Lauderdale church.

**Florida, Fort Myers**

**Mary Masters, Terri Young**

After what has been many weeks of having services online, May 17 was our first service of actually assembling together in church. It is good to be one step closer to the privileges we have enjoyed of worshipping together as a body. With all that is going on around us in this present time, let’s keep our eyes on the eternal things, knowing this world is not our final home. We are thankful for answered prayers as Sis. Margaret Getz had two successful surgeries here in Fort Myers recently. She is recovering well and recently stated that she appreciates the prayers. Our prayers are also with Bro. Larry and Sis. Teresa Bruellman and family as Larry’s father (Bro. Harley Bruelman) passed away May 12 in West Bend, Iowa. This was just three months after Larry’s mother (Sis. Adele) passed, so it is a blessing to the family. Also, we will be keeping the family of Sis. Carol Bucher in prayer as she passed away May 14 in Valparaiso, Indiana. She and Bro. Ken worshiped seasonally with us for many years. We rejoice when believers go Home, but loved ones take a piece of our heart with them when they go.

**The New Beginnings**

The New Beginnings is very happy to welcome another young mom and daughter into our program! Mackenzie and her one-year old daughter, Alina, moved in with us the middle of May. Mackenzie is a full-time student at FSW, and her long-term goal is clinical psychology. She comes out of many years of foster care, and recently out of an abusive situation. We look forward to getting to know her and introducing her to our church family. We already told her what a warm and loving group of people we are blessed to worship with in Fort Myers.

Arzu finished her first semester in nursing with As and Bs and got a job as a home health caretaker for the summer. Although I think it took some adjusting to being apart from Demir after 2 months together, it has been good for Arzu, and Demir is glad to be back in daycare with his friends and teachers.

We appreciate your ongoing prayers as we continue to seek an Executive Director for our program. We are so thankful for Mackenzie and Alina, but we still have apartments available for more moms and children, and for mentors. We want to experience growing pains!

Our little group here at TNB has been having a weekly Bible study on Dr. David Jeramiah’s Overcomer series. I think two of the sections that stood out, especially during these uncertain times, were Overcoming Anxiety
with Peace and Overcoming Fear with Faith. It has been good to be comforted by God’s promises, and to look at our perspective about faith. The study reminds us that it’s not how much faith we have or that we should try to believe more, but rather how big God is and to get to know him better. The issue is not the size of our faith, but the object of our faith. “Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Romans 5:1

Another topic of discussion during our Bible study has been our prayer life. Doesn’t it seem that more than ever the enemy tries to distract us from prayer? We talked about how prayer should be a dialogue, not a monologue, and not to just pray “words.” When our thoughts are scattered and distracted, pray out loud. Prayer is a time to focus on God, not on our problems. Such an admonishment to me as too often I want to jump right into the asking part!

May God give us hearts and minds to focus on Philippians 4:8,9.“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; If there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.” Amen!

Florida, Sarasota
Sandra Kaeb

The country being in a panic and everyone seems so scared, churches being closed and we are told to stand six feet apart. No more than ten to gather together seamed to become the new norm, many in isolation with depression starting to set in. What joy it is to now look forward to this coming Sunday, May 17, as we plan to reassemble at church. Oh, how we are prone to take for granted so many things and don’t understand how good we have it until it is taken away. Let’s remember daily to thank our heavenly Father for the many blessings he has given us.

Prayers are continuing for Bro. Dick Van Deest as he is getting radiation treatments. May he and his dear wife feel our love and prayers and find comfort and peace through God’s word.

We rejoice to hear that Bro. Rod Stoller and Bro. Gordon Bryant are home from the hospital and rehab. May God grant healing and peace to these dear brothers for a full recovery.

Sis. MaryLou Joos had back surgery and is recuperating from hip surgery, our prayers continue for her.

We were saddened to hear of the passing of Bro. John Zollinger (Sis. Marge, Smithville, OH). Bro. John and Sis. Marge spent winter months in Florida and he will be dearly missed. His faithfulness, kind, loving heart were always such an example. Prayers are with Sis. Marge and the family.

As we have just come through Mother’s Day, have we taken the time to thank God for our loving, faithful mothers.

"Somebody somewhere was praying that night, when Jesus came in and I saw the light.
It must have been momma I heard her before, as she knelt by her bedside her tears touched the floor.
She prayed to the master and wouldn’t give in, till she knew all her children have been born again.
Just an old fashion momma but she loved the Lord, as her prayers touched the master, her tears touched the floor."

- Waldner

Note of Thanks

We want to thank everyone for the cards and prayers for Bro. Dick as he goes through radiation treatments.

- Dick and Nancy Van Deest

Haiti, Bonne Fin - Hospital Lumiere
Rick and Komari Aberle

Greetings in Jesus’ name from Hospital Lumiere. We are grateful that we did not have any COVID-19 cases present at the hospital during our preparation period. The staff at
the hospital was able to finish those preparations in the last part of April. As of this writing, no COVID-19 patients have sought care at the hospital. However, in recent weeks, we have seen numbers begin to increase in Haiti.

With travel restrictions, we have had no visitors during the past month. While this is unfortunate, we are thankful for God’s continued grace and sustenance for the team here. We are thankful for the gifts of technology as we have been able to attend our “home” services in new ways in the past weeks.

Haiti, Les Cayes  
Mike and Susie Walder  
Greetings from Les Cayes.
As we enter the rainy season, we appreciate the increased number of rainbows we have been blessed with. Every time the bow is in the sky we are reminded that God keeps all his promises, and specifically that floods will never cover the entire earth again. In the books of Ezekiel and Revelation brilliant rainbows were seen around the throne of God. They are amazing displays of both his majesty and his holiness; probably the ones we are fortunate to see on earth are only a peek into the heavenlies.

We were thankful that recently Sis. Sheila Moser was able to safely return to Kansas and Bro. Mike Walder was able to return to his family in Ohio. Flights out of Haiti are very limited and there are none going back in at this time. There are many uncertainties all around us, but we are reminded that God’s time is always right.

“Go to now, ye that say, Today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.” James 4:13-15

Illinois, Belvidere  
Darcy Steffen  
As the stay at home order continues on for those of us in Illinois, we are reminded again and again that the church is not a physical location in which we gather. In many ways, I feel that this time has only served to strengthen us as a body and bring us closer together, and I am thankful for it!

We were blessed to have Elder Bro. Wayne (Sis. Camille) Hartzler from Rittman join us on Zoom and preach to us from God’s Word. It has also been nice to have others from across our congregations “visit” our little church.

The body of Christ came together to celebrate with Sis. Peg (Bro. Brian) Anliker on a milestone birthday. We invited Belvidere and friends from Elgin and the community to do a drive by birthday party for her! It seemed to be a blessing for her, and it gave us all such joy to see each other again, if only from behind a windshield.

We have had the opportunity to gather in Spirit over the course of the past month to learn more from God’s Word as we participated in Bible studies together. We started out by going through the book of Philippians and then did a study on the Holy Spirit and his work in our lives. We are grateful to the ministers and Bro. Sam (Sis. Betty) Bachtold for leading these for us.

"O how lovely ‘tis to be  
With our Lord in unity;  
And united voices raise  
Him to bring our songs of praise.  
See in faith, and hope and love  
Lies the power from above;  
But one Baptism, faith, and Lord,  
Spirit, head, in one accord.  
Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,  
Three in one, so shall the host  
Of those born of God above  
Be as one in holy love.  
Also does this bond unite  
Heart and heart in faith and light;  
Many in one body be,  
Many souls in unity."  
Unity in Love, Zion’s Harp #181

Illinois, Bloomington-Normal  
Sara Anliker, Kinsey Dotterer  
“He hath made everything beautiful in his time: also, he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.” Ecc. 3:11

Waiting and watching. For several months we have all been waiting and watching… and wondering. We listen to reports, statistics and stories of how lives have changed. Questions are being asked like, how long? and what if? Only God has the answers to these challenging questions.
What a comforting thought to know that our Father in heaven holds all things in his mighty hands. His timing is perfect for his glory.

We celebrate with Bro. Luke and Sis. Natalie Gudeman on the birth of their son Teo. (Grandparents are Elder Bro. Lynn and Sis Leonda Stieglitz of Leo, IN and Elder Bro. Randy and Sis. Becky Gudeman of Francesville, IN.) We also celebrate with Bro. Tofig and Sis. Amy Mammadov on the birth of their daughter Josie. (Grandparents Bro. Tim and Sis. Cathy Hohulin).

It has been an opportunity to find creative ways to support one another when we are so used to greetings, hugs and handshakes. We encourage and lift up Bro. Seth and Sis. Hannah Bollier as they take the next step into a new chapter in their lives and begin at Gateway Woods. They will be dearly missed.

Soon our graduates will be preparing to begin anew. We pray for strength and wisdom.

“Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.” Phil 4:9

**Illinois, Bradford**

**Becky Endress, Lena Stoller**

“For to me to live is Christ, but to die is gain…” Philippians 1:21

“I feel the same as I did before my heart surgery… either way (it turns out) is OK,” Bro. Dick assured Sis. Marilyn as they parted at the hospital ER. Late the night of May 8, while recovering from a lesser surgery, our Bro. Richard “Dick” Slutz was unexpectedly called Home. Bro. Dick is survived by his wife, Sis. Marilyn, children Bryson (Danell) Slutz, Emily (Joel) Austin, and Sis. Katie (Bro. Ben) Endress, thirteen grandchildren, and three brothers. Many of the church family and friends joined in a drive-by visitation and then listened from their cars as the family attended his funeral service inside the church, and walked to his last resting place. Bro. Dick is remembered as a peaceable and modest brother who loved the Lord, his family, and his church, and we will surely miss him when we are able to gather again.

Bro. Les and Sis. Barb Fehr are thankful for a new baby grandson! Brayden Isaiah was born to Calvin and Lauren (Hasbrook) Fehr of Normal, IL on March 22. Meanwhile, big brother Easton spent time with Grandpa and Grandma. Bro. Jerry and Sis. Wilma Kieser are his great grandparents.

May the Lord bless Calvin and Lauren and their little family. Dustin Moody, son of Jenny Moody, will soon leave for nine weeks basic training in the Army National Guard, returning for his senior year of high school. We wish him well in this endeavor. We have been blessed to have Bro. Grant Knobloch (Remington, IN) worshipping with us during an internship. We will miss him as he has relocated to Kansas City.

Congratulations and best wishes to our four high school graduates: Rachel Hausmann (Bro. Fred and Sis. Sue), Jessica Joos (Bro. Ralph and Sis. Jenny), Sis. Emma Kieser (Bro. Matt and Sis. Tracy), and Isaac Stahl (Bro. Wendell and the late Sis. Linda.) Though their final year of high school ended so abruptly, we have not forgotten them. We trust the Lord to bless and lead them throughout their lives.

**Illinois, Champaign**

**Brent Young**

We sorrow with our Sis. Amber Miller in the passing of her father, Bro. Orlan Miller (Sis. Carol, Gridley, IL). Bro. Orlan went home peacefully after a long battle with cancer.

Our men’s small group is studying the book of Genesis and in recent weeks we have spent some time studying Abram. Abram made many great decisions in his life based solely on his trust in a promise from God. In Romans, it says that Abram ‘staggered not’ at that promise and in James he is called the ‘friend of God’. As we discussed how Abram dealt with the many unknowns in his life it reminded us of the lessons we’re all learning now, in the age of COVID-19.

I’ve been struck by the contrast between the disinformation, lack of clarity, and lack of vision in our current circumstances versus the foundational truths of the Bible. In light of Abram’s willingness to move at God’s command, my conclusion has been simply this: “Even now, there is more that is certain than uncertain.” We have a promise and we too are looking for a city, whose builder and maker is God.
This past month we continued virtual services through videoconferencing, including Bible study, Fellowship Night, and a Women of the Word devotion. Maintaining fellowship and connectedness has required extra creativity, and we are grateful for those who have put in the effort to organize the various activities.

Sis. Christine Eckel passed away in early May, just before her 97th birthday. We praise God for her victory in Jesus, but we will miss her presence and example. We were saddened that circumstances didn’t allow us to gather as a church family to bid her farewell. We pray for God’s peace and comfort upon her family.

We failed to report Alexa Steffen and Clayton Grassi were married in November. Their parents are Bro. Kim and Sis. Diane Steffen of Chicago and Sis. Cheryl and the late Bro. John Grassi of Peoria, IL.

Jade Steffen (Minneapolis, MN), the son of Bro. Kim and Sis. Diane, is engaged to Kelbie Roe of Medicine Lake, MN. Her parents are Johnny Roe (Blanchard, OK) and Stephanie Harling (Osceola, WI). They are planning an October wedding. We rejoice with the Steffen family for these joyous occasions, and we pray for God’s rich blessing on the new couples.

Congratulations to our high school graduates: Sis. Abbi Kaeb (Bro. Todd and Sis. Val), Sis. Joanna Walder (Bro. Dan and Sis. Pam), convert Micah Waldbeser (Bro. Mark and Sis. Janie), Daniel Hardison (Kathy Hardison), and Gracie Walder (Amy Walder). We wish them God’s blessings and direction on their future paths in life.

Deepest sympathies are extended to Bro. Bruce and Sis. Bonita Frank, and the family, in the loss of his sister, Sis. Joyce Eland (Bro. Brad, Iowa City, IA). Although our hearts weep with them, we also shed tears of joy and thankfulness for the example of strong faith and godliness that Sis. Joyce displayed during her lifetime. May God be felt strongly at your sides in the days ahead, and fill your hearts with peace and the hope of a reunion on heaven’s shores.

“I 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

Note of Thanks:
Thank you for all the love and cards that were sent for my 90th birthday. I appreciate the support and love from you all. Also, Sis. Lois and I want to extend our heartfelt thanks for all the support we have both received during Lois’ hospital stay and recovery at home. We are so
thankful for our church family and all those who prayed and supported us.

In Christ’s Love,
Bro. Duane and Sis. Lois Steffen

Illinois, Elgin
Amy Gasser

Although we still are not able to assemble in church as we have in the past, we are thankful for the use of technology to see and hear the services on Sundays and Wednesday nights, and we thank our ministers for providing these for us. Special thanks to Elder Bro. Dan Moser, who presented an all-church topical presentation on Wednesday evening, May 6, entitled “Prayer.”

We are praying for Bro. Dick and Sis. Judy Klopfenstein, as Bro. Dick has recently been placed on hospice care.

Bro. Roger and Sis. Karen Weiss welcomed a new granddaughter, Adalynn Joy, who was born on April 16 to John and Alison Sweet. Her paternal grandparents are John Sweet of Elgin and Carol Sweet of Florida, and her siblings are Tayden, Grayson, Lincoln, and Madden.

Illinois, Eureka
Debra Blunier, Lavonne Schumacher

“There is beauty all around
when there’s love at home.
There is joy in every sound,
when there’s love at home.”

Three of our families welcomed little babes this month into their hearts and homes! Remi Rose Getz was welcomed into the loving arms of her parents, Robert and Emily, on May 2. Siblings Sawyer and Sophie are excited to have a new sister! Grandparents of Remi are Bro. Wayne and Sis. Mary Getz and Mark and Lisa Schmidgall. Bro. Colin and Sis. Kyla Knapp were blessed with another daughter, Aspen Heath. She was born on May 7 and is being loved by sisters Dalyah, Avery, and Nora. Grandparents are Bro. Keith and Sis. Nadine Edelman and Bro. Steve and Sis. Lori Knapp. Quinn Andrew blessed the lives of Bro. Jared and Sis. Sarah Fehr, Audrey, Serena, Jayla, and Austin on May 10. Grandparents also welcoming him into their families are Bro. Tom and Sis. Edie Stoller and Bro. Ken and Sis. Sandy Fehr. Our dear Sis. Dorothy Ginzel was born to loving parents on May 18, 1918. As she turns 102, we wish her God’s richest blessings!

“As in the cottage, there is joy,
When there’s love at home;
Hate and envy ne’er annoy,
When there’s love at home.

Roses blossom ’neath our feet,
All the earth’s a garden sweet,
Making life a bliss complete,
when there’s love at home.”

As we recently celebrated Mother’s Day, we express our thankfulness to each Godly mother who showed or is showing her children love at home each day. Eighteen years ago, four mothers from our congregation brought little souls into this world. Those little souls have reached adulthood so quickly and we pray that as they graduate from high school, they will seek a rebirth in the near future. Congratulations to Maria Cottrell (Bro. John and Sis. Gloria), Lane Schumacher (Bro. Dale and Sis. Lavonne), Jesse Wiegand (Bro. Andy and Sis. Vicky), and Levi Zimmerman (Bro. Matt and Sis. Sara). We also extend congratulations and well wishes to those in our congregation who have graduated from college.

We extend our deepest sympathy to Doug and LoriJean Wood and their family in the loss of their mother and grandmother, Mary Wood. We pray that God will comfort their hearts during this difficult time.

“Kindly heaven smiles above,
When there’s love at home.
All the earth is filled with love,
When there’s love at home.

Sweeter sings the brooklet by,
Brighter beams the azure sky;
O there’s One who smiles on high,
When there’s love at home.

Love at home.

Sweeter sings the brooklet by,
Brighter beams the azure sky;
O there’s One who smiles on high,
When there’s love at home.

Love at home.

Time doth softly sweetly glide,
When there’s love at home.”

The Christian Home,
Hymns of Zion #64

Recently in a sermon, we were reminded to look around outside us at the green grass, beautiful flowers, and trees coming to life this Spring to see the work of God in each unique beauty. As the earth is renewed and gives us hope, let our souls also be renewed and as Titus 2:13 says, let us be “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.”
Illinois, Fairbury

Kati Meiss, Trish Steidinger

“There shall be showers of blessing: This is the promise of love; There shall be seasons refreshing, Sent from the Savior above.”
There Shall Be Showers of Blessing, Tabernacle Hymns, #208

We feel God’s blessings on our Fairbury Church, even amidst the uncertainty of the time. God is always faithful.

We rejoice with Bro. Abe and Sis. Kara Zehr, who have received the blessing of a baby girl, Josie Adeline. Little Josie is welcomed home by her brother, Nyle. Her grandparents are Bro. Nelson and Sis. Amy Zehr, and the late Bro. Eldon and the late Sis. Stephanie Kaeb.

Another blessing is the engagement of Sis. Kate Stoller (Bro. Bryan and Sis. Kara) to Bro. Clay Zimmerman of Forrest (Bro. Kent and Sis. Paulette). Sis. Kate has been doing an Equine Internship over the past several weeks in the state of Oregon after receiving certificates as an Equine Manager and Equine Specialist. We wish Sis. Kate and Bro. Clay the Lord’s blessings as they plan for their upcoming wedding, and we look forward to having Sis. Kate back in our area.

“I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.” Psalm 40:8

As our graduates reach this turning point in their lives, we pray they will have this desire upon their hearts, to do the Lord’s will going forward. Our high school graduates are Marcus Blunier (Bro. Dave and Sis. Kara), Corbin Moser (Bro. Jeff and Sis. Sara), Bro. Bryce Teubel (Bro. Nathan and Sis. Jennifer), Sis. Hannah Hartman (Bro. Ryan and Sis. Lori) and Sis. Andrea Teubel (Bro. Ed and Sis. Melanie). College graduates are Sis. Lori Young (Bro. Bruce and Sis. Bev), Bro. Ashton Schieler (Bro. Glen and Sis. Charity, Gridley, IL) and Sis. Shea Hartman (Bro. Caleb). We pray the Lord will lead all of these graduates in plain paths.

Our prayers are with Sis. Colleen Walter, who recently returned home from a hospital stay. We pray for a complete recovery for Sis. Colleen.

We think of our four converts that had to have their testimonies and baptisms postponed due to not being able to assemble. We pray for patience and grace for Lily Blunier, Audrey Leman, Heidi Stoller and Kyle Stoller as they look forward to, and wait, for this longed-for event to be rescheduled. We, too, look forward with longing to assembling and enjoying such a weekend with our brothers and sisters after this time of absence one from another.

Illinois, Forrest

Carissa Knapp, Marsha Lanz

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

As we adjust to the new normal in our virus-directed lives, we are finding small gifts amidst the uncertainties, such as cleared calendars, unhurried family meals and more time to strengthen family bonds. May we cherish those treasures and take comfort in knowing that even when everything around us seems unsettled, God is faithful and unchanging.

In his faithfulness, God continues to draw souls to him. We rejoice with Lyndon Schaffer (Bro. Erik and Sis. Michelle) and Alexandria Brown (Bro. Joel and Sis. Lana) as they begin their repentance.

We also rejoice with Bro. Joe and Sis. Rhonda Rudin as they welcome Russell Paul into their family. Doting on little brother are siblings Ryleigh, Taylor and Roman. Thankful grandparents are Bro. Craig and Sis. Trudy Rudin and Bro. John and Sis. Lavonne Teubel.

Our church family is also growing, with the engagements of Bro. Jared Knapp (Bro. Harlan and Sis. Jean) and Sis. Rachael Manz (Bro. Russell and Sis. Vera, Junction, OH) and Bro. Clay Zimmerman (Bro. Kent and Sis. Paulette) and Sis. Kate Stoller (Bro. Bryan and Sis. Kara, Fairbury, IL). May these dear couples be bound in the three-fold cord of love.

Our prayers are with Sis. Beth Ifft, Sis. Melba Zimmerman, and Sis. Velma Koehl as they recently spent time in the hospital. May they continue to feel God’s nearness in the days ahead.

Our beloved Sis. Marjorie Friedman (Bro. Henry, dec.) was recently laid to rest. Our prayers are with her dear children: David and Wynne Friedman, Jean Ann and Mike Wenger, Curt and Robin Friedman, Scott and
Anita Friedman, all of Fairbury, IL; Teri Kidd of Chenoa, IL; and Mark and Crystal Friedman of Cape Fair, MO. Our prayers are also with Bro. Matt Edwards as he mourns the loss of his brother, John Bogucki of Reading, OH.

While their high school graduation was probably not how they envisioned, we still offer sincere congratulations to our graduating seniors: Alexandrea Brown (Bro. Joel and Sis. Lana), Elise Dotterer (Bro. Jason and Sis. Lynn), Sis. Grace Eisenmann (Bro. Dan and Sis. Abby), Andrea Edelman (Bro. Kraig and Sis. Carrie), Cassidy Edelman (Bro. Kent and Sis. Bethany), Bro. Lucas Kaeb (the late Bro. Eldon and the late Sis. Stephanie), Damaris Kilgus (Bro. Kevin and Sis. Denise), Kylee Mueller (Bro. Jay and Sis. Jolene), Bro. Wade Mueller (Bro. Stan and Sis. Kristen), Haley Slagel (Bro. Kevin and Sis. Jodi) and Bro. Jerrett Zimmerman (Bro. Josh and Sis. Molly). May they look to God for guidance and direction as they end one chapter of their lives and begin another.

Leaning on the wisdom and direction from our Heavenly Father, our church family welcomed two new ministers to help serve our congregation. Our prayers are with Bro. Ted Bachtold (Sis. Teresa) and Bro. Jeremy Leman (Sis. Shara) and their families as they take up the mantle of servant leadership. May they feel our support and God’s guidance as they speak the truth in love.

**Illinois, Goodfield**

**Amy Hinrichsen, Judy Knapp**

“The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him.” Nahum 1:7

Such loving comfort to know that even in the trying times we are experiencing with the COVID-19 virus, that our God is there and he has it all in his loving hands. All he asks is for us to continue to glorify him through it all! It is definitely a test of patience and love as I’m sure we are all ready to be back to “normal”, especially going to church and the fellowship we share with our beloved church families. We are so thankful for technology that allows us to listen or watch services in the safety and comfort of our own homes. Here in Goodfield, some are also doing Zoom fellowship gatherings and that has been a wonderful blessing of interaction with those we miss so much. I hope by next issue, we will be able to begin assembling together again, Lord willing! Even though we are social distancing, we are still trying to go on with life and that means weddings that were scheduled must be celebrated even if in a unique way.

On May 3, our dear Sis. Sabrina Glueck (George and Pauline) and Bro. Cole Zeller (Morton, IL) celebrated their marriage with only their immediate families present. Bro. Willie and Sis. Danielle from Morton, IL are Bro. Cole’s parents. The newlyweds were pleasantly surprised when the church family planned a drive-by reception after the ceremony to extend our love and congratulations. Along the same lines, we hosted a drive-by shower in the church parking lot on Friday May 15 to honor 6 couples who are already married or soon to be married. It was a beautiful evening and it was good to see all who drove by to share with these dear couples: Bro. Cole and Sis. Sabrina Zeller, Rob (Bro. Brian and Sis. Lisa) and Melissa (McGregor) Rieke, Audrey Ruegsegger (Bro. Lee and Sis. Alice) and Felix Vilguens, Sis. Taylor Wiegand (Bro. Kevin and Sis. Lindsay) and Bro. Drew Gerber (Bro. Chad and Sis. Jam, Bluffton, IN), Bro. Nate Hartman (Bro. Jim and Sis. Rec) and Sis. Haley Rokey (Bro. Ben and Sis. Shelley), and Gabe Swords (Bro. Kris and Sis. Heather) and Nicole Webb. Praying for all of these young couples that God will bless their marriages and give them many years together.

Bro. Wes and Sis. Joyce Hohulin recently celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary and we praise God for the example of a Godly marriage. We also welcome them back home after the winter spent in Phoenix, AZ.

We are thankful for the peace Reggie Plattner expresses and, as a result, his desire to be baptized in the near future. His thankful parents are Bro. Kurt and Sis. Joan Plattner.

We would like to honor our High School graduates and wish them well as they take the next step in their lives. Commencement ceremonies have either been canceled or done in drive-by fashion and with social distancing a reality there are no parties scheduled at this time but
we want them to know their church family loves and prays for them.


Many of our loved ones have health issues, have had surgeries or injuries and we just lift them all up to the Father and especially our dear ones at the nursing home who are in strict quarantine at this time, we send special prayers heavenward for them. We are thankful the home has remained safe and no cases of the virus there to report. Praying daily for the health professionals who work with these dear residents who can’t understand why their loved ones can’t come visit. Sis. Marian Wieand celebrated her 98th birthday and Bro. Roy Roth his 95th in the past week. Both are residents at the home.

We shared sympathy and love with Bro. Mike and Sis. Gretchen Zimmerman and their family as they lost Sis. Gretchen’s father, Jim Vietti. They are thankful to report that Jim acknowledged his need for a Savior before departing this life. Another victory won! Blessings to all, until we meet again.

“For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will be withhold from them that walk uprightly.” Psalm 84:11

Note of Thanks
A special thank you for the cards and prayers on our 60th anniversary. We have been blessed and appreciate our friends and church family.

In Christian love, Bro. Kenneth and Sis. Phyllis Rokey

Illinois, Gridley
Perry Klopfenstein
Our dear brother in faith, Orlan R. Miller, 77, passed away on May 4 at his home. He is survived by his wife of 51 years, Sis. Carol and by five children: Sis. Carla (Bro. Scan) Cornell, Bro. Alan (Sis. Theresa) Miller, Bro. Arlan (Sis. Katie) Miller, Cathy (Brandon) Jones, all of Gridley, and Sis. Amber Miller, Champaign. And by ten grandchildren. He is also survived by a sister, Sis. Vera Miller, Gridley. He was preceded in death by his parents, Bro. Rudy and Sis. Esther Miller. Bro. Orlan served in the sound room for over fifty years at our Gridley congregation. He was a kindly man dedicated to our beloved church. His life was one of farming and raising Angus cattle.

We had a goodly number of graduates this spring. High School graduates were Bro. Graham Baner, Kylie Bazzell, Emma Betts, Ashley Cela, Joseph Funk, Madison Funk, Myra Gramm, Olivia Gramm, Anna Hale, Zach Herr, Rodney Kaeb, Wes Stork, Ashlyn Mool, and Andrea Teubel. Graduating from higher education were Sis. Emily Wettstein, Sis. Paige Metz, Bro. Adam Kuntz and Bro. Joel Metz. May God be with each graduate in the years ahead.

Illinois, Morton
Annette Tanner
Even though we have spent another month of “staying home” and not being able to gather with our church family, we have had many reasons to rejoice and celebrate God’s goodness.

We welcome Bro. Landon Dietrich who is now making Morton his home church. We look forward to the time we can all meet him in person.

April 26 we heard the engagement of our Bro. Jeff Strunk, son of Bro. Gene and Sis. Joyce, to Sis. Amanda Herrmann, daughter of Bro. Doug and Sis. Angie, all of Princeville, IL. We wish Bro. Jeff and Sis. Amanda God’s blessings as they make plans for their wedding day and life together.

May 3 our Bro. Cole Zeller and Sis. Sabrina Glueck (Goodfield, IL) were united in holy matrimony at our church in Goodfield, IL. Their parents are Bro. Will and Sis. Dannelle Zellerm (Goodfield, IL) and George and Pauline Glueck. Although only a small group could gather in church, hundreds were able
to watch or listen to the wedding ceremony online. Also, many met at the Goodfield church for a drive-by reception line following the wedding. We congratulate this dear couple and trust they could feel the love and support of family and friends on their special day. We welcome Sis. Sabrina into our Morton church family.

Our May Family Worship Night was in honor of our high school graduate Sis. Tori Sauder, daughter of Bro. Todd and Sis. Wendy Sauder. Her grandpa, retired Elder Bro. Ted Witzig, Sr. (Sis. Cindy), gave not only Sis. Tori, but all of us, many encouraging teachings from God’s Word. He reminded us all that we are in a spiritual battle. As we go forward into the future, we should have faith to take the first step, even when we can’t see the whole staircase.

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

As we have celebrated Mother’s Day and look forward to honoring our fathers in June, let us follow God’s instruction.

“My son, keep thy father’s commandment and forsake not the law of thy mother: Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck. When thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee. For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life.” Proverbs 6:20-23

Even though we have enjoyed many happy times, we want to extend our deepest sympathy to two families who have said farewell to a loved one. Eleanor Kay Alberts, Springfield, IL passed away on April 29. She is the sister of our Bro. John (Sis. Marcia) Kelley. May 16 Bro. Robert “Bob” Moser entered his Heavenly Home. He is survived by his wife Sis. Barb and four sons: Bryan (Mary) Moser, Morton, Curt (Lisa) Moser, Germantown Hills, Bro. Mark (Sis. Colleen) Moser, Tremont, and Bro. Matthew (Sis. Aimee) Moser, Morton. His daughter Julie, age 2 1/2, preceded him in death in 1966. As we mourn the loss of these dear ones, we can also rejoice that they are now safe in the arms of Jesus.

While we continue to live in uncertain and “quieter” times, we were encouraged to use this time for the furtherance of the gospel, each one in our own special way. When our lives seem to be turned up-side-down, let us not forget to thank God for his many blessings. “God of unlimited compassion, Thou never ending fount of love With countless hosts in meek submission We praise Thee now, O Lord above, For grace and patience Thou has shown Ere this created world was known. For thy most wonderful redemption, For the atonement of our wrong, For Thy most gracious invitation And for Thy Word with promise strong. Yea, for the comfort of Thy Word Our hearts bring thanks

to Thee, O Lord.”

Give Thanks Unto the Father, Zion’s Harp #75

Illinois, Peoria
Bonnie Bach, Crystal Wettstein

As the restrictions continue due to the virus, I believe our hearts have become more eager to assemble with our church family. We appreciate the connections technology has afforded but long for real fellowship again! Our ministering brothers have given us uplifting words of encouragement from God’s Word through sermons and devotionals. We appreciate all the extra effort and time they have spent. Elder Bro. Tim Funk’s thoughtful leadership has helped guide us through these difficult times.

Kyler Harter (Bro. Ben and Sis. Heidi) has made known his desire to walk with the Lord. May God be with him and grant him grace!

Thoughts of sympathy go to Sis. Lucille (Bro. Wayne) Unsicker in the death of her brother, Walter Lauber. Marilynn Hermann (late Bro. Rich) who assembled with us for many years has passed away. May God comfort her family.

We have some happy grandparents in our church. Bro. Ron and Sis. Carol Christ welcomed a grandson, Louis John. His parents are Jon and Amber (Christ) Robertson. Bro. Mike and Sis. Rosie Waibel also have a new grandson, Kyler Michael, who has just been adopted by Bro. Austin and Sis. Jessica (Waibel) Knobloch (Princeville, IL). His big brother Israel now has a little buddy.
Congratulations to our high school graduates! They are: Bryce Brecklin (Thomas and Karen), Charlie Hemmer (Charles and Kim), Belinda Knobloch (Bro. Zach and Sis. Daniela), Megan Ricketts (Bro. Gary and Sis. Marie Unsicker and late Bro. Brian Ricketts), Julissa Schick (Bro. Bill and Sis. Joan), Delaney Steidinger (Bro. Duane and Sis. Debbie), Ashley Triplett (Bro. Matt and Sis. Kristi), and Terren Waibel (Bro. Matt and Sis. Lisa). We pray that these young people may follow in God’s ways!

“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.” Isaiah 26:3

May we remember to trust in the Lord!

Illinois, Princeville

Melinda Christ, Cherie White

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

It was made known to us the engagement of Sis. Amanda Herrmann (Bro. Doug and Sis. Angie) to Bro. Jeff Strunk (Bro. Gene and Sis. Joyce) of Morton. May God guide them as they prepare for their wedding.

We rejoice with many households welcoming babies! Bro. Doug and Sis. Ann Stahl are first-time grandparents as Sis. Sarah Stoller (Bro. Jason, Rittman, OH) gave birth to baby girl Lois Joann on April 18. Bro. Andy and Sis. Michelle Martin and big sisters Lela and Iris welcome their precious baby son and brother, Otto Andrew born on April 29. Grandparents are Bro. Sam and Sis. Mary Martin and Walt and Peggy Mueller.

Sweet baby boy Kyler Michael was lovingly adopted by Bro. Austin and Sis. Jessica Knobloch and Israel. Grandparents are Bro. Keith and Sis. Lisa Knobloch and Bro. Mike and Sis. Rose Waibel (Peoria, IL). May God lead these dear parents in the raising of their children.

Bro. Jordan and Sis. Kathy Feucht celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. They were married May 10, 1970. We wish them continued blessings in their marriage!

We rejoice with Jacob White (Bro. Craig and Sis. Cherie) as he begins his walk in the Lord. It is good to pray for our converts as they seek to put the old life behind them and begin anew in Christ.

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge…” Proverbs 1:7.

May God bless our graduating seniors from high school, Cassie Berchtold (Bro. Dave and Sis. Leann), Sis. Lindsey Givens (Bro. Erik and Sis. Deb), JoElle Knobloch (Bro. Jay and Sis. Deanne), Hope Mueller (Bro. Stacey and Tonda), Sis. Liberty Steffen (Bro. Matt and Sis. Deanna), Brenna Wagenbach (Bro. Tim and Sis. Tricia), Sis. Claire Wieland (Bro. Brian and Sis. Renee), Bro. Ethan Beutel (Bro. Steve and Sis. Kari), Bro. Kip Hoerr (Bro. Ryan and Sis. Joy) and Philip Sauder (Bro. Paul and Sis. Marie). May they feel God’s guidance at this time especially during the uncertainties of COVID-19.

Sis. Myca Steffen (Bro. Matt and Sis. Deanna) has heard God’s call to missionary service at CVE in Magdalena. As she prepares for her move this summer, may God continue to guide her as she makes decisions. As her sending church, may our Princeville church family keep her in prayer.

Sis. Joyce Blunier was hospitalized this past month and then she moved to Serenity Villa at Fairview Haven in Fairbury, IL. We surely will miss Sis. Joyce and pray that God be with her during this time.

We sorrow with our families who have lost loved ones in the past weeks. It is truly a difficult time especially with the current pandemic bringing many challenges for visiting sick ones or planning funerals. Bro. Richard “Dick” Graham passed away on May 3. May God comfort his children, Bro. Bruce Graham (Sis. Pam, Princeville, IL), Sis. Doreen Leuthold (Bro. Jerry, Indianapolis, IN), Sis. Darlene Herrmann (Bro. Roger) and Sis. Deanne Knobloch (Bro. Jay) both of Princeville, IL, Brent Graham (Deb, Edwards, IL), Blake Graham (Rachel, Princeville, IL), Brandon Graham of Peoria, IL and Bro. Ben “BJ” Graham (Sis. Suzanne, Indianapolis, IN). Even though plans did not transpire as we would have expected under normal circumstances, it was a blessing to be able to attend a drive-through visitation and have the opportunity to view the funeral service online.

We also extend our sympathy to Bro. Bob Wieland (Sis. Nancy) and Bro. John Wieland (Sis. Liz) on the passing of their brother-in-law Jack.
Summers. May Jack’s surviving spouse, Kay, feel God’s comfort and feel the prayers of loved ones.

Illinois, Roanoke

**Judy Sauder, Barb Schwind**

Sis. Joyce Hodel became a grandmother once again with the birth of Carrigan Belle to Tory and Annie Wentworth (Carlock, IL), on April 24. Bro. Dustin and Sis. Mandy Hodel welcomed Ruby Lynn into their family on May 4. Her older sisters and brother are Liberty, Caden, Josie, and Paisley and her thankful grandparents are Bro. Ron and Sis. Carol Koehl (Sarasota, FL) and Bro. Brad and Sis. Patty Hodel. We also are thankful for the arrival of Willow Kate born to Bro. Brett and Sis. Laura Hodel on May 8. Her older sister Oakleigh and her grandparents, Bro. Jim and Sis. Kay Knochel (Bay City, MI) and Bro. Curt and Sis. Jenell Hodel, are also thrilled with her arrival. We rejoice with these dear families and ask for God’s rich blessings upon them.

We have been studying the book of James on Wednesday evenings. On April 22, Elder Bro. Frank Sauder (Sis. Kathy) spoke on James 1. “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.” James 1:22. Among other things, Bro. Frank encouraged us to humbly receive God’s message, to reach out to the hurting and weak, and to control our tongue which exemplifies that our faith is at work.

On April 29, Bro. Jon Hodel (Sis. Megan) continued our study with James 2. “For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.” James 2:26. Bro. Jon mentioned that James warns against being a respecter of persons, for there is no respect of persons with God. He also exhorted us that good works flow from a faithful follower, whereas the works of the flesh are unproductive and unprofitable.

On May 13, Bro. Nate Hodel (Sis. Jamie) spoke on James 3. “But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.” James 3:8. Bro. Nate exhorted us that the tongue is the hardest member of our body to bring under subjection. Only with Jesus is it possible to control our tongue. Bro. Nate also explained that what we are on the inside comes out on the outside; our speech reflects the condition of our heart. We thank all of our brothers for faithfully serving us and helping us to grow in Christlikeness.

Our church commemorated the National Day of Prayer on May 7. The theme was “Pray God’s Glory Across the Earth” taken from Habakkuk 2:14. Bro. John Sauder led us in prayer for those who are sick. Bro. Jim Leman prayed for those who are fearful and worried, and Bro. Harold Roth led us in prayer for the safety of healthcare workers and for our nursing home. We also listened to hymns and worship songs by our Youth Choir and the Prairie Choristers. Bro. Nate Hoffman, administrator of our nursing home, then gave a brief update of how the residents and staff are doing. By God’s grace, so far none have been diagnosed with the COVID-19 virus. We are so thankful for our Lord’s continuing mercies. We are also grateful that through technology we can worship together while being “socially distanced.”

“God does not promise enough food for comfort or life - he promises enough so that you can trust him and do his will… Affliction is made the servant of godliness and humility and love… God seldom calls us to an easier life, but always calls us to know more of him and drink more deeply of his sustaining grace.” These are quotes from John Piper’s book “Don’t Waste Your Life.” I thought they were especially applicable in the days we are living in. I pray I can use these days to treasure Christ more, be more useful in the Kingdom, and have more of a passion for the lost.

Bill Ryals’ mother, Juanita Pauline Ryals, of Morton, IL, passed away on May 5. Sue Schupp of Chillicothe, IL, went to be with the Lord on May 9. She was the mother of Sarah (Steeves) Dominique. May the Lord comfort these dear families in their loss and help to fill the vacancy that remains in their family circle.

On May 17, Elder Bro. Frank thanked Bro. Byron Gerber and Bro. Matt Leman from our sound committee for their diligent efforts in keeping us digitally connected so we can worship as a church. He also expressed appreciation for our
ministers who provide leadership for our church especially during these unusual times. He then thanked our COVID-19 advisory committee for their wise insight into safe daily living practices and working toward eventually opening up our church. He also thanked our church trustees for their ongoing efforts in dealing with the logistics of our church reassembling. Finally he thanked our church for their patience, prayers, and perseverance through this pandemic. Bro. Frank discussed various scriptures that are especially relevant during this time. He then went on to explain the possible logistics of opening our church up. Finally, he exhorted us on the challenges of gathering back together as a church body. We want to above all exhibit grace and love to each other during this time of transition. We thank Bro. Frank for his leadership and for his wise and timely exhortations.

We continue to lift up Wally (Sis. Marilyn) Leman and Bro. Dave (Sis. Barb) Schwind for our Lord’s healing, strength and nearness as they go through health issues.

**Note of Thanks:**

I would like to thank my family, friends, and church family for the many acts of kindness shown me during my hospitalization and stay at the Roanoke Apostolic Christian Nursing Home. I appreciate the many prayers offered on my behalf and the cards, gifts, and well wishes of so many. May God bless you for your thoughtfulness.

Sincerely, Bro. John Sauder

**Note of Thanks:**

The family of Sis. Betty Hodel wishes to thank each of you for the love, prayers, and kindnesses offered on her behalf. She loved her church family and appreciated the love they showed her. May God bless each one of you.

**Illinois, Tremont**

**Debbie Aberle, Anita Koch**

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

With the pandemic, we have several little babies that we will not see until they are several months old! Congratulations to Bro. Paul and Sis. Victoria Baer as they welcomed Heinrich Thomas (May 9) into their hearts and home. Leanna is the big sister, and rejoicing are grandparents Bro. Todd and Sis. Val Steiner and Tom and Martha Baer (Tremont, IL).

Our prayers have been with Bro. Jon Wagenbach (Sis. Rebekah) as he suffered a finger injury, and required hospitalization and surgery. We pray that his finger will heal with several weeks of IV antibiotics.

Elder Bro. James Fehr invited us all on Mother’s Day to attend church in our vehicles. We certainly appreciate his efforts and those of our ministers in bringing forth God’s Word and encouragement during these times. Praise God for His love shown to us in many ways. Our younger mothers have been put to the test finishing out the school year teaching their children at home.

**Illinois, Washington**

**Lillian Pfaffmann**

“Rejoice in the Lord, and again I say, Rejoice!” Philippians 4:4

In Washington, our ministers and other brothers and sisters are working together on various committees to help us get through this challenging time. Their time, energy, thought, and prayer put into them is appreciated.

Belated congratulations to Bro. Justin and Sis. Marcia Koch in the engagement of their son, Bro. Logan to Sis. Cordin Gerber, both of Leo, IN. Sis. Cordin’s parents are Bro. Ked and Sis. Joanne Gerber of Bluffton, IN. May God bless them as they plan their lives together!

As one looks out over creation and beholds the beauty of the rebirth of the earth as spring unfolds, it sometimes boggles my mind to think that man cannot “see” the creator God! What a pity for he is missing the very reason he is here on Earth to do, to feel, to be, and to prepare himself for! How sad that he knows not where to find joy, hope, love, and peace! With our “stay at home orders”, many are suffering without his presence and may we sincerely pray that even in nature they will “see” him, seek him, and find him! Jesus uses so many nature examples in the Sermon on the Mount to help us, who are his children, “see”! May we find our solace in the lonely,
“out-of-normal”, frustrating, and/or confusing times, remembering that:

"Be not dismayed what-e’er betide,
God will take care of you
Beneath His wings of love abide,
God will take care of you.
God will take care of you,
Thru every day,
O’er all the way. . . ."

God Will Take Care of You.
Hymns of Zion #138

The Lord reassures us of his promises and provision throughout his Word as well as what he would have us to do with our days on earth to glorify his Holy name!

Indiana, Bluffton
Suzie Fiechter, Liana Reinhard, Olivia Steffen

“Come unto me, all ye that labour 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.” Matthew 11:28-30

While these past weeks have been hard, it has also been a blessing to reset, slow down, and be more attentive to what God wants to teach us. So often in our normal, busy lives we forget to rest in God. Hopefully our time of isolation has led to a greater increase of our spiritual connection with the Lord.

To stay connected virtually, we have had a variety of streamed services and our Sunday school teachers have been creating videos to reach the youth. The minister group has also been posting videos each Monday for us to start our week with a devotional and some encouragement. We thank everyone for their efforts!

We were able to begin meeting back in church at a reduced capacity on May 10, Mother’s Day. We look forward to the time when our entire congregation will be able to gather.

Even in times of separation, we still have news in which to rejoice! Ireland Greenway (Tina Michael) has begun her repentance. She is the granddaughter of Bro. Bill and Sis. Kathy Stoller of Bluffton North. We also rejoice with the family of Bro. Aaron and Sis. Katie Rush as they were able to bring baby Grayson home from the hospital after an extended time in NICU. Bro. John and Sis. Trudy Eisenmann are thankful for the arrival of granddaughter Kesandu “Kesa” Grace born to Tochukwu and Danielle Onyeke. Bro. Alec Schneider (Dale and Andrea, Francesville, IN) is engaged to Sis. Dana Rosswurm (Bro. Bruce and Sis. Amy) of Latty, OH. We are prayerful for all of our engaged couples as they plan their weddings during this uncertain time.

We want to remember those who have had health struggles recently. Our prayers are with Sis. Sandy (Bro. Kendall) Ringger as she has had two hospital stays for pneumonia and abdominal issues from an ulcer. Sis. Jamie (Bro. Luke) Rinkenberger has received positive news that her thyroid cancer has not spread and she is undergoing treatment to target that area. We rejoice with Bro. Jeff (Sis. Linda) McAfee on the news that his shoulder pain was not a reoccurrence of lymphoma, but rather arthritis.

Our sympathy is extended to the family of Sis. Leona Schwartz. She was the beloved mother of Sis. Susie (late Bro. Russell) Gerber and Bro. Jim (Sis. Jan) Schwartz. We also remember her sister, Sis. Josephine Schwartz.

May the Lord be near each one and guide us in his perfect way through the unknown future.

Indiana, Bluffton North
Rhonda Maller, Tiffani Schladenhauffen

“I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD.” Psalm 122:1

We know that our fellowship is deeper than just the church that we meet in, but we were glad to be able to return to our church building on May 10! Things looked a little different because of the pandemic and will for a while, but what a blessing to worship again together in the same place.

In this time that we have had to do church differently than what we are used to, we have had many step up to the challenge making this experience as good as it can be. We want to thank our ministers for being flexible in how they have had to do our church services, the extra resources they are providing us with, and the extra time spent on discussions on how to proceed in these uncharted waters. Our Sunday school teachers have really shown their creativity in reaching out to the students even though the Sunday school has not been
able to meet in person yet. We have had some brothers use their technology skills to help with the sound and video recording services that have been so essential during this time of limited contact. We want to thank our ushers as we begin meeting in church as they have extra duties in helping us stay within the government guidelines. Finally, we want to thank the Holy Spirit as we have felt his guidance during this time.

We are praising the Lord that Benton Rauch, son of Bro. Jadon and Sis. Tundy, has answered the Lord’s call and began his repentance this month. We rejoice with Benton and his family, and pray he will continue to draw closer to the Lord.

We want to recognize our graduating high school seniors; Daniel Bross, son of Mark and Blanca (Bross) Miller; Kaden Bussel, son of Bro. Travis and Sis. Missy; Hayden Craighead, son of Bro. Jason and Sis. Gwen; Jack Gerber, son of Bro. Vince and Sis. Susan; and Grace Moser, daughter of Bro. Klint and Sis. Amy. We have loved watching them grow up and our prayers go with them as they move onto their next phase of life. We are praying they will seek after what is truly most important in this life: Jesus!

We do not want to forget our loved ones that are at Christian Care Retirement Community, at our other local nursing homes, or the elderly that are in their own homes. They have not been able to go out in public, and we have not been able to physically visit, but we pray they feel our love and prayers during this time.

Indiana, Francesville

Jacki Huber, Connie Linback

“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.” Psalm 18:2

As I look out my window on this beautiful morning, I realize that our God has certainly allowed our world to slow down. This is giving us time to rethink many of our ways. We are thankful for technology that keeps us connected and for the use of some of our old ways: such as writing letters, sending cards, telephone, signs in windows, and visits across the street with neighbors.

Our congregation has been blessed with the recent wedding of Sis. Hailey Luzadder (Brian and Sarah) to Bro. Brandon Putt (Bro. Mike and Sis. Donna). Also, recently announced is the engagement of Bro. Alec Schneider (Bro. Dale and Sis. Andrea) to Sis. Dana Rosswurm (Bro. Bruce and Sis. Amy, Latty, OH).

We welcome Sis. Kenia Hernandez (Sonia) and Bro. Isaiah Cook (Bro. Ben and Sis. Deana) into our church family, as they shared their testimonies of faith, and were baptized. Our thanks to Elder Bro. Ken Wuethrich (Sis. Lyn, Indianapolis, IN) for assisting with the testimonies on Saturday evening.

Prayers are with Bro. Richard (Dick) Overmyer (Beverly) and Sis. Phyllis Wuethrich (Bro. Bob) as they are experiencing health concerns at this time.

We extend loving sympathy to Bro. Harv and Sis. Ellen Gutwein and family in the passing of Ellen’s dear father, Willard Koebcke. Also to Bro. Mark and Sis. Lynne Wuethrich and family in the passing of Lynne’s mother, Sis. Carol Bucher (the late Bro. Kenny). Carol has been residing at Parkview Haven Retirement Home in Francesville.

Indiana, LaCrosse

Meagan Frank, Julie Rocke

“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.” Psalm 1:1-2

We said farewell on earth to our Bro. Don Gudeman (Sis. Mary) as he passed from this life into eternity on May 3, 2020. Our thoughts and prayers extend to his faithful wife, Sis. Mary, as well as their children Sis. Judy Gudeman, Sis. Becky Moser (Valparaiso, IN), Bro. Owen Gudeman (Sis. Nicole), Duane Gudeman (Jill, Congerville, IL) and Glen Gudeman (Kerri, Kouts, IN), his grandchildren, and great-grandson. He was a gentle, faithful brother in our congregation and labored many years in the ministry. We are thankful for the memories of his steadfast example and ready, genuine smile.

As things continue to change and restrictions are lifted, we want to again say a very sincere thank you to Bro. Tim Bucher (Sis. Julie)
and Bro. Jon Pratt (Sis. Sharon) from the Valparaiso congregation for joining our ministers for church services and laboring on our behalf. It was a blessing and a joy to hear the Word and to know that we were worshiping together with the Valparaiso church family.

May each of you be blessed and feel God’s nearness and blessing as we walk the paths set before us.

Indiana, Leo
Jan Beer

"Sometimes I feel discouraged, and think my life in vain, I’m tempted then to murmur, and of my lot complain; But when I think of Jesus, and all He’s done for me, Then, I cry, O Rock of Ages, Hide Thou me. O what a Friend is Jesus, sure Anchor for my soul, So tender, true and gracious, I’m safe in His control. My help in times of danger, my strong defense is He, O Thou blessed Rock of Ages, Hide Thou me. O Rock of Ages, Hide Thou me, No other Refuge, have I but Thee, When life’s dark vale I wander, Far, far from Thee; Then I cry, O Rock of Ages, Hide Thou me.”

Hide Thou Me, Melodies of Praise #104

During this time of isolation, uncertainty and global turmoil, this song speaks of a calming perspective of the situation. The storms and trials of life will come, and we may not like them and be tempted to grumble and complain! But, we are reminded that Jesus loves us, he is our friend, our anchor of our soul, our strong defense and we can safely trust in him. Praise him!

With the COVID-19 restrictions still in place at the time of this writing, we have no visiting ministers to report, of course. It is a blessing to be able to receive our local sermons through the modern technology available to most of us. In a type of turnabout, after we have listened to our local message, we often tune in to other of our congregations’ worship service from around the country. We are visiting the ministers instead of them visiting us!

A dear, elderly couple in our fellowship has been diagnosed with the coronavirus. The brother is currently at home, but our sister has been hospitalized. At this time, it appears they are expected to make a full recovery. Our love and prayers are with them.

The evening of April 23, Connor Beer (Bro. Joe and Sis. Heather) and Adrienna Atkins (Kevin and Janet) were married in a private family wedding at the home of the bride’s parents in Cecil, OH. The state of Ohio had already made a wedding exemption to the isolation order. In August, Connor and Adri hope to celebrate their marriage at the original venue. We pray God’s blessing upon them as they establish a home that honors God.

Mother’s Day was celebrated a little differently this year. In spite of the current conditions, love and appreciation was able to be expressed to mothers.

Saturday, May 16, was the “come-and-go” wedding shower for Caleb Stieglitz and Sarah Schmutzer. It was a joy to meet Sarah and to enjoy limited fellowship with whoever happened to be at the shower when you were! Caleb is the son of our elder Bro. Lynn and Sis. Leonda, and Sarah’s parents live in St. Charles, IL. The couple plans to marry at the Leo Fellowship Center the weekend after the shower. Caleb and Sarah both work in Chicago, so they will establish their home there. We pray God’s blessing upon them as they adjust to serving God together.

Some planned events disrupted by the pandemic have been able to be rescheduled. One of those is our High School mission trip to the Dominican Republic. It is now planned for June 2021 for the same students who would have gone this June. We are glad arrangements could be changed.

Other planned events have had to be cancelled due to the virus. Our Young Group 2020 Invite is one of the casualties. It would have been an encouragement to have so many young people from other congregations visit us, but we hope it can happen at another time. Another event cancelled is our Vacation Bible School for this year. Although it was a disappointment, our VBS Director attempted to make it palpable by saying, “At least, we will be ready for next year”!!

Prayer is the key. Among our prayers, let’s include discernment,
wisdom and guidance for our church leaders and our federal, state and local government in respect to how to reopen from the isolation. Prayers of gratitude for their service would be great too.

Indiana, Milford
Heidi Beer, Anne Wilson
As I write this entry, I have been enjoying the May issue of The Silver Lining. The creativity of fellow believers to stay connected to church family and God is inspiring. God is so good, and he has provided in many ways.

We want to make a special mention of our recent high school and college graduates. Cassie Gramm, Jasmine Gramm, Bro. Austin Beer and Sis. Ashley Beer have each finished a major milestone in life. We are thankful for each of them as a part of our Milford church family.

Indiana, Remington
Jenni Honegger, Marcella Tyler
Little Winston Douglas arrived to bless the hearts and home of Bro. Micah and Sis. Brittany Zehr on April 18! Bro. Micah and Sis. Brittany are thrilled with their precious firstborn son and grandparents Bro. Nelson and Sis. Amy Zehr of Fairbury, IL and Bro. Joe and Sis. Joan Fehr of Kansas City, MO are too! We eagerly look forward to being able to meet little Winston when we can gather together safely again and we pray that Bro. Micah and Sis. Brittany can feel the Lord’s nearness as they seek to raise their son to glorify the Father’s name.

We have several graduates this month. Bro. Nelson Knobloch (Bro. Neil and Sis. June) graduated from Purdue University. Sis. Lea Bahler (Bro. Tim and Sis. Lynnette), Sis. Chloe Getz (Bro. Jason and Sis. Sara), Bro. Corey Honegger (Bro. Loren and Sis. Jenni), Sarah Walder (Bro. John and Sis. Lisa), and Bro. Brendan Weerts (Bro. Dan and Sis. Denise) all graduated from high school. Although their senior year didn’t end up going as they had expected, we hope each graduate takes comfort in the knowledge that their unusual and disappointing senior year was not a surprise to God. We as a church are thankful to have witnessed each one as they have grown up, and we pray that each one will seek his will for their future steps in life.

We neglected to say anything last month about Mother’s Day and here it is almost Father’s Day already! Many of us grew up with godly mothers and fathers who pointed us to Christ. Those who didn’t must have had godly examples somewhere along the way or we wouldn’t be where we are today as a part of this body. Let’s remain prayerful that we in turn can do our part to leave a godly legacy to the next generation.

Indiana, South Bend
Joshua Martinez
“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.” Isaiah 26:3

We joyfully learned that our convert Gabriel Martinez (Bro. Joshua and Sis. Keyna) has found peace with God and man and looks forward to baptism. On May 17, we filled our church with joyous singing after many weeks of being apart! Because we are a small congregation, we were able to be seated in every other bench by families. As we navigate many changes during this long emergency, we may often wonder, “How long until….”? Let’s pray we will take this time as an opportunity to wait on the Lord and grow.

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

Indiana, Valparaiso
Sherry Meiss
A huge thank you to all of our church body for giving us AC Central and for those working behind the scenes bringing us the many sermons online. Also, for the LaCrosse church for inviting our Valparaiso church to join our ministers with them in preaching from the pulpit. In uncertain times we are blessed with the love of others that have God in their hearts. This has been an essential gift that has uplifted my spirit and soul during this time. May we have great joy looking ahead to worshiping together in person again.

Our verse for the month is: “For I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not: I will help thee.” Isaiah 41:13
As we celebrated our Mothers this month, may we thank God for his design for he loved us before we could love in return. Only through him can we appreciate and be thankful for the selflessness life they have molded and shaped us for. The promise of God was accomplished and fulfilled even thru the depths of suffering.

Praise the Lord that Sis. Marilyn Zeltwanger is feeling better and both she and Bro. Lyle and Bro. Mike and Sis. Claudia Thomas have returned from their winter retreats. How comforting it is to have them back home again with us.

Thanks to Sis. Lois Bucher who made face masks for those of us interested in one. A program has been put together with a local florist to deliver a plant and gift package from Ace Hardware for nurses and those impacted by the COVID-19 virus. What an unexpected surprise when my husband opened the door and the delivery was for him. Even though he did not feel worthy, he was truly grateful and appreciated being thought of for what he does.

Prayers for Sis. Carol Bucher’s family, as she has gone to be with our Lord on May 14, 2020. Her husband Bro. Kenneth Bucher of 60 years preceded her in death in 2018. She is survived by her 4 children, 13 grandchildren, 3 great grandchildren, and 6 siblings. Her other 5 siblings preceded her. Also, please keep the Gudeman family, our Sis. Becky Moser, her daughter Sis. Lauren and son Grant in your prayers as her father Bro. Don Gudeman (LaCrosse, IN), was laid to rest on May 3, from complications from Alzheimer’s disease. He is survived by his wife of 55 years, Sis. Mary along with their 5 children, 14 grandchildren, 1 great grandson and 2 siblings. Donna Paarlberg, a former member of our congregation, passed away on April 14. She is survived by her husband of 63 years, Conrad, one brother, 3 children, 15 grandchildren and 23 great-grandchildren and several more on the way.

Our dear Bro. Bob and Sis. Marguerite have tested negative for the COVID-19 infection, but some of the staff and other residents have tested positive and there have been some deaths at Rittenhouse. Drew McClanahan has multiple Doctor’s appointments in Chicago for the next step in his health care. Dave Kotzer is at Life Care in Valparaiso until he gains his strength. Prayers for all of our brothers, sisters and friends during their different seasons of life.

Indiana, West Lafayette
Libby Wahl

Our thoughts and prayers are with Austin Roe for his father, Roy, who recently received a heart transplant. It’s always a sobering, amazing process to see someone receive another person’s healthy organ.

Last Sunday, our special graduation messages included some video sharing from our high school and local college graduates. It was good to have this opportunity as all are feeling a bit of disconnect not being afforded the traditional graduation receptions and ceremonies. We pray God’s comfort and direction on them as they transition forward.

Our high school graduate, Alec Meiser (Bro. Ryan and Sis. Hollie), hopes to attend Ball State University this fall. Our college graduates, with a few locating back home for work, a couple in ongoing education and others moving on to Indianapolis, IN, Kansas City, MO and St Paul, MN are: Sis. Rachel Maibach (Geo, IN); Bro. Austin Beer (Milford, IN); Sis. Monica Frauhiger (Bluffton, IN); Bro. Nelson Knobloch (Remington, IN); Bro. Seth Edelman (Wolcott, IN); Bro. Kray Klopfenstein, (Geo, IN); Ben Gudas, (Winamac, IN); Lauren Schwab (Wolcott, IN); Bro. Tim Huber (Francesville, IN), Bro. Jerod Putt (Francesville, IN) and Sis. Hailey Luzadder Putt (Francesville, IN).

Congratulations and Godspeed to both Bro. Jerod Putt (Francesville, IN) and Sis. Hailey Luzadder Putt (Francesville, IN) on Holy Matrimony during the challenges of the current pandemic.

Our congregation is so thankful to welcome Sis. Sarah and her mother, Sis. Mara Leman (Bro. Randy), back from extended treatment at a health facility in FL. Ongoing prayers for continued improvement for Sis. Sarah are appreciated.

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

Indiana, Wolcott

Teresa Earney, Luann Gerber

“But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:19

The COVID-19 restrictions are beginning to lessen in some areas and remain in place in others. The way our brotherhood has responded to these restrictions has been so encouraging. A sincere thanks to those who have had Bible studies and fellowship hours via Zoom, those who have had a part in podcasts, song services, Sunday school for children and many other virtual activities that we could be a part of. Not being able to gather in a building as a group of believers has been difficult and yet such a growing time for our spiritual well-being. On May 17, we began worshipping together with modifications.

Bro. Tim and Sis. Rachel Schwab welcomed a new grandson on April 16. Joe and Katie Watkins are the parents of little Beauregard John. His big siblings are Jackson and Georgia. Bro. Kip and Sis. Donita Edelman also welcomed a precious little granddaughter, named Veronica Rae on May 17. Valerie and Derrek Dalman are the first-time parents.

Bro. Jerry Kyburz (Sis. Nancy) spent some time in the hospital. Praise God that he is back home now. We pray for his continued healing.

As a congregation, we sang “Ring the Bells of Heaven” on Sunday, May 17 to celebrate that we have a new convert. Jacob Wagenbach (Bro. Michael and Sis. Erica) began his repentance.

Singing hymns is a way that many of us worship God. We sang a hymn this Sunday that we do not sing very often. It ministered to me; #15 in the Hymns of Zion “Quiet; Lord, My Froward Heart”.

And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places;” Isaiah 32:18

Iowa, Bloomfield

Kendra Schlatter

Evie Carol was welcomed on May 4 by first-time parents, Bro. Derek and Sis. Carly Wettstein. Thankful grandparents are Bro. Lloyd and Sis. Carol Wettstein and Bro. Colin and Sis. Barb Wagenbach (Mediapolis, IA). Ella Riley was also welcomed into this world on May 11 by thankful parents, Ruth Teubel and Jeremy Breeding and also big brother Dmitri! Thankful grandparents are Bro. Paul and Sis. Charlotte Teubel and Terry and Kathleen Breeding.

We are happy for Natalie Joos (Bro. Eugene and Sis. Lana) as she completed her schooling at Iowa State University.

“Rejoice with them that do rejoice; and weep with them that weep.” Romans 12:15

We weep with Bro. Dave Wiegand as his dear wife, Sis. Mary Wiegand, has passed on to her heavenly reward. Sis. Mary leaves behind 4 sons, one of which is Bro. Daryl Wiegand (Sis. Christy) from our congregation. We also weep with Sis. DeAnn Wuthrich (Bro. Roger) in the passing of her father, Bro. Harley Bruellman (West Bend, IA). Bro. Harley leaves behind several grandchildren from our congregation who will miss his presence.

“Faith of our Fathers! We will love both friend and foe in all our strife:
And preach thee, too, as love knows how,
by kindly words and virtuous life:
Faith of our fathers! Holy faith!
We will, be true to thee till death!”

Faith of our Fathers,
Hymns of Zion #85

Iowa, Burlington

Marilyn Anderson, Angela Steiner

We honor a great God, the author and creator of miracles! Our young, growing church family is excited for his new miracle, Narra Charlene, born May 17 to Bro. Seth and Sis. Brenda Hartter. Little Narra is warmly welcomed home by Shadrach, Taren, Asher and Abram. Thankful grandparents are Tim and Charlene Hartter and Bro. Gary and Sis. Melody Schulz (and Sis. Karen, deceased).

Our sincere congratulations go to Kaley Eisenman as a high school graduate, and Lydia Eisenmann as she graduates college. Both young ladies are grandchildren of Sis. Elaine Eisenmann. We encourage these girls to fear the Lord, as this is the beginning of knowledge (Proverbs 1:7).
For some time now, our Burlington church family has been making plans to replace our parking lot. We are eager to see the end result as work on this project has finally begun.

As the Word calls us to draw near to God, we continue to worship in our homes, ever grateful that his Spirit draws near to us wherever we are. Yet we all look forward to gathering as a church family again, Lord willing in the near future. We lift up our elders and local brothers in leadership as they make detailed plans for reopening. I was reminded recently that it’s not our circumstances, but rather our response that defines us. May we walk on in faith with a patient attitude, counting our blessings step by step.

**Iowa, Elgin**

*Maria Rocke*

We rejoice with our convert Clayton Schupbach who has found peace, and we are looking forward to his testimony and baptism. Until that can happen, we trust God will continue to encourage him in his walk of faith.

Bro. John and Sis. Janet Schupbach are thankful for the addition of grandson Treyton Jay Knoblock, born to Bro. Andy and Sis. Abby Knoblock (Lester, IA) on April 19. We wish them God’s blessings and wisdom.

We were able to open our church doors for the first time this past Sunday morning. With social distancing guidelines and precautions, it wasn’t a normal day. However, we were grateful for the opportunity to worship and sing with a handful of families. We certainly missed those who were not able to attend and continue to lift them up in prayer.

“Let us then be so united as Thou with the Father art,
That not one of Thy weak members here on earth shall stand apart.
From the flames of Thy own burning may our light partake its glow;
And that we are Thy disciples all the world may surely know.”

*Fellowship of the Saints Zion’s Harp #33*

**Iowa, Garden Grove**

*Laura Funk*

Last month when I wrote, we had 11” of beautiful white snow. Today we are receiving the gift of rain, just the right amount that God sees needful. We are enjoying fresh produce from the garden. Another blessing!

As many of us were not able to physically spend Mother’s Day with our mother, we could reminisce about previous special times. We are not big technology fans, but are thankful we can visit a different Apostolic church every Sunday! Our congregation looks forward to assembling together this coming Sunday. We will follow the guidelines that have been established.

**Iowa, Iowa City**

*Diana Butikofer*

Bro. Bob and Sis. Barb Fehr are rejoicing in the birth of their first great-grandchild. On April 18 Winston Douglas was born to Bro. Micah and Sis. Brittany Zehr of Remington, IN. May the Lord grant these new parents much grace to raise their son to know Him.

**Iowa, Lester**

*Kristi Knobloch, Audrey Metzger*

Even though the COVID-19 virus has kept us from assembling together in church, life has gone on. We express our appreciation and thanks to the following: our ministering brothers for their efforts in keeping services as normal as can be, to the Sunday school teachers who have kept our students in “class” through Zoom meetings and activities provided for them and to all those who make it all possible by providing technology and expertise. May God bless their efforts during this challenging and uncharted time.

We look forward to assembling together again soon.

Bro. Andy and Sis. Abby Knoblock welcome home another son. Treyton Jay arrived early on April 19 and went home to three excited and loving brothers, Tanner, Tyler and Trevor. Also loving him are grandparents Bro. Terry and Sis. Elaine Knobloch and Bro. John and Sis. Janet Schupbach (Elgin, IA). Honoring our Mother’s is always a time to reflect on the sacrifices they make for us.

We were reminded on Mother’s Day that Moses’ mother found the courage to hide and protect her son from the evil Pharaoh commanded. God blessed
her courage and trust by providing for Moses in an amazing way.

Celebrating Mother’s Day for the first time were Bro. Nedd and Sis. Kayla Knobloch as their precious daughter, Skylar Jo was born on that very day! Skylar’s grandparents are Bro. Dan and Sis. ReJean Knobloch and Bro. Kent and Sis. Beth Banwart (West Bend, IA). May all mothers find that grace and strength are renewed each day from the Lord.

Body afflictions know no age limit, from the very young to the oldest we all experience difficult times. Little Jax Hoogendoorn, infant son of Melinda Popkes was dismissed from the hospital after a stay of more than two weeks battling several severe infections. Thankfully, he is gaining strength. Suffering through a serious eye injury is Mitchell Knoblock (Bro. Thadd and Sis. Wendy). He has limited vision in one eye after surgery and will have continued procedures to help regain sight. Our prayers go out to the patient young guy! There are always those who continue treatment or start new treatment plans to battle illnesses and we likewise lift them up in prayer.

Grieving the loss of their brother-in-law, Bro. Richard Graham (Princeville, IL) are Sis. Marie Knobloch and Sis. Joyce Metzger (Bro. Glen), Bro. Terry and Sis. Elaine Knoblock and family laid their dear mother and grandmother, LuEtta Braker (Missouri) to rest. Our sympathy also goes to Jerry and Deb Larson’s family and Sis. Erma Gerber (Bro. Bill) as their father, grandfather and brother-in-law, Bro. Harley Brulleman (West Bend, IA) passed away. Both Sis. Elaine and Deb no longer have parents here on earth but how comforting to know they await in heaven.

Our graduating high school seniors are Gabe Knobloch (Bro. Lance and Sis. Kristi), Adam Knoblock (Bro. Thadd and Sis. Wendy), KaryAnn Knoblock (Bro. Marti and Sis. Martha), Addison Metzger (Bro. Jerome and Sis. Jana), Cade Metzger (Bro. Brian and Sis. Angie), Kiley Metzger (Craig and Kelly), Blake Meyer (Bro. Dean and Sis. Linda), Greg Molter (Carol), Lucas Moser (Bro. Keith and Sis. Julie) and Carson Popkes (John and Sis. Karmin). Their senior year of school ended in an upheaval as they adjusted to finishing up classes remotely and without all the expected experiences of being a senior! Our wish for them would be to “Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them;” Ecclesiastes 12:1

Graduating from college are Sis. Tyra Metzger (Bro. Brady), Kerrick Knoblock, (Bro. Trent and Sis. Heather), Parker Metzger (Craig and Kelly), and Sis. Becca Knobloch (Bro. Stan and Sis. Dawn). Congratulations to all!

Special thank you goes to Sis. Audrey Metzger (Bro. Mark) for her years of faithfully reporting Lester’s news in the Silver Lining. Sis. Lois Mogler (Bro. Rodney) has willingly accepted to take over this position.

Iowa, Mediapolis

Laura Kuntz, Janet Lanz

As I sat down to write the Silver Lining, I realized that this is the third time we have written since our lives have changed so dramatically. I am amazed how God has built into the human spirit the ability to adapt and be creative in times like these. As the busyness of life ground down to the basics, we have heard many comments on how nice it is to be spending more time at home with our families, and not to be so caught up in the race we so often find ourselves in. God does have his sovereign ways of working with all of us. It makes me think of Mark 6:31, “And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while; for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat.”

Sis. Elva Gerst celebrated her 100th birthday on April 28. Since she is in the nursing home, we could not celebrate this milestone with her, but this wonderfully sweet sister is loved by all of us. We look forward to seeing her again.

With high school graduation looking very different this year, our hearts and prayers are with those who are in our church family who will be using new and unusual methods to celebrate this momentous occasion. High school graduates are as follows: Holly Massner (Bro. Troy and Sis. Joni), Bro. Travis Massner (Bro. Chuck and Sis. Lois), Bro. Nolan Schmidgall (Bro. Mark and Sis. Sally), Kendra Schulz (Roger and

As the spring events on the calendar come and go, we are learning to recognize them in modified fashion, but still remember their significance. Mother’s Day was not a family gathering this year, but we didn’t let it pass without reaching out in some way to our mothers. They have taught us so much. We pause to give thanks for their love and kindness, not only on Mother’s Day, but all through the year.

We continue to marvel at the power of the Holy Spirit moving our ministers as they preach to their invisible congregations. We have learned we can be together in the Spirit though absent in the flesh. The blessings abound as our living rooms become our sanctuary. The one thing that remains very hard however, is not being able to be present in the flesh when one in our church family is lonely, sick or suffering the loss of a loved one. We lift up Bro. Sean and Sis. Valerie Gray and their family as they mourn the loss of Bro. Sean’s mother, Bonnie Gray. Our Sis. Doris Kuntz (Bro. Leon) has lost her last sibling, Bro. Robert Moser (Sis. Barbara, Morton, IL). Sis. Doris’s sister passed away just a short time ago, so the loss of her brother is difficult. We also extend our sympathy to our convert Kevin Gerst and his wife Selena at the passing of Selena’s mother, Darlene Noble. We pray for all of these families who are going through the deep valley of grief and pray God can sustain them.

**Note of Thanks**

The family of Sis. Elva Gerst would like to thank all who remembered her with a card on her 100th birthday. She really enjoyed them! God bless you.

**Note of Thanks**

We are so deeply humbled by the generosity and compassion shown since the passing of our dear nephew Mark Siegle, age 52. Thanks for the prayers, phone calls, cards, flowers, food, driveway visitation, and yard walk. These deeds planned by friends were Heaven sent. Mark’s demeanor was one of charity, and he always had a friendly smile. His pain and suffering was very difficult and hard for us, but thinking upon Christ’s suffering, death, and resurrection has given us great comfort. The love shown us will be lasting.

“Verily I say unto you, insomuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” Matthew 25:40

Least ones in faith,
Sis. Arlene and Sis. Phyllis Siegle

**Iowa, West Bend**

**Jenny Banwart, Karen Schmidt**

We wish Noah Fehr (Bro. Cory and Sis. Jennifer) and Emma Thatcher many blessings as they are joined in marriage. May they look to God to be their guide as they move to Colorado. Moving back from Colorado are Bro. Phil and Sis. Colleen Virkl, Elma, Liam and Cora.

We welcome them and look forward to worshipping together, hopefully soon!

Thankful to be back home and recovering from an accident are Tyra and Camdyn Schupbach, children of Bro. Greg and Sis. Gwen. Jean Knobloch (the late Adolph) is also back home and recovering after a fall. We trust God will continue to provide healing.

Bro. Harley Bruellman was called to his eternal reward just a few months after losing his wife, Sis. Adele. May God be near their children, Sis. Cheryl Morrow (Dave), Mavis Ann McGuire (Jeff, Council Bluffs, IA), Bro. Dave Bruellman (Sis. Yvonne), Sis. DeAnn Wuthrich (Bro. Roger, Bloomfield, IA), Deb Larson (Jerry, Larchwood, IA), and Bro. Larry Bruellman (Sis. Teresa, Ft Myers, FL).

Our high school graduates are Connor Fehr (Bro. Mark and Sis. Janet) and Thomas Fehr (Bro. Cory and Sis. Jennifer). Although there have been many changes during these past couple months, they still hope to have their graduation ceremony later in June.

Our minds have gone to scripture often lately, and we are so thankful for God’s assurance that he holds us in his almighty hands.

“No unt his that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.” Jude 1:24,25
Japan, Shioda and Tokyo

Anna Inoue, Marie Inoue, Carrie Ito

Even though restrictions for gathering have not been lifted for the Tokyo area, we are thankful for the willing brethren who were able to prepare technology so that we can be blessed by our own ministering brothers and that of AC Central. We are also thankful for those who have been participating who do not often attend in person.

Our news this month consists of loving memories of our deceased ones. The Sakuta and Utsuki families ask that we extend a thank you in this publication for the generous love and kindness shown at the passing of their loved one, Sis. Yoshiko Utsuki Sakuta. We received word this week of the passing of Toshio Urushino. He was the beloved husband of the late Sis. Shizuko Urushino. He leaves three adult children: Kenichi, Sachiko, and Takeshi. Many special memories linger of his friendly smile and times in their home.

This past weekend was actually reserved for the ordination services of Bro. Akihiro Ito and Bro. Makoto Inoue for the office of deacon. The elder brothers performing this duty are not able to travel at this time. We look forward when the way is open for them to come.

Kansas, Kiowa

Janice Bahr, Millie Frieden

"Precious mem’ries, unseen angels, Sent from somewhere to my soul; How they linger, ever near me, And the sacred past unfold. Precious father, loving mother, Fly across the lonely years, And old home scenes of my childhood, In fond memory appears. In the stillness of the midnight, Echoes from the past I hear; Oldtime singing, gladness bringing, From that lovely land somewhere As I travel on life’s pathway, Know not what the years may hold, As I ponder, hope grows fonder; Precious mem’ries flood my soul. Precious mem’ries, how they linger, How they ever flood my soul, In the stillness of the midnight, Precious, sacred scenes unfold." Precious Memories, Gospel Hymns, #408a

Our precious sister, Nelda Ott, fell asleep in the arms of her Savior this past month at the age of 96 years. She loved her Lord, her family, her church family and many friends. She and her husband, Bro. Arnold Ott, served the church in many ways, and showed hospitality to many travelers who passed through the Burlington area. Her health kept her from attending services in Kiowa the last few years, but did not dim her love for God and those around her or her wonderful sense of humor. We know the angels are rejoicing, and though her family will miss her, they have some truly precious memories to remember her, and give them and all of us peace at her passing.

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him and he shall direct thy paths." Proverbs 3:5-6

We have two young men who are graduating from High School this year. Although the virus is stopping many regular graduation ceremonies, people are coming up with many ways to make sure our young people get the recognition they so deserve. Stanley Klippenstein (Bro. Adolf and Sis. Elma) and Gabe Stewart (Bro. Kelly and Sis Jenny) are our seniors this year, and we truly wish them God’s love and guidance as they begin this new and exciting step in their lives. We will miss these two very special young men as they go off to college next year. Sterling Stewart (Bro. Kelly and Sis Jenny) is graduating from 8th grade. God Bless you Sterling, and we will be happy to still have you here to worship with us for a few more years!
"Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." Exodus 20:12

We are truly a blessed nation that our government sets aside a day to honor our mothers and a day to honor our fathers. Those of us who have believing parents are especially blessed, as we were brought up to love and honor our precious Lord. There is no greater gift our parents could ever give us. It was rather hard this year for those who have parents in the closed rest homes due to the virus, but the staff let families put flowers outside windows and set up Facebook calls so we could visit with our loved ones. We appreciate their labor of love on our behalf.

Again, many thanks to those doing Zoom who share God’s Word not only with the Kiowa congregation, but with many other Apostolic churches as well. We are also truly thankful for AC Central for providing God’s Word from our churches all over the country so we can listen anytime we wish. We are so blessed with these technologies we can enjoy.

Kansas, Lamont
Maria Luthi

This month our church has continued to meet via Zoom for Sunday services. We want to thank our “visiting” ministers this month: Bro. Klint Beyer (Sis. Kara, Sabetha, KS), Bro. Dan Stoller (Sis. Debra, Remington, IN), Bro. Mark Wettstein (Sis. Karen, Lamar, MO), and Bro. John Baumgartner (Sis. Lori, Bern, KS). It has been such a blessing to be able to connect with others from different areas. We also held our monthly hymn singing over Zoom.

Our church has been prayerful for several members this month. Bro. Glen Anliker had a procedure done that he is recovering from, Bro. Albert Edelman is waiting for results from testing, and Sis. Dorene Metzger had a severe nosebleed requiring surgery. During this time of uncertainty, health challenges are an extra concern because of the coronavirus. We also extend our sympathy to Tony Hines with the passing of his uncle, Jim Bowden.

Bro. Max Burnham, with the help of the church, has been busy finding alternate ways to hand out Bibles to the local graduates this graduation season. Since the ceremonies are not happening in a typical fashion, it’s been encouraging to see how God works to get his Word out anyway.

We are happy to have three high school graduates this year! They are: Sage Edelman, (Bro. Victor and Sis. Hope Edelman), Hannah Luthi (Elder Bro. Jay and Sis. Jane Luthi), and Aleah Hines (Tony and Sis. Dora Hines.) We also have an eighth-grade graduate, Judy Luthi (Elder Bro. Jay and Sis. Jane Luthi.) We pray for God’s leading in all our graduates’ lives.

Kansas, Sabetha
Leanna Hartter, Whitney Hartter

Our thoughts and prayers are with Bro. Don Plattner (Sis. Ada) as he had a brief hospital stay this month.

We congratulate the 2020 high school graduates, Deborah Edelman (Bro. Loren and Sis. Jeanne), Olivia Meyer (Bro. Alan and Sis. Colleen), Vivian Strahm (Bro. Tom and Sis. Carrie), Jeanelle Wenger (Bro. Wayne and Sis. Jean), and Bro. Kody Beyer (Bro. Klint and Sis. Kara). May they each look to the Lord to lead them in their next phase of life!

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

Sis. Megan Grimm (Bro. Darin and Sis. Marci) is moving to Taylor, MO for school and a job. Bro. Kody Beyer is also moving to Morris, MN for his job. We will miss seeing them around here but trust God will bless them as they take this step of faith!

Kansas, Wichita
Niklaus and Sara Schrader

We hope everyone is staying safe and healthy during this trying time. As we have implemented church using Zoom, we are thankful that we can still enjoy some form of church fellowship. Knowing that God’s mercy and protection are always with us gives us all a sense of peace and hope in this difficult time. John 14:27 says, “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.”

Prayers go out to our widows, who no doubt are experiencing loneliness. Sis. Ann Warner has been hospitalized this past week.
We pray for God's peace upon her heart and mind during this time as well as for the family.

Our church is currently going through the bolstering process. We pray for God's guidance and direction in this matter.

"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28

Mexico, Ixtlán
Ruth Gerber

"O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." Jeremiah 10:23

This is a time when we can more readily see the need to walk by faith, when so many things are uncertain, and we have very little planning we can do for the long term. We do have a faithful God and our steps are best directed by his hand!

As everywhere, the brothers and sisters in Ixtlán have varying perspectives on the COVID-19 situation, and it is a blessing to share our hopes, fears, joys, and faith. As two of our older sisters conversed on their desire to assemble once again, one of them said, “I think when we are able to go back to church we’re going to go in leaping and walking and praising God like the lame man Jesus healed!” We pray that day will come soon.

Bro. Carlos Hernandez has asked us to pray for his mother, Maria. She is battling cancer and has started chemotherapy. Carlos says his prayer is for God to use this situation to turn his mom’s heart to himself. Also, Sis. Carmen García requests prayers for her sister Ramona, for her health and ultimately her salvation. May the Lord be the one to direct each step.

México, Magdalena
Laura Aviña

As June begins, the tentative plans are to slowly decrease COVID-19 restrictions, however, it has not been announced the exact date our church services will commence. We are thankful for technology that allows us to receive recorded sermons and to keep in touch with loved ones and church family.

The week of May 10-16, violence between drug cartels around Magdalena increased through a series of confrontations. By the weekend, additional military and police personnel were stationed in the area which to date seems to have calmed the violence. We are thankful for everyone who prayed for us and ask that you continue to pray, not only for our safety, but that God would heal the brokenness in this community and nation. We ask that you pray for the men, women, and families involved in the cartels that they would find a way out and a way to Jesus! Please pray that no matter the economic circumstances coming out of COVID-19, people would turn to God for strength and not to fear, anger, or selfishness.

How often do we identify ourselves with the many roles we fill? Some of us are parents, employees, spouses, entrepreneurs, you name it, and yet deeper than our occupations, goals, and social circles which can so easily disappear or disappoint, there is a foundation that is unchanging and sure. We are God’s children!

“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light;” 1 Peter 2:9

Michigan, Alto
Heidi Kaeb, Renee Steffen

As I begin to write today, the precious hymn “Our Love Shall Not Diminish” comes to mind. It brings tears of joy to my heart for I am reminded of our journey’s end beyond the struggles and trials of today. I pray we will keep our eye on the goal of eternity in heaven where all that is happening now will be remembered no more.

“The flowers are still blooming, the birds still sing in the trees, we still have faith to believe that God hears each prayer and each plea. We still have friends and family, brothers and sisters in Christ, freedom to worship without persecution that in other lands some must fight. There is still food on our tables and groceries on the shelves, we still can purchase gas to travel, make choices for ourselves. We still can make a phone call, hear the Truth spoken every week. We still each have a Bible that from which comfort we seek. The sun still shines every day even if behind the clouds.
We still can call the doctor and getting treatment is still allowed. We still can write a letter or send a package in the mail. We still have those who help us when something breaks or fails. There are still scientists hard at work and others using their minds, inventing new ways to make life doable in our ‘new normal’ to which we find. Let us focus on the ‘still have’s’ instead of what we may have lost. Remember Who is in control and Who already paid the cost."

We are thankful for the successful heart procedure on Elder Bro. Ted Steffen (Sis. Sandy), and for the continued healing and comfort God provides for others. Our dear Bro. Martin Blough (Sis. Michele) has received very difficult news after a mass was found on his brain. We are earnestly praying for him and his family as they journey through this cancer diagnosis and begin treatment. We know God’s Kingdom purposes are always at work even through pain and suffering, and our prayer is that these dear ones can rely on the Holy Spirit and support from the Body of Christ.

Congratulations to our graduates this year: Ella Byam (Fritz and Kim Byam) and Ivy Stoller (Bro. Ned and Sis. Heidi Stoller). For many who graduate this year, it has been a very disappointing time due to not having the ‘normal’ senior fun and activities. May each of you know that God is bigger than your struggles and he can and will guide you if that is your desire. It is our prayer that our Father in heaven will watch over and keep you in his care.

**Michigan, Bay City**  
Sarah Knochel

We pray for continued healing for those in our church family who spent time in the hospital recently. They include Sis. Debbie Knochel (Bro. Jack) and Randy Wackerle (Jane). We rejoice with Bro. Jim and Sis. Kay Knochel as they welcome another grandchild, Willow Kate Hodel, into their family circle. Bro. Brett and Sis. Laura Hodel (Roanoke, IL) and big sister Oakleigh are thankful for the safe arrival of this sweet little bundle of joy.

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways, acknowledge him and he shall direct thy path." Proverbs 3:5-6

Congratulations to Beau Bateson (Lori) on his high school graduation. We trust that God will guide and direct him as he continues on to college and enters the workforce.

We continue to benefit from online worship services and weekly fellowship meetings. We trust that God will continue to lead and direct us as we make decisions to again gather in person.

**Michigan, Detroit**  
Bev Bahr

We are happy and grateful to welcome Sis Carrie Ramseyer back to Detroit for work as a nurse after spending a year working at a hospital in Chicago. Our special prayers have been with all the workers (and their families) caring for those in hospitals, nursing homes and care facilities as well as all essential workers in our communities. May God be especially near staff as they deal with many burdens in a very challenging time.

Our love and sympathy are with Sis. Linda Reardon in the loss of her son, Johnny Reardon. We are also prayerful for Scott, Erin and Liam in the loss of their brother and uncle. May God comfort and be with all their families during this difficult time.

Our graduating high school seniors will have a memorable year to remember as they deal with the loss of graduation ceremonies and other high school events with school closures abruptly ending in April with in school classes, special events and normal social gatherings. Congratulations to Jacob Stevens (David and Laura), and Craig Maibach (Bro. Doug and Carole) as they graduate from high school. May God guide and bless them as they continue their college education.

Congratulations to our college graduates with semesters ending early and without ceremonies: Sis. Haley Knochel with dual major in Marketing and Management (Bro.
Dana and Sis. Beth), Jack Maibach with degree in Math (Bro. Doug and Carole) and Grace Ramseyer with a nursing degree (Bro. Mark and Sis. Kelly) Trusting our Heavenly Father to bless them as they pursue their vocation and/or continued studies.

Our church has been so grateful for the blessing of technology with AC Central and Zoom meetings as we worship and fellowship online while we are dealing with ‘house restriction’. There have been inspiring ways of drawing our hearts together and closer to God for our church family as well as our individual families. Let us remember the Lord’s goodness to us in so many ways and focus our hearts on him.

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee.” Isaiah 26:3

Our hearts and prayers go out to Sis. Krista (Bro Andy) Wieland as she continues to deal with seizures that have impacted her, her family and nursing vocation. We pray for healing of her injuries, help with medical solutions and the nearness of our Heavenly Father caring deeply for her in this journey.

**Minnesota, Minneapolis**

**Brenda Messner, Renee Messner**

Being with child in a pandemic can be a very uncertain time. Just as a good mother would never forget her baby, God will not forget you. We pray for all the expectant mothers during this time. Commit your child to God,

“Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.” 1 Peter 5:7.

We rejoice with Derek and Valerie Dalman with the birth of their daughter, Veronica Rae, born on Sunday, May 17. Grandparents are Bro. Kip and Sis. Donita Edelman (Wolcott, IN) and Mark and Linda Dalman (Fort Wayne, IN). Our prayers are with the new parents as they strive to raise this precious little girl to know him!

**Minnesota, Morris**

**Peg Wellendorf, Brianna Wulf**

We share the joyful news that Bro. Trent Wulf and Sis. LaNae Schar are engaged to be married in August. We wish them God’s blessings as they begin to plan their life together in the Lord. Parents are Stan and Sis. Pam Wulf, and Bro. Tim and Sis. Joanne Schar (Akron, OH).

While the physical doors of our church may be closed our hearts remain wide open. The word of God still flows from the pulpit and through AC Central. We are blessed by the ministers and servants who selflessly bring God’s promise to us each week. The longing we feel to be with one another runs deep and come with a strong desire to serve. Driven by the Spirit we want to act upon these words; “For I was an hungry, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison and ye came unto me.” Matt 25:35-36. May God continue his work in us to be the Light.

In a recent sermon, we were reminded that with a humble attitude of gratitude, we can make the best of everything that comes our way. God will use the good things in life as well as the difficult things for his good. Encouragement comes to us daily through both song and verse, of his great wisdom and power. Let us remember to seek his counsel in all aspects of life.

"He stays my soul, and after toil He never fails to cheer it. He makes my cup to overflow That I, refreshed, may onward go.” The Faithful Shepherd, Jesus Christ, Zion’s Harp, #116

**Minnesota, Winthrop**

**Julie Schmidt, Ginny Stoll**

"When a Christian dies, precious is the prize! Lasting joys for days of sorrow, Rest from conflict on the morrow Follows when he dies." The Death of a Christian, Hymns of Zion #248

We are saddened at the passing of our Sis. Marilyn Messner (Bro. Bill) on April 28 and we will miss her sweet smile. Sis. Marilyn is survived by her husband, Bro. Bill of 41 year, her children, Jeff (Tina) Halvorson, Brad Halvorson, Greg (Brenda) Halvorson and Kevin (Tanya) Halvorson and Bro. Bill’s children, Bro. Rick (Sis. Brenda) Messner, Shelly Knobloch and Troy Messner and many grandchildren and great grandchildren. Sis. Marilyn was a sister-in-law to Sis. DonnaBell Nelson, Sis. Marcelle (Bro. Ernie) Dapper, Sis. Barbara (Pat) Mattes and Sis. Carol Ann Messner.
We also give condolences to our Sis Callie Knobloch (Bro. Keegan) in loss of her grandpa, Wally Feuchtenberger, Hancock, MN.  
As we continue to have our church services through technology instead of gathering together, let us remember that God is not limited in his power. He is near and he hears our plea. Let’s not become discouraged.  

"Give to our house the peace within  
And to all who abide therein  
In love bind us together  
That we may be prepared alway  
To bear and to endure, we pray  
In humbleness forever  
Each soul Fulfill Love’s sweet measure  
With great pleasure, Thereby showing  
Pleasing fruits from tearful sowing.”  
The Believing Family,  
Zion’s Harp, #160

Missouri, Kansas City  
Katy Franz, Julie Webel  
This month we were thankful for the opportunity that most of our church family could meet in person. Church was done outside at a member’s home, with individuals seated separately. Sunday school was done differently. We still live-streamed our services for those staying home, but we were together! Singing on a video call has not been the same as praising together in person! It was wonderful to worship together.  

“Praise ye the Lord: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely.” Psalm 147:1  

We grieved with Doug Wiegand over the passing of his mother, Sis. Mary Wiegand (Bloomfield, IA).  

Our hearts are filled with thankfulness for Betty Sinn’s decision to repent. The angels in heaven rejoice and so do we!  

Missouri, Lamar  
Mindy Wettstein  
We’ve had quite a bit of rain and thunderstorms within the past few weeks, and along with the rain and storms, I’ve been able to witness 2 brilliantly bright double rainbows!!  

“The sun will shine!  
The sun will shine!  
Soon God’s rainbow will appear,  
The sun will shine!  
The sun will shine!  
The sun will shine!  
Turn your dark clouds into background for God’s rainbow.”  
The Sun Will Shine!  
Tabernacle Hymns, #125  
We have been blessed to continue worshiping with the Lamont, KS congregation via Zoom meetings! We have had a bit of a change though as we have continued to worship with Lamont in the mornings, and starting April 26 we have been worshiping with our own church family for the afternoon service! We have appreciated visiting ministers Bro. Earl Beery (Rittman, OH) and Bro. Bruce Frank (Cisna Park, IL) and their families joining Zoom church with us!  

Missouri, St. Louis  
Victoria Eberhardt  
Many thanks to our ‘visitors’ this month over electronic means. As difficult as it is for us to not be able to physically gather, it is a blessing to see other parts of our lives join us from all over the country. We had the privilege of having Elder Bro. Kent Heimer (Sis. Jan, Taylor, MO) join us to share God’s words. As spring continues to bloom all around us, it’s a wonderful reminder of new life and refreshed minds.

Missouri, Taylor  
Tami Pflum  
As we continue to be separated and unable to gather in person, many in our congregation have found creative ways to reach out and connect with one another: sending letters or texts, making phone calls, sharing encouraging scripture verses, delivering flowers, placing signs in yards, window visits, and even painted rocks left on front doorsteps with the message, “We love and miss you”. Each random act of kindness, no matter how big or small, serves as a reminder of just how much our church family means to us and how much we long to be re-united in person.  
In spite of not being able to assemble together, we were still blessed with a visiting minister when retired elder Bro. John Lehman (Sis. Carol, Bern, KS) participated in one of our online worship services. We are grateful to all the local ministers as well as Sunday school teachers for their continued efforts in sharing the word and planting seeds using various online platforms.  
Due to COVID-19, this can be a trying time for those who are hospitalized, as they aren’t allowed to have family visit. For
that reason, we have prayed extra diligently for not only those who were hospitalized, but also their family members who longed to be with them. Bro. Cooper Sutter (Sis. Shania) recently underwent surgery and spent several days in the hospital recovering. We are thankful Bro. Allen Massner (Sis. Rosie) is also back home after time spent in the hospital this month. In addition, our thoughts and prayers have been with the family of Greg and Beth (Heimer) Hastings, as Greg recently suffered a stroke and will be spending time in a rehab facility. We pray for a full and speedy recovery for Greg! Finally, we are grateful that Bro. Jim and Sis. Sally Gottman’s precious little grandson, Brody Gottman (Jeff and Amber) recovered from a severe allergic reaction and was able to return home after spending time in the hospital for observation.

As the world continues to battle an invisible enemy in the form of a virus, we frequently hear the phrase, “During these uncertain times”. However, one thing is certain; none of this has come as a surprise to God. He knows the end from the beginning and we can rest each day by placing our unknown future in his all-knowing hands.

As we enter into our second month of social distancing and the closing of churches, schools and most businesses, we find ourselves growing impatient and desiring to get back to the old “normal.” As believers we read in the Scriptures that we are not assured of another day or the “old normal”, but we know that if we awaken each and every morning with thankfulness in our hearts, we can say

“This is the day the Lord has made, We will Rejoice and be glad…” Psalm 118:24.

Many prayers are offered to those shut-ins or patients who are isolated and cannot be with family at this time. Two weeks ago, we had to return our daughter to the hospital at OSU for ongoing health problems. As we pulled up to the front door, we had to watch from a distance as they escorted her to admitting. It was a very helpless feeling to watch her disappear behind the doors, not knowing what would lay ahead for her and that she would be all alone. She reminded me later that although she missed her family, she never felt alone.

“Take courage, wayworn pilgrim!
The mists and shadows hide
The face of Him thou lovest,
He’s ever at thy side.
Reach out thy hand and find Him,
And lo, the clouds have flown:
He smiles on thee who promised
Never to leave thee alone.
No, never alone.
No never alone!
He promised never to leave me,
Never to leave me alone.”
Never Alone, Hymns of Zion #127
Ohio, Junction
Karen Schlatter

Our sincere congratulations and best wishes to our high school graduates for 2020. They are Owen Carnahan (Jason and Danielle), Sydney McCullough (Bro. Jim and Sis. Julie), Bro. Jonathan Reinhard (Bro. Doug and Sis. Elizabeth), and Bro. Joel Schneider (Bro. Michael and Sis. Jodi). May the Lord be with them as they pursue their goals and ambitions.

We are thankful to hear James Fairchild has turned to the Lord in repentance. Although it has been a different way to conduct church services these past few months, we are thankful the Lord is still calling souls to repent and serve him.

On Sunday, April 26, we were blessed to hear the engagement of Sis. Rachael Manz (Bro. Russell and Sis. Vera) to Bro. Jared Knapp (Bro. Harlan and Sis. Jean, Forrest, IL). Our sincere best wishes to them as they plan and prepare for a wedding and their life together as husband and wife in the Lord.

Bro. Ray and Sis. Corrine Schlatter welcomed a new granddaughter on April 22. Darius and Gina Scott and their son Drew welcomed little Anna Corrine.

As we have worked to adjust to holding services remotely, and then in small groups, we look forward to being able to gather as a full church again someday. We trust the Lord to guide and direct the decisions that are made on our behalf.

We talk about all of the events that have been cancelled or postponed. May we all remember that living a life of service to our Heavenly Father has not been cancelled or postponed. Now, more than ever, it is very important to keep our life of service to the Lord a top priority. May we spend more time reading the Word and storing it in our hearts. Not one of us knows what tomorrow may bring. May each day be a day lived to glorify Jesus!

Ohio, Latty
Angie Klopfenstein, Carmen Stoller

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:” Ephesians 1:3

We are pleased to report the ways we have experienced the blessings of God this month.

On May 9, Lydia Marie Reichart was welcomed by Taylor and Sis. Audrey along with siblings Kollin, Kolby, and Karlee. Lydia's grandparents are Valerie Dotterer and Rick and Donna Greear. Savannah Lynn Stackhouse was born on May 12 to Bro. Travis and Sis. Ann, Cheyanne, (and Oliver, in heaven). Grandparents are Bro. Leon and Sis. Deb Klopfenstein and Dave and Jamie Stackhouse. We are prayerful for these families as they raise their daughters to know and love God.

Sis. Dana Rosswurm (Bro. Bruce and Sis. Amy) was announced to Bro. Alec Schneider (Dale and Andrea, Francesville, IN) from Bluffton, IN. Our prayers go with them as plan for their upcoming wedding and life together in God’s service.

We have been able to hear sermons preached on Sundays and Wednesday nights in past weeks, even when we could not be together in church. We thank our ministers, those who ran the sound system, and others who made it possible to continue to hear the Word. Thankfully, we have been able to start going to church in smaller groups this past week.

Truly we are blessed in this time of uncertainty by a sovereign God who knows all things, cares for us, and showers his peace, grace, and gifts upon us.

Ohio, Mansfield
Katie Miller

Our loved ones are all very dear to us. We wish to extend sympathy to Lori Gabor (Scott) in the passing of her mother, Janet Rall. Sis. Judy Sauder's brother, Richard Sauder, also passed away. We pray that the Lord will comfort these families with his peace, love, and presence.

Sis. Kelly Beard spent time in the hospital, and we keep her in prayer for God's strength and nearness. We continue to pray for Bro. Fred Domka (Sis. Connie) as he experienced recent hospitalization. Let us encourage one another with confidence like the Apostle Paul when he wrote: “But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:19.

The circumstances of a pandemic challenge us to walk by faith. Most of us have not been
traveling by airplane recently, but many of us can recall the experience of flying through a layer of clouds into brilliant sunlight. Do we sometimes forget that the sun is shining even when there are clouds? The view from under the clouds is very different than that from above. Our Lord sees the “clouds” in our lives from above. Sometimes he gives us glimpses of this unique and beautiful view, and other times we must simply trust him without understanding.

“Oh they tell me of a home far beyond the skies;  
Oh they tell me of a home far away.  
Oh they tell me of a home where no storm-clouds rise;  
Oh they tell me of an unclouded day.  
Oh the land of cloud-less day!  
Oh the land of an unclouded sky.  
Oh they tell me of a home where no storm-clouds rise!  
Oh they tell me of an unclouded day.”

The Unclouded Day  
Gospel Hymns #743

Ohio, Rittman  
Maria Beery, Julie Steiner

We extend our love and prayers to loved ones who have had to say goodbye during this difficult time. On April 20, Brian (Deanna) Brown passed away. He will be missed by a host of family members, including sister-in-laws Sis. Sandy Zollinger, and Sis. Denise (Bro. Alpha) Maibach. Bro. John (Sis. Marge) Zollinger of Smithville, OH passed away on April 26. He leaves behind much family, including siblings Sis. Linda Zollinger, and Bro. Ed (Sis. Shirley) Zollinger, and brother-in-law Bro. Henry Dotterer.

God is lovingly calling souls to him. We rejoice with Denny and Sandra (Imhoff) Franks, and Bro. Bill and Sis. Monica Bauman’s son, Brandon of Smithville, OH, as they seek the Lord in repentance. May they feel our love and God’s grace.

With grateful hearts, Sis. Anna Hartzler (Elder Bro. Wayne and Sis. Camille) has followed the Lord’s leading of engagement to Bro. Justin Palitto (Bro. Bryon and Sis. Lisa) of Akron, OH. May God bless their new journey together.

Several precious babies have been born recently. Isaac Randy Stoller was born on April 27 to Bro. Bradley and Sis. Alicia Stoller. Happy family members include siblings Annie and Philip, and grandparents Bro. Ken and Sis. Lori Stoller, and Bro. Neil and Sis. Donna Gasser. On April 30, Fitz Edward Riggenbach was born to Bro. Jeriah and Sis. Shayleen Riggenbach. Big brother Finley, and grandparents Bro. Bob and Sis. Lorie Riggenbach, and Fred and Mindy Hartzler rejoice for this little lad. On May 8, the safe arrival of Lily Marie Rufener was welcomed by parents Abe and Rachel Rufener, siblings Milan and Titus, and grandparents Bro. Leon and Sis. Lori Rufener.

Spending time in the hospital recently is our Bro. Ron (Sis. Joann) Christian, and others. Many we do not know by name, but only hear the statistics. Looking down from Heaven, our Father sees each one, cares for each one, and answers those who seek him.

Thankfully, on May 17, we cautiously yet joyfully re-opened our Rittman church, after nearly two months. The current plan is to invite a portion of the congregation for each service, while maintaining social distancing within the church building. We invite all to listen in to our services.

Ohio, Sardis  
Renee Blough, Doris Miller

We have more of the best kind of news to report, as another young soul has confessed her need for a Savior. Livi Beard (Bro. Seth and Sis. Faith) is looking to the Lord in repentance and trusting him to be her guide through life, and for that we are uplifted and overjoyed.

Bro. Matthew Rassi (Sis. Bridget, Chicago, IL) was a recent “visiting” minister when he led our worship service from his home via Zoom. When I asked my family what they remembered about the sermon they said, “He read about Noah’s Ark” and “the number forty”. Thinking about the multiple times in the Bible that circumstances lasted for 40 days or 40 years was beneficial in comparison to being in quarantine, which derives from the Italian words meaning forty days, in the year 2020. When we think about how people throughout time had periods of trial and transition for extended periods, it gives us courage to face tests and trials in our day. As we are reminded in many places in the Word, periods of testing so often end with a time of blessing. How many examples of forty can you find?
"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience: and experience, hope:"
Romans 5:1-4

The annual New Martinsville, WV memorial service will be held Sunday, June 28. Local ministers will be used for the service this year. If you have any questions you can contact Elder Bro. Bob Dotterer, 740.350.9434.

Ohio, Smithville
Connie Maletich, Millie Stoller

May our Lord’s comfort be with the family of Bro. John Zollinger as he passed away April 26. He is survived by his wife, Sis. Marjorie and children, Bro. Ken (Sis. Becky), Deb (Mark) Steiner, Bro. Marvin (Sis. Pam), Mark (Michelle), and Dan (Olivia). He is also survived by a brother and sister, Bro. Ed (Sis. Shirley, Rittman, OH) and Sis. Linda Zollinger (Rittman, OH).

Our prayers are also with Bro. Andy Fetzer (Sis. Elizabeth) as they mourn the loss of his mother, Harriet Fetzer.

We are rejoicing with our convert Brandon Bauman (Bro. Bill and Sis. Monica) as he has confessed his desire to fully submit his life to the Lord. We pray that he will find grace to build a firm foundation.

Even though the school year had a different ending than any of us could have anticipated, we have a number of graduates. They are Andrew Beery (Bro. Dwaine and Sis. Shelly), Max Gucker (Bro. Garth and Sis. Sheila), Kaden Katronic, (Bro. Mike and Sis. Heather), Cheyenne Maibach, (Dean Maibach and Sis. Bonnie Maibach), Elijah Steiner (Bro. Rick and Sis. Dawn), Esther Stoller (Bro. Tom and Sis. Gretchen), Lane Uhler, (Bro. Adam and Sis. Ann), and Jock Zollinger (Mark and Michelle). Our prayers are with each of our graduates as they look to the future. These uncertain times brought to my mind this verse.

"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." Jeremiah 29:11.

Our prayers are with each graduate as they are faced with many new challenges and decisions.

Within the guidelines of the officials and our church elder body we are able to gather in groups again. It is a wonderful blessing to be able to worship together and we long for the day when we will be able to meet and greet as before.

Bro. Bill and Pam Hartzler welcome a new daughter-in-law to their family as their son Kolstein married Hannah Frazee. We pray for God’s blessing on their marriage.

Ohio, Toledo
Anne Baumann, Rebekah Witzig

All around us, the world is frantically searching for a solution or a plan to fix the Coronavirus pandemic. We already know the one who has the plan, and that is Jesus Christ our Savior. But, he is here to ‘fix’ more than just the pandemic, he is here to fix the brokenness of the world.

“And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.” 1 John 4:14.

Let us, as soldiers in the Lord’s army, take God’s plan and share it with the world.

We are thankful to have one of our college students, Jesse Schlatter (Junction, OH), recently commit his life to the Lord and begin his repentance journey. What a clear reminder that even when the world is in a stand-still, God is always on the move.

Prayers are continually being said for those affected by the Coronavirus. As a church, we are still waiting to begin gathering as a congregation for services, until the situation in our area improves. Until then, we continue to make use of various means of connecting with each other, while trying to respect the current recommendations given. When the time comes, we will be more than ready to physically worship and commune together.

Looking to the future, Toledo is still looking forward to the construction of a new church building. The excavation work on the property is mostly finished, and the sewer system is complete. The construction on the building is ready to begin. We are so thankful for God’s provision thus far and know that He will continue to lead us through this process.
Ontario, Kitchener  
RoseLynn Metzger

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.” Ephesians 1:3

Greetings of love to everyone! Reflecting on this verse, I am certain we can all find something or someone who has blessed us lately. God provides for his children, never leaving them. During this time of uncertainty, it is hard to see the blessings, and we can often feel alone. But we can rest in the assurance that our God never leaves us. Ever. He is full of love, waiting for us to submit to his will, showering us with love and grace each day! We truly are blessed. A blessing to our church family this month has been our continued Sunday services via Zoom. We are so thankful for technology since it provides some visual connection to our church family. On May 3, Bro. Chad Leman (Sis. Kim, Fairbury, IL) brought the word to us. Also, we had several midweek services this month, held on April 29 and May 13.

In closing, I pray that you can find blessings in your life today and forever. God bless!

“Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is.” Jeremiah 17:7

Oregon, Silverton  
Lorraine Kuenzi, Teresa Sinn

Alfred Von Flue, a dear friend and relative to many in our Silverton congregation, recently passed away unexpectedly. Please pray for his wife Marie, and the family during this time of loss.

Bro. Jim (Sis. Tresa) and Bro. Scott (Sis. Bethany) Zollinger’s uncle, Bro. John (Sis. Marjorie) Zollinger from Smithville, OH, recently passed away. We are prayerful for the family as they travel through this time of grief together.

We have welcomed two little ones into our congregation this month! May 2, Bro. Brent and Sis. Laura Sinn along with Alyssa, Caleb, and Dylan welcomed a baby girl, Arianna Aurora. Grandparents are Bro. Don and Sis. Linda Sinn and Angeles Lozada and Maximino Jiménez from Mexico.

May 3, Jordan and Alisha Kuenzi along with their son Emmett, welcomed a baby girl, Rosella May. Grandparents are Bro. Art and Sis. Mary Beth Kuenzi and Greg and Carol Dyke.

We are happy to share that Trenton Sinn (Bro. Tom and Sis. Edith) and Laura Moore (Joe and Edna) were joined in marriage May 3. Our prayers are with them as they grow together and seek God’s will in their lives.

We are also happy to share that on the same day, Jaclyn Kuenzi (Bro. Jack and Sis. Janet) and Rich Smith were joined in marriage! Jaclyn and Rich are planning to move to Philadelphia and our prayers go with them as they begin this new journey together.

It is joy to share that Hayden Metzger (Bro. Kurt and Sis. Koreen), Kyle Schurter (Leonard and Cheryl), and Drew Kuenzi (Bro. Jeremy and Sis. Kristy) have begun their walk with the Lord! We pray for God’s blessings and nearness in their lives as they seek his direction.

Maria Sinn (Bro. Kenton and Sis. Alicen) has recently had some health concerns and been recovering from being sick. We are thankful she is feeling better and praise God for his Goodness!

Bro. Micah Kuenzi (Bro. Jeremy and Sis. Kristy) has recently had surgery. We are
prayerful for a quick recovery and thankful he is doing well again!

Despite not being able to get together and celebrate our graduates this month, the parents organized a drive through event in which we were all able to offer our congratulations as the seniors prepare for their future careers! The graduates include Andrew Roth (Bro. Jim and Sis. Deb), Elisha Snook (Bro. Jason and Sis. Colette), Hayden Metzger (Bro. Kurt and Sis. Koreen), Lanah Metz (Bro. Joel and Sis. Laura), Lee Metzger (Bro. Rick and Sis. Ruth), and Sis. Victoria Hoach (Bro. Rick and Sis. Miriam, Portland, OR). May each one seek God first and pursue his kingdom!

**Pennsylvania, Philadelphia**  
Laura Isch

"Art thou fearful? See the Pilot,  
Who our ship doth safely guide;  
Unto whom we are most precious,  
Who directs us through the tide  
To the haven, To the haven  
Which He does for us provide."

_Art Thou Fearful? See the Pilot, Zion's Melodies, #51_

Congratulations to Cami Wiegand (Elder Bro. Ben and Sis. Michelle) and Yoshi Allen (Bob and Sis. Rika) as they graduate from high school. We wish them the Lord's blessings as they look ahead to the future and whatever God has in store for them.

Tennessee, Nashville  
Mike Fritz

We have nothing to report this month in the way of visitors or other activity due to the pandemic. We are thankful for technology that allows us to “gather” remotely for audio and video sermons, fellowship, as well as remote work and distance learning.

If you have the opportunity to travel to or through the Nashville area, please plan to fellowship and worship with us. We meet for worship every Sunday (normally). Please contact us ahead of time to confirm our schedule.

Contact:  
- Bro. Jeff and Sis. Cynde Stoller, 309.530.5760, cyndelynnstoller@gmail.com;  
- Bro. Jordan and Sis. Emily Fritz, 615.852.9109, jordanmfritz@gmail.com;  

**Texas, Austin/Bastrop**  
Candy Meiss

Sending our Love and Greetings from Austin!

We rejoice and are thankful that we are all healthy and able to continue to meet virtually this month. We are thankful to feel connected with video conferencing and appreciate the Brummit family who are willing to lead us in song for each service. We were blessed from the Word by Elder Bro. Gerry Hertzel (Sis. Ellen, Sabetha, KS) and Bro. Dan Koch (Sis. Julie, Tremont, IL). We are thankful for their willingness to serve.

During this time of uncertainty in the world, may we remember to call out to our Heavenly Father for peace and hope for our future. We know that God holds tomorrow, and he will continue to care for us. Let’s continue to pray, be thankful, and trust him more.

“Prayer + Thankfulness = Peace. To be able to have peace in the midst of problems we must come before him with gratitude.”  
by Nancy Leigh DeMoss

“I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus: Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.”  
1 Tim 2:1-6

Please refer to our minister’s directory for directions and contacts.
Texas, Dallas-Ft. Worth
Sheena Pelsy

“Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.” Joshua 1:9

Love and greetings from the Dallas church! As we continue to walk through these unknown times, I am reminded of the Footprints in the Sand poem. In times of trials and suffering, we are not alone. Our Lord and Savior is not only walking beside us, but he carries us when we are too weak. What a great encouragement to know, no matter what we are going through in life, we do not need to be fearful because our God is with us through it all. May we always rely and trust on him through times of trials and hardships.

Texas, Zapata
Mary Plattner

Like our brethren across the nation we have experienced many changes and challenges in our lives. It has made us all much more aware of the need of God’s Word.

“Draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you…” James 4:8

Vermont, Clarendon
Nathan Reutter, Sarah Wagenbach

We are thankful for our visiting ministers this month and for their willingness to join us through our video conferencing church services: Bro. Brad Wiegand (Sis. Deanna, Rockville, CT), Elder Bro. Kevin Ryan (Sis. Cheryl, Rockville, CT) and Bro. Curt Rassi (Sis. Kathy, Tremont, IL). We wish them God’s blessings for their time and effort.

---

Giving Single Moms a Hand up not a Hand Out!

Job opening for The New Beginnings of Southwest Florida Executive Director position

The New Beginnings is seeking a director for their program that helps single mothers and their children.

QUALIFICATIONS:

• Have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and a firm foundation of faith
• Have a heart for single mother families that may have experienced childhood trauma and dysfunction
• Good communication skills and strong conflict management abilities
• Counseling skills helpful
• Ability to network and have a good rapport and relationship with other organizations

RESPONSIBILITIES:

• Oversee staff through weekly meetings and providing spiritual and professional leadership
• Community outreach to provide awareness of the program for purpose of fundraising and meeting potential clients by visits, newsletter, social media and coordinating community events
• Participates in appropriate community organization meetings and events
• Organize, coordinate and delegate for our annual fundraising dinner and auction
• Must devote at least 40 hours a week, with some flexibility of schedule due to the community outreach aspects of the position

Salary commensurate with experience and education.

Please pray about this opportunity and if you feel God may be calling you to this ministry, send your resume to: mwrmasters@aol.com, to learn more of the details of the position.
AC Central: a growing hub of Apostolic Christian Content

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

Help us shape the future of AC Central.
Submit feedback and vote for suggested features at accentral.userecho.com

Want to support new feature development?
Donations for AC Central are appreciated and are currently routed through HarvestCall. Write AC Central on your check memo or choose it when making an online donation at harvestcall.org

Light from the Word

Now available by downloadable PDF at www.acpublications.org

After entering the website, click on the item located at the left hand frame entitled, “Light from the Word Reprints”. The entire set of editorials are available in a complete download (June 1987 to current).

Christian Guesthouse and Worship Services in Rochester, MN

Accommodations for Mayo Clinic outpatients and families – two locations:
1. Guesthouse - Three bedrooms with private baths, laundry, kitchen and family room area.
   2. Near St. Mary’s Hospital - two bedroom apartment within a 12 unit building.

Guesthouse Accommodations:
For information and reservations, contact caretakers:
   Bro. Randy and Sis. Brittaney Lehman
   4733 Birdie Lane NW, Rochester, MN 55901
   Phone: (507) 288-0072

Mid-week Services:
(3rd Wednesday in Rochester area)
For information, contact:
   Bro. Jim and Sis. Deb Tilbury
   Phone: (507) 281-2875
For additional information and ordering visit www.acpublications.org
Apostolic Christian Publications - 651 East Peoria St., Goodfield, IL 61742
**Bible Distribution:**
**Sharing His Word in Love**

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

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

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

---

**Hospital Lumiere - Bonne Fin, Haiti**

**DIRECTOR OF NURSING**

The nursing department within the hospital and clinic at Hospital Lumiere is staffed by Haitian nationals who are trained and certified by the Haitian medical system. Over the past 10 years, the nursing staff capability and dedication to serving the patients has greatly improved. All nursing departments are supervised by well qualified and skilled team members that are responsible for delivering the nursing services including staff assignments, scheduling, quality assurance and training. The position of Director of Nursing is to support the nursing team providing guidance, supervision and mentoring. This is not a hands on direct patient care position.

A key component of the medical program at Hospital Lumiere is hosting medical teams and ongoing training from medical professionals in the States. The DON will be responsible for establishing, coordinating and hosting nursing medical teams visiting HL.

This opportunity is a fulltime missionary position resident at Hospital Lumiere in Bon Fin, Haiti.

**DEPARTMENT QUALIFICATIONS:**
- Active member of the Apostolic Christian Church with a heart for service and desire to share the love of Jesus with the Haitian people
- Love for Haitian people and desire to work in close collaboration with Nursing Staff with a focus on relationship building
- Commitment to Ethical decision making and honesty in all decisions
- Responsibility and Accountability in all action, and willingness to support Nursing Supervisors in fostering program expectations with their nursing staff
- Willingness to adapt to necessary and frequent change
- Attitude of openness to learning and respect for Haitian culture
- Willingness to learn Creole language to effectively communicate with staff
- Willingness to work as team-player with other staff members and other members of Leadership Team including Administrator, Medical Director, Manager of Central Supply, Facilities Director, Operations Director, Finance Director and Pastors Office.
- Desire to interact with patients, families and employees while serving as an Ambassador For Christ.

**REQUIRED EDUCATION/EXPERIENCE:**
- Active Licensure as Registered Nurse in US
- 5 years nursing experience preferred

---

**For additional details for this exciting and worthy service opportunity contact:**

Amber Miller - Missionary Care Coordinator  
Email: amiller@harvestcall.org or  
Phone: 765.250.4295 x108

**APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN HarvestCall**
SPONSORSHIP: Giving Children Hope for the Future

Those in the child sponsorship program have several things in common. They are very poor, they desire to learn, and they have an undying soul.

The goal of this program is to provide an education so these children can learn life skills to enable them to become more productive adults. In addition, its purpose is to present a spiritual opportunity to be exposed to the gospel message and eventually be called to serve our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children.

Isaiah 54:13

To Sponsor a Child or School

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

Name _________________________

☑ Mr. ☐ Mrs. ☐ Miss

Spouse _________________________

Address _______________________

City ____________St ___ Zip _____

Home Ph ______________________

Cell Ph ______________________

Email _________________________

Please check preference:

☐ Haiti Student ☐ Jamaica

☐ Haiti School ☐ Guatemala

☐ Mexico ☐ Zambia

☐ Wherever needed

If possible, I prefer:

☑ Boy – Age _______

☑ Girl – Age _______

☐ No Preference

Send to:
HarvestCall Child Sponsorship
PO Box 36
Morton, IL 61550

Phone: 309-266-6080
Fax: 309-266-5281
Email: childsponsorship@harvestcall.org

Used Bible, Bible Story Book, and Song Book Distribution

Used Bibles, Bible Story Books, Hymns of Zion, Zion’s Harp, Gospel Hymns, and Tabernacle Hymns are needed.

AC Publications is now the collection center for your donated books.

651 E. Peoria St, Goodfield, IL 61742

www.harvestcall.org
FACILITIES MANAGER
OPENING at Hospital Lumiere, Haiti

The Hospital Lumiere team is presently seeking candidates for missionary service as Facilities Manager. Singles, Couples and Families of all ages are encouraged to prayerfully consider full time missionary service supporting the Hospital Lumiere ministry and outreach in Bonne Fin, Haiti.

General Duties and Responsibilities for the Facilities Manager:
• Manage Hospital and Campus Facilities maintenance and upkeep
• Manage Hospital Carpenter/Cabinet shop
• Manage Hospital and Campus vehicle fleet and maintenance
• Manage and Supervise the Hospital and Campus Electrical system (Solar, Diesel Generators and Hydro-electric generation and distribution)
• Plan and Manage construction and renovation projects. Supervise and coordinate Haitian staff and US volunteer teams.
• Manage and supervise Haitian facilities, maintenance, mechanic, electrical and construction staff.

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

For additional details for this exciting and worthy service opportunity contact:
Amber Miller - Missionary Care Coordinator
Email: amiller@harvestcall.org or Phone: 765.250.4295 x108

MISSIONARY SERVICE OPPORTUNITY

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

There are many service and ministry opportunities at HL. The most important qualification is that the brother and/or sister is called by God to serve at the hospital. The service opportunity and placement will be developed to match the candidate's interest and experience. Potential service roles for non-medical candidates:
• Business office management
• Finance and Accounting
• Hospital Administration
• Facilities Operations and/or Maintenance
• Hospital Operations (non-medical)
• Hospital Technical Support
• Information Technology Support
• Missionary School Teacher or Teacher Aid
• Campus and Hospitality Management
• Missionary Support

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

For additional details for this exciting and worthy service opportunity contact:
Amber Miller - Missionary Care Coordinator
Email: amiller@harvestcall.org or Phone: 765.250.4295 x108

If you are interested in Medical service, please review the Medical Professional Advertisement.
**TEACHER OPPORTUNITY**

Hospital Lumiere, Bonne Fin, Haiti is presently seeking a teacher and teacher aid for missionary children. These positions involve full-time teaching in the multi-level classroom setting of the Bonne Fin Missionary School on the Hospital Lumiere compound. The missionary role is expected to start during the summer of 2020. These are full time missionary positions with a service term of one school year. There is opportunity to extend the term of service.

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

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

For additional details for this exciting and worthy service opportunity contact:
Amber Miller - Missionary Care Coordinator
Email: amiller@harvestcall.org or Phone: 765.250.4295 x108

---

**Head Coverings and Veils**

now available at the Apostolic Christian Publications store in Goodfield, IL
$12-25 each, depending on the style.
Available IN STORE ONLY.

**Missionary Support Card Packs**

A Resource Tool to Stay Connected with our Missionaries

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


**Ideas for Use**

- Awareness
- Prayer Reminder
- Personal Connection
- Servant Fund Needs
- Communication via
  - E-mail & Texting
  - Letters
  - Care Packages

**Contact your Local HarvestCall Representative for Availability**

---

**PROCLAIM CHRIST & SERVE OTHERS**
Are you looking for more purpose in your life?

There is an abundance of hurting children and families in need of help. Come find fulfillment walking alongside them as they experience hope restored at Gateway Woods. Find joy as you share the Gospel with those in need of a Savior and be humbled as He shapes your life while doing so.

We currently need Houseparent Couples, WillowBridge Community Advocate Couple, Assistant Houseparent, LARC Coordinator, Development Coordinator and a Teacher. Will you be the beautiful feet that comes and labors to share Christ?

For more information:
gatewaywoods.org/careers
888-443-4283
Hopeful Distancing: The 2020 Auction Experience!

After more than 40 years of hosting the auction on our campus, we are in uncharted territory. The auction as you and I know it, will not be happening this year, and we would be remiss to not express our disappointment at that thought. I know that our staff looks forward to this day every year, as do so many of you. The Auction will still be happening – it’s just going to look a little different this year.

So with much prayer and deliberation, and on behalf of all of us at Gateway Woods, we are excited to invite you to join us for Hopeful Distancing: The 2020 Auction Experience! This will be a 3-day online event where you can still bid on items against your friends, purchase “pre-priced” items like apparel, and invest in Kingdom work through Gateway Woods. This pared-down virtual Auction will kick off on Thursday, July 30th and run through Saturday, August 1st. We will also hold a live virtual program that Friday evening, full of inspiring stories, along with a chance to still interact with the staff and other supporters.

Stay tuned and for more information: gatewaywoods.org/auction
Loving as Jesus Loves

— Continued from pg. 3

keep with mere human passion. Such a love must be the fruit of the vine; from being submitted to and rooted in the love of God.

The order or pattern of obedience is paramount. Just as with Jesus’ devotion to the Father, we begin with a sincere love for the Savior. As we fix our eyes upon him, he returns our gaze, and in the brightness of his presence, he softens, purifies, and cleanses our hearts. We do not obey to prove that we love him. Rather, our submitted devotion to Christ displaces our self-love and yields an obedient love that is so intertwined with his own that it becomes essentially inseparable from Christ the vine, even as the Father and the Son are inseparable.14

Such a love is truly otherworldly. This is precisely why our love for one another would be the proof of Jesus’ divinity,15 because it is manifestly unattainable in our own strength. This is the hope of the Gospel. Though we despair of our weakness, Jesus’ great high priestly prayer16 is not simply love poetry to be potentially fulfilled in some distant time, but a present and effectual intercession on our behalf. We firmly believe that through the gracious presence of his Spirit, like the generations of faithful saints that have gone before us, we are empowered as Christ prayed, to obediently follow our Savior’s teaching and example in a very radical, tangible, and present way.17 Obedience in action, not abstraction.

Considering my own weakness and our Lord’s infinite goodness, I often begin the day with some version of the following prayer: “Lord, have mercy on me and abide with me. Holy Spirit, govern my heart. Lead me in some simple way to demonstrate your love today. Lord, come to my aid. Today, be my healing, be my salvation.” As he answers my prayer, obedience to his commandments becomes the fruit of his love, rather than a compulsion to love. Indeed, through the Spirit, Jesus is in me, and he rests in the Father.18 Like a wild vine grafted in, I am joined into the divine life of the Trinity, and the love that was unattainable becomes reality in loving obedience to Jesus.

Endnotes
1   John 14:15
2   I John 4:8
3   James 1:17
4   Jeremiah 17:9
5   John 15:10
6   John 14:19
7   Cf. Col. 1:15 (Christ is “the image of the invisible God”). In early Christian art, the Father was not depicted separately from the Son. One image represented both. Michelangelo’s much later painting in the Sistine Chapel, separately portrays the Father as a gray-bearded, old man. To some degree, Michelangelo mirrored the Marcion error of thinking of the God of the Old Testament as a separate, sterner God than the God of the New Testament. The writers of the New Testament go to great lengths to reject this false dichotomy. For an interesting window into the intensity of this issue, research Polycarp’s colorful meeting with Marcion in Rome. We reject this false dichotomy each time we meet by reading from both the Old and New Testaments as the unified expression of the word and love of God.
8   Romans 5:8
9   Phil. 2:8
10  John 13:34
11  James 1:23-25
12  John 14:15
13  John 15:5
14  Cf. Ephesians 2:8-10
15  John 17:21
16  See generally, John 17
17  For further discussion of the obedience to the Christ’s teachings, see “The Way of Peace” podcast posted on Around the Table, December 2, 2019.
18  John 17:23
want God to know everything about us? He knows, but if he was there, right there? When we sit down to read, is it like when we’re sitting down with our spouse? Wed night, I opened up to the Song of Solomon. It kind of makes us blush sometimes, but even when we read the Psalms where David would say, “Oh, Lord, oh my soul,” he uses language that is so – in our western way of thinking – sappy. Do you love the Lord? Do you think of him affectionately?

When I look at this, it’s almost like sometimes we look at God as having placed us in a cage, like we’re a bird in a cage, and we’re just his little toys. I think culture has helped shape us to this thought. That’s not the case. He’s purchased us to marry us. We’re engaged. It’s all throughout the scripture. What do we read about when we enter into new Jerusalem? We’re going to sit down to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

So, as I think about Nehemiah and this endeavor to begin this rebuilding, I have to think, for many of us, our repentance started no different. As we started, we came back to this place where we knew we should be, and yet it doesn’t look real pretty in the beginning. It doesn’t at all. I remember the night I started repenting; it was a Friday. I woke up Sat morning, and I thought, “What in the world did I just do?” It was rough, but I started calling people asking them for forgiveness. I really didn’t feel anything but relieved. I didn’t know what I was doing as much at the beginning.

It’s just like a couple when they’re together. They begin their interactions one to another, but they don’t know what pleases the other right away. In fact, at the beginning, a lot of times in the earthly sense, there’s so much cordiality that we don’t really see the true picture. I’ll use this example: I remember an engaged couple that were going around looking at houses. They went into one house, and the sister thought, “Oh, this is terrible. This house is terrible; it’s about ready to fall in.” The soon-to-be-husband thought, “Well, she isn’t really saying she doesn’t like it. Maybe she’s likes it, and maybe I’ll try to say, ‘well we can work with this.’” Then the sister thought, “I guess he kind of likes it; maybe I should try to encourage him.” There wasn’t the right true communication.

That’s kind of the awkwardness sometimes when we first start seeking out God. We’ve been running from him for so long, but then in coming to him, our prayers are probably pretty awkward. We don’t really know how to pray. The first prayers are just ‘help me.’

My dad told me, “Your prayers are probably going to feel like they’re bouncing off the ceiling, like they’re not going anywhere.” That was about right. As I continued on, I knew I didn’t want to stay where I was; that is for sure. My life looked like Jerusalem: the gates were burned out, the walls were down, and it looked like a destitute place. That was me.

As repentance goes on and we start building up, there are going to be people that are detractors. They’re going to despise us. They’re going to laugh at us. It was related to me at noon that there was a brother that was working some place pretty rough for a while, and at the end, they came saying, “You know, we were going to try to break you.” That’s the evil one we wrestle against. That’s the tempter. That’s the accuser of the brethren. All these are names for Satan. He is a snake. As the bride of Christ there’s enmity between us and the snake, and there should be. We’ve got to be careful. We’ve got to understand his tactics and keep them in mind. In this process of repentance, as we start building, we start testifying back to the detractors – or the gainsayers, the naysayers, and all those sayers – “Then answered I them, and said unto them, The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his — Please turn to pg. 60
 servants will arise and build: but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem” Neh 2:20.

Our testimony is going to be that we can’t speak to someone that can’t see reason. When Jesus talked about the spirit, he said, “That which is flesh is flesh and that which is spirit is spirit.” The spirit can’t relate with the flesh. So, when we’re starting to walk in the spirit, and we start making confession of our sins, the Lord brings us out. They’re not going to be able to identify with the Spirit.

There was an account related to me of a brother that went back to one of his teachers. He didn’t really want to go back and talk to them because it was a long time ago and his teacher probably didn’t remember him. He went back, and sure enough, the teacher didn’t remember him. The teacher said, “you know why you came here? It isn’t to ask me. I need to ask for your forgiveness.” Then there was a reconciliation.

I think to make this more applicable to today, think of it as we go through our repentance. We talk about it like it’s a process, and we go back to people. I think that’s all good, but we’ve got to remember this isn’t just a one step and then we’re done. This is a journey. Really when we stand in the waters of baptism, that’s just the beginning of a beautiful courtship. I use that word courtship very precisely – us and God. We’re going to try to learn more of him. How do we do that? Well, if we look out and see the trends of Christianity, we see there’s more books written, more commentaries that are written every day, and it just mounds up.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ was mentioned this morning. There is no greater evidence of the resurrection of Jesus Christ than the lives of his disciples. When we carry forth his work, when we love the unlovable, when we love our enemies and those that despitefully use us and that reproach us, it’s evidence he arose and was victorious over sin.

So that is, “The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build: but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem” (Neh 2:20). It may be awkward at times in our work as it was here. They were building with one hand, and they had a sword in the other. We’re going to be constantly battling with ourselves. We’re going to be battling with the tendencies that we have in our flesh, and yet we also have a work to build up God’s kingdom. That’s when it feels like we can’t ever get anything done.

I’m sure young mothers can understand this. They can have the whole house cleaned in an hour if the kids are not there, but then it takes all day when they are. That’s what it’s going to feel like going through life because God’s going to allow things to come into our lives for our purification and for our edification to remind us. What if things were too good here? Why would we want to go to heaven? I don’t think any of us ever experienced it being too good.

I realize that I spoke so much on the Old Testament that there’s not a lot of time for the New Testament, so let’s just share a little bit more out of the Old Testament here. As time went on – this is why I think it goes beyond just the building process – and Jerusalem was rebuilt, there was that time it was complete, and there was a bunch of rejoicing and also the sound like weeping. You couldn’t discern because the old timers remembered the glory of the old, and these younger ones couldn’t understand. They were just rejoicing. They had some place to live. You know, it goes on in our lives.

Our testimony is going to be that we can’t speak to someone that can’t see reason. When Jesus talked about the spirit, he said, “That which is flesh is flesh and that which is spirit is spirit.” The spirit can’t relate with the flesh. So, when we’re starting to walk in the spirit, and we start making confession of our sins, the Lord brings us out. They’re not going to be able to identify with the Spirit.

There was an account related to me of a brother that went back to one of his teachers. He didn’t really want to go back and talk to them because it was a long time ago and his teacher probably didn’t remember him. He went back, and sure enough, the teacher didn’t remember him. The teacher said, “you know why you came here? It isn’t to ask me. I need to ask for your forgiveness.” Then there was a reconciliation.

I think to make this more applicable to today, think of it as we go through our repentance. We talk about it like it’s a process, and we go back to people. I think that’s all good, but we’ve got to remember this isn’t just a one step and then we’re done. This is a journey. Really when we stand in the waters of baptism, that’s just the beginning of a beautiful courtship. I use that word courtship very precisely – us and God. We’re going to try to learn more of him. How do we do that? Well, if we look out and see the trends of Christianity, we see there’s more books written, more commentaries that are written every day, and it just mounds up.
and mounds up and mounds up of peoples’ opinion of who God is. But if you were betrothed, newly engaged, would you go the person directly?

I kind of liken to when we just sit down listening to sermons; I’m not saying it isn’t good to listen to sermons, but I want to encourage you to spend some time in personal quietness of your home with the Holy Spirit and the word of God. Let God speak to you.

Like the time of a newlywed when they first meet, and they are asking each other a lot of questions. They’re spending time together to get to know one another, what makes them happy, what are their pet peeves, and so on. We understand that in the earthly sense, but it’s also that way with God as he looks down in your heart, and he says “I know you. This is what you need to do to please me best because I also know your weakness. There are some things that I want to personally ask you not to do, and there’re some things I want you to do.” He’s not asking anybody else; he’s talking to you.

This is where we really get to know one another, but when we read a lot of books – and I’m not saying reading a book is absolutely terrible – or listen to a lot of sermons, in some respects, it’s almost like as a newlywed that instead of going to talk to the person they’re engaged to, they go talk to their brother. It’s one step off, and they might be very accurate, but it also is not personal.

We do need to spend a lot of time with our creator. There’s going to be a lot of things that he’s going to ask us to do and not to do. That’s where we literally learn to die to self. It’s where we learn our insecurities, about our struggles, about why we may struggle with something, and we get back to pride. We’re very open with our creator. We pour out to him. We adore him. We want to just invite him in to all our decisions. I know some people ask God to show “what do I need to eat for the next meal?” It may be not literally, but they ask him almost everything. I don’t think it’s as important to get down to that granularity; it’s more of a reflection of your view of him.

Do you only ask God for big decisions? Do you only ask God when you’re struggling? Do you only invite him in to help you with a big struggle, and then once it’s past, you stop calling? I think that’s a dangerous place. We want God to be with us at our every step of the way. I think it’s important to reflect on that often.

I think it’s just an encouragement for me when I see young new couples that are just really enamored, and I think about myself. I think about how when time goes on, and you kind of sense of some familiarity. You get used to them, and you start losing your courtesy. That’s not good. We need to draw closer together. Just like when we start, we sometimes hear “you’ll be no closer to God than at the time of your baptism.” I hope that’s not true. I know what they’re saying. I know what the brethren are saying. I sure hope that you can say today, “I’m closer to God than I’ve ever been.” Today, if you’re married, “I’m closer to my wife or my husband than I’ve ever been” or to my sister to my friend if you’re not married. All that means is that we are knowing them deeper than facts and figures, more about who they are, what they want from us to please them, to please God.

I’m so encouraged as we think about our life we’re building or as building a marriage. Let’s consider what God has for us, and I’m sure that’s there’s many things I could have shared. I know that even in just sharing this afternoon, a lot of things lay heavily on my heart; I haven’t been as faithful in my earthly marriage or even my relationship with God as I could have been. Hopefully, the Lord spoke to you personally as well. I trust that each one of you would be blessed by the word the Lord has brought forth. I really enjoyed being here today and invite you to come and visit us in Burlington.
This issue of REMEMBERING contains the second and last portion of an address given to the National Church Conference at Gridley, Illinois in August, 1972. It is remembered as an especially inspirational talk on “The Appreciation of True Faith.” It was presented by Elder Bro. Loren Stoller, of Latty, Ohio.

The Appreciation of True Faith (part II)

I’ve imagined our grandchildren in twenty years from now driving down the highway past our church with some of their friends. And I’m wondering what they’re going to say. And as your children drive by your churches twenty years from now, what’s your grandchild going to say? Is your grandchild going to say, “That’s grandpa’s church. They’re kind of funny there. Their ways are different.” Or, is your grandchild going to say, “That’s my church! We’re believers in Jesus Christ.”

It is not these brothers who will soon pass away, not us younger elders, not the preachers, and the teachers, but all of us together by the grace of God, are the answer to what’s going to happen to our children!

You preachers and you teachers go home and tell your assemblies: "Working mothers, do you have to work? And fathers, that are gone three and four nights a week, or maybe from Monday morning to Friday evening, do you have to do a job like that?" Nobody can raise the children like the people that God gave to them, like those first people that held that little baby up to their bosom, and it began its spiritual growth then and there.

Medical professionals tell us that in the first three years of a child’s life it accomplishes twenty percent of its physical growth. And, in the same three years it accomplishes eighty percent of its brain cell growth. If the physical properties of the human body began to grow so early and so rapidly, the mental aspect, and the spiritual aspect takes place in that very beginning also.

And so as the Lord had told the Israelites, when he was teaching them to love the Lord. Do it when they’re little. When you get up in the morning, when you go to bed, when you sit around your table. Don’t growl and grumble about the church, but express your appreciation for the true faith.

And then it will not be your grandchildren that burns his draft card or desecrates the flag. But he’ll respect all of America, and he’ll tremendously love the Lord...and he will love the old and young alike.

Thus united and in concord, let us walk the path of life!

Editor’s note: I had the opportunity to attend this 1972 General Conference, my first ever, and was able to notice the deep impact Elder Stoller’s remarks left on those in attendance. It was with deep feeling that he spoke, and with a commanding fervor that he exclaimed the worthiness of our beloved faith. It was a fitting preamble to the end of the session when we all stood and sang “Unity,” out of the Zion’s Harp.

Verse 1: “Thus united and in concord, Let us walk the path of life. Hand in hand, O may love bind us, For each other’s welfare strive.”

-Compiled by Perry A. Klopfenstein
The Light of Hope

Routine Blood Work

As he approached his routine that day, little did the Roman soldier recognize the eternal significance of his upcoming actions. Taking his post at Golgotha, his group of soldiers went to break crucified prisoners’ legs. Coming to Jesus, they realized he was already dead. So, the soldier speared Christ's side instead, releasing blood and water (see John 19:31-37). That Roman soldier became our “phlebotomist” (one who draws blood for analysis or transfusion)! A key element of God’s love for the world (John 3:16) arose from a common soldier’s work. The blood he drew remains in a spiritual bank to instill life into any sin-deadened recipient.

With all praise to God, analyze how that “routine blood draw” let unfathomable blessings flow for all receptive souls. We must drink Christ’s blood to have life (John 6:53). It makes us nigh instead of far off (Ephesians 2:13) and purges consciences from dead works to serve the living God (Hebrews 9:14). Jesus’ blood grants the brethren bold entrance into the holiest (Hebrews 10:19). It sanctified the people (Hebrews 13:12). The blood of Christ’s everlasting covenant allows God’s peace to make us perfect in every good work. Then, we can do his will to work what is well-pleasing in his sight (Hebrews 13:20-21). Christ’s blood redeems from vain conversation (I Peter 1:18-19). Those who forsake darkness and walk in the light share fellowship and cleansing from all sin by Jesus’ blood (I John 1:6-7). We glorify Christ’s love in washing us from our sins in his own blood (Revelation 1:5-6). Truly, a complete analysis of that blood work’s power is humanly impossible!

It is humanly possible to let Christ’s blood transfuse our approach to routine duties. By his grace, our daily work can have more long-term significance than we recognize. What will happen as we continue taking our post? When we bring our routine to Jesus, his flow of blessings may eventually yield eternal fruit. As we serve God with boldness, dead consciences may desire his purging and everlasting covenant. Tired of their vain conversation, they may see the light to walk in cleansed fellowship. It’s impossible to describe how the Lord can use what we do heartily as to him (Colossians 3:23). Whether eating, drinking, or whatever, “… do all to the glory of God.” (1 Corinthians 10:31) Eternity will reveal how God multiplies our faithful actions for His glory!

Consider other Biblical examples of God multiplying ordinary deeds for extraordinary benefits. A widow woman of Zarephath trusted God’s unfailing promise by making Elijah a cake with her dwindling meal and oil (1 Kings 17:10-16). While waiting on Naaman’s wife, a little Israelite maid expressed bold faith that God would recover him of leprosy if he went to Elisha (2 Kings 5:1-4). Up a mountain near the Sea of Galilee, a lad gave five barley loaves and two small fishes to nourish a seated multitude after Jesus gave thanks (John 6:1-13). Christ viewed a certain poor widow’s casting of two mites into the treasury as more than the rich men’s gifts (Luke 21:1-4). And the next example awaits our willingness to humbly labor on.

Our work has untapped significance as we approach our routine today (see Hebrews 13:2). Even if our post seems mundane, our crucified Christ longs to release blood-borne blessings in response to our service. Will we become “spiritual phlebotomists,” whose work routinely points others toward freedom from sin’s burden through the power of the Lamb’s blood?

-by Sam Manz
"When peace, like a river..."