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Casting all your care upon him: for he careth for you.
1 Peter 5:7
Christian Connection

The Apostle Paul reached out and connected to fellow believers by writing many beautiful letters, some which we still reference today as part of the Word of God. His purpose for writing varied according to the needs and concerns of the believers he wrote to.

Often the letters of Paul shared warm and heartfelt expressions of pure love and Christlike affection. In Philippians 1:3 he shares “I thank my God upon every remembrance of you.”

Current events have restrained our gathering and travel from what we are used to, but the Silver Lining is one of the time proven methods we have to exercise our Christian Connection. May God richly bless you as you read through the content of this edition. Much like the letters from the Apostle, there will be some news and some spiritual encouragement. We love you and we thank God upon our remembrance of each of you.

In Christian love,
Jeff Grimm and Greg Lehman, Counselling Elders

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The Manner of Our Father’s Love

Theme verse: “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.”

The first ten verses of 1 John 3 contain some extremely important precepts for Christians to consider: our adoption as children of God; Christ’s mission to take away our sins; our spiritual victory over sin; maintaining a proper relationship with the world; the promise that we will be like Jesus; and the love that is demonstrated as evidence of being a child of God.

Our Adoption by God – 1 John 3:1a

When we consider this theme verse, do we ever find ourselves taking the privilege of being a child of God for granted? For us to be given the opportunity to be adopted as sons and daughters of the Living God is one of the most profound and wonderful pronouncements in the Bible! This is true despite the fact that all mankind was and is in a lost and imperfect state, and even the best of us have been separated from our holy heavenly Father by our own doing. “…for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God.”

The Psalmist of old aptly described our dilemma, “For mine iniquities are gone over mine head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me.”

God’s answer to our quandary was to extend to us the highest and purest form of sacrificial love, “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” As the recipients of such great love, we surely desire to render God our love and joyful service in return, “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.”

Christ’s Mission – 1 John 3:5

Christ’s mission on earth was to save sinners. Our sins have been pardoned through His atoning blood on the cross. “In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.” We realize that we have no worthiness within ourselves, but instead must rely fully on the redemptive work of Christ alone for our salvation, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Spiritual Victory Over Sin – 1 John 3:6-9

Christ’s redemptive work at Calvary, acted on by faith, actively destroys the works of Satan, providing the means to overcome the lies and deception of the devil by the power of Jesus’ blood. “He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.” Faith in His shed blood, and in the power of the Holy Spirit results in a spiritual rebirth and we become new creatures in Christ: “…old things are passed away; behold, all things are...”

— Please turn to pg. 60
Monthly Sermon

Sermon by Bro. Greg Schambach, Elgin, IL
February 2, 2020

Numbers 9 & Luke 3

Good morning and welcome. Today is a day of worship. We’re thankful for this opportunity. Today is the Lord’s day as it’s often referred to, and of course, we gather on Sundays to remember the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Its root meaning is life, and the triumph of life over death, the defeat of Satan, the defeat of death, and even the defeat of hell. That’s why we gather together, and why, for centuries, Christians have gathered together on this day to consider that power that’s in life and in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Maybe as we gather together today, we think of this also as a day of rest, and that’s good. Maybe as we gather together, we’re preparing to worship, and we’re kind of ready to sit back and sort of check out a little bit. It’s probably not a good idea.

When Paul was in Thessalonica and then went to Berea, it says that the Bereans “were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind” (Acts 17:11). It says “readiness of mind”. Why? What were they doing that showed that they received it with readiness of mind? It says they “searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11). Paul came and preached the gospel to them, and what they did, and were commended for, is saying, “Well, let’s see what the Bible says about that.” Readiness of mind. So, as we receive, as we hear the word today, don’t just sit back. We should examine what’s said and compare it to scriptures to see if it’s so because if I say it, it isn’t so. What I say doesn’t matter. What matters is what the scripture says. It has to conform to the scriptures.

So if we’re here, and the Bible is our authority, may we come from a place of humility, allow it to speak to us, and not simply assume that whatever the Bible says is going to pat me on the back, make me feel good about myself, and confirm everything I already think. That’s not letting the word of God be powerful and quick and sharper than a two-edged sword, which it is. We have to be humble enough and willing to let it be that. Today, as we gather together to praise the name of Jesus, to worship our great God, and to receive the word, may we do it with readiness of mind. What that means is check what’s said with the scriptures because the scriptures are what matters – not my thoughts, not your thoughts, but what the Bible says.

I’ve opened to Numbers: chapters nine and ten are in front of me. We’ll probably stick with Numbers chapter 9. On Wed evening, Bro Neil Stoller was with us, and he gave a topical presentation about lessons from Deuteronomy. He did a really great job of situating it to get a picture in our minds of where the children of Israel were. As he told us, and as we know, Numbers is after they were redeemed out of Egypt, out of Exodus; Numbers is when they’re traveling in the wilderness on the way to the promise land, but we know that they’re doing that for 40 years. Of course, Deuteronomy is Moses’ words to the children of Israel before they enter into the promise land at the end of that 40 years. Now we’re going to read a little bit about that time between the Exodus and the entering into the promise land in Numbers 9.

It’s pretty clear who was in charge of the children of Israel, wasn’t it? Maybe Moses was the appointed leader, but it’s also pretty clear that Moses wasn’t really in charge, was he? The children of Israel were led by God. That’s a vivid picture when we see their wanderings in the wilderness. Moses, or whoever wrote this, is at pains from verses 15 to 23 to make it very clear that whether they went or whether they stayed, however long they stayed, however long they journeyed, whenever it happened, it was based on how God led with the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire.
That was it. It didn't matter if it's years; it didn't matter if it's two days or a month or a year. If the cloud tarried upon the tabernacle, if it just sat there, they stayed in their tents. They were living a nomadic life in tents. They didn't have permanent dwelling places. They were wandering in the wilderness, and yet if the cloud stayed on the tabernacle, they stayed, even for a year. They didn't build houses. They didn't put down roots. They didn't say, “I guess we're here. We're here forever, for the long haul.” They knew they were going to the promise land, but sometimes they sat in the same place for a year. That's faith. They stayed for a whole year without building permanent houses.

How many of us would be tempted to build a permanent house? to kind of settle in there? But no, they were going to the promise land. They were looking toward what God had promised for the future, and they trusted in him. That's what faith is, isn't it? It's a deep trust. They trusted in God and were very much forward looking in their faith, but it wasn't only forward looking. We read about the Passover at the beginning of the chapter, and the Passover was something probably all of the people alive at this point had actually gone through. They were actually slaves in Egypt. They had actually seen the plagues. They had actually walked through the Red Sea. The vast majority of these people, if not all of them except for a few newborns, had been there. They had experienced it, and yet God institutes this feast of the Passover every single year. He says, ‘You're going to keep it every year.’

Why? They’re looking backwards and remembering what God has done for them. That’s what the whole Passover feast, the whole meal, is about. It's highly symbolic, and it’s about God redeeming them from slavery. He tells them to make sure to remember this every single year. It's looking backwards to what God has done, and at the same time, their faith is looking forward to being led into the promise land. They have a deep trust in that. It’s a bifocal existence, isn’t it?

Faith: living as a child of God. It’s looking backwards and looking forwards at the same time. Those two things confirm, or support, one another. They can trust that they’re going to the promise land and that God’s word is true. They are going to end up there even if they’re sitting in the same place in the desert for a year. They know it’s going to happen. Why? Because they look back to Passover and say, “we were slaves for 400 years, and he redeemed us; what’s a year sitting here in the wilderness?”

A year’s a long time, isn’t it? In some senses, it goes by fast. We recently had the new year, and it seems like years go by in a hurry, but if you’re sitting in one place and living in a tent, a year’s an awfully long time. It’s easy to get discouraged. It's easy to let circumstances overwhelm us and let that be all we see. I’m sure there were many times in that 40 years wandering in the wilderness, people dying out the whole time because that’s why they had to wander, isn’t it? The generation had to die out because they lacked faith, but what kept them going in that period of waiting, in that time of transition – a hard time, a trying time, no doubt – is looking backwards to remember what God has done and looking forward, trusting in what God has promised. It’s the conjunction of those things that should keep us going in the present. That’s why they were able to sit there for a year in their tent and be okay with it, though they probably weren’t okay with it all the time.

We know that they grumbled and complained an awful lot just like you and me, and yet they were able to have faith. That’s so important that they were grounded in what God had done in the past, that they remembered. It wasn’t just a vague, “well, you remember it,” but the Passover was instituted as a way to be sure that they remembered it, and it solidified their faith in God.

— Please turn to pg. 61
Encouragement for Good Vision Farm

Caribbean Committee

A number of significant changes have occurred at Good Vision Farm in Haiti. Probably the most obvious is that the original program missionaries, Les and Christine Kaeb, have returned to their home in Francesville, Indiana, where Les continues his service as Mission Manager for the Haiti Dairy Program. Serving at Good Vision Farm are Daryl and Debbie Knobloch and Eric and Melanie Stoller.

Whenever there is a change like this, one of the first concerns for missionaries in a country like Haiti involves trust. Will the Haitian community trust the newer missionaries like they so obviously trusted Les and Christine? Will the employees and regular volunteers at the farm continue to show up and support this ministry? Of course, the unrest in Haiti and the unpredictable COVID-19 situation have added to the uncertainty, but trusting in our Saviour first of all makes the difference. The missionaries at Good Vision Farm have been encouraged lately in several ways.

Here are some examples of how our missionaries at Good Vision Farm are encouraged:

At a recent meeting of local Haitian farmers, they received a co-op dividend for the milk that their cows have supplied to the program over the past year. Their excitement and desire to support the program with additional cows was tremendous. This was one of the most concrete examples of putting trust in the leadership change at the farm. Seeing the Haitian’s big smiles and continued interest in the dairy program poured a lot of strength into the encouragement bucket!

Amidst Covid-19 Concerns – Good News From Hospital Lumiere

Caribbean Committee

If Any Man be in Christ, He is a New Creature

Sony and Gilbert grew up together in Bonne Fin. They played together, went to school together and went to church together. When they reached adulthood, their paths took them in different directions, both physically and spiritually. Gilbert stayed in Bonne Fin, became converted and is active in the Church de Dieu (Church of God) where he attends. He is currently the Chief of Security at Hospital Lumiere.

Sony went down a different path. Although he had a church background, he never became converted. He found a job in Port-au-Prince and spent several years there, loading trucks at a food market. Then, in January of 2011, the earthquake struck Port-au-Prince. Sony fled the building he was in, then watched it collapse into a pile of rubble.

“I was alive by the grace of God” said Sony. But the wake-up call God sent Sony was not enough.
Another example is one of a local Haitian farmer who has been an enthusiastic supporter of the program. This young farmer has now planted two fields of brachiaria grass, not for human consumption, but to feed his cows so that they will produce more milk. While unremarkable to us, this is a huge paradigm shift for this community. As others observe this first farmer’s example, we trust it will contribute to additional participation in the program.

In the past, the milk that has been bottled and sold from Good Vision Farm has primarily been purchased by missionary families and sponsors for orphans. But lately, local Haitian people have been regular customers of the milk and ice cream that is made at the farm. Seeing the local community take such interest in using these products has been heartening. This also provides a platform for Christian interactions and conversations that are so necessary for this ministry.

Frequently, when things go wrong, we Americans try a dozen options at our disposal to fix the problem, while Haitians often have the initial response of turning to God in prayer. How much better for us to follow their example of falling to their knees before it’s our last resort; how much we can learn from each other as we more fully trust our Heavenly Father and obey His precious word! – by LuAnn Troxel

“I wanted to make a decision a long time ago” continued Sony, “but things in my life were going OK so I didn’t”.

After the earthquake, Sony came back to Bonne Fin. Gilbert helped him get a job as a security guard at Hospital Lumiere. As they worked together, Gilbert encouraged Sony and reminded him of a promise he had made, that someday he would repent and become converted. Then, on Sony’s past birthday, it finally struck him, “I need to have a new spiritual birth too.” Sony promptly went to visit his pastor and they prayed together. Sony said “I could just feel God’s grace and the presence of his spirit”.

Gilbert says “Sony was always a good person. He was gentle and respectful. But now he is different.
He is a new person” II Corinthians 5:17 tells us “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” Sony can testify to this.

“I pray morning, noon and night that my life can be pleasing to God. And I feel the impact of those prayers because God helps me not do the things I used to do. I can feel God’s presence, protection and guidance in my life.”

Sony’s favorite Bible verse is “The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace” - Exodus 14:14. “God will give help and strength, just like he did for Israel” explained Sony. Sony also likes the 23rd Psalm. “I will lose nothing in my life because now Jesus is my Good Shepherd” says Sony. Our hope and prayer is that through the ministry of Hospital Lumiere, many more can come to know Jesus Christ as their Good Shepherd.

– by Rich Bertschi
Appreciating Forbearance

What comes to mind when you think of the word “forbearance”? Perhaps it is Scripture. Perhaps it reminds you of someone you know—someone that is forbearing. Often this attribute of forbearance is associated with some uncomfortable feelings, thoughts, and experiences. It is not something our human nature engages naturally. The belief is especially present in society today that relationships should exist only as long as they benefit you. If a relationship becomes a hindrance, inconvenient, or downright difficult, you should just move on. This equates relationships to something you buy at the store. If it works for you or helps you, you invest in it. If it does not, you let it go. Relationships in the Body of Christ, however, are called to a different standard. There is a beauty to relationships we do not choose but come about as a result of being saved into a community. They can be quite sanctifying for us, but they often require forbearance to make them work. Redeeming and appreciating forbearance as a beautiful attribute that Christ calls us to should be our goal.

What is forbearance?
According to Webster’s 1828 dictionary, forbearance is “the exercise of patience; long suffering; indulgence towards those who injure us; lenity; delay of resentment or punishment.” Expansion of this definition means to be tolerant or understanding toward those who may annoy us—a challenge to any human spirit. Paul shares in Colossians 3:12-13 “Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humility of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.”

There are a couple things to consider from this passage. First, the Greek word Paul uses is a verb that is translated into the English language in the following ways: “suffer, bear with, forbear, endure.” The Strong’s definition is “to hold oneself up against” or figuratively to “put up with.” Forbearance is a love action. Consider the experience of holding a baby. Your arms and body are standing erect, holding yourself up to sustain and bear the weight of this precious child. The child is a liability and you are “bearing with” or “enduring” the weight put upon your body. In a similar way, as we forbear with each other, we are acknowledging the inevitable reality that we all have annoying habits or characteristics which call us into tolerance in an understanding way.

Secondly, forbearance and forgiveness are similar but not the same. Forgiveness requires an offence to be pardoned. Forgiveness occurs when sin has occurred. Put another way, forgiveness recognizes fault in the other and then dismisses the charge. Forbearance does not necessarily involve sin, though it can. Often forbearance involves accepting and receiving the rough edges and annoying habits that most of us seem to have. However, at times forbearance also calls us into patience and grace with those that may make hurtful comments or sin against us. There are times where relationally we are called to both forgiveness and forbearance when sin occurs. Remember, the “riches of his goodness and forbearance” led to our repentance (Romans 2:4). Also, consider Romans 15:6-7 “That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.” We are called to “receive” or “take” one another as Christ took you and me. Did Christ receive each of us in a state of perfection? Certainly not, nor was that his expectation. Both forgiveness and forbearance are choices we make as individuals that lead to freedom. Forgiveness frees us from bitterness and wrath while forbearance frees us from unrealistic expectations of others.
What does forbearance look like?
While the concepts of forbearance can make sense in our head, it is an entirely different matter to allow this attribute to grip our heart. The reality is forbearance is hard work. It requires the Holy Spirit leading our hearts. Consider an example: A brother or sister in your local church is awkward in social settings - laughs at inappropriate times during a conversation or misses social cues that seem evident. This continually leads to awkward and uncomfortable interactions. Likewise, consider that some individuals in your life are no doubt overly “scattered” or perhaps “too structured”. How do we forbear and “receive” these individuals as Christ has received us? As you reflect on this, remember others are most likely continually forbearing with us regarding some of our own annoying habits or behaviors.

In both examples, forbearance is not just gritting your teeth and bearing it. It is much more:
- Forbearance is enduring with someone or something that does not comply with your favor.
- Forbearance is not assuming someone has ill intent or is intentionally engaging in annoying behaviors.
- Forbearance is acknowledging an annoyance and tolerating it.
- Forbearance is not confronting an unfavorable issue and urging change.
- Forbearance is expecting the irritant to exist and not becoming bitter that it does.
- Forbearance is not enjoying, appreciating, or celebrating the annoyance.
- Forbearance is receiving people and loving them despite their unfavorable attributes.
- Forbearance is not ignoring or avoiding people or who do not strike your fancy.
- Forbearance is an attribute of Christ towards you.

In order to engage forbearance well, we need to have a good understanding of brokenness in our world and in ourselves. Christ calls us to view others through a lens that sees much more of an individual than their annoying behavior. We need to appreciate others as an image-bearer of God in spite of a rough edge. Additionally, forbearance flows out of “lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering” (Ephesians 4:2-3).

When and how do we confront?
There are times in relationships it may be helpful and appropriate to lovingly confront or engage in communication about annoying behaviors. Before engaging in dialogue, it is helpful to reflect on a few things. Is the behavior flowing out of the personality or temperament of an individual? Generally, an individual’s personality does not change over time. For example, someone who tends to prefer structure and routine may change somewhat overtime but generally would not shift to being overly spontaneous. Additionally, if there are clear, sinful behaviors it is obviously appropriate to confront in the spirit of Matthew 18. Finally, consider the consequences that the behavior is having on others. Confronting may be more appropriate if the annoying behavior has a negative impact on others outside of just yourself.

When we do confront an individual in love – we do well to start with prayer and thanksgiving. Grounding ourselves in the Holy Spirit and gratefulness for the positive attributes of the individual are important before confronting. The individual we are approaching is much more than just the annoying behavior we are addressing. It is also helpful to seek to remove the beam out of my own eye before seeking to remove the mote in my brother or sisters’ eye (Matt. 7:3). Finally, remember each of us can be annoying at times and acknowledging this can help us confront in humility.

— Please turn to page 47
Apostolic Christian LifePoints
www.aclifepoints.org
@aclifepoints on Facebook or Instagram
Ashlyn Gramm-Mission
Communication Coordinator

“Obey them that have the rule over you and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account. That they may do it with joy and not with grief, for that is unprofitable for you.” Heb. 13:17

Apostolic Christian LifePoints is owned and operated under the authority of the Apostolic Christian Church of America’s Elder Body. In other words, our bylaws establish that this mission is held directly accountable to the Elder Body, similar to Gateway Woods, ACCFS, and HarvestCall. From the beginning, the Board of Directors for LifePoints and the Elder Body developed a strong and trusting relationship. Because this trust was established early on, the Elder Body’s current oversight of LifePoints’ operations is relatively light. The Elder Body receives Annual Reports from LifePoints, summarizing the financial wellbeing and operations of the agency. The Elder Body also maintains authority over purchases and sales of land or property, and the use of donations to the endowment fund. The relationship between LifePoints and the Elder Body is quite interactive and can best be illustrated by the process of appointing members to LifePoints’ Board of Directors.

Every year, a new member of the Board of Directors needs to be selected to serve a nine-year term. The process begins with the Board asking the Elder Body to submit candidates from specific geographic areas (local or out-of-state) who could offer helpful skills, like teaching or accounting, in addition to a heart for serving this mission. There are three counseling elders who attend LifePoints’ Board meetings and serve as liaisons to the rest of the Elder Body during this process and at the Elder Conferences. The Elder Body will typically give the Board three candidates to interview, and the Board will then present the new member to the full Elder Body for approval.

The Board of Directors is responsible for recruiting and overseeing the Executive Director of LifePoints. The Board also has the authority to hire additional staff, but that task is typically delegated to the Executive Director. The Executive Director and other management staff regularly meet with various Board committees – Building, Grounds and Equipment, Personnel, Finance, and Executive – to develop initiatives and proposals for LifePoints. The Board itself meets six times a year and uses these meetings to approve the committees’ proposed initiatives, approve major financial transactions, and determine the amount of money to be used for wage increases and retirement benefits.

In total, there are five levels of authority at LifePoints: the Elder Body, Counseling Elders, Board of Directors, Executives, and Department Heads. This division of leadership has worked well for our organization, largely due to the deep level of trust that has been developed between the members in authority. We at Apostolic Christian LifePoints praise God and give thanks for consistently providing this mission with godly leaders who share our heart for serving those in need.

Gateway Woods Apostolic Christian Children’s Home
Karla Zimmerman - Former Houseparent

When we moved to Gateway Woods 5 years ago, we had a 9-month-old little girl and no plan. We invested fully, gave our best, and found our passion. We praise God for the work he has done in our lives over the past 5 years as houseparents. God knew our passion for hurting youth
before we did and he led us to a place we could fully invest and use the gifts he gave us to take part in his Kingdom work. He grew our hearts for the hurting, challenged us beyond what we would ever really desire, and continued to teach us more of his love, compassion, justice, and truth. Our time as houseparents at Gateway Woods has been some of the most challenging, fulfilling, unbearable, and wonderful times of our life.

It’s interesting to me how something can be unbearable yet so incredibly wonderful and fulfilling at the same time. I’ve come to recognize this mystery is God at work within us, his children, to prune out our dead branches and bring to life new eternal fruit. God was faithful to provide through each failure and victory. He gave us a huge team of support to walk with us through each season. So many times, I was a crying mess, “gave up”, or became angry about a situation. But just as many times, I had people pouring into me, strengthening me, challenging me, and pointing me to the reason we do this work. Taking the focus off me, and refocusing on Christ. I wouldn’t trade this experience for the world.

A few things this job has taught me:

1. Nothing is as simple as it appears.
2. How to enjoy the simple things in life like cooking, gardening, and taking walks.
3. We are all in need of “treatment” and if we aren’t willing to accept that we are going to be stuck in a rut for a long time (at GW, we call it Phase 1)!
4. How to accept and embrace my strengths and weaknesses, and how God created us all different for a reason…and that is good!
5. When God gives us supports and relationships and then those change, we can count on God to continue to supply our need through other avenues. God never forsakes us even through change.
6. Teenagers are challenging but fun and underneath all that tough exterior is a broken child longing for someone to set boundaries and teach truth so they can feel safe and grow.
7. The importance of being authentic - with the teenage residents, with co-workers, or with your spouse. Honesty, being assertive, and allowing others to see your struggle and support you through it creates relationships that last.
8. I love the ministry of Gateway Woods and the way God has used it to spread truth and touch lives; yours, ours, and the kids we work with.

**News:**

- 2020 Auction: We are thankful for the overwhelming support from our church family this year as we transitioned to a virtual auction.
- We are thankful to announce that we have hired Bro. Seth and Sis. Hannah Bollier from Bloomington, IL and Bro. Phil and Sis. Janean Gerber from Bluffton, IN as new houseparents.
- Please join us in welcoming Sis. Claire Berchtold from Princeville, IL as our new math teacher. Please pray for Claire as she transitions from the 2020 Volunteer Coordinator into a first year teaching role.
- We currently have these openings at Gateway Woods: Assistant Houseparent, 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.

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

Alabama, Athens
Lisa Aschliman, Kristy Moore

“I want Jesus to live in my heart… and in my belly,” exclaimed our delighted 3 year old daughter. Both my husband and I chuckled at her innocence. However, as those words continue to resonate in my mind, I am reminded that we are to be wholly surrendered (body, soul and spirit… yes even our belly) to Christ. In doing so, we have the opportunity to have complete peace despite the circumstances surrounding us.

“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Thes. 5:23

This month has been pretty low key as many of us have taken little family trips for the summer. We ask for your continued prayers for Sis. Carolyn Lewis as she continues to endure many side effects from her cancer treatment. As always, we would love to have y’all visit, even if you’re traveling through for the evening! For our guest house accommodations, please call Sis. Rebekah Klaus at 815.674.5411.

Arizona, Phoenix
Marge Lindenbaum

“And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and he saith to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray.” Mark 14:32

I recently had one of those moments where I realized something and am not sure if I just learned it or if I always knew it and never really thought about it before. Or, possibly, I thought about it and forgot – I am getting to that age! When I think about Gethsemane, it brings the thought of a garden – an olive grove. We have a large olive tree in our yard that makes it easy to picture a small grove of trees where Jesus went to pray before he was betrayed, abandoned, arrested, and put on trial. What I did not know (or remember) is that “Gethsemane” means “oil press”. This was an area at the foot of the Mount of Olives, apparently where the oil was pressed out of the olives. I have never pressed oil from olives, but dear friends have taken the olives from our tree and turned them into oil. From this and some internet research, I learn it is no simple process, and involves grinding, crushing, stretching out and high pressure to achieve a quality oil. How beautiful is the imagery God uses to teach us his plan! How perfect the illustration provided for our greater understanding! And how easy it is to miss if we are not paying attention.

In the garden, Jesus was bruised, crushed, and poured out. He began his mysterious mission of taking on our sin so we might become the righteousness of God. He agonized over what lay before him but prayed earnestly and submitted to the will of his Father, to experience the wrath that should have rained down on us. His suffering and willing sacrifice satisfied that wrath, as it somehow pleased the Father to save us in this way. Oil in the Scripture often signifies the Holy Spirit. Jesus’ work, from the garden to the cross, opened the way for the Holy Spirit to be here with us when it was finished.

We cannot know the battle that took place that night, and we are told the power of darkness was at work (Luke 22:53) and surely seemed to prevail, in the eyes of all the participants that night. But we know the judgment of the world on the person of Jesus resulted in a complete victory for our Lord and, consequently, for those who believe on him. Considering the perfect execution of such a complex and wonderful plan, how can we not?
“Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.” Isa. 53:10-11

Our return to in-person meetings did not last long, and we are back to shut-down mode. We appreciate the technology and all those who make it possible to continue to meet “virtually”. Our city and church are not fully shut down, and our local HarvestCall continues to operate. Our youth attended an abbreviated VBS, and again, we thank our Sunday school and youth leaders for all the effort they expend for the benefit of our kids.

We mourn the loss of our Sis. Eleanor Prieger-Hill along with her family, and rejoice at her victory in Jesus! She was an inspiration and blessing to our fellowship.

Our prayers continue for those throughout the entire world who are affected by this plague, for our leadership, and for the Holy Spirit to bring many souls to salvation, even as it seems, once again, the power of darkness is having an hour. We take heart, as we know how it all turns out.

Arizona, Prescott
Autumn Rokey

Please pray for Sis. Bridget Koehl as she has the opportunity to work at the CVE program in Magdalena, MX this summer.

“But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God” Luke 18:16.

May we all come to God with a child-like faith, an open heart, and desire to know Jesus.

Arizona, Tucson
Dean and Jackie Knobloch

By now, I think we are all amazed at just how much COVID-19 has affected our lives. With increased cases abounding here in Arizona, we are finding it would help to be more cautious and more concerned with how we are spreading the virus. It is interesting to me that we have become our own worst enemy. We Americans, who boast about our freedom of speech and our own rights, have now decided if and when we will wear masks and gather in large groups. We have, in some ways, valued our rights over our common sense to keep this virus from spreading. So be it! God has always given us the freedom of deciding if we will obey his word and follow Jesus Christ’s teachings. This pandemic holds the same principle: Are we willing to forego our own will and follow the ones who advise us and are the authority?

I think man’s nature just doesn’t change. We will have to learn the hard way and hopefully we will get our will in line with God’s plan before our days are ended. Controlling our destination at life’s end and controlling the spread of COVID both lie with each person and the decisions they make today. I pray you are making the right choice.

California, Los Angeles/Altadena
Kali Sauder

“There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling: One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” Ephe. 4:4-6

As the divide in our nation is magnified in these unsettled times, we the body of Christ have even more opportunity to shine brightly, unified by our faith in our “One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in [us] all.” Does this mean we all see things the same way? No. Unity is not the same as uniformity. God delights in his diverse creation. It is by his creative design that we differ in opinion, personality, and experience. Our unity is based in love. Even when we disagree, we don’t attack each other or disengage from community, but we esteem each other in love, with respect. We hold our status as belonging to Christ, being adopted brothers and sisters, above opinions and disagreements. Let us be led by the Spirit within each of us to walk in love toward each
other as a church family, so that
the world will know to Whom
we belong and that they too are
welcome in this unified, loving
family of God.

With great joy, Cody and
Garrett Moser (Bro. Justin and
Sis. Robin) were baptized, in a
more unique way than usual due
to social distancing requirements.
We're thankful we were able to
gather via Zoom and carefully
distanced at a local church
family's backyard swimming
pool. It was a unique and
wonderful day!

From beginnings to endings,
Bro. Dick Hecker went to his
eternal reward. Although our
hearts ache and we lift up his son,
John in prayer through this loss,
we rejoice that Bro. Dick is finally
home in heaven and reunited with
his beloved wife, Sis. Marian.

As we all walk by faith and
not by sight in these uncertain
times, there is comfort in the
words of this old English poem:

"Many a questioning,
many a fear,
Many a doubt, hath
its quieting here.
Moment by moment let
down from Heaven,
Time, opportunity,
guidance are given.
Fear not tomorrows,
child of the King,
Trust them with Jesus.
Do the next thing.
Do it immediately,
Do it with prayer;
Do it reliably, casting all care;
Do it with reverence,
tracing His hand
Who placed it before thee
with earnest command.
Stayed on Omnipotence,
safe 'neath His wing,
Leave all resultings, Do
the next thing."

Colorado, Denver
Tess Leman

Greetings of love because of
Jesus.

Many thanks to Elder Bro.
Marvin Dotterer (Sis. Nancy,
Forrest, IL) for sharing the Word
as well as many warm smiles
with us. We always enjoy your
visits and wish we could have
hugged you!

May the Lord help us to all
exercise patience as life continues
to be abnormal! In a time when
it is easy to speak disrespectfully
of those in authority over us, may
we remember:

"Set a watch, O Lord,
before my mouth; keep the
door of my lips." Psa. 141:3

Let the world watch the
followers of Christ endure this time
with the grace and virtue that, in
turn, points to its worthy origin.

Connecticut, Rockville
Heidi Beutel, Kim Schneider

"Rejoice with them that do
rejoice, and weep with them
that weep” Rom. 12:15

Our families continue to
grow as we welcome new babies.
Nate and Ashley Carlson, along
with siblings Logan, Dylan and
Carter welcomed little Owen
Walter. Grandparents are Bro.
Wally and Sis. Judy Carlson,
Wendy Duprey and Tom Burns.
Bruce and Stephanie Hoffman
and big sisters Ava and Adelynn,
welcomed Jackson Lee to their
family. Grandparents are Bro.
Mark and Sis. Luella Hoffman
(Clarendon, VT) and Dennis
and Sandra Sneath. Hudson
Benjamin and Teagan Joy were
welcomed by their parents, Bro.
Ben and Sis. Christy Carlson, and
their siblings, Colten, Peyton and
Tanner. Grandparents are Bro.
Wally and Sis. Judy Carlson and
Sis. Jody Spielman.

We rejoice with Rachel
Mangold (Dave and Sis. Heather)
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 Bro. Roy Schneider
and his family, Bro. Doug
(Sis. Jane), Sis. Beth Gottier,
and many grandchildren and
great-grandchildren, as they
said goodbye to their dear wife,
mother and grandmother, Sis.
Joyce Schneider. Bro. Owen
Bahler passed from this life
into eternity, leaving his dear
wife, Sis. Donna, and children,
Bro. Dave (Sis. Peggy), Bro.
Glenn (Sis. Erika), Lynn Knight
(Doug), and Debra DuPerry
(John), along with many
grandchildren. We also send our
love and prayers to Bro. Gene
Kupferschmidt’s family; his wife,
Sis. Ellen, his children, Lisa,
Janet Binkowski (Rob), Neal
(Jennifer), and Gail Williams (Kim) and his grandchildren with his passing from this life.

District of Columbia, Washington

Henrietta Meyer

Greetings of love from Washington, DC.

Although we are not meeting for services, we were able to gather on Saturday to prepare the house/church for marketing. We all wore our masks and worked hard getting it ready to be viewed in the best light. What a joy to see everyone after three months. Our hard work paid off; the Lord blessed us with an offer which we have accepted. Hopefully, we will be able to close the transaction next month. We have had many precious memories of worship together in this sanctuary over the years. We have appreciated the friendships that we have made and the fellowship that we have had, as you have visited us over the last years. May God bless each of you for your efforts.

When we again are able to assemble in person, it will be at a yet to be determined location. In the meantime we are thankful for technology which enables us to assemble virtually with brethren in different locations.

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

We had one visiting minister in July, Bro. Tom Bolliger (Sis. Jane, Tremont, IL). We were thankful that they came and shared God’s word with us. Our sympathy goes out to Bro. Mike and Sis. Faye Hohulin and their family with the passing of Bro. Mike’s mother, Sis. Marie “Dit” Hohulin, this past week. Her visitation and funeral will be July 21, 2020. I’m sure it was a blessing that Bro. Mike and Sis. Faye were visiting in Illinois and had the chance to see her several times before she passed away. Our prayers for comfort and peace go out to them.

Florida, Fort Myers

Mary Masters, Terri Young

Our dear Sis. Dottie Beer went to be with the Lord on June 27, passing peacefully in her sleep. Our prayers are with Bro. Vic and his family. Bro. Vic and Sis. Dottie attended and served in the early years of the Fort Myers church, and have always been wonderful examples to the rest of the congregation. Bro. Ryan and Sis. Rachel Hollan gave their testimonies and Bro. Ryan was baptized July 5. What a tremendous joy and encouragement to the whole church! Elder Bro. Jeff Streitmatter III (Sis. Lynne) and Bro. Matthew Koehl (Sis. Emily) from Sarasota served us on this day. Bro. Curt Rassi (Sis. Kathy, Tremont, IL) also served us in July. Now that we are back to two services each Sunday, we are no longer doing our Wednesday night Zoom meetings.

We, as a congregation, have been enjoying a Bible study Sunday afternoons called “Identifying and Developing Your Spiritual Gifts.” Our prayer is to become more effective as a body in the Lord’s work.

The New Beginnings

We at TNB are thankful and even amazed as we observe the work that God continues to do in, and through, this ministry. We are very grateful for answered prayers! Our new Executive Director, Danyale Kinney, started this week and it didn’t take long to experience confirmation that she was the right person for this position. Danyale not only comes to us with over 20 years of community-built relationships, expertise and knowledge in managing and growing nonprofit organizations, but even more importantly, she is a solid, conservative Christian, a wife and mother of four, which she will tell you is her most important role in life. Danyale is excited to work in an atmosphere that allows and even encourages expression of faith and is touched by TNB’s practice of beginning every week together in prayer time. We told her how
blessed we are to have such a supportive church family, both local and extended, and that we would ask you all to remember her in prayer, as she settles in and begins her outreach as the director of this ministry.

Our newest mom, Mackenzie, is a gentle spirit with an active and fun-loving 1½ year old daughter, Alina. Mackenzie is inquisitive about our faith and the church and is very receptive to the teaching of the gospel. She has continued to be a full-time student during the summer months. Arzu continues to enjoy activities with her 2½ year old son, Demir, when she’s not working as a home health assistant, and will start back in the nursing program this fall.

We hired a Christian counselor who will contract with TNB as we get new moms into the program.

We have been assembling in church with the moms and kids for the last few Sundays, and are so thankful to be able to fellowship once again.

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

What a mighty God we serve!

Florida, Sarasota
Sandra Kaeb

For Father’s Day, our Elder Bro. Jeff Streitmatter meditated on Ephesians 5 and Colossians 3. Bringing out the gift of sacrifice and love shown to us from our father’s and how that reflects our Heavenly Father. These are not just for father’s but also for each of us to consider. “Who are we in Jesus Christ, what do we put off, what do we put on and what is our vision or purpose.” Honoring our Fathers and Mothers are part of the ten commandments (Exodus 20:12). Even when they are feeble, old and gray; God commands us to respect, love and honor them.

“No chilling winds nor poisonous breath
Can reach that healthful shore.
Sickness and sorrow, pain and death
Are felt and feared no more.
I am bound for the promise land,
I am bound for the promise land.
O who will come and go with me,
I am bound for the promise land.”
On Jordan’s Stormy Banks,
Tabernacle Hymns #312

It makes me wonder what the song writer was thinking of when he penned these words, about the poisonous breath as we look at the world today concerning COVID-19. So thankful to God that he is in control knowing all things that happen and what our future holds.

Haiti, Bonne Fin - Hospital Lumiere
Rick and Komari Aberle

The past month in Bonne Fin has been blessed again by God’s loving grace and protection. The hospital, while being challenged by COVID-19, has not been overwhelmed. God promises his sufficiency in all things, and this has again proven true. The Haitian government took steps to open the country to travel in late June, for which we are thankful. This has allowed the missionary family at Hospital Lumiere to begin planning for furlough visits to the United States. During the month of August most of the missionary team will at some point be traveling. We trust in the traveling mercies of our Lord.

Although travel restrictions have been eased, we have not had any visitors or teams in the past month. Local churches have been allowed to resume assembly and the government has given dates for re-starting schools in August. As these events impact all of our missions and missionaries in Haiti, we continue to pray that God will direct all with responsibility of these decisions to rely on His direction.

Haiti, Les Cayes
Mike and Susie Walder

“A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.” James 1:8

Do you know someone who is two-faced, who acts one way around some people and another way around others? Is it easy for you to trust them? We are all often guilty of putting on our social face to friends, neighbors and co-workers and then acting a different way at home. There are two yous –the “visible you” who others see and the “real you” who is known by God.

Every missionary can tell you some stories about two-faced
people on the mission field. The things we are told, the way we are treated, how agreeable someone is, and the reason they want us to trust them can all be misleading. It is only later that we realize what the true motive was, and then we see their other face of deception, manipulation or betrayal. It is always very discouraging.

While some relationships on foreign soil can be difficult (driven by poverty and need, mistrust or misunderstanding the culture) it’s not always the case. The Holy Spirit is alive and at work in every culture and in every nation. He is working within all Christians, refining and purifying our thoughts and our motives.

Are you walking in the Spirit today? Praise God! Are you walking in the flesh and still putting on a false front? You cannot serve two masters, you cannot pretend all is well. There is no time to waver, no time to wait. Praise God His arm to save is stretched out still!

Our thoughts and prayers are with Bro. Isaac and Sis. Brittany Steiner and family as they travel back to Rittman, Ohio, for a short time this summer. Their families will discover the children have grown up a lot this past year!

Illinois, Belvidere
Darcy Steffen

In Sunday school today, I was relating the story of Jesus wreaking havoc on the money changers in the temple. It is a shocking account. We are so used to seeing Jesus portrayed as kind and gentle, healing people and showing compassion on them. As I think about how Jesus flipped tables and forcibly removed the animals in righteous anger, it reminds me how truly grievous it is to the Father’s heart when I allow worldly pursuits and gains to crowd out the temple of my heart.

This concept was driven home as we were blessed to have Elder Bro. Duane Rocke here to share the Memorandum with us today. There are so many things that we can partake in that are not necessarily wrong, but we must remember the principles in God’s Word. If our heart turns more into noisy animals and clanging coins than a place of prayer and praise, then maybe it is time to reevaluate. We appreciate Bro. Duane’s love and care for us, and his willingness to come down to share with us today. We were also blessed to have Bro. Doug Moser from Morris North, MN preach the Word to us a few weeks ago.

We usually do Wednesday evenings on Zoom, but we are grateful to Bro. Sam and Sis. Betty Bachtold as they invited us to their garage to continue our monthly hymn sings, socially distanced style!

Ellie Braun, daughter of Bro. Kevin and Sis. Pam Braun, graduated from high school today! We are very excited for her, and wish her God’s wisdom and direction for her life!

Bro. Jordan Steffen (Sis. Shayla) took over the responsibility of Sunday school superintendent this month. We wish them God’s blessing and wisdom as they take on this role, and we wish to thank Bro. Rudy (Sis. Rosario) Troxel for their love and service in this area in the past.

Illinois, Bloomington-Normal
Sara Anliker, Kinsey Dotterer

“Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.” Heb. 13:5-6

This past month has been a time of reflection and taking refuge with our Father. We have spent time in preparation for communion and speaking our hearts to the One that has all the answers and directions we seek. We had wonderful teaching about resting in and sharing with God because he desires to speak to each one of us through an intimate relationship. Bro. Eric Strassheim (Sis. Jodi, Indianapolis, IN) blessed us with their visit and sharing of the gospel message. As we have been transitioning back into joining together as a church family, it has been a great joy to see those we have been away from for many months.

We are rejoicing with Bro. David and Sis. Tara Prevo at the birth of their daughter Ansley. Grandparents are Bro. Mike and Sis. Barb Prevo (Gridley, IL) and
Bro. Mike and Sis. Faye Hohulin (Ft. Lauderdale, FL).

We are also rejoicing with Bro. Dustin and Sis. Elizabeth Rabe at the birth of their son James. Grandparents are Bro. Derek and Sis. Julie Rabe.

We mourn with the family of Bro. Randy (Sis. Marj) Schmidgall upon the death of his mother Grace. We also mourn with the family of Sis. Terri (Bro. Ryan) Huber upon the death of her mother, Sis. Karen Martin (Detroit, MI). We lift up the families of Bro. Rich and Bro. Phil Kiefer upon the loss of their mother Sis. Louise (Gridley, IL).

We continue to seek refuge in our Father’s love through our obedience and worship no matter what this world may hold. May God bless you and keep you!

Illinois, Bradford
Becky Endress, Lena Stoller

"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.” Psa. 122:1

This verse has taken on new meaning for our church now that we all can attend either Sunday morning or afternoon. Thanks to our ministers and sound system brothers who have labored faithfully to bring our worship services to us during the times we couldn't assemble, and to the ushers and reopening committee for their work since then.

On Father’s Day, June 21, Bro. Bob Baer and Sis. Hannah Schrenk were united in marriage in her home church at Junction, OH. Later many of us were happy to attend an open house reception here to meet Sis. Hannah and offer good wishes and blessings to our new couple. Parents of the bride and groom are Janna Baer, late Raymond Baer, Bro. Steve and Sis. Linda Schrenk.

On July 7, Bro. Morgan and Sis. Candace Pyles welcomed their first child, a son they have named Ryland Wade. Bro. Troy and Sis. Heather Pyles and Bro. Weston and Sis. Jill Stahl, both first-time grandparents, are delighted and thankful too.

We are glad to have Bro. Daryl and Sis. Debbie Knobloch home from Haiti on furlough. We also were blessed to welcome ministering Bro. Les Kaeb (Sis. Christine, Francesville, IN) on Sunday morning with Group 1, and Bro. Warren Schlatter (Sis. Cindy, Junction, OH) on Sunday afternoon with Group 2. No doubt it felt very refreshing to our home ministers! Bro. Les meditated on Daniel 7 and exhorted us to, like Daniel, recognize our own failures, then pray earnestly for our nation and world to turn to God, and to remember to look beyond earth toward heaven. Hymn #246 “How Shall It Be” expressed that thought as we enjoyed our first congregational singing since March.

Illinois, Champaign
Brent Young

We were thankful for the opportunity to share some cheer with our Bro. Jerry Vogel with a vehicle parade and brief conversations. Our parade was on July 4 weekend, and as a veteran of medic training at Fort Sam, we trust that Bro. Jerry was encouraged!

We are all dealing with many changes due to COVID-19, and unfortunately this includes canceling our VBS, after it was postponed from earlier in the summer. We are still hopeful to begin our fall Sunday school on time, with appropriate precautions.

Our counseling Elder, Bro. Jeff Grimm (Sis. Ruth, Goodfield, IL) visited recently to share God’s direction regarding raising up a local elder here in Champaign. We learned that the ballot was split evenly among the candidates and the decision was to wait.

Ballot participation was extremely high and Bro. Jeff shared that nearly all ballots indicated support for any of the candidates. Though we are not installing a new elder, we are moving forward with clear direction and in unity. Our ministry team has functioned well as a committee and Ordained Deacon Bro. Brian Waibel and Elder Bro. Jeff have willingly fulfilled their roles.

Recent challenges, including COVID-19 and the passing of our Elder Bro. Wayne Banwart, have brought us together as a church family. The future continues to be securely in God’s hands. We will continue to trust him and work together.
Illinois, Chicago
Diana Eisenmann

The last Sunday of June felt like a momentous occasion as we gathered for church in person for the first time since mid-March. Being able to once again connect face-to-face has been an incredible blessing that we will not soon take for granted. Wednesday services and other events continue virtually for the time being.

We had another virtual Fellowship Night in June and also took that opportunity to say farewell to Bro. Spencer and Sis. Rosie Plattner who have moved to Bloomington, IL. We’ve bid farewell to several dear ones who have moved or are in the process of moving this summer. Bro. Paul and Sis. Milli Leman have relocated to be near one of their children in Tennessee, and Bro. Dave and Sis. Julie Westfall are moving to Indianapolis, IN. We were thankful for the opportunity to have an in-person outdoor farewell reception for the Westfalls following a church service in July. We will miss each of these couples very much and are grateful for the wonderful times we’ve shared together, whether just a few years or many. May God continue to guide each one and use them for his glory where he has placed them.

Sis. Amber Vercler has agreed to fill the open Sunday School position. We appreciate her willingness to serve.

We held a virtual Memorandum service on a Wednesday evening in July. Also in July was VBS: “The Path of the Prodigal.” Many thanks to the VBS Committee for their creativity and extra efforts that went into converting it to a virtual format. They presented skits and interactive lessons for the Pre-K through 8th grade students via videoconference and provided packets with craft supplies and snacks for each participant. Presentations for the Bible Class and adults are scheduled for three Wednesday evenings in July.

We thank Bro. Craig Stickling (Peoria, IL) for presenting the first of these: “The Prodigal Chooses His Way.” We didn’t have any in-person visiting ministers this past month, but we did enjoy Bro. Craig’s virtual visit!

Illinois, Cissna Park
Denise Kaeb, Joan Rudin

“Another day of grace is here
O, Lord, I pray be ever near... I know this way of truth leads on To lands of one eternal morn... But yet, I long for that sweet rest, Where weary souls, I know, are blest; There, safe and free from all alarms, I’ll rest within my Savior’s arms.”
My Day’s Journey,
Hymns of Zion, #79

We mourn the loss of several that have finished their walk of life on earth. We grieve and extend prayers to the family of Dorothy (Marvin, dec) Maul Martin from our congregation. Our sympathies also reach out to Sis. Dorothy Walder and Pete Bauer in the loss of their sister, Sis. Marie Hohulin (Bro. Robert, dec) of Roanoke, IL. Likewise, thoughts and prayers go to the family of Sis. Julie (Bro. Larry) Bahr of Fort Scott, KS, who is the sister of Sis. Beth Steffen (Bro. Rod). May each one of us be prepared to meet our maker when that day/moment comes for him to call us to our eternal home.

Recent hospitalized patients have been Sis. Myrna Weertz (Bro. Ken), Shaun Hofbauer (Bev and Jerry Knapp), and Melissa Beer (Scott and Debbie Beer). Prayers have been offered for each one’s complete recovery.

New babies are a welcome addition to our church family. Grandparents Bro. Todd and Sis. Valerie Kaeb added two newborns to their family this month. Little Silas Matthew has joined the home of Bro. Joe and Sis. Amber Stuckel and siblings Corryn, Miles, and Eben. Matt Stuckel and Jayne Jessen are also happy grandparents. Little Leif Anthony is the newest member of the home of Bro. Nathan and Sis. Hillary Kaeb, being welcomed by siblings Kaiden and Kenna, as well as grandparents Marty and Lisa Hines.

Ryan and Tamar Walder, and “big brother Ben”, are pleased to have little Ezra James in their home. Bro. Doug and Sis. Julie Walder, and Ed and Rebecca Hickman are thankful grandparents. A.J. and Katrina Nowaczyk, and siblings Brielle
and Spencer, have welcomed little Bennett Gray into their family. Bro. Eric and Sis. LouAnn Kaeb, and Ron and Kathy Nowaczyk are enjoying their new grandson.

Students gathered for an outdoor Sunday school picnic recently, with beautiful weather and a nice time enjoyed by all.

Bro. Adam and Sis Belinda Kaeb (with little Owen coming to Illinois for the first time) are home for a few weeks from their duties in Magdalena, Mexico. May God continue to provide for them, and for CVE, in their outreach efforts.

**Illinois, Congerville**

*Mary Knapp, Erica Steffen*

Three dear converts have professed peace in their heart and are looking forward to baptism. They are Levi Steffen (Bro. Jay and Sis. Melinda), Jacob Ifft (Bro. Brent and Sis. Sheila), and Hannah Walder (Bro. Josh and Sis. Tina). We pray they each can feel God’s presence and peace, even as the world swirls in confusion.

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

**Illinois, Elgin**

*Amy Gasser*

We extend sympathy to those who have lost loved ones recently. Bro. Dick Hartman’s wife, Allegra, passed away on June 19 in DeKalb, IL. Surviving are four sons and a daughter. Bro. Bill Schambach passed away on June 27. We pray for his wife, Sis. Cora; their children: Bro. Bob (Sis. Jeanne) Schambach of Phoenix, AZ, Sis. Joyce Schifferer, William (Josey) Schambach, Elaine Gudeman and Mary Jane (Lance) Gladwin; 37 grandchildren; two siblings: Sis. Gert Sauder and Bro. Ron (Sis. Nancy) Schambach; along with many nieces, nephews, family and friends.

Our prayers are with Sis. Edie Anliker (Bro. Gary), as she recently had surgery.

**Illinois, Eureka**

*Debra Blunier, Lavonne Schumacher*

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever." Psa. 111:10

The pandemic has sparked waves of fears that come and go with every report of new spikes in the COVID-19 numbers. But this verse reminds us what is truly important: respect, reverence, and love for God lead us to follow His direction. The thanks and praise we now have for our Father in Heaven will continue through all eternity, when all earthly trials and pandemics will be over, solved and healed!

We rejoice to have two new converts who have turned their hearts to the Lord. Braxton Martin is the son of Bro. Tim and Sis. Becki Martin and Trevor Getz is the son on Bro. Gary and Sis. Gail Getz. It is so wonderful to hear such good news.

Lord willing, we look forward to the testimonies and baptisms on August 1-2 of Natalie Meiss (Elder Bro. Trent and Sis. Lucy) and Tamra Edelman (Bro. Keith and Sis. Nadine). Witnessing souls coming to the Lord and finding peace with him reminds us of our own spiritual journey. If we are born again, we have a story that is unique to each of us, and we pray for the grace to share it whenever God creates the opportunity.

Our prayers go out especially at this time for Sis. Ruth Martin (Bro. Les, dec.), as their daughter Becky (Dean) Martin is undergoing treatment for cancer.

July 19 we plan to begin Sunday school for grades 3-12. Amid the many opinions and plans for reopening schools (and Sunday schools), we can be sure that the most important action we can take is faithfully to pray for the students, their teachers, and parents, as well as all the decision-makers. The Word promises: "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old he will not depart from it." Prov. 22:6

**Illinois, Fairbury**

*Kati Meiss, Trish Steidinger*

"The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord." Psa. 37:23

Years ago, a young mother sat in a hospital room with her sick baby, hoping to be discharged, when this verse showed up in morning devotions. After reading it, she thought her feeling about being discharged was from the
Lord. But the devotion for the day went on to add that the stops as well as the steps are ordered by the Lord.

God has definitely led His people in the past by stops as well as steps. Think of the pillar of fire by night and the cloud by day with which the Lord led the children of Israel. When the cloud or pillar of fire lifted and moved on, the people were to move on. When the cloud or pillar of fire tarried, it was a sign for the people to rest. Both were the leading of the Lord.

Sometimes, we would just as soon get things moving, but maybe the Lord asks us to wait. We don’t know His purposes, but we know he has our best interest at heart. Does he ask us to “Be still, and know that I am God”: (Psa. 46:10)? If we slow down and become still, are we then able to hear God’s voice more clearly? When God spoke to the prophet Elijah, it was not in the strong wind, or the earthquake, or the fire. God spoke to him with a still, small voice. A plaque on the wall says, “Let us be silent, that we may hear the whisper of God.” If we are complaining, or grumbling, or pushing ahead with our own desires, we will not hear. If we slow down and listen, God will speak to us and lead us forth in His time.

The baby, with his mother, was not discharged that day as she was hoping. But, because they stayed in the hospital longer, treatment changed and led to healing! This stop was ordered by the Lord for a purpose. And when discharge day finally arrived, the morning verse in the devotional read,

“He is faithful that promised.” Heb. 10:28

“For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.” 2 Cor. 1:20

We can trust that God knows what he’s doing when he leads us by steps or by stops. And we can trust in his promises because he always keeps them.

There is no news to report from the Fairbury congregation this month, but we wish each reader the blessings of the Lord as you seek to follow his leading in steps or stops.

**Illinois, Forrest**

*Jessica Gerber, Marsha Lanz*

In these ongoing times of uncertainty, we take comfort that God is still calling lost souls to him. We rejoice with Bro. Stan and Sis. Kristen Mueller as their son, Jacob, recently began his repentance.

We are also thankful for those who have come to peace with God and man and are now desiring baptism. These dear souls are: Mary Bradley (Dan, dec.), Alayna Nussbaum (Bro. Lucas and Sis. Raya) and Heidi Kelson (Bro. Nate and Sis. Paula).

Our prayers have been with Bro. John Schaffer (Sis. Sally) and Bro. Larry Ifft (Sis. Shirley) during their recent hospital stays. We also continue to lift up Bro. Brad Brown (Sis. Shannon) and his dear family as he faces new concerns with spreading cancer. May they feel God’s abiding peace during these difficult times.

We rejoice with Bro. Alex and Sis. Carmen Dotterer and big brothers Pierce and Larson as they welcome home little Audrey Carol. Thankful grandparents are Bro. Dan and Sis. Kathy Banwart and Bro. Ken and Sis. Carol Edelman.

As children grow, we are thankful for those who are willing to teach them of God’s ways. Our prayers are with Sis. Jessica Gerber, Bro. Caleb Leman (Sis. Shannon) and Bro. Ben Mueller (Sis. Susan) as they begin teaching in Sunday school.

We extend heartfelt thanks to our Sis. Carissa Knapp (Bro. Kyle) for sharing her talent and time for years to write the Silver Lining articles for our church family. We welcome Sis. Jessica Gerber as she has graciously accepted the duty. May God bless all our efforts, great and small, as we work for him in the vineyard.

**Illinois, Goodfield**

*Amy Hinrichsen, Judy Knapp*

“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 have experienced the blessing of physical showers in the form of rain, spiritual showers in the form of joy and heartache.
The Lord blessed us with some much needed rain this past week; it wasn’t a gentle shower, but a deluge of rain in a short period of time, thus causing some flooding issues. Our church basement had water coming in and a plea went out for help to prevent water damage. In a very short amount of time, the church parking lot was overflowing with vehicles and many willing hands bringing in shop vacs, fans, etc. Several hours later, the work was done with minimal damage to the basement. It was such a blessing to see everyone working together in a time of need.

Sis. Alice Nohl celebrated her 99th birthday and was showered with cards for the event. It was truly a blessing for all to share in this milestone with our dear sister. Another shower of joy is the surrendered heart of Anna Wiegand as she has come to the foot of the cross in repentance. Bro. Nathan and Sis. Laura Wiegand are her thankful parents.

A joyful blessing has arrived in the home of Bro. Nate and Sis. Abby Bauman, as they were blessed with a baby boy on July 8. Creeden (Creed) Warren will be lovingly cared for by ‘big’ sister, Tinley and grandparents, Bro. Bob and Sis. Lisa Hartman, (Congerville, IL) and Bro. Andy and Sis. Rita Bauman.

When one of our loved ones suffer, we suffer with them and even though times of suffering are not necessarily a time of joy, we consider it a blessing to be able to lift our loved ones up in prayer, knowing that God hears those prayers and will answer in the way that is best for each one. Bro. Jerry Steffen (Sis. Allene) and Bro. Gary Wiegand (Sis. Karen) have both had some health issues and we pray that they will mend quickly. We continue to lift up Bro. Herman and Sis. Sara Glueck and their 3 little girls as Bro. Herman battles cancer. We pray for wisdom as they make decisions on whether or not to continue treatment or stop treatment as side effects are taking their toll on him. Bro. Herman would tell us to ‘Make the main thing the main thing!’ Thanking God for this dear little family and asking for your prayers on their behalf.

As we all continue to navigate the challenges of COVID-19, may we continue to look heavenward and leave the worries and stress at the cross.

“What we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will reveal.” Rom. 8:18

Illinois, Gridley
Perry Klopfenstein

We were glad to have guest ministers for Wednesday evening topical presentations. They were Bro. Matt Kaufmann (Sis. Rebekah, Bloomington, IL) Bro. Joe Gerber (Sis. Heidi, Champaign, IL) and Bro. Jeff Wiegand (Sis. Janel, Goodfield, IL).

Speakers for VBS were: Bro. Jeff Fischer (Sis. Gloria, Fort Scott, KS), Bro. Craig Stickling (Sis. Jacqueline, Peoria, IL) Bro. Jeff Neihouser, (Sis. Sue, Morton, IL), Bro. Nate Wiegand (Sis. Laura, Goodfield, IL) and Bro. Randy Mogler (Sis. Evie, Washington, IL). We thank these brothers for ministering to us.

We are saddened to report the death of Sis. Louise Mae Kiefer, 94, who passed away on July 4. She married Bro. Richard “Dick” Kiefer in 1959, and they enjoyed 51 years of marriage. He preceded her in death on July 10, 2010. Other survivors are a daughter, Julie Kohlhase (Randy, dec) of Green Bay, Wisconsin; three sons, Bro. Richard, Jr. (Sis. Gale, Bloomington, IL), Jay (Heidi, Gridley, IL) and Bro. Phil (Bloomington, IL); ten grandchildren, and ten great-grandchildren. Sis. Louise Mae will be missed. In meeting her, she always expressed kind warmth.

COVID-19 remains, and seems to be ongoing. Uncertainty continues across the nation. The words of the prophet Joshua seem to apply to us today:

“Be not afraid; do not be discouraged. Be strong and courageous.” Josh. 10:25

Illinois, Morton
Annette Tanner

Father’s Day was one of mixed emotions as we remembered our fathers - those we have with us, and those who have gone on to their reward.

Also on June 21, Bro. Jon Zeller (Sis. Christie) preached his last two sermons. We will miss
him being a part of the pulpit ministry. We thank Bro. Jon and Sis. Christie for their thirty years of service in that capacity, and wish them God’s blessings as Bro. Jon’s duties are “reallocated” to other areas of service.

June 28 we bid farewell to Bro. Brian and Sis. Julie Bahr and Bro. Roy Bahr as they are moving to Florida after being a part of our Morton church family for many years. We will also miss Tom and Lynn Keith who had been worshipping with us for some time. Both of these families will be attending our church in Ft. Myers, FL.

As another Sunday school year comes to a close, we thank all of the brothers and sisters who put forth so much effort in teaching our young people from the three year olds through high school. They rose to the challenge of staying connected to their classes with the use of modern technology during the COVID-19 situation.

July 1, Bro. Tim Roecker (Sis. Diane, Peoria, IL) spoke at our Family Worship Night continuing our series “In Light of Eternity” with the topic “One Day as a Thousand Years”.

“But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” 2 Pet. 3:8

Bro. Tim gave us several points to ponder: Who gets to Heaven? Eternity is forever! Do we consider eternity enough? We have our time on earth. How will we impact eternity?

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.” John 3:16


We extend our deepest sympathy to three dear families whose loved one has gone to their heavenly home. Brad Pascual of Winter Garden, FL, passed away suddenly on July 3 just a few days before his 51st birthday. He was the son-in-law of our Bro. Mark Wuthrich (late Sis. Cheryl). Brad leaves his wife Marti, two sons, Max and Gideon and one daughter Maddie to cherish his memory. Bro. Daniel, Sis. Diane, Lana, Leia, Asher and Ila Wuthrich of our Morton congregation, also mourn the loss of their brother-in-law and uncle. July 5, our Sis. Lois Getz of Detroit, MI, entered Heaven. She is survived by her granddaughter Sis. Sheryl Kaiser (Bro. Nick) who worships with us.

As we celebrated Independence Day on July 4, we remembered that knowing Jesus as our Saviour brings us true deliverance and freedom.

“My country, 'tis of thee, Sweet land of liberty, Of thee I sing: Land where my fathers died, Land of the pilgrim’s pride, From every mountain side Let freedom ring! My native country, thee, Land of the noble, free, Thy name I love: I love thy rocks and rills, Thy woods and templed hills; My heart with rapture thrills Like that above. Let music swell the breeze, And ring from all the trees Sweet freedom’s song: Let mortal tongues awake; Let all that breathe partake; Let rocks their silence break, The sound prolong. Our fathers' God, to Thee, Author of liberty, To Thee we sing: Long may our land be bright With freedom’s holy light; Protect us by Thy might, Great God, our King!» America, Tabernacle Hymns #351
Illinois, Peoria
Bonnie Bach, Crystal Wettstein

So often, we, as humans, need reminders of how limited our abilities really are! The recent storms through this area brought it to my mind so clearly. A very large tree came down in my neighbor’s yard and was held from crashing on her home and mine as well by the rail of her deck and the branches of another tree. The tree removal service tied it to another tree until it could be taken down. However, before that happened, another storm came through. As the storm roared with wind, rain, thunder and lightning, I prayed for safety and thought of the words of this song:

“In the dark of the midnight have I oft hid my face
While the storm howls above me, and there's no hiding place,
’Mid the crash of the thunder, precious Lord hear my cry,
Keep me safe till the storm passes by.

Till the storm passes over, till the thunder sounds no more,
Till the clouds roll forever from the sky,
Hold me fast, let me stand in the hollow of Thy hand,
Keep me safe till the storm passes by.”

’Til the Storm Passes By”, Song by Gaither Vocal Band.

Although the coronavirus has changed our activities, we are gradually doing more things to bring us together. The church enjoyed a special outdoor Father’s Day service at the Fellowship Hall. The Beauty for Ashes group used the Fellowship Hall for a weekend get together. Even though VBS was cancelled for the younger children, the older students still had lessons given by a number of visiting ministers, Bro. Brad Metz (Bloomington, IL), Bro. Kirk Plattner (West Lafayette, IN), Bro. Jedd Rocke (Goodfield, IL), and Bro. Kim Sutter (Taylor, MO).

We extend sympathy to Mary Ann Herman in the passing of her sister, Carol. Our thanks to the Lord that she found her salvation before she passed from this life!

Sis. Cheryl Grassi has become a first time Grandma! Olivia Joy was born to Bro. Jason and Sis. Geo Grassi from Magdalena, Mexico. We pray for this new little one and her parents!

May we remember those serving as missionaries, those who are sick, and the dear ones isolated in their homes at this time! God be with us all!

“When the long night has ended and the storms come no more,
Let me stand in Thy presence on the bright peaceful shore.
In that land where the tempest, never comes, Lord, may I Dwell with Thee when the storm passes by.”

Illinois, Princeville
Melinda Christ, Cherie White

“And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.” 1 Cor. 11:24.

On July 11, Elder Bro. Bruce Endress (Sis. Elizabeth, Bradford, IL) assisted our Elder Bro. Craig Martin in serving us Holy Communion. There were a few adjustments to our normal administration of taking the bread and wine. Thankfully God provides for his people to still partake so that we can remember him and be renewed in spirit. Our Father is not limited by COVID-19, praise God!!

May God’s blessings be with Hannah Rumbold (Bro. Rick and Sis. Joyce) who is engaged to Trenton Edelman.

Bro. Fred and Sis. Nancy Menold celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on June 20.

“And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” Rev. 21:2.

On July 19, whether we attended church or joined in virtually, we had the opportunity to witness the union of hearts of Sis. Amanda Herrmann (Bro. Doug and Sis. Angie) and Bro. Jeff Strunk (Bro. Gene and Sis. Joyce, Morton, IL). We thank our visiting ministers, Bro. Dennis Kaufmann (Sis. Bonnie, Bloomington, IL) and Elder Bro. Brad Eisenmann (Sis. Cindy, Chicago, IL) as they helped our Elder Bro. Craig serve us in the Word for the wedding service.
Some of our grandparents are experiencing joy as they welcome sweet grandchildren. Duke Frederick Pfaffman was born July 3 to Bro. Luke and Sis. Rhea Pfaffmann (Washington, IL). Bro. David and Sis. Leann Berchtold are the happy grandparents. Palmer Rae Hoerr was born July 4 to Luke and Janae Hoerr. Welcoming grandparents are Bro. Jay and Sis. Deanne Knobloch.

Our prayers are with those suffering afflictions; Sis. Arlene Scholl (Bro. Bob), Bro. Fred Menold (Sis. Nancy), Sis. Betty Lou Herrmann (Bro. Walt) and Bro. John Wieland (Sis. Liz).

Sis. Destiny Herrmann is taking the rewarding opportunity to spend time at CVE in Mexico for the summer. May God continue to bless all those that take part in the ministering to others in our various missions.

On July 15 we resumed our midweek in person church services. That night we listened as our ministers shared thoughts and exhortations on the Spring Memorandum. It was so good to be reminded of the proper application of God’s holy principles to our lives. Sometimes we need gentle nudges to get back on track where we may have strayed.

We were blessed to have Miriam Luginbuhl (Bro. Brian and Sis. Cyndi, Rockville, CT) gather with us while she lived in Illinois. May God gently lead her along as she moved back home to Connecticut.

Illinois, Roanoke
Judy Sauder, Barb Schwind

Dalton Hodel (Bro. Jim and Sis. Connie) was united in marriage to Maya Hernandez (Ariel and Amie) on June 20. Rachel Fehr (John and Jane) and John Bull (Fred and Susie, Elberon, VA), exchanged wedding vows on July 17. Dalton and Maya reside in our area, and Rachel and John will be returning to the UAE where Rachel teaches and John will continue his studies. We wish these dear couples God’s rich blessings as they begin married life.

Bro. Mike and Sis. Joyce Barth welcomed another granddaughter, Maelee Jo, born to Cody and Kimberly Barth of Washington, IL, on June 17. Skye Carina arrived to bless the home of Kendall and Carla Knapp of Belleville, WI, on July 12. Skye’s thankful grandparents are Bro. Norm and Sis Kathy Knapp. May God bless these dear families as they raise their children in the ways of the Lord.

Our last virtual VBS was June 24. The theme was: “The Climb of your Life: a Journey up the Mountain with God; Base Camp: Golgotha: The Victory of the Cross--Jesus Saves Us.” Bro. Jason Rassi and his sons shared that when we become believers, Jesus exchanges our hard heart for a soft heart. Then Bro. Ed, Sis. Bonnie, and Luke Sauder encouraged us to stay connected to Jesus in our climb. They also exhorted us to persevere, press hard into Jesus, run with patience and press toward the mark as we journey to heaven. “The Climb--Reaching the Summit… it will be worth it all!” was the topic of our Elder Bro. Frank (Sis. Kathy) Sauder’s message. Bro. Frank exhorted us that before we go to Mt. Calvary we need to go to the Mt. of Olives where Jesus submitted to the Father’s will. And when God offered his son on Mt. Calvary there was no angel to stop his hand as there was when Abraham offered Isaac on Mt. Moriah. There was no greater love, humility, and obedience ever exhibited than when Christ gave his life for us. The evening ended at “The Summit” with some of our older sisters and brothers sharing their thoughts about their lives and their experiences on “the Climb of their Life” and what they’re looking forward to in heaven. Some of our Sunday school students, their families and a group of brothers and sisters also sang for us. It has been a beautiful month of VBS shared virtually with our church. We thank all those who helped make it a blessed, encouraging, and educational experience, particularly Bro. Nate and Sis. Jamie Hodel who organized and coordinated the virtual VBS program.

On July 8 our ministers presented the spring Memorandum. The four basic principles shared were: “Jesus Christ’s love for us is the foundation and motivation for everything we do; We seek to be like Jesus in thought, action, and character, and to live the entire counsel of God’s Word.
in our individual lives, local congregations, and church body; We apply spiritual discernment to our daily decisions based on the Bible, prayer, the Holy Spirit’s direction, and godly counsel from fellow believers; and We obey the Great Commission, sharing the love and truth of Jesus Christ in our homes, churches, communities, and throughout the world as God calls us to serve.” We are so thankful for our church leadership, for their vision, compassion, and wisdom in keeping our church united during these unusual times. May our Lord bless each one.

A young mother in our church shared a family experience on Facebook. Recently Roanoke experienced over six inches of rain in a few hours which caused quite a bit of flooding in our area. Her husband was working tirelessly in their basement which was flooded. Meanwhile their four young children were joyfully playing outside in the rain unaware that their father was faithfully caring for them and protecting them. This young mother shared that that is so much like our heavenly Father. “He is constantly working for our good out of his love for us. Just as our kids played without a care while their earthly father worked without a complaint. Our kids trust us to take care of them. How much better does our Father take care of us?” Thank you dear sister for sharing this beautiful analogy!

Sis. Marie Hohulin went to be with the Lord on July 17. Her survivors include her sons: Bro. Tim (Sis. Cathy, Bloomington, IL); Eldon (Sue, Washington, IL); and Bro. Mike (Sis Faye, Ft. Lauderdale, FL); a daughter, Sis. Eileen Blunier (Bro. Duane, Eureka, IL); a daughter-in-law, Connie Hohulin, (Cumming, GA); 15 grandchildren, 32 great-grandchildren and one great-great-grandchild. Also surviving are two sisters: Sis. Dorothy Walder and Sis. Carol Waldbeser (Bro. John) both of Cissna Park, IL, and two brothers: Bob Bauer (Sonnie, Cissna Park, IL), and Larry Bauer, (Fairbury, IL), and a sister-in-law, Linda Bauer, (Texas). Sis. Marie was always a very willing servant in our church. She was very active in our World Relief and Helping Hands sewing groups, sang for many years in the Prairie Choristers, and was a faithful volunteer at our Roanoke Apostolic Christian Nursing Home. She loved to spend time with her family and be outdoors. We will miss Sis. Marie in our fellowship.

Barb Isaia of Roanoke passed away June 25. She was a sister-in-law to Bro. Rich Isaia. May our Lord comfort these dear families in their loss.

We want to continue to lift up Bro. Dave (Sis. Barb) Schwind for our Lord’s healing mercies. We are so thankful that Bro. Dave has received a very positive report from his oncologists. After recent scans and biopsies there is no evidence of disease. We give God the glory!

**Illinois, Tremont**

**Debbie Aberle, Lucy Kaiser**


We offer our love and prayerful support to Bro. Greg and Sis. Mary Beutel as he has been willing to submit to God’s leading in our congregation that he should help in the ministry. A special thank you to Elder Bro. Mark Streitmatter (Bloomington, IL) and Elder Bro. Craig Martin (Princeville, IL) for helping Elder Bro. James Fehr with this process, and serving us as we installed Bro. Greg.

Our prayers this month have been with Greg Baker (Christy) as he has begun treatment for Leukemia. Bro. Jeff Sinn (Sis. Gail) submitted to hip surgery. Bro. Dan Steiner (Sis. Shirley) had back surgery. May God grant his divine healing.

We sang a farewell hymn for Bro. Gabriel and Sis. Mary Koch, Lacy and Hazel, as they move to Oregon while he attends Med School. We wish them Godspeed and pray that they can feel peace as they become a part of the Silverton congregation.

”And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.” Rev. 21:4
We extend our sympathy to the family of Sis. Joyce Schneider (Bro. Roy, Rockville, CT). Sis. Joyce was a grandmother to Sis. Janelle Gottier, and sister to Sis. Jeannette Beutel, Sis. Kathy Rocke, Bro. Dave Wagenbach; sister-in-law to Sis. Barb Wagenbach and Sis. Lavonne Wagenbach. We sorrowed with Bro. Maurice (Sis. Marge) Schaefer and Sis. Kathy (Bro. Jerry) Zuercher as they laid to rest their sister, Sis. Karen Martin (Detroit, MI).

Our Elder Bro. James Fehr reminded us of the thoughts and words of a hymn “I am pressing on, new heights I am gaining every day! Lord lift me up, plant my feet on higher ground!”

“One thing I have desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.” Psa. 27:4

Indiana, Bluffton

Suzie Fiechter, Liana Reinhard, Olivia Steffen

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

As we recently celebrated Independence Day, we ponder the concept of freedom. While we are thankful to live in a free country, how much greater is our freedom from sin through Jesus Christ! This freedom gives us everlasting, abundant life no matter what our circumstances on earth. We praise God for this freedom! We are in the process of transitioning towards a more normal Sunday routine.

Our plan is to begin having two morning church services on July 19, which will allow for more ages of Sunday school to gather. Although we miss our traditional fellowship and lunch hour, it has been a blessing to find creative ways to connect as a church.

The young group has also had to make adjustments. For the time being, they are unable to sing at nursing homes. Therefore, they have been finding alternative ways to bless shut-ins with their singing.

Our prayers are with the family of Sis. Joyce Baumgartner as she passed away. We remember her children: Sis. Beverly Jolloff (Bro. Bob), Sis. Mary Francesi (Bro. Len), Julie Schwartz (Steve), Craig (Beth), and Sis. Joy Tonner (Bro. Brian).

We rejoiced in the wedding of Bro. Logan Koch (Bro. Justin and Sis. Marcia, Washington, IL) to Sis. Cordin Gerber (Bro. Ked and Sis. Joanne) on June 28. May God bless them as they reside in Leo, IN.


Denver Paul was born into the family of Bro. Todd and Sis. Nicole Drayer. He joins siblings Miles and Cal at home. Grandparents are Bro. Herman and Sis. Julie Drayer and Bro. Roger and Sis. Kathy Weigand of Gridley, IL.

Bro. Skip and Sis. Connie Aschliman welcome a new grandson, Jaxton Reid, born to Bro. David, Sis. Victoria and

Illinois, Washington

Lillian Pfaffmann

Having grown up in Washington church, but then moving to Leo, IN, Bro. Logan Koch married Sis. Cordin Gerber in Bluffton, IN, on June 28. Parents are Bro. Justin and Sis. Marcia Koch and Bro. Ked and Sis. Joanne Gerber (Bluffton, IN). We wish them God’s blessings as they start their life together.

Bro. Adam and Sis. Rhea Pfaffmann added another son to their family, Duke Frederick! He was born on July 3 and welcomed home by Hutch.


We praise God for the safe arrival of each little one. We hope the rest of the summer is spent rejoicing in our freedom in Christ!

Indiana, Bluffton North
Rhonda Maller, Tiffani Schladenhauffen

"Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations." Jer. 1:5

Just like the Lord was calling Jeremiah in this verse, we are so thankful that the Lord is still calling souls into his service today. Grace Moser, daughter of Bro. Klint and Sis. Amy, answered his call to fully surrender to him. We know the Lord has a plan in mind for Grace, and we are looking forward to watching him work it out in her life.

The Lord also blessed our congregation with a new baby this month. Meredith Rose was born to Bro. Kyle and Sis. Kyann Schwartz. She is welcomed by her siblings, Delaney, Joel, Grant, and Brody and by her grandparents, Bro. Dan and Sis. Jacki Kershner and Bro. Scott and Sis. Patti Schwartz (Bluffton, IN).

We rejoice at the engagement announcement of our Bro. Cody Shively to Sis. Michaela Cook of the Francesville, IN congregation. Parents of the happy couple are Bro. Andy and Sis. Cindy Shively and Bro. Ben and Sis. Deana Cook (Francesville, IN). We are praying for them as they begin a new phase in their lives.

Our VBS was canceled this year, but that did not stop some families from organizing a couple of drive through or carry out fundraiser suppers. These VBS fundraisers are done every year to raise money for local charities and families in need in our community.

Our high school boys were invited to attend high school boys camp. Things had to be done a little differently this year but the message of the need for Jesus Christ did not change. Praise God for that!

The Lord called Sis. Joyce Baumgartner to her heavenly home on June 19. We are prayerful for her son Craig (Beth), her four daughters, Sis. Beverly Jollof (Bro. Bob), Sis. Mary Francesi (Bro. Len), Julie Schwartz (Steve), and Sis. Joy Tonner (Bro. Brian, Bluffton, IN), her 14 grandchildren and 21 great-grandchildren, and her sister Sis. Betty Frauhiger. We look forward to a sweet reunion with her one day in heaven.

Indiana, Francesville
Jacki Huber, Connie Linback

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

We are grateful for those who have helped us to adapt to new technology so that our congregation is able to stay connected in these changing times. God truly provides.

We offer sincere congratulations to our high school graduates: Bro. Elijah Waibel (Bro. Nick and Sis. Sandra), Bro. Ethan Leman (Bro. Phil and Sis. Amber), Wendy Garcia (Wendy Garcia), and Nikita Kronvale (Wendy Young). We offer best wishes to the graduates as they move bravely into the future.

With Father's Day approaching, we were encouraged to pray for the fatherless and for fathers to instruct their children well.

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

We were recently blessed with a visiting minister, Bro. Mark Wettstein (Sis. Karen, Lamar, MO), who encouraged us to be “active listeners and remember what we hear from the sermon”.

Feeling that God has led them to be together, we
were thankful to hear of the engagement of Bro. Cody Shively and Sis. Michaela Cook. Parents of the couple are Bro. Andy and Sis. Cindy Shively, (Bluffton North, IN) and Bro. Ben and Sis. Deana Cook. May God bless this dear couple as they move forward in faith.

We continue to pray for those from our church family who remain at home, and for those who are dealing with health issues. Our prayers are with Bro. Roger Ward (Sis. Sandi), and Sis. Miriam Metz (Bro. Ben).

Parkview Haven’s long time resident Sis. Arles Kropf has gone home to be with her Lord and Savior. We are thankful for her victory in Jesus and we will miss her.

**Note of Thanks**

Bro. Harold and Sis Maxine Gutwein wish to extend a heartfelt thanks to everyone who remembered their 70th anniversary.

**Indiana, Indianapolis**

*Edie Bollier, Kaylin Bollier*

Summer has brought beautiful weather along with uncertainty in plans as the Pandemic continues. Many have had to cancel plans or alter them, but we are learning flexibility and to depend on the Lord and his faithfulness.

Bro. John Lichtle’s mother, Mary Lichtle, lost her battle with cancer but gained eternal life. We grieve with him and his wife Sis. Sandy, their daughter Sis. Stacey and son Justin (Olivia).

As we adjust to changes in life, we continue to see the need to extend grace to one another as there are many differing opinions and reactions to what is changing in our country. We are thankful for God’s grace toward us and his faithfulness.

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

**Indiana, Leo**

*Jan Beer*

Greetings of love to you from the Leo church family. As everyone is experiencing the drought of fellowship because of COVID-19 restrictions, we rely on memories of times spent with loved ones in our own and other congregations to buoy us up! “Precious memories, how they linger…”

We are thankful for and appreciate our ministerial brothers who are devoting much time in prayer and in decision making regarding the details of our worship services with all the constraints that must be followed. We are grateful that our brothers faithfully compose a letter to the church that is emailed each week, which has become known as “The Thursday Update”. It is evident they have spent much time in discussion and prayer before apprising us of the protocol for each Sunday.

June 28 was the wedding of our dear Sis. Cordin Gerber and Bro. Logan Koch in Bluffton, IN. Because of the current conditions, many of us were blessed to be able to view the ceremony through Zoom. As this young couple settles in their home in Grabill, we ask the Lord’s blessing as they learn how to serve him together.

Sis. Rachel Gehring Fessenden’s creativity led to a fun, heartwarming celebration of her mother’s milestone birthday of eighty years! Our Sis. Judy Gehring has been almost completely isolated since the beginning of the pandemic because of health issues. It is nice to talk to her by phone, but we miss seeing each other.

Wednesday, July 8, was her birthday, so the Fessendens spent the supper hour with her, then convinced her to walk with them across the street from her condo to sit in rocking chairs on the condo association’s community center porch. As they got settled in about 6:30 PM, cars began to pull through the circle drive in front of the porch - what a grand birthday parade it was! Since Judy lives a couple blocks from our church building, it was ideal for folks to drive through and celebrate her special day; especially once Sis. Rachel suggested it! We thank God for joy, for his people using the creativity with which he gifted them, and for the love that flows from our hearts to each other. Our God is an awesome God.

Because of Gateway Woods, we have the privilege of meeting folks who answer God’s calling to serve him there. We heartily welcome
recent new houseparents, Bro. Phil and Sis. Janean Gerber from Bluffton, IN and Bro. Seth and Sis. Hannah Bollier from Bloomington, IL. The current restrictions have prevented most of us from meeting our new church family members, but we look forward to rich fellowship in the future.

Also because of Gateway Woods, we feel the sadness of saying farewell to departing staff. Recently, Bro. Luke and Sis. Andrea Gerber and their children and Bro. Quinn and Sis. Sarah Fiechter and their daughter have returned to Bluffton, IN. Instead of focusing on their departure, we are thankful for the fellowship we shared and for the work they performed with the residents of Gateway Woods. May God bless them richly.

May Jesus’ words in John 16:33 encourage your heart:

“These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”

Indiana, Milford
Heidi Beer, Anne Wilson

We’ve had times of rejoicing and weeping this past month. Praise God for his comforting and constant presence when our lives face uncertain and ever changing times. We were able to celebrate the beautiful marriage of Sis. Ashley Beer to Bro. Bryce Klostergaard of Lester, IA. Parents of the bride and groom are Elder Bro. Randy and Sis. Deb Beer, and the late Bro. Brad and Sis. Linda Klostergaard. Bro. Kent Mogler (Sis. Mary, Minneapolis, MN) ministered to us during the wedding service.

We are saddened by the loss of Bro. Ray Haab. His consistent, steady spirit will greatly be missed, and we pray God’s loving hand will comfort his wife Sis. Paula and their family in the coming weeks.

Bro. Tom Price (Becky) had some recent health issues and we pray for a full recovery.

Indiana, Remington
Jenn Honeyger, Marcella Tyler

We recently had our annual Sunday school picnic, and although it was a different format from most years due to COVID-19, it was still a blessing for all who attended. We thank each Sunday school teacher for their labors of love throughout the year and for all the time and energy they pour into their students and preparing for lessons. May each one be blessed for their efforts! As the Sunday school teachers and students prepare for VBS later this month (again in a different format than usual), we ask you to pray that seeds will be planted and hearts could be drawn closer to the Lord.

The nearby town of Kentland experienced some catastrophic flooding this month, and several from our congregation aided the clean-up efforts there. Please pray for those whose homes were damaged or destroyed.

Schools in our area are starting to release plans for what the coming school year might look like. With such a quickly changing situation, it is a challenge for all, from each school employee to each student and family. Let’s pray that we can all give each other grace, mercy, and forbearance during this difficult time as everyone seeks to do what’s best for the students. As Christians we have an opportunity to be a light and example in this dark and difficult time!

Indiana, South Bend
Joshua Martinez

“I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.” 3 John 1:4

Our prayers were with Sis. Jocelyn Payton and our Elder Bro. Scott Schafer (Sis. Gigi) who are doing well after experiencing health issues. We congratulate Bro. Tom and Sis. Carolyn Frank on their 50th wedding anniversary!

We thank Bro. Caleb Schafer (Sis. Laura, Indianapolis, IN) for “coming home” and sharing the gospel message with us!

As we transition to a new school year, we will pray for newly-elected Sunday school teachers Bro. Brad Langhofer (Sis. Becky) and Bro. Jason Isch (Sis. Jessica). We thank outgoing Sunday school teachers Bro. Craig Langhofer (Sis. Rachel) and Bro. Garrett Kupferschmid (Sis. Bethany) for the powerful impact they had on our children.
We continue to rejoice at the work of the Holy Spirit in our church family! Marty Jo Martinez (Bro. Joshua and Sis. Keyna) has expressed his need of a Savior and begun his repentance!

“I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth.” Psalms 121:1-2

Indiana, Valparaiso

Sherry Meiss

Our verse for the month is:

“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.” John 15:5

We had our annual outside church clean-up and a lot was accomplished due to the many helpers. Thanks to you all for your interest and knowledge.

Abraham part 3 of 5 will continue on Wednesday nights via virtual study. How blessed we are for Bro. Tim Bucher and his willingness and hard work on this project.

The Feed NWI nonprofit organization continues to sell Butterbraids to help support NWI food banks. Thank you to the group of community-minded business people for doing your part to help out during this time of crisis from the COVID-19 epidemic. Let’s fight hunger and feed hope to those in need. Our collection for this month is for the New Beginnings in Ft. Myers, FL.

Please keep Bro. Mike and Sis. Claudia Thomas in your prayers. Rittenhouse has opened up for visits so we can now go see Bro. Bob and Sis. Marguerite Hoerr. Praise God for such good results for Drew McClanahan. This has been a real time of trust for Sis. Tasia Weiss and her family. We pray that Moses is able to enter back into our country without any issue.

Indiana, West Lafayette

Libby Wahl

Per the scheduled testimonies announced in our June report, it was wonderful to welcome Bro. Austin Roe and Sis. Autumn Ross into our fellowship on July 5. It was a joy to have good support for this special rite. Thanks to a few pioneering/creative parents, our Sunday school children enjoyed an encouraging, single evening VBS night.

Congratulations to Purdue college students Sis. Michaela Cook, Francesville, IN. and Bro. Cody Shively, Bluffton North, IN on their engagement. May your lives and families be enriched through this union in Christ. Our sympathy goes to Sis. Nettie Haab in the loss of her brother, Bro. Ray Haab (Milford, IN).

God’s grace and courage to each of you as we look ahead to the potential challenges of a new school year, along with any ongoing concerns with employment, health, finances and/or relationships. On a more eternal note, someone recently shared this poignant gospel statement with me: "Until sin is bitter, Jesus will never be sweet.” (author unknown).

Indiana, Wolcott

Teresa Earney, Luann Gerber

Our Sis, Arles Kropf passed peacefully to her eternal home on June 30 at Parkview Haven Retirement Home in Francesville, IN. She dearly loved her nieces and nephews. Sis. Laurel Widmer and Bro. Neil Widmer (Sis. Kris) and family are her local family.

Bro. Josh and Sis. Jennifer Furrer welcomed a new baby boy. Grayson William was born on June 16. His big sister is Brecklynn and his big brother is Graham.

We were blessed to have our annual Sunday school picnic on June 28. Our students then moved forward to the next class. Being together as a church family is uplifting!

We are rejoicing that Erin Bahler, daughter of Bro. Mike and Sis. Jody, began her repentance.

Our prayers continue for Bro. Jerry Kyburz (Sis. Nancy) with his ongoing health challenges.

Bro. Randy and Sis. Brittaney Lehman and their children, Charlotte and Jack, have returned to the area following his schooling. We are thankful to have them back as a part of our congregation.

Cole and Samantha Cochran, daughter and son-in-law of Bro. Kip and Sis. Donita Edelman, had a major house fire on July 13. They feel the cause was electrical. No one was injured and all were safe. Several days after the fire,
Cole had to be hospitalized due to being diabetic. He was exhausted, dehydrated and in Diabetic Ketoacidosis. At the time of this writing, he is stabilizing and hoping to be dismissed from the hospital within the next day. Please join us in praying and supporting this young family.

**Iowa, Bloomfield**

*Kendra Schlatter*

Our thoughts and prayers are with Bro. Joel Wuthrich (Sis. Shirley), Elder Bro. Doug Schock (Sis. Clara), and Sis. Evelyn Metzger (Bro. Roy) as they spent time in the hospital recently. We pray that God would stand by each of them and provide healing all according to his perfect will.

We extend our sympathy and prayers to Sis. Clara Schock (Elder Bro. Doug) and their family in the passing of her mother, Sis. Alice Wulf (Lester, IA).

Thank you to our outgoing Sunday school teachers, Bro. Andy Joos and Sis. Bethany Wettstein. We were thankful to have nice weather for our Sunday school picnic the last Sunday in June.

**Note of Thanks:**

I would like to thank everybody who remembered me with cards and gifts for my 80th birthday. God bless you. Bro. Bill Wuthrich (Sis. Gloria)

**Iowa, Burlington**

*Marilyn Anderson, Angela Steiner*

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

Peace does not mean an absence of war, trouble, or affliction, but rather a calm serenity in our minds and hearts, amidst the difficulties, that is only found when we are fixed on Jesus Christ. We encourage some of our church family to continue looking to Jesus for that peace as they struggle with continued health issues.

We also seek the Lord for peace and direction as we discuss further church reopening and move on to Phase Two. This next phase has been special to now include Sunday school, both services and a lunch packed from home.

Our church family recently voted in new Sunday school teachers for the next term. We give our prayerful support to Bro. Blake Wulf, Sis. Monica Eisenmann and Sis. Angela Steiner. It is a wonderful opportunity to instruct young souls in the way of peace.

Lastly, we want to thank Elder Bro. Jon Schmidgall (Sis. Julie, Mediapolis, IA), along with our home ministers, for sharing the Memorandum with us on a Wednesday evening. We appreciate Bro. Jon’s efforts and lift him up in prayer as he shoulders many responsibilities.

As we continue wading in the troubled waters of our time, may we all keep listening for the Spirit’s voice that whispers, “Peace. Be still.”

**Iowa, Elgin**

*Maria Rocke*

"I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.” Psalms 32:8

We enjoyed getting to know Sis. Rhonda Wulf who spent some time worshiping with us. We wish her God’s nearness as she moves on to a different job near the Winthrop, MN church.
In every change He faithful will remain.  
Be still, my soul: thy best, thy heavenly Friend,  
Thro’ thorny ways leads to a joyful end.”  
Be Still, My Soul, Hymns of Zion #191

Iowa, Iowa City
Diana Butikofer

We appreciated the virtual visit of retired Elder Bro. John Lehman (Sis. Carol, Bern, KS) on a Wednesday evening. We trust the Lord blessed him for sharing both the Word and a time of fellowship with us.

We recently elected Sunday school teachers for the next school year. They are Bro. Tim Gerst (Sis. Melisa), Bro. Luke Gerst (Sis. Michelle), Sis. Ruth Gerst, and Sis. Renae Snodgrass. We wish each of them God’s grace and wisdom as they teach our children and thank our current teachers for their service this past year!

Iowa, Lester
Kristi Knobloch, Lois Mogler

We have started having two services on Sunday with a noon lunch, and twice monthly singings held outdoors. It will definitely be a time that will be worth telling future generations about. Bro. Arlan Miller (Sis. Katie, Gridley, IL) spent a Sunday sharing God’s word reminding us we should first assume a good intent in others when they question us in any situation. Not to pass judgement too quickly, loving our neighbors as ourselves and extend grace to others reflecting God’s love. Elder Bro. Randy Beer (Sis. Deb, Milford, IN) also spent a Sunday encouraging us that we are called to be saints by the power God gives us to overcome sin and Satan.

Bro. Bryce and Sis. Ashley Klostergaard were married in Milford, IN on Father’s Day. The late Bro. Brad and Sis. Linda Klostergaard and Elder Bro. Randy and Sis. Deb Beer (Milford, IN) are their parents. We welcome Sis. Ashley to Lester. Madison Molitor and Tristan Wylie were married on July 11. Carol Molitor welcomes another son-in-law. Tim and Sis. Becky Ver Beek welcomed a new daughter-in-law also on July 11 when their son Dalton married Mandi Hare. May God bless each of their homes.

Sis. Vera Knobloch and Sis. Marie Knobloch are both recovering from surgeries to repair broken bones. We pray they can find the grace and strength to endure the recovery process. Bro. Dennis Kellenberger (Sis. Shirley) is also dealing with the afflictions of the body. May the Lord provide daily strength to him.

Three sisters were called home to heaven recently. Sis. Leona Moser (Elder Bro. Leo, dec.) passed away July 1. Our sympathy goes to her children, Bro. Wes Moser (Sis. Esther), Sis. Myra Wulf (Bro. Arnie), and grandchildren. Also cherishing her memory are her siblings Bro. Phil Mogler (Sis. Donna), Sis. Florence Knoblock, Bro. Howard Mogler (Sis. Lillian) and in-laws, Sis. Mariann Metzger, Sis. Estelle Leuthold, Sis. Janet Wysong and Bro. Frank Moser all of our congregation.

Sis. Alice Wulf (Bro. Jake, dec.) passed away July 10. Our sympathy is extended to her children and grandchildren, Madonna Krieger (Jerry, Sioux Falls, SD), Sis. Clara Schock (Elder Bro. Doug, Bloomfield, IA), Colleen Dogotch (Tom, Morris MN), Jenell Koehl (Roy, Morris, MN), Sis. Mavis Schmidt (Bro. Mike, Lester IA), Bro. Harlan Wulf (Sis. Betty, Lester, IA), Sis. Nola Gerst (Bro. Walt, Mediapolis, IA), and Albert Wulf (Jodi, Renner,SD). Her brother, Bro. Carl Moser (Sis. Norene, Morris, MN) also cherishes her memory. Grieving the loss of their dear sister are Sis. Esther Moser (Bro. Wes) and Bro. Tim Feucht (Sis. Carla) and families.

Sis. Julie Bahr (Bro. Larry, Fort Scott, KS) was relieved of her earthly suffering on July 14. Her warm and cheery smile would always brighten the mood when she returned home to Lester for a visit.

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

Let us be encouraged to remain faithful during trials on earth so someday we too can gain our prize.
Celebrating her 100th Birthday this month is Sis. Mariann Metzger. Truly a milestone not many reach.

“O what is hundred?
This age to few is e’er allotted;
O man do strive for virtues pure,
And lay thy treasures up in heaven
And make you own election sure!”

O What is Mortal, Hymns of Zion #131

New life blossomed on July 15 as Erick and Tessa Frewaldt welcomed Irene Marie. Her grandparents are Bro. Wes and Sis. Esther Moser. A new baby reminds us of the sacred gift of life.

Spending some weekends with us this summer are Staci Nohl (Bro. Ben and Sis. Kristi Furrer, Morris MN) and brothers Taylor and Harrison Zeltwanger (Bro. Adam and Sis. Christy, Morris North, MN) All three have begun their repentance and it’s encouraging to have them worship with us as they spend time in the area before returning to college this fall.

Note of Thanks:
The family of Sis. Leona Moser would like to express their heartfelt appreciation for your prayers and messages of sympathy, as well as the many deeds of loving kindness that were shown at the time of her passing. We also deeply appreciated the many visits, cards, calls, etc that she received during the years since she was widowed…especially during these recent months! May God richly bless you-our church family!

Bro. Wes and Sis. Esther Moser and family and Bro. Arnie and Sis. Myra Wulf and family

Iowa, Mediapolis

Laura Kurtz, Janet Lanz

As we move into deep summer, the simple pleasures of life often seem to be such a comfort in their familiarity. A summer evening on the porch swing brings such a feast for the senses. The beautiful hues of summer flowers deepen in their vibrant colors as the sun begins to sink. Birds swoop through the air to chase down insects, and a cool breeze begins to stir after the heat of the day. Using the sky as his palette, the Master Painter begins to brush the majestic colors of a sunset across the horizon. That breathtaking beauty fades as lighting bugs float over the grass and fields, and the children race to put them in jars as their laughter and voices carry across the distance. The stars begin to twinkle and the night sounds announce the end of another day.

What a precious and awesome thing it is to walk hand in hand with the creator of the universe. We have been enjoying more fellowship with one another as our church continues to open up. Our annual Father-Son Campout was held the weekend of Father’s Day. Though it was a bit altered, the time spent together was enjoyed by all.

Our Elder Bro. Jon Schmidgall and our local ministers brought forth the spring Memorandum this past month. There were many good thoughts for us to consider and we appreciate their labors of love.

We have several who are grieving the passing of a loved one. Sis. Norma Massner (Bro. Eric, dec.) bade good-bye to her sister-in-law, Thelma Hillyard. Sis. Carol Steiner (Bro. John) said her last earthly farewell to her sibling, Sis. Joyce Schneider (Bro. Roy, Rockville, CT), and Sis. Nola Gerst (Bro. Walt) experienced the parting of her mother, Sis. Alice Wulf (Bro. Jake, dec.) of Lester, IA.

Alice is also the grandmother of Bro. Alan Schock and Bro. Nate Schock (Sis. Kaylyn) who attend church here. We offer all of these dear ones our sympathy and support and pray the Lord can soothe their times of grief.

After so recently reaching the milestone of graduation, what a joy it is to hear the good news that Holly Massner (Bro. Troy and Sis. Joni) has surrendered her heart to God, and is now making a new beginning with her Savor to guide her through life. We pray God will grant her much grace as she begins this journey.

Bro. Keith and Sis. Tonya Lanz became grandparents once again as Sis. Molly and Bro. Arnie Lanz (West Bend, IA) gave birth to little Rea Mae. Every birth is a miracle, and we pray these new parents can feel God’s nearness as they raise this precious soul.

Visiting ministers for the month include Bro. Greg Fehr (Sis. Denise, West Bend, IA) and Bro. Michael Wagenbach (Sis. Erica, Wolcott, IA). We
are thankful for their efforts in bringing forth the Word.

**Iowa, West Bend**  
*Jenny Banwart, Karen Schmidt*

We really appreciated having our Elder Bro. Rod Bajema (Sis. Sue, Lester, IA) here with our graduates on their belated graduation Sunday. He shared much good advice that we all could take to heart! Also visiting on a Monday evening was Bro. Arlan Miller (Sis. Katie, Gridley, IL). Bro. Arlan gave a technology presentation that included good encouragements for all of us.

Trent and Hailey Banwart rejoice in the safe arrival of their son, Declan Paul. Bro. Ken and Sis. Marlene Banwart are little Declan’s grandparents. Also thankful for the safe arrival of their daughter, Rea Mae, are Bro. Corbin and Sis. Molly Knobloch. Grandparents are Bro. Cameron and Sis. Tammy Knobloch and Bro. Keith and Sis Tonya Lanz (Mediapolis, IA).

Spending time in the hospital was Lincoln Fehr (Bro. Darren and Sis. Nora). We are thankful that Lincoln is healing and doing well.

We extend our sympathy to Sis. Dorothy Zaugg in the loss of her sister-in-law, Ruby Besch. Sympathy also to Bro. Gary and Sis. Sue Schneider as they grieve the loss of their sister, Sis. Julie Bahr (Bro. Larry, Fort Scott, KS). We pray that these families will feel God’s nearness and comfort.

**Japan, Shioda and Tokyo**

*Anna Inoue, Marie Inoue, Carrie Ito*

Summer is here but the vacation time for many of our school children will be much shorter than usual. We have been blessed by more Sunday school students attending regularly despite the challenges with the pandemic. July is very different from what we had anticipated with VBS and the Tokyo 2020 Olympics both being cancelled this year.

What a comfort to know that we can trust our immutable God. We are thankful to report that Sis. Iwama and Sis. Kido living on the southern island of Kyushu were spared of danger when the heavy rains and flooding hit their area several weeks ago.

Daily our prayers ascend to the Father’s throne for the health of our retired Elder Bro. Willis Ehnle (Peoria, IL) who was recently hospitalized. We also intercede for the mother of our ministering Bro. Kan Umemura as she recovers from surgery. We pray she can be encouraged in the Word.

**Kansas, Bern**

*Sheri Edelman, Rita Menold*

We are so thankful for the visiting brothers who delivered God’s Holy Word to us. Thank you to Bro. Arlan Miller (Sis. Katie, Gridley, IL), Bro. Matt Kauffmann (Bloomington, IL), Bro. Aaron Luthi (Sis. Maria, Lamont, KS), Bro. Mark Dotterer (Sis. Kate, Eureka, IL), and Bro. Brent Kellenberger (Sis. Beth, Kansas City, MO).

ACCFS did a presentation to the singles about “Spiritual Gifts” and then to the church about “Stewarding Our Sexuality.” We appreciate your help in being Christ-centered in every aspect of our lives!

Jacob Ruyle (Ron and Cindy) has begun his repentance. We pray for God’s guidance as he steps out in humility to follow Jesus.

Bro. Trever and Sis. Dona Wendler and son Ethan, have moved to Champaign, IL. We will miss them very much at church and in the community. May God bless you!

**Kansas, Kiowa**

*Janice Bahr, Millie Frieden*

"Thank You, dear Father, for so many things, for babies, and sunlight, and butterfly wings… For snowflakes and seashells, for hummingbirds, too, hot cups of coffee, and skies, clear and blue… For laughter and giggles, for kisses, so sweet, choirs of children, warm food to eat… For family and loved ones, the hug of a friend-dear Father, this list could run without end. Your blessings are many, and I’ve barely begun, but dear Father God, thank You most for Your Son, that He came, and lived from His home high above, to tell of Your caring, Your comfort, Your love.” Bea Lotz

We were truly thankful this past month as five young sisters
from five different churches joined us on a Saturday, and taught our one day VBS. They taught music and Bible lessons, and had activities and crafts throughout the day, with a picnic at the river and singing afterwards to end the day. Then on Sunday, they taught our Sunday school classes also. The joy and exuberance these young sisters brought to our group, plus the Wichita youth who joined us, was awe inspiring. We are so grateful to them for taking the time and effort to not only come to Kiowa, but that they also traveled to other churches to teach their VBSs. May God richly bless them for sharing their wonderful gifts of love and joy with so many young people in the name of their Lord and God.

The Kiowa congregation is still having one service with no fellowship hour, and we wish to thank retired elder Bro. John Lehman (Sis. Carol, Bern, KS) and Bro. John Baumgartner (Sis Lori, Bern, KS) for sharing two different Sundays with us. It’s a long way to travel for one service, but we appreciate their willingness to lend themselves.

The family of Sis. Nelda Ott, who passed away in April, had a private memorial service for her at the cemetery on April 17. Due to COVID-19, they decided to have a simple family service to protect relatives from exposure to the disease. We extend our love and prayers to their family.

Sis. Millie Frieden had another surgery this month. This time they operated on her eye. Her recuperation for this surgery is three months with complete inactivity. It is our fervent prayer that God, the great physician, will care for her during this time of healing.

"Seeds of goodness we are sowing in the hearts of man today. Bless it, Lord, that it may prosper, and bear fruit for harvest day! Hasten gladly to the labor. Consecrate to God your heart, say this day unto your Saviour, “Lord, I’ll gladly to my part.”" The Golden Harvest, Hymns of Zion #46

We just completed another wheat harvest in our area, and we thank the Lord for seeing us through again. May we ever be ready to show the love of God to others, that at the great harvest in the latter days, many may see our seeds of goodness, and come to know Christ as their Lord and Saviour.

Kansas, Lamont
Maria Luthi

For a few weeks, our church was able to meet in person with many precautions being taken. However, we have had to move back to Zoom services temporarily due to local coronavirus infections. Once again we are reminded of the need for the truth of the scripture,

“... for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content” Phil. 4:11

Earlier this month, Bro. Max Burnham hosted a fish fry where we all enjoyed fellowship together.

Our Sunday school students had a nice time going canoeing on the Verdigris river and even a few of the parents went along.

We have been prayerful for our Sis. Dorene Metzger who was hospitalized briefly. We are thankful that she has been able to return home to continue recovery. We serve a gracious and merciful Father.

Kansas, Sabetha
Leanna Hartter, Whitney Hartter

We enjoyed a meal and evening of fellowship at our annual Sunday school picnic! We are thankful for all the efforts each teacher puts forth throughout the year and pray that God will bless them. Our prayers are also with those who will be teaching in the coming year.

There were three hospital patients this month. Bro. Elmer Strahm (Sis. Phyllis), Bro. Darin Grimm (Sis. Marci), and Sis. Sally Strahm (Bro. Lynn) are all home after their time in the hospital. We pray that the mighty healer will touch each one.

Deborah Edelman (Bro. Loren and Sis. Jeanne) has expressed her need for repentance. It is such a blessing to know God is still calling souls unto him!

“Haste, while yet His grace is offered; Waste no time in worldly thought; Now begin your pilgrim journey, Cleansed from every stain and spot. You will find by faith, revealing Full redemption in His blood; For each sinner there is healing, Baptized in this cleansing flood.” Repent Ye!, Zions Harp, #52
It seems that times of hardship can be conducive to growing in love for one another. Many of our brothers and sisters in Ixtlán have come down with dengue in the last few weeks. The warm rainy weather we’ve had has increased the mosquito population and many here and in the surrounding communities are experiencing this painful and debilitating disease. We ask for prayers that it could stop soon, and that God’s hand would be merciful as dengue can occasionally be life-threatening.

We were also saddened to hear of the passing of Bro. Carlos Hernandez’s mother, Maria. She is survived by her husband, Benjamin, a daughter, Emma, and two sons, Bro. Carlos and Benjamin Jr. It is a time of sadness and struggle, but also a time to be taught of God to love one another.

We extend a warm welcome to the volunteers who traveled (amongst many COVID-19 precautions) to be here for the summer; Marissa Endress (Princeville, IL), Sis. Bridget Koehl (Prescott, AZ), Sis. Kayla Bahler (Wolcott, IN), Sis. Destiny Herrmann (Princeville, IL), Sis. Kate Dotterer (Sardis, OH), Bro. TJ Sutton (Phoenix, AZ), Bro. Caleb Sauder (Morton, IL), Bro. Zach Plattner (Champaign, IL), Bro. Eric Harter (Washington, IL), and Bro. Brecken Beyer who is back from college in Indiana. We thank them for their willing service!

We are thankful for the arrival of Olivia Joy Grassi, born July 9 to Bro. Jason and Sis. Geo! Grandparents are Sis. Cheryl and the late Bro. John Grassi (Peoria, IL), Ricardo Aquino and Rebecca Nuñez (Cuernavaca, Morelos, MX). We wish them God’s greatest blessings as they begin their journey of parenthood!

We ask for prayers for the family of Maria Jesús Garcia who passed away this past month. She was a follower of Jesus, a sweet friend to many, and a faithful attendee at church. We will miss her smile and her presence.

Over the past month, several from our church community have had close relatives test positive for COVID-19 or tested positive themselves, and others have presented symptoms although undiagnosed. Thankfully in the past week, it appears that the number of cases has dropped here in Sonora, however we would still appreciate your prayers for each one whose life has been touched and for strength for whatever the future holds. May God give us peace and freedom from fear!

Church services are still suspended for an indefinite amount of time and non-essential travel across the border is restricted through August 20. Thank you for your prayers!

We extend special prayers for Stacy Cowan (Sis. Marcie) as he has spent time in the hospital. We pray that God would uphold their family in the coming days.

We are thankful that Bro. Jason Dotterer (Sis. Lynn, Forrest, IL) and Bro. David Maibach (Sis. Larisa, Smithville, OH) included Bay City in their travel plans and ministered the Word to our congregation.

"Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand... Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;" Eph. 6:13,18

Greetings to all of you! Our power went out last evening during a much needed rain. As the three of us searched for flashlights, we got the message from DTE that “we have no idea when your power will be restored but will let you know an approximate time via text when we are able to assess the problem”. Lovely. Our teenager commented, “Mom, I’ve been jealous of people with things I can’t afford, and I never realized what a blessing electricity is.” Meanwhile, I had been worrying about our meat spoiling in the freezer and after her comment I
remembered many people don’t have enough food to eat. Huge reality check for how much we take for granted. Of course none of our cell phones were adequately charged so that was a problem. The three of us struggled to manually lift our garage door (no small feat) so we could use a nearby grocery store to charge our phones. We still didn’t have power at noon the next day, (today) and the estimate from DTE was 11:30 PM tonight. A different plan was obviously needed. We packed coolers of semi-frozen food and my husband and daughter headed to church to inundate the church’s freezers with our hamburger. Me? I am currently enjoying air conditioning and electricity in my friend’s house as I type away. What would we do without the generosity of friends? I have been convicted of all the blessings I take for granted.

Speaking of taking blessings for granted, our church is still gratefully assembling for morning service with some restrictions. What a blessing it is to see our Christian brothers and sisters again. We also are thankful to the committee that is working to advise future church guidelines.

Our beloved Chuck and Sis. Dot Leman celebrated their 72nd marriage anniversary and we sent cards and sang songs outside their home to celebrate.

New Sunday school teachers are Bro. Scott Bahr and Sis. Cherise Blume. We want to thank Bro. Brian Blume and Sis. Carrie Rauhe whose terms have ended.

We want to welcome Bro. David and Sis. Sierra Putt to our church family as they have moved here for him to complete his medical internship.

Our church deeply grieves the death of our Sis. Karen Martin after a brief illness. Although she was 77, she seemed so much younger. She was known for her random acts of kindness, singing, love of flowers, decorating, and family. There is a verse in the Bible that talks about rejoicing with those who rejoice and weeping with those who weep. This seems a fitting snapshot of Sis. Karen. She leaves a hole in so many lives. We extend our sympathy and prayers to her children Sis. Terri Huber (Bro. Ryan, Bloomington, IL); Kenneth Martin (Christine, Mooresville, NC), and Julie Crawford (Plymouth, MI). Her grandchildren, whom she loved deeply, are in our prayers also. Her infectious laugh, empathy, angelic voice, love of church and family, and many other things, leave a wonderful legacy.

**Minnesota, Minneapolis**

*Brenda Messner, Renee Messner*

Giving glory to our great God, for these beautiful summer days! These are the days...why we like living in Minnesota!

We want to say a big thank you, to Bro. Randy and Sis. Brittaney Lehman, along with their little loves, Charlotte and Jack. They so graciously took care of the Rochester Guest House, welcoming those in need of medical care, and providing a place to stay for family members, while in the Rochester area. It was a blessing for us to have the Lehmans living in Minnesota and worshipping with us while Bro. Randy did his residency at Mayo Clinic. Our prayers go with them as they have relocated to Wolcott, IN. May God continue to guide, bless and hold them close!

Gratefully, we welcome Bro. Duane and Sis. Ruth Metzger, West Bend, IA, as they are serving as short term caretakers through the month of July, at the Rochester Guest House. We appreciate their servant hearts and coming to worship with us in Minneapolis.

Lord willing, the plan for the month of August is for Bro. Gerald and Sis. Brenda Messner, Winthrop, MN to be the caretakers. We praise our heavenly Father, for the loving hearts, hands and efforts of these dear couples.

If anyone else is interested in a short term, one month or long term, through the end of this year, please contact Bro. Kent Mogler, at moglerkent@gmail.com

Due to the continued restrictions, Sis. Claire Dill and Bro. Adrian (Sis. Charity) Rocke, came up with a creative way families can still do summer VBS. With the theme Dare to Act for Jesus, children will decorate a puppet theatre, make puppets and act out Daniel, David, and Joshua stories from the Bible. Complete with songs,
memory verses and a Google slideshow, these lessons will be a fun and faith building activity! Great job to all who helped assemble the VBS kits!

We are so thankful that Sis. Brenda (Bro. Rick) Messner is back at home after a short hospital stay. We remain prayerful for her and all those who are hurting and in need of healing. Jesus knows their names!

“Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” James 5:16

Minnesota, Morris

Peg Wellendorf, Brianna Wulf

“And it came to pass also on another sabbath, that He entered into the synagogue and taught: and there was a man whose right hand was withered. And the scribes and Pharisees watched Him, whether He would heal on the sabbath day; that they might find an accusation against Him. But He knew their thoughts, and said to the man which had the withered hand, ‘Rise up, and stand forth in the midst. And He arose and stood forth. Then said Jesus unto them, ‘I will ask you one thing: Is it lawful on the sabbath day to do good, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy it?’ And looking round about upon them all, He said unto the man, ‘Stretch forth thy hand. And he did so: and his hand was restored whole as the other.’” Luke 6:6-10

Thank you to visiting minister Bro. Adam Zeltwanger (Sis. Christy, Morris North, MN) who brought forth the teachings from Luke. We know there is no accusation that we can possibly bring forth against our heavenly Father but that he loves us like no other. Let us each one rise up at his command and stretch forth our hearts to receive his will for us.

We are so thankful for the four perfectly bundled gifts we’ve received recently. We praise him for the safe arrival of these little ones to their parent’s arms and to our church family.

Ezra, son of Steven and Britta Koehl, grandson of Bro. Guy and Sis. Lynette Koehl and great-grandson of Bro. Edward and Sis. Lois Koehl, born June 27.

Kinlie, daughter of Bro. Matthew and Sis. Tara Wulf, granddaughter of Stan and Sis. Pam Wulf and great-granddaughter of Bro. Lloyd and Sis. Diane Fehr, born July 8.

Two births were announced on July 10. Bro. Kurt and Sis. Savannah Wulf welcomed their son, Milo. He is the grandson of Bro. Dennis and Sis. Judy Wulf and Bro. Tim and Sis. Gwen Gramm. Also, Troy and Crystal Madsen celebrated the arrival of baby Evelyn Faith to their family. We ask God to bless and guide these families and our congregation as we love and teach them of his promise.

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

Congratulations to Ross Ascheman and Lindsey Dukart on their engagement. Their wedding will take place on June 19, 2021 in Dickinson, ND. Please pray for them as they prepare their hearts for marriage. Ross is the son of Bro. Tony and Sis. Peggy Ascheman.

“Praise to the Lord: Oh, let all that is in me adore Him. All that have breath sing with Abraham’s children before Him. He is our light, fountain of glory and might, peace to my spirit restoring.”

Minnesota, Morris North

Kay Feuchtenberger, Natalie Feuchtenberger

“I don’t know about tomorrow I just live from day to day I don’t borrow from the sunshine For it’s skies may turn to gray I don’t worry o’er the future For I know what Jesus said And today I’ll walk beside Him For He knows what lies ahead Many things about tomorrow I don’t seem to understand But I know who holds tomorrow And I know who holds my hand” I Know Who Holds Tomorrow, Melodies of Praise, #112

This song is so applicable in the uncertain times we live in. How good it is to know the One who knows the future and holds our hands.

We extend a warm welcome to a sweet new bundle of love in the home of Bro. Allen and Sis. Danielle Schmidgall. Cashten J and his three older brothers will certainly make a lively...
and blessed household. What a privilege to raise future soldiers for God’s army!

We covet prayers, especially for our loved ones in long term care facilities during this time of isolation. What an opportunity we have to carry one another in prayer.

**Minnesota, Winthrop**

*Julie Schmidt, Ginny Stoll*

“Oh God, thou hast taught me from my youth; and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works.” Psa. 71:17

The Sunday school year ended for teachers and students. We are thankful that young and tender hearts were still able to be taught through technology during these challenging times. We thank all the teachers for their extra efforts in teaching and reaching out to students.

Our small church welcomes and is eager to have visitors...let alone when someone is directed to move to the area! We are excited to welcome Sis. Rhonda Wulf (Bro. Jerry and Sis. Linda) from Morris, MN, as she has found employment in the area. May she feel our love and feel at home here.

Surgery and hospital patients this month have been Sis. Dixie Messner, Bro. Ed Stoll (Sis. Ginny), Bro. Darrel Schmidt (Darlene), Brayden Rubendahl (Vanessa), and Karen Smith. We’re thankful Bro. Dick and Sis. Nancy Van Deest’s son, Scott, has been able to come home after some time at the rehab unit.

May the Lord grant healing and comfort upon those afflicted.

**Missouri, Kansas City**

*Katy Frantz*

This month we celebrated with Bro. Alan and Sis. Holly Banwart on the adoption of their youngest daughter, Faith.

We also have resumed meeting for two services as well as eating lunch together. Each family brings their food from home and eats in their own area. We realize this is a privilege not many of our churches in other areas enjoy, and so we thank God for it, even as we pray for our other AC churches.

**Missouri, St. Louis**

*Victoria Eberhardt*

We were so blessed to have HarvestCall’s traveling VBS team in St. Louis again this summer. It’s a joy to watch our congregation’s kids learn about Jesus and God’s power in such creative ways. A huge thank you to the group for spending a week in willingness of spirit with our kids.

Our surgical patient this month was Sis. Betsy Schrenk (Bro. Loren). We are so thankful for her health and pray for her quick recovery.

**Missouri, Taylor**

*Lori Marquart, Tami Pflum*

“When we asunder part, It gives us inward pain; But we shall still be joined in heart, And hope to meet again.”

*Blest Be The Tie, Hymns of Zion #156.*

Sis. Emmadee Hoerr (the late Bro. Robert) has moved to the Sabetha Apostolic Christian Home. Her new address is 1705 Roosevelt St, Apt 70, Sabetha, KS 66534.

Also moving are Bro. David and Sis. Sierra Putt. Bro. David will be continuing his medical education in the Detroit, MI, area. We trust they remember that it’s a two-way road and they are always welcome back, at the least for frequent visits.

Bro. Aaron Luthi (Sis. Maria, Lamont, KS) spoke virtually to us June 17 on the topic of having an accurate and complete view of God (John 17:3). It was a smorgasbord of Truth and we are grateful for his research and willingness to share.

"Jesus" is the theme for our July Wednesday Bible Studies. On July 1, Bro. Todd Witzig (Sis. Nicole, Gridley, IL) spoke from John 5 on "Life Through the Son." On July 8, Bro. Doug Wagenbach (Sis. Lillian, San Diego, CA) spoke virtually from John 6 on "Jesus, the Bread of Life." Gratitude is extended to each minister for their time invested in feeding our flock in Taylor. Also thanks to those who created the themed outline, extended invitations, coordinated schedules, and host those who are able to travel here. Lord willing there will be more to report on this topic next month!

Sympathy is extended to the following: Sis. Judy Huber (Bro. Vernon, dec.) whose sister passed, Sis. Louise Kiefer (Gridley, IL); Bro. Paul Haab (Sis. Kathy) whose
brother passed away on July 11, Bro. Ray Haab (Milford, IN); and to Danny Meyers (Jody) whose brother, David Meyers, Palmyra, passed away. “For the Lord has comforted his people, and will have mercy on His afflicted.” (Isaiah 49:13). Sis. Kathy Haab was a hospital patient this month.

My daughter-in-law gave me the book, Hinds’ Feet on High Places (Psalm 18:33 and Habakkuk 3:19) by Hannah Hurnard. It’s an allegory in which the main character, Much-Afraid, learns to accept the conditions and tests permitted by God by continually laying down her own will and accepting (with joy) his will. Every acceptance becomes an altar of sacrifice, and every surrender and abandonment of her will furthers her toward the “High Places” of victory which he desires to bring every child of his as we navigate this life. If you’ve been keeping company with sorrow and suffering, perhaps the Lord can speak comfort through the thoughts in this lovely book.

New York, Croghan/Naumburg
Karen Farney

Our prayers continue to be with Norbert Farney as he recently had knee surgery, and is now home recovering.

Matthew and Julie Farney were blessed with a special gift from heaven, a son Maxwell Norbert, he was born May 20. Grandparents are Norbert and Joanne Farney. A daughter, Kensli Joy, was born to Joshua and Mckenzie Herzig, her sister Jaxie Dawn welcomed her home. Grandparents are Brad Jr. and Joyce Herzig, Tom and Dawn Tohonica, Great-grandmother is Sis. Jeanie Herzig (dec. Bro. Brad).

We are now having our Wednesday evening services at 7:00 PM.

We rejoice with our high school graduates, as they will be starting a new chapter in their lives. Some are going on for further education, and one is going into the service. As they start this new journey of life, we pray for God’s guidance, protection, and most of all his wisdom to see them through whatever they face. The graduates are: Kierstin Getman (Daniel and Tracie Getman), Maggie Farney (Terry and Tracy Farney), Jason Schneider (David and Deborah Schneider) and Morgan Aubel (Tony Aubel and Erin Wolff).

“...and God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.” 2 Cor. 9:8

Ohio, Akron
Joelle Indermuhle

Our sympathies are with those in our congregation who have recently lost loved ones. May the Lord be near Sis. Audrey Graf as her brother, Bro. Sherwood ‘Owen’ Bahler of Rockville, CT, recently passed away. We are also thinking of Sis. Evelyn Baumgartner with the recent passing of her brother-in-law, Bill Shane of Sterling, OH.

Ohio, Columbus
Nancy Banks

If there is anything to be learned as we enter into the hazy days of summer, it’s patience. Just as our church thought that restrictions would start to be lifted, there was an upsurge of the virus and we are back to all restrictions. During this time, we must remember to:

“Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him all creatures here below:
Praise Him above, ye heavenly hosts;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.”
Praise God, From Whom All Blessings, Hymns of Zion #95

Many prayers were answered as young Clayton Saurer (Bro. Todd and Sis Esther) was released from the hospital after having a medical procedure. We are thankful for having God as our healer and for Clayton’s quick recovery. Also in the hospital this month was Jenny Curry (Jon) as she suffered setbacks with her shunt placement. We continue to keep her in our prayers as she recovers. Daughter Jaylynn would like to have her family together again!

We think of our dear Sis. Cheryl Gehres as she remains quarantined in her assisted-living facility. We pray she can feel
the Lord’s nearness during this difficult time. We look forward to the time when we can visit her.

**Ohio, Junction**

**Karen Schlatter**

What a blessing to be able to listen to the testimony of Daniele Porter and witness her baptism on the weekend of June 27-28. Elder Bro. Matt Manz (Sis. Deanna, Toledo, OH) spent the weekend with us and assisted Elder Bro. Tony Manz. We also thank Bro. Matt Miller (Sis. Wendy, Latty, OH) for ministering to us that Sunday.

We are thankful for Aric and Jessica Mericle who have found peace with the Lord. We look forward to their testimony and baptism in the near future. They have three precious daughters who will be excited to witness their mom and dad’s baptism.

Balloting for new Sunday school teachers was done this summer. Bro. Neil Stoller and Bro. Tim Manz will begin their new term as teachers beginning in August. We want to thank Bro. Fred Manz, Bro. Greg Manz, and Sis. Sara Manz as they will be completing their terms in August.

Sunday, July 19, Bro. Don Manz’s (Sis. Connie) retirement from the ministry was made known to the congregation. We, as a church body, want to thank him for his many years of service to the Junction church as well as the many other locations he, Sis. Connie and their family visited sharing the Word of Life.

Sis. Carolyn Manz (Bro. Ben) has been in the hospital recently due to health problems. May we remember her in prayer as she hasn’t been able to assemble with us for quite some time now. We also think of our loved ones who are not able to assemble with us because of restrictions due to COVID-19. May we continue to keep them in thought and prayer.

**Ohio, Latty**

**Angie Klopfenstein, Carmen Stoller**

“God be with you till we meet again; keep love’s banner floating o’er you; smite death’s threatening wave before you; God be with you till we meet again. Till we meet, till we meet, till we meet at Jesus’ feet; till we meet, till we meet, God be with you till we meet again.”

*God be With You, Hymns of Zion # 216*

Our prayers are with our Sis. Irma Stoller and Sis. Ann Sinn as they bid farewell to their brother, Bro. Ray Haab (Sis. Paula, Milford, IN). May God provide comfort to the entire family circle. We look forward to a grand reunion in Heaven with all our loved ones.

Bro. Brian Wenninger (Sis. Mackenzie, Leo, IN) ministered the word to us on Father’s Day. We appreciate his labors on our behalf.

**Ohio, Mansfield**

**Katie Miller**

Bro. Dave Eyerly (Sis. Edna) has been on our hearts as he experiences health difficulties. We pray for strength and healing after surgery and that he and his family feel the closeness of God as well as our love.

We extend sympathy to Bro. Chip Hill (Sis. Sieda) and to the Hill family in the passing of Sis. Eleanor Hill (Bro. Robert, Phoenix, AZ).

It was a blessing to have an opportunity to read the spring Memorandum together. The foundational love for Jesus is a timely reminder. May the Holy Spirit give direction to each one who strives to live the principles of the Word.

“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” Heb. 12:1-2

We pray more souls find the salvation that gives this wonderful hope!

**Ohio, Rittman**

**Maria Beery, Julie Steiner**

On June 21, Bro. Tom Hill (Sis. Elaine) was ordained into the ministry here in Rittman. God has again provided, and we are thankful for brothers who are willing to share the gospel.

Usually in August, we look forward to the General
Brotherhood Conference. Due to the pandemic, our plans have been pushed back a year. Lord Willing, Rittman is planning to host the August 2021 General Brotherhood Conference.

Many in our community (as well as around the country) have said goodbye to loved ones this summer. Our friend Bill Shane passed away, leaving his dear wife Sis. Kathleen, and many cherished family members. Several others in our congregation have said goodbye to close relatives…Larry Hanzie's (Jan) brother, Terry Hanzie (Sandy) died recently. Dwight Hartzler's (Bev) brother, Mike Hartzler passed away. Thom and Sis. Ellen Daw said goodbye to their precious daughter Jessie. Bro. Rowen Schar (Sis. Judy) said farewell to his sister, Janice Minnerly. We pray God would be felt very near to each of the families. Blest be the tie that binds…

God has called, and souls are answering! So thankful for three souls who have turned to God in repentance, Isaiah Henry and Nehemiah Henry (sons of Bro. Buck and Sis. Taunia), and Aubrey Csapo (Bro. Matt and Sis. Darlene).

We were able to witness the marriage of Bro. Derek Stoller and Sis. Annaliese Graf, and pray God's love and blessings on their step in faith. Their parents are Bro. David and Sis. Jan Stoller, and Bro. Eric and Sis. Erika Graf.

Special thanks to Elder Bro. Vic Bauman (Smithville, OH), and Elder Bro. Dave Graf (Akron, OH) who served at our minister ordination, and Bro. Matt Knapp (Peachtree City, GA) who assisted at the wedding.

Baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we welcomed three new lambs into our fold, the last weekend in June: Bro. Chad Ramsier (Bro. Tim and Sis. Joni), Sis. Ashley Steiner (Bro. Joel and Sis. Katrina), and Sis. Kaitlyn Hoffman (Bro. Nathan and Sis. Mary).


Accidents and hospital stays have been the lot of many families lately, including Isaac Raifsnider (Bro. Andrew and Sis. Esther), Harold Bauman, and Sis. Carole Steiner. Life is always uncertain. But in recent days, this has been magnified all around us.

Ohio, Sardis

Renee Blough, Doris Miller

On Fathers’ Day we reflected on our heavenly Father as well as our earthly fathers. We read in Joshua 24:15 that we have a choice to make about who we will serve. How blessed we are when the intentional decision is made “…but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD”.

Bro. Matthew Rassi (Sis. Bridget, Chicago, IL) assisted our local ministering brothers with the service. He meditated on the parable of the prodigal son, revealing that it could be thought of as the parable of the loving father as well.

The last Sunday in June found us worshipping in the hills of West Virginia as we continued our yearly tradition of having a memorial service at the little white New Martinsville church. We sang hymns outdoors in the morning, ate packed lunches that we all took along, and heard the Word preached in the afternoon. Current circumstances required some modifications and a smaller group this year, but we felt the same Spirit in our midst.

We experienced the uplifting awe of a testimony of faith and peace, the common union of communion, and the joy of the baptism of Sis. Haven Blough (Bro. Alan and Sis. Renee), all in one weekend. We thank Elder Bro. Matt Manz (Sis. Deanna, Toledo, OH) for serving our congregation for these special events.

While there is much uncertainty in these times, we can take courage in Matthew 6:33. "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

Ohio, Smithville

Connie Maletich, Millie Stoller

It feels like this unsettled year of 2020 is becoming normal. Social distancing, face masks and
unrest within our country are part of our daily life. I am thankful we can lean fully on our Lord and Savior as he leads us through.

“What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?” Rom. 8:31

We are thankful to share the good news that Lane Uhler (Bro. Adam and Sis. Ann) has begun her repentance. We rejoice with Lane and her family.

Colt Reed has expressed he is at peace with God and man. We are so thankful for every soul that feels this gift from God.

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

Rob Beery (Bro. Gaylord and Sis. Cheryl) spent some time in the hospital this month. There are always those with health needs. Let us be prayerful for God’s healing hand.

Our sympathy is extended to Sis. Gloria Hartzler (Bro. Stan) at the passing of her brother, Terry Hanzie (Sandy).

Ohio, Toledo
Anne Baumann, Rebekah Witzig

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

I pray that each of us can rest in Jesus and remember that he is our hope. God has given us peace and joy and we have the opportunity to let them shine. As the children’s song says,

“This little light of mine, I’m going to let it shine.

Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.”

We have recently started Sunday school again. What a joy it has been for the teachers and students. Along with Sunday school, we have added in a second service. We still do not eat lunch together but look forward to when we are able.

Many prayers are with Sis. Geri Beard and her family as she is recovering from her recent surgery. The healing process will take some time, but we are thankful she is able to be home with her family.

We were blessed to have our groundbreaking service to signify the beginning of building our new church on a warm, Sunday afternoon. The following Monday, June 29, the digging of the foundation began. We are so thankful for the willing and gracious volunteers that have already spent countless hours at the job site. It has been a journey to get to this point and we are thankful for God’s constant provision and guidance with every step.

Oregon, Portland
Louisa Gallup

Greetings to all. At the time of this writing, everyone in our congregation is staying healthy for which we are very thankful. Some people we know have contracted the virus and our prayers go out to them.

At this point, we are still having morning services only, with all safety requirements in place. Not everyone is able to attend. We continue to pray for an effective treatment or cure and also for the medical personnel. Our faith and patience are being tested for sure as we navigate through this pandemic.

May we all feel the Lord’s nearness and experience his protection.

Oregon, Silverton
Lorraine Kuenzi, Teresa Sinn

Our congregation was blessed to welcome two babies this month. On June 19, Bro. Kevin and Sis. Jill Dettwyler welcomed their eighth child, Laurel Hope. Grandparents are Bro. Loren and Sis. Marlene Dettwyler and Jim and Joan Dietrich. Dakota and Christa Hagenauer welcomed their first child, Layna Jo, on July 2. Grandparents are Ron and Kelly Hagenauer and Bro. Todd and Sis. Melissa Kuenzi.

Our congregation would like to extend a warm welcome to Bro. Gabe and Sis. Mary Koch and their daughters Lacy and Hazel from Tremont, IL, as they settle into their new home in Oregon! We look forward to having them as part of our fellowship and pray for God’s nearness in this transition.

Jake and Elena Metzger, Noelle Kuenzi (Bro. Harvey and Sis. Jennifer), and Lanah Metz (Bro. Joel and Sis. Laura) have begun their repentance journey! Our hearts are full of joy and
prayer as they seek God first in their lives.

Sis. Julie Bahr (Bro. Larry) from Fort Scott, KS, recently passed away. Sis. Julie was an aunt to several in our congregation. We are prayerful for the family during this time of loss and pray for God’s nearness.

Thank you to Elder Bro. Randy Kellenberger (Sis. Karen, Kansas City, MO) for joining us for services on Wednesday evening July 15. It’s always good to have you here and we’re thankful for your service.

It’s a blessing to be in church again even though we are required to wear face masks and are limited to how many can gather. God is good and we are thankful for his steadfastness in our unpredictable world!

**Pennsylvania, Philadelphia**

*Laura Isch*

“For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.” Gal. 5:13

As the country traditionally celebrates its independence on July 4th, we often hear about the freedom we have in Christ. Many see freedom as being able to do whatever they want, regardless of how their actions affect others. Christ calls us to a much higher standard. What a witness we can be to the world when we use our liberty to “by love serve one another”!

Ashtyn Lanz (Bro. Tyler and Sis. Mallory) recently spent some time in the hospital. We are thankful she has her cast off and is doing better now. May we all continue to trust in the Lord and serve one another as we continue on to our heavenly goal.

**Tennessee, Nashville**

*Mike Fritz*

Bro. Mike and Sis. Monica Fritz rejoice to share the engagement and upcoming wedding of their son, Bro. Ezra Fritz (Indianapolis, IN), to Sis. Rebekah Edelman, also from Indianapolis. Sis. Rebekah’s parents are Bro. Kip and Sis. Donita Edelman (Wolcott, IN).

We are thankful that we have been able to gather at our church building for worship a couple times in the past month. We want to thank Bro. Kevin Schrock (Sis. Rachel, Congerville, IL) and Bro. Dan Walder (Sis. Pam, Cissna Park, IL) for their willingness to bring us the Word. We were also blessed with the presence of numerous visitors from Peachtree City, GA; and Cissna Park, Congerville, Fairbury, Gridley and Tremont, IL.

If you have the opportunity to travel to or through the Nashville area, please plan to fellowship and worship with us. Under normal circumstances, we meet for worship every Sunday. Please contact us ahead of time to confirm our schedule. Contacts are Bro. Jeff and Sis. Cynde Stoller, 309.530.5760, cyndelynnstoller@gmail.com; Bro. Jordan and Sis. Emily Fritz, 615.852.9109, jordanmfritz@gmail.com; or Bro. Jeremy and Sis. Jillian Bradbury, 765.993.8917, jeremy.bradbury1975@gmail.com.

**Texas, Austin/Bastrop**

*Candy Meiss*

Sending our Love and Greetings from Austin.

“When upon life’s billows
You are tempest tossed,
When you are discouraged,
Thinking all is lost,
Count your many blessings,
Name them one by one
And it will surprise you
What the Lord hath done.
Are you ever burdened
With a load of care?
Does the cross seem heavy
You are called to bear?
Count your many blessings,
Every doubt will fly,
And you will be singing
As the days go by.”

*Count Your Blessings,
Hymns of Zion, #116*

Often I find myself awake during the night with my thoughts burdened with cares, and I can become discouraged. It has been such an incredible help to stop that way of thinking by naming one by one all that I am thankful for.

Ideally, I would say, this is not the time to be quarantined in Texas as we have had record high temperatures for the past 7 days and the humidity is in the 80-90s. We walk a few miles each morning at 7AM and return with our clothes drenched in sweat. The breeze and the shade of the huge oak
trees are a welcome relief. During this tumultuous time with the pandemic, riots and unrest when churches, families and places of work find it difficult to agree on the proper course of action we rejoice knowing that we can put our trust in the loving Heavenly Father. We rejoice and give thanks that we are healthy and able to continue to have Sunday morning services for a limited number at church while using Zoom for those at home. This month we were blessed from the Word, through Zoom, by Elder Bro. Gerry Hertzel, (Sabetha, KS) and our deacon Bro. Leland Plattner, (Zapata, TX) as they shared the reading of the Memorandum.

We are commanded not to worry about tomorrow but throw off this oppressive burden knowing that his grace is sufficient.

“And He said unto me, My Grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” 2 Cor. 12:9

"Count your blessings,
Name them one by one:
Count your blessings,
See what God hath done;
Count your blessings,
Name them one by one;
Count your any blessings,
See what God hath done!"

May we be encouraged to enjoy his presence continually by trusting him at all times and remember to count our blessings.

Please refer to our minister’s directory for directions and contacts.

Texas, Dallas-Ft. Worth
Sheena Pelsy

“Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you, walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have the light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light.” John 12:35-36

Love and greetings from the Dallas church. While our local church family has not been able to gather again, we are grateful for the ability to hear the living Word preached over our pulpits all across the country. A sermon I recently listened to touched on the importance of the church in today’s world. The minister shared how the church is like a lighthouse; a safe haven for those caught in the tossing waves. A lighthouse gives navigational aid to those out at sea and warns them of dangerous areas. With everything going on today, many people may feel like they are lost at sea, being tossed around and trying to navigate in complete darkness. As a body of believers, we have the opportunity to let our lights shine brightly and guide them to their only hope, Jesus.

The only reason why the church can be a lighthouse to those lost at sea is because of Jesus. He is the light of the world and when we accept Jesus into our hearts, his light shines through us! Just like a lighthouse, when Christ is in us, we can illuminate Jesus to those who are lost, direct them out of the darkness and to Jesus himself, and let God’s glory and light reflect off our faces. In a world of darkness, it is critical that we keep our lights burning bright by remaining in Jesus Christ so that others can find their way out of the darkness and into our Savior’s loving arms.

Vermont, Clarendon
Sarah Wagenbach

We again were able to gather in person outdoors for Sunday school and worship services a couple times this month. We appreciated being together during times of worship and also during other outdoor activities. We felt so blessed to be joined remotely by ministers on the national rotation: Bro. Dan Goric (Sis. MaryLou, Rockville, CT), Bro. Caleb Schafer (Sis. Laura, Indianapolis, IN), Bro. Don Manz (Sis. Connie, Junction, OH) and Bro. Clark Stoller (Sis. Cindy, Gridley, IL).

We know we will treasure the times when we can host visitors again and enjoy fellowship in person.
Verses of Comfort

Recently shared by a reader, these verses were originally referenced in a Silver Lining issue during the early 1970’s.

"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." Isa 41:10

"These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." John 16:33

"And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing the tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope." Rom. 5:3-4

"Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord." Psa. 31:24

"Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast." Psa. 57:1

"My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Phi. 4:19

"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

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

"The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing." Zep. 3:17

"The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them." Psa. 34:7

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee." Isa. 43:19

Appreciating Forbearance
— Continued from pg. 9

Conclusion

Relationships can be both messy and beautiful. God calls us to engage life in His body with imperfect people that can have less than convenient behaviors or attributes at times. Imperfection is the reason for the Gospel. The reality is forbearing with our brother or sister showcases God’s grace – something on which we are all dependent. Forbearance is allowing your brother or sister to be who God wants and desires them to be, which at times is not necessarily who we want them to be. The beautiful gift of forbearance leads to peace, love, and unity in relationships. As we seek to become more like Christ, may we consider the forbearance Christ had and continues to have with each of us. May this reality continue to transform our hearts and lives to reflect His love to those around us.

Relationships affect every facet of our lives and maintaining God-honoring relationships throughout our life can be a challenge. ACCFS has developed numerous resources to assist individuals and the church family in the areas of boundaries, communication, conflict/forgiveness, and other aspects of healthy relationships. These resources are found on our website at www.accounseling.org/relationships. If you would like more information, please contact ACCFS at (309)263-5536 or info@accounseling.org.
Thirst is often associated with drinking water or something else. “I thirst,” Jesus’ words on the cross (John 19:28), prompted them to give Him a sponge with vinegar, also translated as sour wine. “They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.” (Psalm 69:21) With the words “...and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws,” Psalm 22:15 also prophesies this thirst. The definition of thirst is an uncomfortably dry sensation in the throat, accompanied by an urgent desire for liquids (Webster’s Dictionary). Jesus also asked the woman at the well for a drink of water. “Jesus saith unto her, give me to drink (John 4:7).” Jesus then offered her “a well of living water springing up into everlasting life (John 4:14).”

Water is vital to our existence. Its presence or absence determined where people settled and built cities. In rural areas, people may have a well at their home. If the well does not provide enough water, they can use gutters and downspouts to collect rainwater from the roof and store it in an underground tank called a cistern. However, this water is not pure like well water. God wants us to joyfully draw living water out of the wells of salvation (Isaiah 12:3) and not the stagnant water stored in cisterns. “For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water (Jeremiah 2:13).”

We depend on “living water” for spiritual nourishment, which is a description of the Holy Spirit living inside us. How do we increase this desire to be nourished with the living water from God? How do we encourage others to seek the living water from God? Jesus said, “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled (Matthew 5:6).” When we seek God’s righteousness, He is faithful to answer us. He does the greater part in seeking us out and blesses us when we turn to Him.

“As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?” (Psalm 42:1-2) We often sing “As Pangs the Hart,” #157 in the Zion’s Harp. Our family lives in a rural wooded area that has many deer (similar to harts). Yet, we don’t see the deer panting because there are ample sources of water. For the hart that lives in the desert areas of the Middle East though, scarce water makes them quite thirsty when reaching a pool of water.

We thirst for God when we recognize our helplessness. We reach out to God and cry for His help, grace to endure, and understanding of what things He wants. “For when I am weak, then am I strong (2 Corinthians 12:10).” When we come to God broken in repentance, humbly, and confessing our sins, He fills us with His Holy Spirit. As we begin to trust more in God instead of asking Him to take away a burden or trial, we begin to ask for grace to go through it. As Christians, our calling is not to be free from want, sorrow, pain, and discomfort.
God calls us to pick up our cross. It might not be a wooden cross like the one on which Jesus was crucified. It might be our cross, an instrument on which our natural man may be crucified. As the natural man dies and we are open to the leading of the Holy Spirit, God can work to draw us into a closer relationship with Him, the living water.

How do we find this living water throughout our day? We can start with prayer, reading, and studying the Bible in the morning. The more we study the Bible, the more God’s Spirit teaches us who He is while our desire to know Him increases. At times, prayer might be out of habit. At other times, we feel a need to plead for God for direction and assistance. At work, we may beg God for help to do our job while also seeing His greater purpose in serving and sharing the truth with those around us. Let’s make the effort to refocus during the day, to breathe a prayer, to think of someone in need, and to listen to someone with a concern. Further, it is refreshing to talk with another Christian. Love from God, kindness, and compassion flow from them as a river of living water. “O God thou are my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; To see thy power and they glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary (Psalm 63:1-2).”

During this time of the COVID-19 virus, we have been experiencing life in a very different way. For the first time in many of our lives, we were not able to go to the church building and worship. The children could not go to school, and many people changed to working from home. Slowing down from all the activities and spending more time with our family allowed our relationships with God to grow. Yet, in my life, the stress of the situation brought items to surface in which I still sinned and did not submit to God. In times of stress, David cried out to God. He begged for His mercy and help, often not understanding why these things were happening. God inspired one-third of the Psalms, considered lament psalms, to be written in this manner. This lament was an emotional outpouring to God. The lament starts with turning to God, verbalizing our complaint and lack of understanding, asking for His help, and putting our trust in Him. (Listen to ACCFS’ studio podcast: “Lament: Bringing our Emotional Pain to God” – 04/20/2020)

We likewise turn to God in earnest prayer when we are in difficult trials and situations we do not understand. We don’t know why we are experiencing this. We confess our sins and inadequacy. We pray to God to ask Him to stop the virus. We put our trust in Him knowing He can, but also knowing we don’t deserve anything. We desire God’s will to be done and praise Him for providing what we need. We are very blessed and thankful. God can use these times to chasten us and direct us to grow closer to Him. These trials can purify our hearts and consume the desires and works of the flesh with fire. God is so gracious to hear our pleas, to quench our thirst, and to satisfy us with His presence. We hope to endure our trials, turn to God, confess and tell Him our troubles, desire the living water, and rest in the comfort of His love. “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 (Matthew 11:29).”

– Bro. Matt Brake Sardis, OH
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HARVESTCALL MISSIONARY PURPOSE

The primary purpose of a HarvestCall missionary is to proclaim Christ and serve others. In fulfillment of HarvestCall’s mission, all missionary roles are purposed toward the sharing of the Gospel, the discipleship of believers, and the demonstration of the love of Christ through deeds of compassion.

PRIMARY ROLE: DEAF DISCIPLESHIP (3-5 years)

1. To intentionally and effectively be engaged in discipling relationships as part of a healthy body of local believers.
2. The commitment of our team to discipleship within the Deaf community continues to deepen, and as such we believe there is a need for long-term growth of our missionary team. We believe that 3-5 years is necessary for cultural and language acquisition before someone is adequately prepared for discipleship roles. Therefore, the purpose in the early years would essentially be as a “training ground” although the near-term role itself might change with time as the missionary becomes more equipped for the long-term role of being engaged in Deaf discipleship.

TRANSITIONAL ROLE RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Key Result Area #1 (first step)
   Cultural and Language Training
   a) Complete Levels 1, 2, and 3 of JSL (Jamaican Sign Language) training on island

2. Key Result Area #2 (near-term)
   HarvestCall Jamaica Team Role
   a) JSL Video Bible translation coordinating / video editing / support
   b) Support Deaf Can! Operations
   c) Support E3 Fellowship gathering (small church establishment)
   d) Assist in the distribution of material aid

3. Key Result Area #3 (within 6-12 months)
   CCCD Role possibilities
   a) CCCD support opportunities (based on skill and interest)
   • STM teams (support Seth for a year before taking responsibility)
   • Construction and maintenance
   • Teaching or Interpreting (w/ ASL skills already)
   • Teen Bible study

QUALIFICATION AND SKILLS REQUIRED:

1. Interest and desire to learn sign language (past training / experience is preferred)
2. People person – willing to engage with others, particularly those different than you

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
HARVESTCALL MISSIONARY PURPOSE
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TRANSITIONAL ROLE RESPONSIBILITIES:
1. Key Result Area #1 (first step)
   Cultural and Language Training
   a) Complete Levels 1, 2, and 3 of JSL (Jamaican Sign Language) training on island
   b) Learn the history of Jamaica and develop an understanding of the native language, Patois
   c) Complete Helping Without Hurting curriculum
      • Read the book, “When Helping Hurts”
      • Go through video series “Helping Without Hurting in STM”

2. Key Result Area #2 (near-term)
   HarvestCall Jamaica Team Role
   a) Support Sis Erin with En Gedi House ministry and child-care
   b) Assist in the distribution of material aid
   c) Possible establishment of Deaf Can! Coffee ministry in Mandeville

3. Key Result Area #3 (within 6-12 months)
   CCCD Role possibilities
   a) CCCD support opportunities
      (based on skill and interest)
      • Agriculture (vegetable crops and cattle as well as coffee farm)
      • After school activities
      • Construction and maintenance
      • Teaching or Interpreting (w/ ASL skills already)
      • Coffee farm (Deaf Can!)

QUALIFICATION AND SKILLS REQUIRED:
1. Interest and desire to learn sign language (past training / experience is preferred)
2. People person – willing to engage with others, particularly those different than you

For additional details for this exciting and worthy service opportunity contact:
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**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:**
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And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children.

Isaiah 54:13

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**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

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**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)
- Background/experience with facilities, electrical, plumbing and mechanical skills is preferred

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Phone: 765.250.4295 x108

If you are interested in Medical service, please review the Medical Professional Advertisement.
Hospital Lumiere, Bonne Fin, Haiti is presently seeking a teacher and teacher aide 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.

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Loving as Jesus Loves
— Continued from pg. 3

become new.”12 This requires the death and burial of our old sinful nature giving us the freedom to live a life in which we are not overcome by sin, “Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin.”13

Our Relationship with the World – 1 John 3:1b

In the last part of our theme verse we find that because of our love and obedience to God we will have a different relationship with the world. Jesus recognized the reality of our being in the world. However, it was His specific prayer to God that we not be of the world but instead be “kept from the evil” thereof.14 The Apostle John defines the world as containing the following: “For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.”15 The Word of God cautions us to avoid all improper relationships with the world. Friendship with the world in mindset and lifestyle actively fights against God, “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.”16 Equally important and perhaps paradoxically, we are taught not to hide from the world and isolate from the lost, or even our struggling brother or sister, quenching the Spirit and its pure love. The Lord’s new and greatest commandment was that we love one another17 and his series of teachings on care for the lost in Luke 15 indicate the need to be ‘in’ the world as we share the love given to us with others and serve as the salt of the earth.

Living like Jesus Eternally – 1 John 3:2-3

The Lord’s triumph over Satan means that we no longer must fear death. Rather, as overcomers we now have the hope and promise of an eternity with God and His Son. “After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.”18

Love, the True Test – 1 John 3:10

“In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.”19 In this verse, “manifest” literally means “shining”. As children of the Heavenly Father, we are called to love as Jesus loves, and so doing we will shine out to others as we sojourn in this sin-darkened world. “That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.”20

Endnotes

1 1 John 3:1
2 Romans 3:23
3 Psalms 38:4
4 1 John 4:10
5 1 John 5:3
6 1 Timothy 1:15
7 Colossians 1:14
8 John 3:16-18
9 Hebrews 11:6
10 Ephesians 2:8-9
11 1 John 3:8
12 2 Corinthians 5:17
13 Romans 6:6-7
14 John 17:15
15 1 John 2:16
16 James 4:4
17 John 13:34-35
18 Revelation 7:9-10; 21:7
19 1 John 3:10
20 Philippians 2:15
Verse 14 is sort of interesting, just sort of as an aside. “If a stranger shall sojourn among you, and will keep the passover unto the LORD; according to the ordinance of the passover, and according to the manner thereof, so shall he do: ye shall have one ordinance, both for the stranger, and for him that was born in the land.” (Numbers 9:14) So often, we think of, and rightfully so, the Old Testament as mostly concerning Israel, right? The children of Israel were God’s promised people, and then, we think that Jesus came and opened it up to the Gentiles, and that’s true, right? That’s certainly correct. And yet, even in this we see that if a stranger, a foreigner, comes among you and wants to keep the Passover, they keep the Passover. There’s one ordinance. There’s no difference between the immigrant, between the stranger, and between you, the children of Israel. That was to be fundamental to who they were as a people.

Yes, they were God’s covenant people, but even in the Old Testament, we see the heart of God, don’t we? We see his desire that salvation will go to the ends of the earth, even if it’s just in an embryonic form here. We see God’s love for the oppressed, don’t we? It showed as slaves that God loved them when he redeemed them. When strangers come into their land, they’re to be part of them. They are also to partake of the Passover. Why? They weren’t in Egypt. They didn’t experience the Passover. But they too were to remember God’s redemption. They were to acknowledge who God was and that he is on the side of the oppressed and of the poor. That’s who he is.

So, may we conform our thinking to scripture. Search the scripture and see whether these things are so. May our faith be firmly grounded in the past and in the future; it’s kind of the only way it’s going to stand strong. It has to be firmly rooted in both.

I’ve opened to the gospel according to St Luke. Chapter 3 is in front of me. We know that chapters 1 and 2 are about the coming of the Messiah, the coming of Jesus Christ. It tells us about Mary and Zacharias and the miracle of the Son of God coming to earth, the miracle of John the Baptist being born, and then of course, the miracle of Jesus Christ being born. Now, we’re going to read in Chapter 3, now that Jesus and John are adults, and we’re going to read of the preaching of John the Baptist.

The first two verses of this chapter are probably easy to skip over. A couple of things are happening, and Luke is putting this in historical contest. This is something that happened in real life, in real human history. This isn’t just some myth or some fairy tale but is grounded in the nitty gritty of real human existence. He’s putting this all in its historical context and doing that by talking about who was Caesar at the time and who were the secular rulers: Pontius Pilate and Herod. He talks about Annas and Caiaphas being the high priest. It’s a pretty impressive list of people, isn’t it? Caesar, the Tetrarchs, Pontius Pilate, the high priest.

After going through all that, it says, in that time, when those people were ruling and were the people in power, “the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness” (Luke 3:2). When all these high and mighty people were in power, the word of God came to John, a man who ate locusts and wild honey, was out in the wilderness, in the middle of nowhere. No one would’ve known who John was in this day and time. Most everyone would’ve known who Caesar was. Everyone would’ve known who Pontius Pilate was and who the high priests were. Now, they were somebody, but the word of God comes to John, someone whom, if they would have known him, they probably would’ve thought he’s this crazy guy that lives in the wilderness, eating bugs. What was he doing?

— Please turn to pg. 62
— Continued from pg. 61

The word of God comes to him, and God continues his pattern from the very beginning, to use things that don’t make sense in our human understanding.

We look at history and the movers and shakers: it’s the mightiest, the powerful, the people who are in charge that have it all figured out, but God so often, time and time again, works through the unexpected. He works in ways that are miraculous, that no one sees coming. How many times? Mary is with child. Elizabeth has John the Baptist, and she isn’t the first barren woman to finally have a child because of God’s intervention, is she? That’s a pattern we see throughout scripture. Why? It gives God the glory, doesn’t it? How things really move, the wheels on which history turns isn’t dependent on high and mighty people. It’s the work of God. It’s his purposes in the world, and we see that here. All these people and the word comes to John in the wilderness.

You know who else is in the wilderness? Israel. When we read in Numbers, they were wandering in the wilderness. Not much of scripture is an accident or a coincidence. John’s in the wilderness, and he has a very important purpose, doesn’t he? He’s preaching baptism of repentance for the remission of sins as was written in Isaiah, the prophet. He’s fulfilling this prophecy: “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall become straight, and the rough places shall become level ways, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’ (Luke 3:4-6). He’s preparing the way, right? Because something is coming. That’s what he’s trying to get people to see. Something is coming. They had waited for it for years; there’s prophecies of the Messiah from hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of years ago, but it had never been fulfilled, and now it’s coming.

The people needed to be shaken up, to be smacked out of their sleep, so their eyes would be opened to the Messiah who was coming. That’s kind of John’s role, isn’t it? In some ways, John is the last prophet of the Old Testament and of the old covenant because he dies before the death and resurrection of Jesus. Jesus talks about John as being a great prophet, doesn’t he? John has a very important role to get people ready to see the Savior, to unsettle them. Just to look at John must have been kind of unsettling, I think. Someone who we would see as crazy in the wilderness, eating locusts and wild honey, living out there. Why is he living out there? He could perhaps be a priest; his father was a priest, and certainly, he would fall in line. He could be doing that, but no, he’s called to something different. People are coming out to him to hear what he has to say, and he’s preparing them to see this salvation of God.

It says, “Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him” (Luke 3:7). I’m not sure how they heard about him or how it started, but soon enough, multitudes are coming to be baptized – this ritual, perhaps, isn’t the right word, but this sign of renewal, this sign of a kind of purification, and all those things that have these connotations of baptism, at least in this context before the death and resurrection of Jesus. What does he tell them? He says, “O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance” (Luke 3:7-8). It’s an unsettling message. They don’t come out to him, and he says, “oh, yeah, come on; this is great.” He says, “O generation of vipers; who warned you to flee the wrath to come?” He tells them to bring forth fruits worthy of repentance. Part of the message that John had to get across to prepare people to see the salvation of God was basically, we have problems. It’s basically, bring forth fruits worthy of repentance because
we are not right. That’s what John’s unsettling message is. The heart of it was: there’s something wrong about us, and to prepare you to see the salvation of God, you first have to understand that.

He says, “begin not to say within yourselves, ‘We have Abraham to our father’” (Luke 3:8). Abraham, the father of faith. Who are the children of Israel? They are descendants of Abraham. They are the covenant people of God. Unto them was given the promises of God. They were the ones who, in Numbers, were wandering through the wilderness. It was them who saw the pillar of cloud by day and the fire by night. They were the ones redeemed from Egypt. They were the ones who inherited the promise land. They were the ones who were waiting for their Messiah, and when they come to John, the one who is preparing the way for that Messiah, what does John tell them? An unsettling message, isn’t it? It says, “Don’t tell me that you have Abraham for your father. I don’t care to hear about your heritage.” God’s not interested. That doesn’t make you right. That doesn’t make you good.

“God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham” (v. 8). God doesn’t care who you’re descended from; it doesn’t matter who our grandparents are. That’s nice, but God is doing something different – a very unsettling message for the children of Israel. They were the children of Israel; they were the children of the covenant. They probably came to him expecting to get patted on the back, and John’s message is ultimately, “No, there’s something not right deep within your human heart.” Not exactly a feel good message, but that’s exactly what they needed to hear if they were going to see and receive the salvation of God. “God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham” (vs 8). Not interested.

“And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire” (Luke 3:9). What matters is not our genealogy, not who we can trace our ancestors back to, but it’s what comes out from the heart, isn’t it? It’s the fruit. “Every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire” (Luke 3:9). We see this same message from John the Baptist. It’s basically the same message that Jesus is going to have with the sermon on the mount and in much of his preaching and teaching. The point is there’s something deeply wrong with the world as it stands, but it starts in here, in every human heart.

They needed to be unsettled to the point – to be shaken in a sense – of what is this crazy man, John, saying? What is he saying to us? How dare he say that?! You know, some of them were probably offended, thinking “I am a child of Abraham!” But that’s exactly what they needed: to be shaken to the core, so that they’re in a place where they can see God’s salvation for what it truly is and to see ‘God with us’ come to redeem them. They needed to not become complacent, not to think that they’re fine, or to think, “I’m basically a good person, and after all, I can trace my lineage back to Abraham. I guess I’m good.” Not at all. That’s not the message we get from John the Baptist or from the rest of the New Testament. It’s an unsettling message, but one that was so needed.

“And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then?” (v.10) Different people asked John what they should do, and John gives them an answer. “He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise” (Luke 3:11).

The publicans come; they were the tax collectors. Tax collecting was something obviously of the government, but it was farmed out to individuals. I believe many times they would purchase the office, but then whatever they would collect more than they needed, they could
pocket some of that. So, that’s why people hated tax collectors. They would extort people to get more so that they themselves could be made rich. Here, they come to John the Baptist, and he says, “Exact no more than that which is appointed you” (v. 13). Justice, right? He wants them to be just and equitable in their dealings and stop extorting people. This is cutting to the heart, isn’t it, for the publicans and how they thought and just their way of life. Everyone knew that the publicans were grabbing more than was actually due and skimming off the top; it’s just what they did, yet John cuts to the core of all of it. That’s the point of it to get to the problem, to the heart.

“He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise” (v. 11). This cuts to the heart. It cuts against the grain of our own selfishness to store up things for ourselves and to think it’s all mine. Now, John says, no, what’s needed is generosity that we don’t have of ourselves. It’s pointing out the condition of the heart.

The soldiers come, and they “likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely and be content with your wages” (v. 14). Once again, cutting to the heart of what they thought they were supposed to be doing, of what their identity was. “Do violence to no man.” Not much of a soldier if you’re not willing to do violence to other people, are you? Don’t “accuse any falsely” (v. 14). There’s probably a lot to unpack there. Maybe this is something that John saw in them as people or knew of them as people, but really, just think about the whole idea of force, of power, of violence. To keep that power and to expand that power, so often as part of that comes accusing people falsely and making up pretenses. He’s cutting right to the heart. “Be content with your wages” (v. 14).

An unsettling message, right? That’s what he’s trying to do. He’s getting people to wake up, to see that the problem is right here in the heart, to see that it doesn’t matter what your lineage is. Don’t come and pretend that you have credentials. It doesn’t matter. Just see that they need a Savior and that he’s coming.

They ask him if he is the Christ, is he the messiah. He says, “I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire: Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable.” And many other things in his exhortation preached be unto the people.” (Luke 3:16-18) He preached to the people preparing the way for Jesus, preparing them for the One. They’re asking him if he’s the Christ. He says, “No, I’m not worthy to unstrap his sandals.” He’s coming, but to get you ready, you need to be unsettled. You can’t be comfortable with who you are and think that’s fine, that you don’t need salvation, or that you’re pretty good of yourself. That’s what John came to do. It’s bringing every mountain low. It’s filling every valley. It’s making the crooked straight, so then salvation can come. They needed to be unsettled to receive that salvation, didn’t they? That’s the first hurdle: seeing ourselves as we really are and not some fairy tale that we like to believe about ourselves.

Then we read about the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River. We heard about the Jordan River Wednesday night. There’s symbolism of John preaching in the wilderness just like Israel had wandered in the wilderness; then they went through the Jordan River into the promise land, and Jesus is baptized in the Jordan River. It’s evoking these symbols of a new Exodus, symbols of God keeping his promises. The
Jordan River is so symbolic, not only to us today because Jesus was baptized in it, but to the people of this time because of the children of Israel coming to the promise land. Here’s Jesus baptized in the Jordan River evoking symbols of the promise land, of the faithfulness of God, of all these things just filled with meaning that you and I so often miss out on living in this day and age. There, the people would’ve understood it.

The Spirit “descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased” (Luke 3:22). ‘God with us’ in a much more amazing way than just a tent in the wilderness as he was when they wandered. His presence was in the temple for centuries and centuries; now, the word becomes flesh and dwells with us. He desires to be with us, and he himself becomes the sacrifice for our sins. We can see how that’s necessary. We can see how amazingly good that sacrifice is of what Jesus came to do. First, when we get that unsettling John came to bring, that Jesus came to bring, Jesus pokes at people a lot. That’s what the sermon on the mount is about – getting at issues of the heart, getting at this whole heap of who we truly are that we tend to hide from the outside. He just keeps kind of poking at it, showing us who we are and what we really need: him. We need his salvation.

Then, finally, the genealogy of Christ. We didn’t read it all, but of course, it starts with Jesus, and it goes all the way back to Adam, which is the son of God. There’s a genealogy in Luke and a genealogy in Matthew. They’re a little bit different; you could compare them side by side and read through them, but they’re different because they had different purposes. They were making different points with these genealogies, and of course, John said earlier, ‘I don’t care if you have Abraham for your father; that makes no difference.’ It’s not about tracing your lineage so you can feel good about yourself or anything like that.

The point is that Jesus, who is ultimately the son of Adam, who is the son of God, came. Adam in Hebrew means humanity. Adam was the first man. Jesus came to save all mankind; that’s a point that Luke’s gospel constantly tries to make about Jesus reaching out to the outsiders, of Jesus coming and very clearly being for the least of these. He came to save humanity, everyone; not just the covenant people of God, as in Israel, after the flesh, right? We saw a kernel of that in Numbers when it talks about the strangers coming, and they too can partake of the Passover. Jesus just takes that and magnifies it. That’s a key focus of Luke that Jesus came to save all. There’s not a group of insiders that he came only to save, and everyone else is just out of luck. ‘Lucky for the children of Abraham; too bad for the rest of us.’ Jesus came to save you – whomever you are – and the first step to getting there is letting the message of John and the message of Jesus poke at us, unsettle us so we realize we need a savior. Then we will see his graciousness and his goodness. We will see God for who he is and see the faithfulness of God, and we will rejoice all the more. We will remember, just like the children of Israel remember that Passover, and trust God of where he is leading us.

May we get to that place. May we allow ourselves to be unsettled. We need to go there. We don’t like to go there, but that’s the whole point of John the Baptist’s, and really of Jesus’, message that we need to see our need for a savior. Then when we get there and we see what he has done for us, we can go on our way rejoicing and spreading the good news, because Jesus came for all, right? For all humanity. He came to seek and save that which is lost. May we continue to spread that good news with our lives.
The purpose of pursuing history is to learn of the past and to be inspired by its positives, and warned by its negatives. The courage displayed by loved ones in the past can form a foundation from which to spring forth today. Historical values can be preserved for today and for tomorrow, and from this the church can benefit. A famed Russian author (a dissident against tyranny, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn) once said that a way to destroy a civilization, a nation, an institution, and a church is to cut off their history. Such a statement speaks to us yet today. The deeds of history, led by the Lord, remain for us today -- if we pursue the learning/familiarity of them -- and they can surely help to bolster the future, so long as God tarries his coming.

Author Herman Ruegger on History
More than a hundred years after the beginning of the Froehlich churches in Switzerland, Herman Ruegger penned Apostolic Christian History, Volume I. Finished in 1947, it is a 235-page outline/account of the origins of our faith. Near the end of the book, he comments on two phases of the church’s history. One phase is entitled, “In Retrospect,” and the other, “In Prospect.” Ruegger wrote with eloquence and passion concerning the work of the church and the possibilities for laxness and a milder attention to dedication:

“The Society of the Evangelical Baptists (our church’s name in Europe) must realize with concern how the Spirit of the times has brought with it a crippling of faith and fellowship. Worldliness, rationalism, passions and lukewarmness desire to make inroads. In our day, external persecution which the old believers had to endure has ceased, at least, in western countries. Many of the brothers and sisters suspect nothing of the labor amid privations, which was formerly accomplished. But nothing is so wholesome for a church, nothing creates so much love and awakens a livelier spirit than the labor in the work of the Lord.

The harvest is still plenteous today and every believer ought to fulfill his calling in the service of the Lord. Not all are called for the proclamation of the Word, yet everyone must be a witness of the truth and mercy of Christ. To visit and lift up the lonely and oppressed. Seeking the erring, fallen, persecuted, imprisoned, widows and orphans, and the sick and the dying is every true believer’s duty of love and his task, which carries rich blessing, but which, sad to say, is neglected by many.

How much labor, love, and sacrifices were necessary to awaken persons here and there, to found (establish) and sustain congregations; this can hardly be described. Where would the many congregations be over which we rejoice today, if the living testimony of our ancestors had not called them into being?

The purpose of this history is to arouse our brothers and sisters out of a dangerous indifference and inactivity. As oppressive as the times of persecution were, they were yet epochs of revival, cleansing, of growth and blessing, in which the lukewarm and slothful were aroused, and the unfaithful separated, through the trials.

Ruegger concludes in the “Prospect” section. “Let therefore the admonition and promise of the Revelation be placed: ‘He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches; he that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death’. (Revelation 2:11).

-by Perry A. Klopfenstein
The Light of Hope

Certainty in Uncertainty

What a day and time we live in. Have not events of the past several months changed so many things about our lives? Compared to a few short months ago, we now find ourselves attending church, shopping, interacting with friends and loved ones, and going out in public differently. The term ‘social distance’ defines so much of our former routines that we wonder if things will ever be the same.

And what of planning? This is a basic principle of our culture. We do this by eliminating uncertainties from our lives. We save, build, prepare, or formulate all variability out. And then, world events occur that change everything and it becomes impossible to plan.

It is human nature to feel unsettled in times of change. We seek routine to give us a sense of stability. When this is taken away, we find ourselves facing uncertainty. We wonder what will happen and seek immediate resolution. We often imagine the worst case, or react in disbelief that anything has changed. How do you deal with those types of circumstances and feelings?

We see in the world today how these things are dealt with. We seek to stay abreast of news and current events, but come away more confused, having heard conflicting information. We hear of protests and unrest and see images of some trying to change or erase things that did happen for certain. We see the human spirit reacting with anger, lashing out and blaming.

We can recall a group of people that dealt with great disruption to their lives. The eleven disciples and other followers of Jesus were very uncertain after his crucifixion. They were paralyzed by uncertainty. They fled, denied, and hid out of fear of what might happen. At the end of the book of John, we are taken into the midst of the disciples. We see them after three years of following Jesus, seeing him die and rise from the dead, and interacting after his resurrection. They were returning to their former lives. By the sea of Tiberius, Simon Peter turned to his six companions and said “I go a fishing”, to which they respond “We go with thee”.

This scripture presents us with a picture of a group of people who don’t know what to do. Out of habit, they turned to something familiar, a former life and occupation. Wouldn’t it have been a sad disappointment if the story had ended there? Yes, they were faced with uncertainty! Their former world, which they had grown accustomed to for over three years, was completely gone. Jesus was alive, but he wasn’t leading them like before. They were not going around towns, preaching, healing, casting out demons, and being thronged by crowds.

Can you identify with their situation, given what you’ve experienced for the past months? We don’t worship like we did, do we? Our social interactions have changed and may never be like they were in times past. There is much uncertainty as to what school and holidays will be like. Much has changed… but does it really matter?

We know from the word that there are some things that are sure. So, while life today, similar to the time of the disciples, is very uncertain, we can choose to focus on the things that are certain: Christ died to redeem the world. God is on the throne. He knows our needs. He has given us a Hope of life eternal.

With these things as certainties in the life of a Christian, let us return to one of the final scenes of Jesus with his followers. The book of Mark relates: “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature… And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.” Mark 16:15,20

In that time of great uncertainty, our Lord gave his followers the Great Commission. What does he expect of us today?

-by Rick Aberle
...Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.
Mathew 8:26