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...A thrill of hope the weary soul rejoices...
Hope in Action through Jesus Christ

As we celebrate and remember Jesus birth this month, we realize God is in control during these ever-changing times. Be assured of his love for us through his son Jesus and manifested through us with love for one another. It is good to think about how we can connect with others and encourage each other along the way. This is a time for the church to shine as COVID-19 continues. God’s hands are not shortened, and the gospel message has never been more important than it is right now. We have an incredible opportunity to be his hands and feet during this time. We will walk by faith with his help and choose hope. When we are hopeful ourselves, we can install hope in others. Praying that we can all keep a biblical perspective through it all and our love will not diminish. May each of you be blessed this Christmas season.

In Christian love,

Jeff Grimm and Greg Lehman, Counseling Elders

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2 SILVER LINING December 2020
Loving as Jesus Loves – Jesus as a full reflection of the love of God

“For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him.”

Throughout the year we’ve been inspired by the many facets of loving as Jesus loves. But why the focus on Jesus and his love? Simply put, Jesus is a full reflection of the image and love of God. Through Jesus, God reveals himself to us, redeems us, and reshapes us into the image of his Son Jesus, so that we likewise can reflect his love, grace, and truth to others.

Let’s first consider the miraculous truth expressed in our theme verse: In Jesus lives and dwells all the fullness of God in a human body. Not just part, but all the fullness of God -- his divine nature, his perfect love, his redeeming grace, his life-giving truth -- is fully revealed to us in bodily form in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus truly is “God with us.” When we see Jesus, we see God. When we know the love of Jesus, we know the love of God. When we love as Jesus loves, we love as God loves, and those around us experience God’s love through us.

We cannot see God, but we need only to look to Jesus to understand God, for Jesus is “the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature.” Jesus as the only begotten Son of God, came from the bosom of the Father to make Him known unto us. In Hebrews we learn that Jesus is “the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, … upholding all things by the word of his power.” Jesus is the exact representation of God’s nature and being, the full revealing of God and his love to humankind. When we look into the face of Jesus Christ, we see the life-giving radiance of God’s glory. Through Jesus, our hearts can be filled with “the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God.”

We, like Jesus’s disciples, may struggle to grasp that God the Father was fully revealed in Jesus. Philip asked Jesus to show them the Father, not understanding that Jesus and His Father are one. Jesus answered, “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father… I am in the Father, and the Father in me.” Jesus was sent by God, and lived and spoke the very words of God, for God poured into Jesus his Holy Spirit without measure. As John so beautifully pens, the “Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”

Jesus came not only to show us the Father, but also to give us a way back to the Father. He teaches us, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” “The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life.” Jesus from the beginning dwelled in close relationship with the Father. Through Jesus, and only through him, we too can dwell with the Father and inherit everlasting life.

In Philippians we read that Jesus was equal with God, and in the form of God. And yet in the greatest demonstration of God’s self-sacrificing love, Jesus as God in the flesh, took on the form of a servant, humbled himself, and became obedient even to the point of death. Through Jesus, God reconciled all things to himself, “having made peace through the blood of his cross.” And “when he had by himself purged our sins,” he “sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.”

The Father with great pleasure gave Jesus the power to take up his life again and established him as the head of the Church, giving him all — Please turn to pg. 61
Monthly Sermon

Sermon by Elder Bro. Mark Masters, Mansfield, OH
June 28, 2020

Proverbs 19 & 2 Corinthians 4

We look forward to seeing what God has in store for us through the Word this morning. We trust that whatever that might be would be good for us, would be encouraging to us, and would teach us. We trust the Word would reveal to us even those things in our lives that we need to work on, that we need to improve, and that we need to better align with the mirror of his word. So, we encourage everyone to continue praying that it would be the Holy Spirit that would bring the message today. Pray it would not just be thoughts and ideas that the speakers would have but that God’s presence would be with us and would provide the blessing that we all desire and that we all need.

The scriptures opened to the book of Proverbs, Chapter 19.

Could we sing together #126 in the Zion’s Harp.

Without having a dictionary opened up in front of me, I can’t say this for sure, but there are two words that have somewhat similar meanings; one is motivation and another is inspiration. When I think of the two words, I like to separate them in my mind because, in my mind, inspiration comes from the Holy Spirit. Inspiration is something that reaches beyond just the physical and carnal man and goes to the depth of our soul. We’re inspired to follow Jesus Christ. We’re inspired to live closer to the Word. We’re inspired to be able to follow God’s direction in life even though it might not be the course that we would choose on our own. Everything about God, his Son, and his Spirit inspires us.

Motivation, on the other hand, tends to pull the levers and press the buttons on the things that are instinctive to us, the things that tend to be more of our human nature. We’re motivated to certain actions, behaviors, and thoughts based upon experiences and circumstances. When I think about motivation, it can be positive; there’s no question about it. It can be fruitful, but it also can be poisonous to the believer. I think to a great degree what we’re reading about in this proverb has to do with motivation – motivation by the adversary of our soul to seek things that aren’t good for us.

Many of the first verses were written reflecting on how mankind is motivated towards things and wealth and possessions and so much so, that they’re willing to give up their reputation. They’re willing to sacrifice their integrity. They’re willing to follow after those that they perceive have accomplished their ends and are receiving wealth, goods of some kind, or possessions, and they’re willing to discard those who haven’t as lesser. The wisdom of Solomon here tells us that it’s foolishness. It has no eternal value and that we would be better if we were poor and destitute of the things in this life than to sacrifice our integrity in the pursuit of wealth.

It also reminds us that lying, or false witness, has consequence.

It reminds us of the value of people. Regardless of their standing in the world, whether it be poor or wealthy, in God’s eyes, the value of their soul is equivalent, and we should not equate wealth with the blessings of God. In fact, in the New Testament, is it James who writes to us that there are some who believe that gain is godliness? In other words, there’s a connection between what gain we achieve and the godliness that we demonstrate. It’s deception. We should never try to put the two things together. We should not think if we’re really good and we follow God’s ways, then he will bless us with gain. Now, it doesn’t mean he won’t, but we shouldn’t equate those two things. We shouldn’t feel like the more we do, the better we’ll have it. It’s just not how God
works. The rain falls on the just and the unjust, the scripture tells us. So, we would be misguided, and we’d certainly misunderstand the direction of the holy scripture if we would think, ‘Well, we’re good, so God rewards us.’ It’s just not the way it is.

As his people, we have to be careful what motivates us. We have a saying in business that has to do with incentives. If somebody’s being paid on an incentive basis, we have to be careful what we motivate because whatever behavior we incentivize is the exact behavior we’ll get. Sometimes, there’s unintended consequences. For instance, if you only incentivize based upon someone selling something, then that’s what they’re going to do, over and over and over, because that’s how they get paid more and more and more. Because of that, you might be sacrificing things like customer service, long-term relationships, and integrity. People might not be honest about their product because they want to sell it more and more. They might sell it to people that don’t need it. You have to have a balance of things to incentivize in order to create behaviors that are honorable in the workplace.

What that speaks to is not a lesson about business tactics. It’s a lesson about human needs and human desires and the carnality of man. We all carry the flesh, and we know that the scriptures so clearly tell us though the spirit be willing, the flesh sometimes is just weak. Though we want to be good – we want to be those who have unquestioned high, pure integrity, and we want to be those who are filled with wisdom and recognized as those who are wise, – at times, the flesh battles against those things that are good for us.

So, by reading a proverb, even though it’s thousands of years old, we can see ourselves in some of these verses. It’s not that we have to just be resigned that, ‘Oh, we’re just worthless’ because eventually we’re all going to mess up.

We need to be inspired. We need to use that word to remember that God gives us his word. It’s not to beat us down or overly burden us or weight us down so we become paralyzed, but he gives us his word to inspire us to walk lives that are more closely aligned with his will. He gives us his word that he will always provide a way of escape every time we’re tempted. He will show us how to accomplish the things that are pleasing to him without giving in to temptation. He’ll help us to be wise in ways that result in eternal blessings.

It doesn’t mean that we’re all going to be wise in the ways that men measure wisdom. We’re not all going to be thought of as professors or great thinkers. I don’t know the word I want to use there, but I think you know what I mean. We’re not all going to be recognized as being wise in the way that the world measures wisdom, but in the ways of God, we all can have the blessing of wisdom. In fact, thinking about one of James’ encouragements is that if we want to be wise, we should be praying for that. We should be asking God, ‘give us the wisdom so that we can measure our own motivations.’

What motivates us? What pushes us? What encourages us in our worldly behaviors? We need to recognize those that are good and godly and in line with God’s will and those that maybe aren’t, and we need to cut those off that aren’t and keep feeding and nurturing and nourishing those that are aligned with God’s will.

The proverbs are always just a wonderful reflection of human nature. Some of them may be hard to understand because they were written in a time and a culture that we can’t quite fathom, but in other times they’re just so emphatically true, even after all these years. They’re useful to us, and they can inspire us.

Back to those two words – inspiration and motivation. It’s just my way of thinking about those two words. Don’t think that what I just said is the dictionary definition or that one word is always bad and one word is always good. That’s not what I meant. It’s just the

— Please turn to pg. 62
Ministry Program Updates

Making our Loving God Known

The gospel goes forth in Japan

The Japanese word for Japan, “Nihon,” 日本 translates into English as “sun’s origin.” In-deed, few sights compare with the sun setting behind Japan’s majestic mountains or reflecting off the ripples in a cherry-blossom-lined river. There is cheerfulness in the people of Japan, as well; looking out for one another’s wellbeing is common, and generous hospitality overflows.

Japan is composed of nearly seven thousand islands, and over nine million people live in Tokyo alone. Yet less than one percent of the population is estimated to be Christian. Japan’s natural beauty and brightness are apparent to all who visit, but as for the real Son, his light has wonderful opportunity to further be revealed.

Still, God is at work.

At first glance, Japan may not seem to be seeking the truth, but God has been turning people’s attention to him for years. This is visible in the elementary school child who has persistently been asking the question, “Where will I go when I die?”; the group of elderly English class students who requested to have their own Japanese Bibles so that they can read the Word in their own language; and the families from the community here and there who may seem to visit the Tokyo Apostolic Christian church “by chance” but were, of course, led there by the hand of God. Always, God is intentionally seeking out individuals, giving them opportunities to find him in the ways he knows their hearts need the most.

Recently, an older attendee of the Tokyo congregation made a passing comment that echoed the sentiments other Japanese people have expressed: in a country where so much emphasis is placed upon academic, familial, and financial success, Jesus cares only about the heart. Another seeker read Isaiah 53, a chronicle of Jesus’ suffering, and exclaimed, “Jesus understands my pain!”

Because Japan’s leading religious traditions teach

Providing a Reliable Source of Water

Haiti Water Aid Committee

Recently a young man in Haiti was asked what specific prayers were needed. His reply was “It has been very dry in our country. Streams have dried up due to lack of rain. People in our village have to go a long way just to get water to live. Pray for relief.”

The village of which the young man spoke is not unique. Many Haitians do not live near a reliable source of water. And many that do contend with contamination and disease from people and animals wading and bathing in the waterways. While we take for granted the water supply available to us in the developed world, many people in third world countries long for a clean, reliable source of water.

For over thirty years, the Haiti Water Aid ministry of HarvestCall has operated in south Haiti, drilling water wells for many rural communities, bringing the blessings of a clean, reliable water source to village after village. A completed well is a blessing to a community, a focal point for gathering and fellowship. The well pump is inscribed with the words “Given in the Name of Jesus Christ”. While HarvestCall provides materials for the wells, communities are asked to pay for a portion of the well installation (about $2,200) in a cooperative

– by Makato Inoue

– by HWA Committee

– Colossians 3:17
that there are countless gods who cannot be known by humans, the personal, loving nature of Christ stands out starkly. The idea of God being close to us, his creation can at first be perplexing to all people who are first learning of God. Why would God care about humanity? Why would God love us? How do we know that his love is good?

For those of us who have grown up in Christian homes, these questions may seem foreign, and seeing God through the eyes of people who have never heard the idea of a Creator who is both sovereign and loving is difficult. Yet these are just a few examples of the questions that Christians in Japan encounter when in conversation with people who are seeking the truth. When we truly step back and ponder these questions, we realize how awe-inspiring it is that the Creator of the universe looks upon us with kindness and knows each of our names.

A little girl in Tokyo recently exclaimed, “I think it’s good we don’t understand everything about God. That means we get to learn it!” There is truth in that statement. Even as the learning process seems daunting at times, there is so much joy in bearing witness to new believers as they experience fresh wonder and gratitude at the mercies of God and the truth of the Gospel.

Specific prayer requests would be for the ladies’ meeting, which has restarted its monthly meetings; the English classes, in which the gospel is shared with both children and adults; the spiritual growth of recent converts; and the overall continued ministry and outreach of the church body into our local communities. We appreciate the prayers and support we have received and know that the members of the global family of Christ have contributed to the softening of the Japanese people’s hearts towards the Gospel. Moving forward, our prayer is that God’s truth and love are evident to all, so that the people of “Nihon” live in a land bathed in the beauty of the sun and covered in the knowledge of the gospel of the Son.

– by Makato Inoue

Haiti Water Aid – Donated Well Fund. (Donations can be made online at www.harvestcall.org/donate)

To date, over 1,000 wells have been installed. HarvestCall provides all equipment and drilling supplies. A five member Haitian crew schedules and conducts day to day operations. The Haiti Water Aid committee visits Haiti three times annually to provide equipment maintenance, support, and program oversight. Volunteers are welcome on maintenance teams (drilling experience not required). For additional information, contact Luke Fischer at lukenal@live.com. – by HWA Committee
These truths may seem obvious on the surface level, but often these truths need continual reminders and disciplines in our lives to bring them into our hearts. And to the non-believing world around us, they are as foreign as can be. In a world where feelings and emotions hold sway, we must work to keep ourselves grounded in the truth of God’s Word, resting in His promises. In this season, as holiday events, activity, stress, and trouble stir all around us, consider the following practices to remind yourself of this peace:

• Write down and recite to yourself your testimony of faith, recalling how you, by God’s grace, have become his adopted child. Reflect on Christ’s role in this transformation.

• Create a list and share with your friends and family five ways that God has proven trustworthy in the past year.

The world is crying out for peace. Everywhere around us we see turmoil. There is a constant din of noise. Our hearts can follow this pattern and become anxious, nervous, weary, and worn. Yet, this is not God’s desire for His creation. This is not what the Scripture speaks to. There you find refreshing promises where Christ, our Savior, encourages us, stating “in me ye might have peace” (John 16:33) and “ye shall find rest unto your souls.” (Matt. 11:29) He promises more than salvation. He also promises to be our Prince of Peace.

First, we must consider what this “peace” is of which Christ speaks. Society today can focus heavily on emotions and feelings. How I do or do not “feel” becomes the determining factor when making decisions or in my general attitude. Our emotions drive our thoughts and then our thoughts drive our actions. Scripture, though, lays out a different equation. It discusses two types of peace:

1) Peace with God is a reconciled relationship between God and an individual (see Rom. 5:1). This is truly why Jesus came — to be our Savior. From the child to the man to the cross, this was His purpose. This peace belongs to each believer by grace through faith. This realization can be a very emotional experience, but this peace is experienced and understood through believing in faith the truth of the Scriptures. We are no longer enemies but children of God, reconciled by His work (2 Cor. 5:17-21). This is powerful fulfillment to his promise to be our Prince of Peace.

2) Peace of God is the awareness that our circumstances rest in God’s hands (see Phil. 4:7, Col. 3:15). This peace refers to the confidence which the believer, who is already at peace with God, has in knowing God is good, faithful, and in control. We hold on to these truths about God and have the peace of God, being confident no matter the circumstances because we know God is in control and can be trusted. This peace can settle into feelings as well but is often best described as that quiet assuredness which helps us to carry on in the midst of tumultuous times. It is the secret of the Believer and a great witness to the chaotic world around us. It transcends the emotions we may be experiencing in the moment. It is truly faith in action. This peace, as well, is why Christ came to be our Prince of Peace.

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” Isaiah 9:6

The world is crying out for peace. Everywhere around us we see turmoil. There is a constant din of noise. Our hearts can follow this pattern and become anxious, nervous, weary, and worn. Yet, this is not God’s desire for His creation. This is not what the Scripture speaks to. There you find refreshing promises where Christ, our Savior, encourages us, stating “in me ye might have peace” (John 16:33) and “ye shall find rest unto your souls.” (Matt. 11:29) He promises more than salvation. He also promises to be our Prince of Peace.

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- Write down and recite to yourself your testimony of faith, recalling how you, by God’s grace, have become his adopted child. Reflect on Christ’s role in this transformation.
- Create a list and share with your friends and family five ways that God has proven trustworthy in the past year.
- Find three scriptures which speak to the peace of God which is offered to each believer. Commit to recite them each morning and each evening for a month. Put them in your car, on your mirror or kitchen window, or have them on your laptop so you frequently view them.
- As you give gifts this holiday season, share with your children the ultimate Gift which God gave his creation and read the Biblical Christmas story with them, reminding them of the good gifts which he continues to impart to his children.
- Write a note or purposefully have a conversation with a neighbor who you know could use encouragement and hope in this season of life.
- In the midst of troubled emotions and busied lifestyle this season, take a moment and stop, pause, and prayerfully thank God for the baby who came to be our Prince of Peace.

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

*Thoughts on the definition of Peace taken from Peace: A Clarification issued by the Elder Body.

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

“I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee.” Job 42:2

As some of you may have read back in July, we have had some construction happening here at LifePoints this past year. We have finished construction on the Administrative Building, where all of the corporate offices for the agency staff will be located, rather than in the front lobby of Timber Ridge. This move will allow us to use the space that those offices used to occupy at Timber Ridge for the residents’ and staff’s needs, and we are excited for these updates! With the new space we’ll have available at Timber Ridge, we are looking forward to creating a more spacious family room, private bedroom options for residents, larger break rooms for staff, and more private dining options for residents.

This construction process, combined with COVID-19, has been extremely revealing of God’s sovereignty and perfect timing. Back in March, the agency staff moved out of the Timber Ridge lobby and into the Morton Fellowship Hall. They then moved into a temporary office space on Jackson Street until construction would be completed. As construction continued running ahead of schedule instead of being delayed, staff began thinking about what we could do with this temporary office space that will be rented, but unused, once the agency staff move out and into the new building at the end of November. And that was when inspiration struck!

A couple of months ago, some staff came up with the idea that this office space could become the perfect Activity Center for our residents to go to during this time when they are still unable to be in the community as much as desired. The Board approved the idea, and the planning process has already begun. We are hoping to use the space during the day for residents who are unable to attend their regular Day Program locations, and it will then serve as an outing location for residents and staff to go to in the evenings. There will be a craft room, kitchen, library room, computer room, and activity hall in this new space! We are so excited about this center, and we were even more excited to provide our LifePoints community with an opportunity to support it!

On December 1, 2020, LifePoints held an online fundraiser for the new Activity Center as a part of Giving Tuesday, a global day of generosity. We had opportunities to sponsor furnishings, activity supplies, and more to make this Activity Center a reality! Thank you to all those who have donated – your generosity will make such an impact on our residents’ lives! If you would like to see more about this fundraiser or updates about the Activity Center, please visit our website or Facebook page. Thank you for your continued prayers and support of our ministry, and praise God for his sovereignty and for how he continues to provide!

Follow us online at: www.aclifepoints.org, @aclifepoints on Facebook or Instagram.

Gateway Woods Apostolic Christian Children’s Home
Emily Fischer - Communications Administrative Assistant

“Have you heard anything about this story before? About Joseph, Jesus’ dad, being a carpenter?” Matt asked Cody.

It was Matt and Rachael’s second Christmas on staff as houseparents and they were sitting in church with their Pine House residents. The minister had just finished his sermon and Matt noticed one young man, Cody, looking particularly lost sitting there in the pew.
He shook his head. He had never heard any of it before.

Cody grew up in Indiana, in Fort Wayne actually. A city often referred to as the “City of Churches”. And yet he had never heard the Gospel. He didn’t know Christmas had a much deeper meaning than gifts being exchanged, trees being lit, or songs being sung.

“I was so blown away that there are people that live right down the road from me that don’t know anything about the Bible, or what Christmas is all about,” Rachael recalls.

It’s probably hard for you to imagine what your life would be like if you had not grown up in a Christian home, going to church every Sunday, being surrounded by a church family that supported you. But for many, too many like Cody, it’s an unfortunate reality.

It is hard to swallow that it took coming to Gateway as a delinquent teenager to be exposed to Truth for the first time in his life. But that’s also the good news for Cody. Gospel seeds were planted in him through Matt and Rachael, his counselor, and his teachers at Gateway Woods School.

Matthew 24:14 says "And this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."

‘Unto all nations’ starts with reaching out to our own first. Find a mission field right here in the States (like Gateway Woods) to share the Gospel with lost souls. Even more than needing to hear about the babe in the manger, they need to hear that “'tis not the manger but the Cross that sets the spirit free.”

News:

- We’re thankful that Sis. Miranda Maibach (Leo, IN) has been filling in as a part-time Assistant Houseparent while we are short staffed.
- In January, we’ll be welcoming some new staff to campus! Bro. Quinn Steffen (Sis. Sandi, Princeville, IL) will be joining the fundraising team as the Development Coordinator, Bro. Pete and Sis. Jolene Zimmerman (Forrest, IL) will be joining the Houseparent Couple ranks, as well as Sis. Jalyne Hinrichs (Washington, IL) as an Assistant Houseparent.
- COVID-19 has now made its way through all of the residential houses on campus without any major cases. We ask for prayers for continued healing for all being touched by this virus.
- We currently have these openings at Gateway Woods: Assistant Houseparent, 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

“Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.” Rom. 12:12-13

We are trusting in God that he will continue to see us through the ups and downs of the COVID-19 changes we see in our lives and our church. He is faithful and we can trust him to lift us up and carry us through.
We had visiting ministers in October and November. Bro. Eric Strassheim (Sis. Jodi, Indianapolis, IN) visited in October and Bro. Randy Mogler (Sis. Evie, Washington, IL) joined us in November. We are very thankful for the ministers and their wives who are willing to come and share with us on their rotations. We welcome anyone who is passing through the area to join us. We love to have visitors!

We ask for continued prayers for Sis. Carolyn Lewis as she endures her battle with cancer and we would also like to ask for prayers for Shawn Ray who has had health issues lately.

“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” 2 Pet. 3:18

If you are passing through our area and need a place to stay for the evening, please call Sis. Rebekah Klaus at 815.674.5411 for our guest house accommodations.

Arizona, Phoenix
Marge Lindenbaum

“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people,” Luke 1:68

The Lord God of Israel has been visiting his children since he walked with them in the Garden of Eden. Even after fellowship was broken, he visited Adam and Eve. He visited Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, the children of Israel, Hannah, Samson, the prophets, Moses, and Joshua. He had the Tabernacle built, and later the Temple, to specifications that somehow would best accommodate his presence, so he might dwell with them. He wants a close relationship with his children and has gone to great lengths to achieve it, from creation to the cross. Over our objection and rebellion, and despite our ingratitude and indifference, he persists in showing his character, pouring out his mercy and grace on his beloved. He decreed and demonstrates for us the concept of “family”. It is one of the most, if not the most, meaningful illustration of his love for his creation. Family is to be our training ground, our haven, comfort, and our prod out of comfort, nurturing, strengthening, everything necessary for growing from a helpless infant to a productive member of society. Family is the reason Mary and Joseph were in Bethlehem when she delivered. Family is the institution created by God at the beginning of time that endures through many extreme and ongoing attempts by our enemy to destroy it. God desires relationship and the clearest example of relationship is to be in a family – to have someone who loves unconditionally, desires your best even at a high cost to themselves, and will defend against any adversary or take up any battle to save you. In the same way, our Lord provides all this for his children, often through his “family”. It is a good and perfect gift. He not only provides this but does it with absolute joy.

Have you experienced what it is like to give someone you love that perfect gift? You know they will cherish it and can hardly wait to watch them open it, to see them enjoy it. That must be the joy set before Jesus that caused him to endure the cross (Heb 12:2). He gave his best gift – everything – to restore fellowship with us. What could we ever give to Jesus? According to Psalm 116:13, a proper response is to take the cup of salvation and call upon the Lord. When we give that perfect gift, it is the response of the recipient that brings us joy. It brings Jesus joy when we accept and enjoy his gift. Spend some time this season pondering the unspeakable gift that is given to us with joy and render unto the Lord the appropriate response.

“What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD.” Psa. 116:12-13

We enjoyed a beautiful day of worship and fellowship with our Prescott brothers and sisters recently and appreciate Bro. Richard Manz (Sis. Audrey) and Bro. Dan Cargill (Sis. Stephanie) for their willing service. We were able to share a meal with a food truck, a coffee truck, and tables set up outdoors so we could observe safety in gathering. It was a sweet prelude to Communion, which we shared the following Saturday.

We were able to proceed with the annual Thanksgiving Food Drive for our African refugee
friends. Instead of food, we provided gift cards so they could purchase what they needed to celebrate the day. What a blessing to be able to help others enjoy the bounty we enjoy as we give thanks to our Lord for his unfailing mercies. We now look forward to celebrating the greatest gift ever given.

May the Lord bless your holidays and the year ahead and fill them with joy!

**Arizona, Prescott**

**Autumn Rokey**

As the evenings darken earlier and we anticipate a long winter ahead with so much unknown in our part of world, I imagine that Joseph and Mary also looked at their future with uncertainty. With Mary being a first time mom in an unknown city and without family, I wonder how much she worried about being prepared for her newborn baby. She didn’t have a baby shower or a nursery to prepare. She did not have women in her family present to help her through labor. Yet she had the words the angel brought her to hold close to her heart.

“And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.” Luke 1:30-33

Can we take the angel’s proclamation to heart and not worry what this next season in life will bring? Jesus has been born and has overcome the world.

**Arizona, Tucson**

**Dean and Jackie Knobloch**

Greetings to all! By the time this issue of the Silver Lining is published we will only be days away from the newly elected President taking office. It is our biblical duty to show respect to all who are leaders in our land. What a blessing to know that our Spiritual King is merciful, just, loving and always the same yesterday, today and forever. We serve an awesome God and Savior, Jesus Christ, and for that we should be eternally grateful.

We are pleased to welcome Bro. Christoph and Sis. Angie Werner to the Tucson church. I am sure the Morris, MN congregation will miss them. We wish them blessings in their relocation and are looking forward to having them in our church family.

We are assembling at 10 am each Sunday with masks and social distancing. If you are traveling, please come and visit us. We also are continuing our Wednesday evening Zoom Bible study on “Hope” on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month.

**California, Los Angeles/Altadena**

**Kali Sauder**

“As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.” 1 Pet. 4:10-11

I am sure those in designated roles serving the church have found this year challenging. Whether the Sunday school teachers learning to navigate Zoom to keep teaching the kids, the trustees implementing means of broadcasting sermons and enabling fellowship in the midst of social distancing, or the elders making difficult decisions which, in spite of prayer and discernment, are met with frustration and complaints, it has been a tiring season for those called to serve.

A few weeks ago, we were able to hold our first outdoor, in-person service in the church parking lot while still maintaining an online option. It was the culmination of surveys, discussion, preparation, and much prayer, and it was still met with some trepidation and frustration. In many ways, it would have been easier to keep with our online format only and not go to the work of creating a hybrid option. However, as we gathered back at church, sang the familiar songs through our masks, listened to the sermon with the San Gabriel Mountains as the backdrop, and greeted each other in Christ, from a distance, both those milling around the parking
lot and those on the computer screen, I was moved. There was a holiness, a specialness to our being together in that way. Maybe it was not what we would have imagined at the beginning of this year, maybe it was not what we would have chosen, but God still met us there. He was glorified. Just as he is when we gather via technology or in a beautiful building.

So, we pray for them, the ones faithfully serving and navigating this season of upheaval. I am grateful that even the intense challenges they have met this year, they are faithful stewards of the manifold grace of God. They keep ministering in the strength and ability God provides in order that Christ continue to be lifted up, to whom be praise and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Ushered into that glory, face to face, is our dear Bro. Bob Crockett. We will miss his positivity and heartfelt prayers but rejoice in his victory. May we all continue on, being good stewards of the manifold grace of God!

**California, San Diego**

*Sarah Fulop*

Many people are looking forward to the holidays and wishing away this tumultuous year. They want to wipe 2020 from their minds and welcome a new (hopefully better) year. From global pandemics, racial riots and heated elections, the year has not been easy, with the media spreading chaos and fear. The economy is not looking too hot either. In my own life, tragedy has shaken me to my core.

Last week, Sis. Abby Fulop lead our monthly women’s Bible study on the spiritual discipline of thankfulness. Though we were few, our hearts began to overflow with praise. Abby reminded us that while we are called to be thankful, we also can give thanks for who Christ has redeemed us to be. We can be thankful because his spirit dwells within us. Amidst the cheesy “Be Thankful” signs in stores, there is a power message of hope and peace that can fill our hearts to overflowing no matter the circumstances. Let us be like Paul and Silas singing in a jail cell with chains around our feet.

"Therefore, will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;” Psa. 46:2

As our year inches close to the end, we still have an opportunity to spread joy to our troubled neighbors. Let us not forget we have the helmet of salvation, breastplate of righteousness, shield of faith, sword of the spirit, belt of truth and feet that spread the peace of the gospel.

We ask for your prayers as our congregation looks to expand our ministry. May God direct our thoughts and equip the brother called to the ministry. We were thankful for a cheerful visit from honorary San Diego members Elder Bro. Jeff and Sis. Ruth Grimm, and their ongoing support of our local congregation.

Prayers continue for the ongoing health of our congregation as Wednesday services have once again gone virtual. We pray for our lonely widows and struggling homeless. Our hearts are with the brothers and sisters facing a long winter season in the face of possible lockdown. We wish you all a joyful holiday season even though many families may not be able to gather in person. While we are physically apart, our spirits unite to bring honor to our sovereign Lord.

**Colorado, Denver**

*Tess Leman*

Prepare Him Room.

As I ponder the upcoming Advent season, the phrase “Prepare Him Room” came again to mind.

This year has been a fight. A battle.

“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” Eph. 6:12

We’ve had to be purposeful in our fight against fear and panic; disrespect of authority, apathy, or perhaps voicing too much opinion. We’ve had to grapple with how to maintain fellowship with our siblings and yet obey the government. We’ve been challenged with patience as we shift our schedules around yet again: canceled trips, teaching our children at home, shifts in job routines.

As we enter a dedicated season of “Preparing Him Room”, it may benefit us to evaluate how...
we’ve been doing in this area all year long. During this past year, how has our witness been? Do we show the sad, dark world around us that we “Prepare Him Room” on a daily basis? Is it evident that we’ve been with Jesus? Our task is a grand one: “Prepare Him Room” in our own hearts so we then can share him with others!

Bro. Clayton Blunier (Bro. Darin and Sis. Keri, Princeville, IL) and Sis. Dominique Braun-Lasnier (Paul Lasnier and Sarah Braun) have felt the Lord’s call to marriage. We wish them much joy during this engagement process and as they settle into becoming one in the Lord!

Connecticut, Rockville
Heidi Beutel, Kim Schneider

We extend our thoughts and prayers to Bro. Ben and Sis. Christie Carlson in the recent hospitalization and surgeries of their little girl, Teagan. We pray the Lord will continue to guide them and give them strength in the days and weeks ahead.

Our sympathy and prayers are with Sis. Charlotte Trench and her children, James III, David, and Cathy, in the passing of their husband and father, Jim.

District of Columbia, Washington
Henrietta Meyer

Even as the COVID-19 situation is worsening at the time I am writing; one thing is getting back to normal. The DC congregation is again welcoming visiting ministers. It is via Zoom, but we are meeting as our own congregation.

Visiting ministers this month were retired Bro. Dennis Kaufman (Bloomington, IL), Bro. Preston Kaehr (Bluffton North, IN), Bro. Jeff Waibel (Leo, IN) and Bro. Brad Gudeman (Bradford, IL). Elder Bro. Ben Wiegand (Philadelphia, PA) also met with us virtually for the reading of the Memorandum. Several times this month we were reminded no matter what is happening, God is in control.

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, to let us know how many to expect for Sunday services and to find out if, when and where services are to be held.

Florida, Fort Lauderdale
Renee Mangold

We were pleased to have two visiting ministers this past month, Bro. Randy Gasser (Sis. Sue, Detroit, MI) and Bro. Scott Wegman (Sis. Dawn, Taylor, MO). We pray for a blessing on these servants and really appreciated that they came to share God’s word with us despite the pandemic and concerns with travel.

For Sunday afternoon service Bro. Randy had a Bible study on the Kingdom of God and Bro. Scott had a Bible study on Creation. We were so blessed by the power of God’s word and spirit.

As our winter visitors return, we will continue to practice social distancing with masks required and sitting by families.

With the next “normal” flu season coming and the number of cases of COVID-19 rising again even in previously less impacted states, we continue to rely heavily on the Lord and his promises to us.

“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.” 1 Cor. 10:13

Florida, Fort Myers
Addison Steidinger, Carrie Steidinger

“I will praise thee, O Lord” Psa. 9:1

“Praise should always follow answered prayer; as the mist of earth’s gratitude rises when the sun of heaven’s love warms the ground. Has the Lord been gracious to thee, and inclined his ear to the voice of thy supplication? Then praise him as long as thou livest. (Morning & Evening Devotion , Charles Spurgeon) God is so good, and we have much to praise him for! In answer to our prayers, God has graciously raised up a brother among us to teach and exhort us in His Word. We lift Bro. Ryan and Sis. Rachel Hollan up as they are willing to take on this position to minister to our church.

Another blessing worthy of his praise is the opportunity to take Communion with our church family. This past month,
Elder Bro. Jeff Streitmatter (Sis. Lynne) joined us as we renewed our thankfulness to God and our fellowship with one another in the body of Christ in Holy Communion. What great things God has done for his children! We join with the Psalmist that says, “While I live will I praise the LORD: I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being.” Psa. 146:2

Florida, Sarasota
Sandra Kaeb

We were blessed to have Elder Bro. Vic Bauman (Sis. Brenda, Smithville OH) join our Bro. Matt Koehl on the pulpit one weekend as our other two Sarasota ministers were traveling.

On October 24 there was a post wedding brunch at Elder Bro. Jeff and Sis. Lynne Streitmatter’s home for their son Bro. Gabe and Sis. Haley Streitmatter to welcome the couple to Sarasota and get to know Sis. Haley better. May she feel our love as she makes Sarasota her new church family.

Sis. Linda Sabo’s mother, Dorothy Spiker, passed to her eternal reward. Prayers are for Sis. Linda (Bro. Doug) and grandson Jeff (Sis. April). May they feel our love and prayers during this time.

Our Lakewood retreat was the first weekend in November. We were blessed to have Elder Bro. Lucas Frank from Detroit MI as our speaker. Even though his family couldn’t join us, we were thankful he could come. The topic this year was “If we don’t stand for something, we fall for anything”.

Bro. Lucas reversed that to say “We fall for anything, if we don’t stand for something.” His main focus was on the many different kinds of trees, their leaves, branches and the roots. He told a story of a little boy who was afraid to give his heart to Jesus. Because if Jesus came to live inside his heart, he would stick out all over. May that be true in our lives also, that people will see Jesus in all we say and do. May God bless Bro. Lucas for the topic so well put together, his time and willing heart.

With grateful hearts, Kendrick and Lindsay Peterson welcome Samuel Dakota to their family. Beatrice is excited about her new baby brother. His grandparents are Bro. Larry and Sis. DiAnne Brown (Sarasota FL.), Jim and Shannon Burgund (Eureka IL.), and Jeff and Angie Crossman (Midway, GA.)

Haiti, Bonne Fin - Hospital Lumiere
Rick and Komari Aberle

Greetings in the name of Jesus, from Hospital Lumiere.
We continue to deal with the effects of having very few missionaries here at the hospital. This past month, Bro. Brett and Sis. Laura Herrmann and family returned home unexpectedly to deal with some health challenges in their family. Please continue to lift this family up in prayer.
Bro. Rick and Sis. Komari Aberle and their daughter Selah returned to the US in October. Bro. Rick plans to return to Haiti in late November. Bro. Tom Hitz is spending an extended period at the hospital in support of the missionary team. Sis. Carrie Stoller returned to the hospital from a furlough in the U.S. as well.

The hospital is very busy at present and we are blessed with the resources to serve the patients both with healing and in sharing the Gospel. We also want to extend the thanks of the missionary team and the entire program to the church body. The program was very blessed by the outpouring of support during our recent virtual auction. Praise be to God for sharing financial resources with many in need.

Haiti, Les Cayes
Mike and Susie Walder

We are thankful for the invaluable contributions of those who have come to Haiti for many years and now know their time of serving is ending. We appreciated the recent visit of retired Elder Bro. Steve Sauder (Tremont, IL) and Bro. Sam Wettstein (Roanoke, IL) as they came to service the new well drilling rig for Apostolic Water Aid.
Bro. Steve has been a regular for many years and we saw some very encouraging glimpses of how special his visits are. He requested to meet his formerly sponsored student, now a middle-age local pastor with children in college. They have had a long-lasting friendship and I’m sure Bro. Steve has mentored this pastor well over
the years. Slipping into the shop one day, I also observed Bro. Steve in the middle of encouraging a circle of Haitian men to work for the Lord and do the best job possible. We never know the impact we have on the lives of others by lending our time and talents to train and teach.

There has been a nice sense of relative calm this past month. We gauge that by the school activity we see in full swing, the visitors and missionaries able to come and go, and the churches functioning fairly well again. We can trust God for each new day as he alone is faithful and changeless in our changing world.

“Great is thy faithfulness!” Lam. 3:23

Illinois, Belvidere

Darcy Steffen

Lately, I have been thinking a lot about lively stones. I am so thankful the writers of the Bible used word pictures for the visual learners out there, and this one is especially beautiful to me.

“Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” 1 Pet. 2:5

We are one stone in a massive stone house, and when we start to get too focused on ourselves, this scripture brings proper perspective. We are a small (but absolutely necessary) part of the much larger body of Christ! It is a reminder to sacrifice for our brothers and sisters in Christ and ultimately our heavenly Father.

Our Elder Bro. Duane Rocke, sacrificed for the Belvidere congregation by sharing the Memorandum with us. We are so thankful for the timely truths the elders have prepared for us, and we appreciate Bro. Duane’s heart for us here.

Our hearts ache with Sis. Heidi Schock (Bro. Ted) in the passing of her father, Bro. Howie Schifferer (Elgin, IL). Since we, as lively stones, are all piled on top of each other, we feel the joys and the sorrows of life together. May the Schifferer family feel God’s nearness and our love during this time.

We have reason to rejoice as well, as Guy Lubin has returned to our area after working in Bluffton for awhile. We appreciate his gentle, thankful spirit, and the perspective he brings. We look forward to having him worship with us again!

While our interactions within the body of Christ mean everything, the apostle Peter did not give us excuse in regards to our lifestyle and relationships with the rest of the world.

“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light; which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God; which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshy lusts, which war against the soul; having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evil doers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.” 1 Pet. 2:9-12

May we always remember that this is life is not about us, and may God give us more grace to be a lively stone, building up his kingdom and supporting his church.

Illinois, Bloomington-Normal

Kinsey Dotterer, Lauren Zimmerman

“I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee: for thou hast now made known unto me the king’s matter.” Dan 2:23

We rejoice with Kylie Masters; daughter of Bro. Rick and Sis. Shawn, and Drendon Stickling; son of Bro. Delayne and Sis Lori, who have given their hearts to the Lord.

We mourn with the family of Bro. Randy Anderson (Sis. Ann) upon the death of his mother, Edna Anderson.

We enjoyed a Selah worship night on the topic of foster care by hearing from a panel of those impacted by it. There was much practical insight given on how we all can make a difference in serving both directly and indirectly.

Our church body is continually looking for ways to stay connected during these unknown times. Forty individuals have been named “connectors” making at least one
Two weeks later, on November 14, Bro. Phil and Sis. Beth Endress welcomed Elise Noelle into their family. Autumn, Caleb, Miriam, and Lillian are excited siblings. Little Elise has grandparents, Bro. Kurt and Sis. Connie Christ (Princeville, IL) and Bro. Larry and Sis. Becky Endress (Bradford, IL), and two great grandmas, Sis. Doris Christ (late Bro. Walter) and Sis. Loretta Rumbold (late Bro. Elwin), both Princeville, IL.

We were blessed when Elder Bro. Tim Funk (Sis. Deb, Peoria, IL) assisted Elder Bro. Bruce in reading and expounding the fall Memorandum. Bro. Nathan Rassi (Sis. Michelle, St. Louis, MO) shared a Sunday meditation about the two men crucified with Jesus. May the Lord bless these dear brothers for serving us.

We have been privileged to continue our monthly Youth Night with several missions-focused programs for our Sunday school children. Sis. Dona Wendler and Sis. Margie Heintz shared of their experiences in Haiti and Japan. Though now back in the US, their willingness is still bearing fruit, this time for the youth here at home.

We are sorrowing with Josh and Sis. Sarah Peoples and their boys, Kaleb and Karter, in the loss of their mother and grandmother, Sis. Joan Rudin (Bro. Gerald, Cissna Park, IL). We pray that they may feel God’s nearness and comfort.

Continuing a delightful and somewhat surprising trend of parents/grandparents moving to Champaign, we welcome Bro. Dan and Sis. Jayne Plattner to our congregation! After many years as a church with mostly one-generation families, we are pleased to have a growing number that are multi-generational.

Of all the turmoil in our world, economic uncertainty is indeed a great cause of anxiety. It can be deeply personal, but often is also corporate, even international in scale. Recent events have me again considering God’s economy. The siege at Samaria (2 Kings 6) demonstrates God’s control of supply and demand, with a donkey’s head selling for $1,500 (today’s silver price) and twenty-four hours later fine flour was selling for approximately a dollar per pound. In only a couple months, God...
transferred the wealth of Egypt into the hands of his chosen people to start a new nation. Cyrus, the Persian king, not only inexplicably allowed the rebuilding of the Jewish temple, but he pledged the most to the building fund. And finally, pagan, imperial Rome provided room and board for the author of much of the New Testament. Is anything too hard for the Lord?

Illinois, Chicago
Diana Eisenmann

God has again shown his faithfulness to our church family in providing for our pulpit ministry. In November, Bro. Mark Lindberg (Sis. Laura) was installed as a new minister. We thank Elder Bro. Ron Messner (Sis. Pam, Washington, IL) and Elder Bro. Dan Moser (Sis. Anne, Elgin, IL) for assisting. In the midst of a tumultuous political climate in our nation, the peace and unity our church has experienced throughout the whole process has been a stark contrast and encouraging reminder of the powerful work of the Spirit.

We have had several virtual events in the past month including a Women of the Word devotion, Fall Memorandum, and a Fellowship Night where several shared encouraging testimonies of God’s faithfulness. We also had an in-person Wednesday night Bible Study on the life of Peter (Bro. Rick Kaisner) shortly before resuming virtual Sunday and Wednesday services in mid-November. While in some ways it feels like a setback, we are appreciating the blessing of technology and the fact that the videoconferencing interface offers more of a personal experience for those who haven’t been able to gather in person.

Our love and prayers are with those who have recently lost loved ones. Bro. Matt Strahm (Sabetha, KS) passed away in October. He was previously a part of our congregation for over twenty years. Sis. Lydia Hauter (Morton, IL) also passed away in October. She was the mother of Diana Halfer. Oralia Colunga (Mission, TX) passed away in November. She was the grandmother of Sis. Cristela Cardenas (Bro. Tony). Sis. Jacquelyn Rumbold (Bro. Ron, Princeville, IL) also passed away in November. She was the mother of Bro. Brian Rumbold. May God provide comfort for these families in their time of mourning.

Illinois, Cissna Park
Denise Kaeb

As I sit down to compose the article for the Silver Lining, I am saddened to have to include the passing of our dear Sis. Joan Rudin. Joan was the wife of Bro. Gerald, whom she leaves behind, along with her five children, Gail Lober (Vince), and Jodi Sinn (Justin), both of Cissna Park, Julie Sadoras (Mark) of Chicago, Sis Sarah Peoples (Josh) of St. Joseph who attends our Champaign church, and Dan Rudin of Philadelphia. She also has 14 grandchildren. Joan was a caring and selfless person who nursed many patients with great compassion. She will be greatly missed by our congregation and also by our community. Our prayers are with this dear family.

COVID-19 has made its presence known in the state of Illinois and in our community. Aren’t we so thankful we serve a God who will provide the grace needed to deal with these trying times! Just remember this in times of doubt... Make sure you test positive for FAITH. Keep your distance from doubt, and isolate yourself from fear. TRUST in GOD through it all. Amen.

Illinois, Congerville
Mary Knapp, Erica Steffen

“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” John 13:35

On a recent Wednesday evening, we were all encouraged to a closer walk to God by the reading of the Memorandum. In challenging situations, our brightest light may by responding with true charity to the circumstances and those around us. We wish to thank Elder Bro. Rick Plattner for assisting our Bro. Zach Anderson in this evening.

Our prayers are also with many in our congregation suffering from various health issues, and their families as they are faced with difficult decisions. May they find the best refuge in The Comforter God has given us.
"In sorrow and pain, 
Thy trust do retain
in Jesus the merciful Savior.
He’ll shield and defend
His child to the end;
No suff’ring or death
shall appall thee."

_The Best Refuge, Zions Harp #46_

**Illinois, Elgin**

Amy Gasser

We thank Bro. Jeremy Leman (Sis. Shara, Forrest, IL) for ministering to us this month. Special thanks also to Bro. Fred Dietz, who conducted an all-church topical presentation on Wednesday evening, November 4, entitled “The Story of Joseph – Glimpses of Christ.”

Bro. Gary Steffen (Sis. Lois) spent some time in the hospital recently. We pray for his continued recovery at home. Bro. Nate Steffen was hospitalized for tests. Bro. Greg Kellenberger (Sis. Debbie) is recovering from another eye surgery.

We extend sympathy to Kevin Power (Marianne) in the passing of his mother, Mary Power, on October 25. Sis. Paul Schambach’s (Bro. Todd) sister, Sis. Matias Angelito Villalba, passed away on October 31. She was a member of our church in Barra Vieja/Acapulco, Mexico. She had three children: Victor, Brando, and Brenda; seven grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.

We are thankful for Bob Weiss (Eleanor), who was baptized by sprinkling in his home on November 14 with a small number of his family members present.

Our retired Elder Bro. Ron Schambach assisted Elder Bro. Dan Moser in this service.

**Illinois, Eureka**

Debra Blunier, Lavonne Schumacher

“Thanksgiving and Christmas are a blessed season of the year, yet they can be filled with stress and tensions as we try to meet all our own expectations as well as those of others.” These words began the Eureka news in 2019, and they seem strangely appropriate for 2020 too. As we try to plan family and church events in the shadow of pandemic fears and dangers. Even if everything seems to have changed, we know God hasn’t changed, and the gift of his son on that first Christmas is the most wonderful blessing ever for us and for everyone who has ever lived. What a true silver lining to all the darkness of this winter and these times!

Due to an outbreak of cases and quarantining for the COVID-19 virus, Eureka didn’t have in-person services for two weeks in November. As cases have fallen, we are thankful to now have returned to regular services, and to share a buffet-style church lunch for the first time since March on November 15. It was very good to be a small step closer back to normal.

November 8 was the wedding day of Bro. Cade Knobloch of Lester, IA, to Sis. Molly Wettstein. He is the son of Bro. Stan and Sis. Dawn Knobloch (Lester, IA), and she is the daughter of Bro. Bill and Sis. Heidi Wettstein. We wish them every blessing of the Lord as they walk by his leading.

We were blest to have Elder Bro. Marvin Dotterer (Sis. Nancy, Forrest, IL) share the Memorandum with us, supporting our Elder Bro. Trent. We are so thankful to be reminded to guard our thinking and our attitudes closely, as Satan sows division as much as he can.

We weep with those who weep, as we mark the passing on November 13 of Sis. Dorothy Ginzel (Bro. Elmer, dec.). Our sympathy goes to all her family for their loss. Even though she attained the age of 102, we still would have liked a few more conversations with her. It’s so comforting to think of heaven, where time will be no more, neither sorrow nor sighing, and all will be made new.

**Illinois, Fairbury**

Kati Meiss, Trish Steidinger

We are so thankful to hear that Nita Moser (Keith) is seeking the Lord in repentance. We wish her much grace.

We rejoice with Sis. Kate Stoller (Bro. Bryan and Sis. Kara) and Bro. Clay Zimmerman (Bro. Kent and Sis. Paulette, Forrest, IL) as they were united as one in the Lord on November 1 at the Forrest Church. Also united in marriage were Sis. Hannah Hartman (Bro. Ryan and Sis. Lori) and Bro. Jake Leman (Bro. Arlen and Sis. Denise, Forrest, IL) on
November 8. We wish these two couples many blessings in the years ahead.

Bro. Joel and Sis. Amber Plattner were blessed with a special bundle from Heaven, Rilla Mae. Little Rilla is welcomed home by her siblings, Micah, Leigha, Landon, Kennan, Brynna and Tryssa. Grandparents are Bro. Kevin and Sis. Denise Kilgus, (Forrest, IL) and Elder Bro. Rick and Sis. Mary Plattner. May God bless this dear family.

We were saddened to hear of the passing of our Bro. Dick Koehl (Sis. Esther, dec.). We offer our condolences to Bro. Dick’s children, Vicky Stewart of East Peoria, IL, and Kevin Koehl of St. Johns, FL, and his brother, Dean Koehl of Tunnel Hill, GA.

Likewise, we offer our sympathy to Sis. Jeannette Bahler (Bro. Ralph, dec.) and Sis. Sharon Kelson (Bro. Bud, dec.) on the passing of their sister and sister-in-law, respectively, Gloria Merrill of Naperville, IL.

Our visiting minister this month was Bro. Arlen Leman (Sis. Denise, Forrest, IL) who held the wedding service for his son, Bro. Jake and Sis. Hannah. We thank Bro. Arlen for his labors of love.

Soon we will be celebrating the birth of the Christ Child as a babe in a manger. The humble birth of Jesus was only the beginning of a life of service to the children of men which culminated in his ultimate act of service when he died on the cross and shed his blood for all mankind. What selfless and all-encompassing love! May we model our lives after the Master’s and bless those in our homes, churches, communities and all over the world with acts of service this Christmas.

“But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” Phillip. 2:7-8

**Illinois, Forrest**

**Jessica Gerber, Marsha Lanz**

While the typical holiday festivities may look a lot different this year, one thing remains the same – the depth of love God showed to his creation by sending his only Son. May gratitude and charity keep our hearts and minds focused on his unchanging grace and mercy through these unsettling times.

As we ponder the miracle of the virgin birth, we also celebrate the safe arrival of little ones in our congregation. We rejoice with Bro. Pete and Sis. Jolene Zimmerman, along with grandparents Bro. Kent and Sis. Paulette Zimmerman and Bro. Andy and Sis. Vicki Wiegand (Eureka, IL), as they welcome Dex Leon into their home to join big brother Finn. Welcoming Tressa Elaine to their family circle are Bro. Waylon and Sis. Ashton Knapp, Bretton, and Alyssa, along with grandparents Bro. Troy and Sis. Kathleen Lanz and Bro. Harlan and Sis. Jean Knapp. Bro. Jeremiah and Sis. Larissa Rinkenberger, along with Trevor, Drake and Bria, welcomed new little brother Hudson Keith. Thankful grandparents are Keith and Sue Rinkenberger and Glen and Holly Steidinger.

Two dear couples were able to navigate the uncertainties and various COVID-19 restrictions to join their hearts as one before God and man. We welcome Bro. Clay and Sis. Kate Zimmerman, whose thankful parents are Bro. Kent and Sis. Paulette Zimmerman and Bro. Bryan and Sis. Kara Stoller (Fairbury, IL). We thank Bro. Matt Knapp (Sis. Dana, Peachtree City, GA) for sharing in the wedding day. We also welcome Bro. Jake and Sis. Hannah Leman. Their parents are Bro. Arlen and Sis. Denise Leman and Bro. Ryan and Sis. Lori Hartman (Fairbury, IL). May this challenging beginning only serve to strengthen their three-fold cord.

We are thankful for Benton and Erica Kaeb who have begun assembling with us and are seeking the Lord in repentance.

Our thoughts and prayers are with convert Carson Leman (Bro. Arlen and Sis. Denise) as he recovers from a serious leg wound. We also continue to be prayerful for Sis. Donna Edelman that her recent back surgery could bring relief from pain. From the young to the older, the prayers of our brethren are vital.
Illinois, Goodfield
Amy Hinrichsen, Judy Knapp

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

We can be so thankful to serve a God who has all things covered in his loving plans for our lives. Our church family has had an eventful month filled with joys, sorrows and abundant blessings.

We thank Elder Bro. Trent Meiss (Eureka, IL), Elder Bro. Ron Messner (Washington, IL), and Elder Bro. Mark Streitmatter (Bloomington, IL) for their loving help as our church family went through the process of selecting a deacon to help our Elder Bro. Jeff Grimm with the responsibility of our beloved Goodfield church. Our dear Bro. Jeff and Sis. Janel Wiegand have accepted this responsibility and Lord willing will be interviewed at the midwinter conference and ordained sometime in March.

The angels are rejoicing with Bro. Erik and Sis. Carrie Wiegand as their two daughters, Claire and Larisa, have come to the foot of the cross in repentance. We are rejoicing that Cale Schumacher has peace and is ready to give his testimony. Cale is the youngest of 5 sons of Bro. Dan and Sis. Heidi Schumacher.

We were blessed to witness the baptism of Sis. Pam Knapp (Ken) and thank Bro. Randy Mogler, (Sis. Evie, Washington, IL) for sharing this day with us. Sis. Pam is a daughter-in-law to our late Sis. Wilma Knapp and we welcome her with loving arms into our fellowship.

Our arms open wide for Sis. Abby (Moser) Hohulin as she was married to Bro. Jon Hohulin the first of November and we hope she will feel at home here in Goodfield. She has roots here as her great grandparents raised their family in Goodfield. Sis. Abby is the daughter of Bro. Greg and Sis. Shar Moser (Roanoke, IL) and Bro. Jon is the son of Bro. Ross and Sis. Heather.

We are thankful for the safe arrival of Abram Jaye who joins the family of Bro. Randy and Sis. Roxy Blunier. Katherine, Nadia, Nicholas, Rachel, Zane, Jesse, and Tristan will be loving helpers with the little lad.

We said farewell to Bro. Dan and Sis. Jayne Plattner on November 1 as they have moved to Mahomet, IL to be closer to their family. They will be attending the Champaign church and we know they will be appreciated there as much as we appreciated having them here in Goodfield these many years. They have assured us they will visit often for which we are thankful.

We thank retired Elder Bro. Earl Ringger (Sis. Dixie, Gridley, IL) for his kind words at the funeral of Bro. Herman Glueck (Sis. Sara) on October 20. Bro. Herman was a young husband and father of three little girls, Miriam, Nora and Brenna.

In sharp contrast, a couple weeks later we said farewell to the oldest brother in our church, Bro. Melvin Heinold (Sis. Mary Helen, dec.), who was 101! We rejoice in Bro. Melvin’s victory and extend our love and sympathies to his two sons and their families, Don and Peg Heinold (Eureka, IL) and Bro. Dan and Sis. Carol Heinold, (Washington, IL).

We lift up the family of Sis. Luann Knapp (Bro. Mike, dec.) as she has claimed victory in Jesus and exchanged her cross for a crown. Bro. Jon and Sis. Pat Knapp of our congregation and their family have certainly been in our prayers as they said goodbye to this loving mom and grandma.

As you can see from this article, we have experienced a wide range of events and emotions this past month along with the anxieties of a pandemic, a rather volatile election and much unrest in our country. Aren’t we thankful that God DOES know all the thoughts and plans? Let us trust him in all things!

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

Illinois, Gridley
Perry Klopfenstein

It was a blessing to take two new converts into the church. Elder Bro. Frank Sauder (Sis. Kathy, Roanoke, IL) came to hear the testimony and help in the baptism of Bro. Caden...
Hodel and Sis. Cristina Schlipf. Caden is the son of Bro. Doug and Sis. Erin Hodel, and Cristina’s parents are Bro. Steve and Sis. Renee Schlipf. May the Lord be with these young souls who chose to follow him in their youthful days.

Several from our congregation have been hospitalized; Bro. Terry Miller, Sis. Annette Kaupp, Sis. Mary Witzig, and Bro. John M. Schlipf. The latter had fallen and broken his arm, and also suffered COVID-19, as did Sis. Mary Witzig. As of this writing the COVID-19 situation has worsened. May God hear the prayers of millions that this pandemic can finally pass on, if God wills it.

Elder Bro. Tim Funk (Peoria, IL) spoke here on a Wednesday night on “Vulnerability.” Bro. Chad Leman (Fairbury, IL) was also here on another Wednesday evening, to speak on “Evangelism.” We pray the Lord will bless these brothers for their instructional labors.

The times are perilous, and often trying, due to COVID-19, as well as a drawn-out, and divisive election process. God’s people are to render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s, and to God the things which are God’s. In the United States, we are “one nation, under God,” and we can rejoice in our freedoms, so long as leaders follow the Constitution, a cherished document formulated by our founders.

**Illinois, Morton**

**Annette Tanner**

The weekend of October 17-18, God spoke to us loudly reminding us of death, birth, and life in between.

On October 17 Bro. Roger Ackerman gained his heavenly reward. We extend our deepest sympathy to his wife Sis. Margie and his children Matthew Ackerman (Missy, New Palatine, IN); Sara Vliestra (Andy, Fort Collins, CO); Sis. Kary Mangers (Bro. Doug, St. Louis, MO); and Adam Ackerman (Linsey, Nolensville, TN).

Sunday, October 18 our Elder Bro. Ted Witzig, Jr. spoke on “Hope: Our Citizenship is in Heaven”. We were reminded that God has not been absent, even in the challenging times. Christ is our all in all and in the end Christ and his Kingdom wins! We were exhorted by Philippians 1:9 “And this I pray, that our love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment.”

Also on October 18, our ministering Bro. Andrew Rassi (Sis. Sandy) was happy to announce the engagement of their daughter Sis. Kayla Rassi to Bro. Javan Plattner son of Bro. Chad and Sis. Laura Plattner all of Tremont, IL. We are excited for this young couple and wish them God’s blessings as they make plans for their January 17, 2021 wedding and life together.

To round out the weekend, first-time parents Bro. Adam and Sis. Lindsay Funk welcomed Darcy LouAnn into their lives on October 18. Happy grandparents are Bro. Fred and Sis. Diane Funk and Bro. Dave and Sis. Krista Ploussard all of Morton. May God bless this new family.

On November 4 our Bro. Fred Funk (Sis. Diane) spoke at our Family Worship Night on “Trust Our God of Miracles”. A miracle is something that happens supernaturally. Bro. Fred recounted the story of Jesus being in a ship with his disciples when a storm arose and .... “Then he arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm.” Luke 8:22-25. As we experience storms in our life, we need to trust God that he will either calm the storm, or walk through it with us.

“The Lord’s our Rock,
In Him we hide,
Secure whatever ill betide,
A shade by day,
Defense by night,
No fears alarm,
No foes affright,
The raging storms may round us beat,
We’ll never leave our safe retreat,
O Rock divine,
O Refuge dear,
Be Thou our helper ever near,
A shelter in the time of storm.
Oh, Jesus is a Rock
in a weary land,
A weary land, a weary land,
Oh, Jesus is a Rock
in a weary land,
A shelter in the time of storm.”
A Shelter in the Time of Storm, Hymns of Zion/Tabernacle Hymns #420
Four more families experienced the loss of a loved one. On October 30 Sis. Lydia Hauter (Bro. Ralph dec.) passed into the arms of Jesus at the age of 101. She is survived by one daughter Diana Halfer (Gary, dec., Chicago, IL); one daughter-in-law Cheryl Hauter, (Morton, IL), and one sister-in-law Sis. Kathryn Kaiser (Bro. Orman dec., Morton, IL). On November 2 Bro. Melvin Heinold 101, (Goodfield, IL), entered Heaven. He was the grandfather of our Bro. Clint Heinold (Sis. Stephanie). On November 13 Linda Jones of Metamora, IL went to be with her Lord. She is the mother of Don Jones who worships with us. November 14 Sis. Lois Aberle went home to be with Jesus. She is survived by her husband Bro. Melvin, one daughter Debbie Tetrault-Stear (Darrell, Minier, IL), and one son Steve (Lea Ann, McLean, IL). May God comfort these dear families with his love and peace.

The weekend of November 14-15 our Morton church family rejoiced together in hearing the testimony and witnessing the baptism of Tali Heinold, daughter of Bro. Clint and Sis. Stephanie Heinold. It was special to have our retired Elder Bro. Ted Witzig, Sr. lead the conversation as he had worked with Tali during her repentance and conversion. We are thankful for our new Sis. Tali and wish her God’s blessings in her walk with the Lord.

By the time this is read, we will have celebrated Thanksgiving and be in the middle of our Christmas activities—although somewhat curtailed because of the pandemic. May we rest in the peace of the reason we celebrate this holy season.

“And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour which is Christ the Lord.” Luke 2:10-11

Illinois, Peoria

Bonnie Bach, Crystal Wettstein

What a blessing to partake of Holy Communion together! After over 6 months from our usual time, it seemed especially meaningful. The changes made due to the virus did not diminish our remembrance and appreciation of Jesus’ sacrifice. Elder Bro. Frank Sauder (Roanoke, IL) assisted Elder Bro. Tim Funk for the service.

For our Family Night service, Bro. Mike Kaisner interviewed two older couples about their lives together. As we heard virtually of their experiences and learned from their wisdom of over 50 years together, it helped us appreciate the blessings of being a part of the body of Christ in which we can strengthen one another.

The annual fall soup supper and benefit auction for Apostolic Christian Skylines Nursing Home was a virtual event this year. We could pick up soup to enjoy at home with proceeds of the online auction going for bonuses for Skyline employees who have been working so hard through the pandemic. Many thanks for those caring for our loved ones and prayers for them and all the residents there!

Prayers also for those who may be at their homes or in the hospital suffering illnesses. May God be near to grant faith and patience as they depend upon him!

We extend our sympathy to Sis. Nanette David in the passing of her brother, Bro. Wade “Randy” Fehr. Bro. Dave Ginzel (Sis. Mary) lost his mother, Sis. Dorothy Ginzel (Eureka, IL). She was grandma to Bro. Geoff Ginzel (Sis. Angie). May God comfort these loved ones.

Sis. Madi Waibel, daughter of Bro. Matt and Sis. Lisa Waibel, has been unable to return home from India because of flight cancellations caused by the Coronavirus. We pray that she can feel Jesus with her as she serves him there!

We will miss Sis. Lisa Jackson and son Ben who have moved to Waynesville, NC to be near family. How thankful that God is not bound by earthly miles but can be with us wherever we are!

As this is being written, the Peoria church is seeking God’s guidance in selecting an ordained deacon. It is a privilege to pray and know that God will lead us!

During these days of so much turmoil in the world, my mind goes to some words from the hymn in the Zion’s Harp, “God Is Still With Me,” #148:

“When throughout life’s journey raging storms I see, this shall be my comfort: God is still with me… Thus in all distresses when by fear I’m tried,
hope my heart possesses: God is at my side… My support and pillar and my gain is He; my strong fort in terror; God is still with me… So I’ll wander gladly, ‘till my home I see, and in Zion’s mansion, God is still with me.”

Note of Thanks
On behalf of the Bro. Don Messner family, we wish to sincerely thank you for the kindness shown to us during the loss of Sis. Viola. We were touched by your overwhelming love through calls, texts, food, cards, and memorials that we received. God bless you!

Illinois, Princeville
Melinda Christ, Cherie White
May God’s Spirit rest upon Bro. Clayton Blunier (Bro. Darin and Sis. Keri) as he has sought out an helpmate, Sis. Dominique Braun-Lasnier of Denver, CO (Paul Lasnier and Sarah Braun). May they seek out his guidance as they prepare not just for the wedding day but to set up a Godly home together to glorify his name.

It is always the right time to receive more encouragement, more exhortation, more gentle promptings of the Holy Spirit to live out our lives in a manner that pleases him. We are so thankful for efforts of our dear beloved elder brethren who have put together helps that we can apply to daily life in the reading of the Memorandum. Help us, dear Father, to become more humble and obey those that have the rule and authority over us. May our hearts and minds be focused fully upon Thee that we can avoid the deceptive forces of Satan. We can rejoice in uncertain and troubling times by anticipating Christ’s return as each one of us would “…lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.” Psal. 121:1. What a blessing to have Elder Bro. Frank Sauder (Sis. Kathy, Roanoke, IL) with us to help assist our Elder Bro. Craig Martin (Sis. Terri) in this work.

We rejoice with Bro. Quinn and Sis. Sandi Steffen and big brother Colt on the birth of precious Auburn Gayle born on November 8. Happy grandparents are Bro. Matt and Sis. Deanna Steffen. Bro. Kurt and Sis. Connie Christ also are experiencing joy as they are the grandparents of Elise Noelle born on November 14 to Bro. Phil and Sis. Beth Endress, Bradford, IL.

Little Alaina Kieser, the daughter of Bro. Seth and Sis. Samantha Kieser, was in the hospital for eye surgery. God’s blessings upon her! “When a Christian dies, Precious is the prize!” The Death of a Christian, Hymns of Zion #248.

May God comfort the heart of Sis. Mary Stoller (Bro. Bruce) upon hearing the loss of her sister, Sis. Jocelyn Payton (South Bend, IN). Our hearts also sorrow for Sis. Joy Baurer (Bro. Art, dec.) with news of the passing of her sister, Sis. Luann Knapp (Goodfield, IL) who resided at the Apostolic Christian Home of Eureka.

A note of thanks
On behalf of the Bro. Don Messner family we wish to sincerely thank you for the kindness shown to us during the loss of Sis. Viola. We were touched by your overwhelming love through calls, texts, food, cards and memorials that we received. God Bless You! Bro. Keith and Sis. Ruth Herrmann.

Illinois, Roanoke
Judy Sauder, Barb Schwind
“That if thou confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” Rom. 10:9

We welcomed three dear souls into the fold this month. We rejoice with Sis. Mida Fehr, who gave her testimony of faith and was baptized on October 21, and Sis. Megan Hodel (daughter of Sis. Joyce) who gave her testimony of faith and was baptized on November 11. Bro. Jesse Fischer (Bro. Kevin and Sis. Annette) also gave his testimony of faith and was baptized in the Austin/Bastrop, TX, church on October 25. We pray for God’s continued blessing on these dear ones in their walks of faith.

Several from our church assisted with church services at the Peoria Rescue Mission on October 25. What a blessing to share the good news of the Gospel with others!

Elder Bro. Mike Leman (Sis. Deb, Denver, CO) was our visiting minister on October 25.

“…With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer:” Luke 22:15
Our church was privileged to share Holy Communion together on October 25. Elder Bro. Ron Messner (Sis. Pam, Washington, IL) assisted Elder Bro. Frank Sauder (Sis. Kathy) and retired Elder Bro. Tom Hoffman (Sis. Kathy) in this service. It was a blessed evening of worship and remembrance.

Elder Bro. Mark Streitmatter (Sis. Sara, Bloomington, IL) assisted Bro. Frank Sauder in the reading of the Memorandum on October 28. We thank our elders and other church leadership for their care and concern in shepherding us especially in these very unusual times.

“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.” Rev. 19:7

November 1 was the wedding day of Sis. Abby Moser (Bro. Greg and Sis. Shar) and Bro. Jon Hohulin (Bro. Ross and Sis. Heather) of Goodfield, IL. Elder Bro. Jeff Grimm (Sis. Ruth, Goodfield, IL) and Bro. Frank Sauder conducted the wedding ceremony. Bro. Jeff shared that our life is worship which leads to joy and gladness; then we will be blessed. We rejoice in God’s kind provision of a helpmate to share life with. Brittney Durand (Tom and Sis. Marsha) is engaged to be married to Jack Jones of Peoria, IL son of Carol and Jack Jones, Sr. of Bellevue, IL. May God richly bless these dear young couples as they become one in Christ.

Isaac James was born to Bro. Fred and Sis. Jodi Leman on October 26. His brothers and sisters are Letty, Noah, Ethan, and Ivy, and his thankful grandparents are Bro. Mark and Sis. Cathy Kieser (Peoria, IL) and Dennis and Sis. Karen Leman. Bro. Fred, Sis. Jodi and their family hope to return to New Guinea where Bro. Fred serves as a helicopter pilot. We are so thankful for their commitment to the outreach of the Gospel especially in these very uncertain times.

Bro. Matt and Sis. Renae Lindberg welcomed their fifth child, a daughter Chloe Jane, on November 8. Her brother and sisters are Emmett, Audrey, Sophie, and Norah. Grandparents Bro. Chris and Sis. Teresa Bahler (Wolcott, IN) and Bro. Rich and Sis. Julie Lindberg are also rejoicing at Chloe’s arrival. Easton Adam arrived to bless the home of Nate and Shelby Rose of Manchester, MO on November 12. His thankful grandparents are Bro. Jim and Lorna Ott. May God bless these dear families as they raise their children in the ways of the Lord.

On November 7, the ACTIVE (junior high) boys raked leaves for those that needed assistance with this task. Our scripture memory students, led by Bro. Nate and Sis. Jamie Hodel, blessed our nursing home staff with gift bags of encouragement. They also included messages of appreciation, love, and prayers. We are so thankful for these teachers, parents and students for the love and kindness they show to our church and community. May God bless them for their time and efforts.

Sis. Luann Knapp (Goodfield, IL) went to be with the Lord on November 7. She was a sister-in-law to Sis. Mida Fehr. Roy Wittmer (Sue) of Goodfield, IL, passed away on November 9. He was a brother of Jane Fehr (John). May our Lord comfort these dear families in their loss.

We heartily welcome Milt and Jen Getz and their children Braden, Luke, and Brooklyn of Roanoke to our church fellowship. We hope they feel “at home” here!

On November 8, Bro. Dustin Hodel gave an update on Gateway Woods to our church. Gateway is in need of house parents and assistant house parents. Their transitional living facility, WillowBridge, is functioning very well. Young people living there are well equipped to transition from foster care into independent living. We appreciate the faithful ministry and outreach of Gateway Woods to the youth of our culture who are in need of the gospel and the hope that is found in Jesus. We give God the glory!

We want to lift up Bro. Gary Wettstein (Sis. Elna), Bro. Jim Leman (Sis. Annie), and Bro. Dave Schwind (Sis. Barb) in prayer for our Lord’s continued strength and healing. We are so thankful for God’s continuing mercies for Bro. Dave and his beloved family.

**Note of Thanks:**

My heartfelt thanks for the beautiful cards, encouragement, and well wishes on my 104th birthday. God bless you all. Bro. Harold Roth

**Illinois, Tremont**

**Debbie Aberle, Lucy Kaiser**

We are thankful to God for visiting brothers who teach and encourage us from the pulpit. We
appreciated Bro. Barry Dietz (Sis. Rachel, Bradford, IL), Bro. Dewayne Dill (Sis. LaRae, Minneapolis, MN) and Bro. Dean Steffen (Sis. Carol, Belvidere, IL) coming this month. These brothers all have family ties to us, and we look forward to their visits! May God bless each of you!

We have remembered Bro. Mel Kaiser (Sis. Marlene), Sis. Velda Glueck (Bro. Karl), and Bro. Mike Oswald (Sis. Michelle) in our prayers as they have dealt with illness and hospital visits. We are praying for all those afflicted with the virus, and certainly miss gathering together as one body in church.

We offered our sympathy to Aaron and Jen Zuercher in the loss of her father. May God grant Jen his comfort.

We rejoice in the marriage of Bro. Philip Steiner to Sis. Mary Hartter. Their parents are Bro. Todd and Sis. Val Steiner and Bro. James and Sis. Sandy Hartter (Sabetha, KS.) Congratulations are also in order for Bro. Javan Plattner (Bro. Chad and Sis. Laura Lee) and Sis. Kayla Rassi (Bro. Andrew and Sis. Sandy) of Morton, IL as their engagement was announced to our congregation. We look forward to welcoming these sisters to worship with us.

"Rejoice ever more. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." I Thes. 5:16-18

"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Phil. 4:6-7

Illinois, Washington
Lillian Pfaffmann

Congratulations to our Bro. Seth Teubel and Sis. Chelsea Williamson of Leo, IN, on their engagement! Their parents are Bro. Mark and Sis. Marty Teubel and Bro. Jason and Sis. Wendi Williamson (Leo, IN). Truly we wish them God’s nearness and richest blessings as they plan their lives together.

"And the Lord God said, ‘It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him.’” Gen. 2:18

Bro. Kirk Streitmatter and Sis. Lexy Knapp were united in marriage in Peachtree City, GA, on November 21, 2020. Their parents are Bro. Paul and Sis. Jean Streitmatter (Washington, IL) and Bro. Matt and Sis. Dana Knapp (Peachtree City, GA). Wishing them God’s fullness in their walk as one in him!

Our sympathy goes to Bro. Myron Rumbold (Sis. Lori) in the loss of his mother, Sis. Jacquelyn “Jackie” Rumbold, (Bro. Ron, Princeville, IL). What a consolation to have that blessed hope of meeting again on the yonder shores of heaven!

The world around us looks so dark and threatening, but how soul-soothing to trust in Jesus, who is our Light and in him is no darkness! As I look outside and see the sun is shining and that the winds have calmed, it is a comforting thought that by his grace every day can be that bright and peaceful!

Indiana, Bluffton
Suzie Fiechter, Liana Reinhard, Olivia Steffen

“Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.” Col. 4:12

Our focus lately as a local church has been on our prayer life. More specifically, we have been challenged in the area of intercessory prayer. It is important for us as believers to recognize our need for God and to not fall into the lie of believing we are self-sufficient, with everything under control. We extend a special thanks to Bro. Joe Gerber (Sis. Heidi, Champaign, IL) for helping launch a new prayer endeavor, and for sharing the Word with us over the pulpit. The goal is to have every member and family lifted up to the Father on a regular basis by their brothers and sisters.

We were thankful to share communion on the evening of November 14. Elder Bro. John Laukhuf (Sis. Marcia, Latty, OH) and Elder Bro. Steve Ringger (Sis. Myra, Bluffton North, IN) were able to join us. We appreciate their willingness to serve! Although the way we did things was slightly different than normal, the heart of remembering Jesus and holy living remained unchanged. Elder Bro. Bob Dotterer (Sis. Laura, Sardis, OH) was greatly missed as he planned to join us but then was unable to.

Our prayers are with Bro. Eric Steffen (Sis. Marcia) as he recently underwent surgery to
remove cancer. May we intercede on behalf of his recovery! Bro. Aaron Gerber (Sis. Cassie) continues to battle brain cancer. We are praying for their young family as he will begin chemotherapy soon. Prayers are also extended to Bro. Brandon and Sis. Katelyn Kaehr, as she was induced into labor after not being able to find a heartbeat at 7 months into her pregnancy. Little Faith Marie went straight into Jesus’ arms but will forever be missed by her family.

Bro. Les Isch (Sis. Ann) went to be with the Lord last month. Sympathy is extended to his wife and sons, Bro. Blaine (Sis. Tonia) and Bro. Bryce (Sis. April) along with 7 grandchildren.

On Wednesday, November 4, it was a blessing to hear the testimony of Breckin Gilliom (Bro. Kent and Sis. Mary) and Brody Tonner (Bro. Brent and Sis. Rachelle). However, their baptisms had to be postponed due to illness. We hope they can schedule a baptism date in the near future.

Rejoicing with the angels in heaven are Bro. Nick and Sis. Jessica Fiechter as their son Mason, age 12, began his repentance this past month. We also congratulate Bro. Colt Rinkenberger (Bro. Linc and Sis. Catrina) on his engagement to Sis. Elly Sauder of Roanoke, IL.

Due a rise in local COVID-19 cases we are back to one church service and limited Sunday school classes for the time being. We are praying for health in our congregation!

**Indiana, Bluffton North**

**Rhonda Maller, Tiffani Schladenhauffen**

“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

With joy and great expectation, our Bluffton and Bluffton North congregations are starting an Intercessory Prayer Initiative. All ages are invited to individually participate in this new ongoing prayer opportunity where we will be privately praying together as a church body. Intercessory prayer is defined as going to God on behalf of someone or something. Our prayer is that this initiative will be a huge blessing for each participant as well as to our church as a whole as we intercede for each other while praising his Holy Name. We were thankful to have Bro. Joe Gerber (Sis. Heidi, Champaign, IL) visit, preach and teach us more about intercessory prayer as we start this new initiative. He encouraged us in how to be more effective in our prayer time and the power there is in our prayers. We are excited to see how the Lord is going to work through this prayer opportunity.

We definitely had opportunities to intercede on behalf of some of our loved ones this month. Spending some time in the hospital were Sis. Kathy Longenberger (Bro. Steve) and Sis. Peg Yergler (Bro. Jeff). We remember the many struggling at home and at our local nursing homes with the challenges that COVID-19 has brought both physically and emotionally. We also want to continue to lift up Bro. Toby Steffen (Jayla) and Bro. Gary Stoller (Sis. Nancy) as they struggle with serious ongoing health issues.

We rejoice with Bro. Ryan and Sis. Jamy Steffen on the birth of their first little girl, Hattie Rose. She is welcomed home by her three older brothers Leo, Axel, and Finn.

Our local church school, Kingdom Academy, had its annual auction. As most other fundraisers this year, it looked a little different than in the past, but the support was still there. We are thankful that we have this Christian education option in our community.

We know that Christmas is just around the corner and we had some opportunities to contribute to some special projects such as Operation Christmas Child, Logansport Gift Lift, and the Wells County Food Bank Christmas Collection. As we get closer to Christmas may we not forget those in need and to focus on the real reason for the season: JESUS!

**Indiana, Francesville**

**Jacki Huber, Connie Linback**

“Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Philip. 4:6-7

God’s creation is amazing! This autumn morning, I glanced out of my kitchen window looking at the frost that coated...
everything. Just then a slight breeze picked up, and I watched as a few leaves and seeds floated to the ground. These leaves seemed to fall straight down to return to the earth from where they came at the beginning of the year. Life is like that!

We send up prayers for Bro. Ben and Sis. Christa Stoller and their boys as they will be temporarily living in Junction, OH, so that Ben can take training on a dairy farm.

Prayers also continue for Bro. Roger Ward (Sis. Sandi) as he continues to recuperate from surgery.

Our prayers are ever ongoing for our nation and our leaders.

Please keep Quinton Young in your prayers as his testimony and baptism are scheduled for December 5-6 in the Detroit, MI church.

We have been praying for several from our congregation who are dealing with COVID-19 related illness. Our church also extends prayers and sympathy to Sis. Connie Linback and Sis. Karen Albrecht in the passing of their brother Jerry Hendershot from Florida.

Note of Thanks:

Thanks for all the prayers and cards received during Bro. Roger’s recent surgery.

- Bro. Roger and Sis. Sandi Ward

Note of Thanks:

Thank you for 35 years of love shown to us as we move to West Lafayette, IN.

- Bro. Mark and Sis. Lynne Wuetrich and son Bro. Nicholas

Indiana, LaCrosse

Meagan Frank, Julie Rocke

“He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions. Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!” Psa. 107:20-21

Sis. Norma Nuest (Bro. Gene) and Karla Martin (Jason) both had surgery this past month. Both were rather extensive, but we praise the Lord that in each case the doctors were able to quickly fix the problem, and send these dear ladies on their way to healing. We are thankful to have them fellowshipping with us once again!

We would like to thank Bro. Jon Pratt (Sis. Sharon, Valparaiso, IN) for blessing us by sharing the pulpit with our home ministers and bringing forth God’s Word.

With the unpredictability of the season we are in, this Thanksgiving may look different than we would like. But I was recently humbled by the words of a woman whose young daughter is going through treatments for brain cancer. She had been asked how she continues to have hope, how she continually clings to God. She shared that God has given her a picture of what it means to ask your children to do hard, painful things; things that they don’t understand but are meant for their good. She has to ask her daughter to do these things daily, and yet her daughter still loves her unconditionally, still trusts her implicitly. Can we respond any less to our Heavenly Father?

“And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing.” Psa. 107:22

Indiana, Leo

Jan Beer

“The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in Him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise Him.” Psa. 28:7

It is a comfort to remember that we can safely trust in God and find peace in our heart while living in this unprecedented time. Even as Thanksgiving Day approaches, it is also a reminder to praise him in song and lots of other ways. To me, the benefit of COVID-19 has been a keener awareness of my nothingness and his sovereignty. Praise and thank him.

On Saturday, October 17, Bro. Phil and Sis. Judy Schlatter hosted a belated wedding reception for their son, Simon and his sweet bride Abby. They were married in a private ceremony in April and live in Roanoke, VA. We pray God’s rich blessing on this dear couple.

Our Sis. Betty Schulz departed this earth on October 24. She was 92 years old. We are very grateful that she could submit her life to Christ just about a year ago. Glory to God! Our prayers continue for her family as they adjust to the loss of their mother.

We have two engagements to announce! Our Sis. Kelsey Kaeb (Bro. Chad and Sis. Kristy) and Bro. Clark Laukhuf (Bro. Mick and Sis. Lisa) are planning a late spring wedding so she can finish her year
at Illinois State University. Our Sis. Chelsea Williamson (Bro. Jason and Sis. Wendy) is engaged to Bro. Seth Teubel (Bro. Mark and Sis. Marti, Washington, IL). Sis. Chelsea has played an important role of being the sole Assistant Houseparent at Gateway Woods during this drought in staffing. Our prayer for both of these new couples is that God will bless and lead them in their lives together.

Some folks in our church family have contracted the COVID-19 virus, but I have not heard any reports of hospitalization. During this time of restricted social interaction, it is difficult to know of news in our church family. If I have overlooked anyone’s news, please know it was not intentional – and please inform me of it.

Continue to trust in the Lord for strength and help, and greatly rejoice in his promises. We are blessed.

Indiana, Milford

Heidi Beer, Anne Wilson

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

It’s with great excitement and thankful hearts that we look forward to the baptism of Micah Lehman in the near future. His parents are Bro. Dean and Sis. Mary Lehman. Our wonderful Father above continues to remind us he is still at work, and that is truly something to be thankful for as we celebrate Thanksgiving and anticipate Christmas. May we be constant in prayer for our church families, especially those who will spend more time alone this holiday season than in years past.

Indiana, Remington

Jenni Honegger, Marcella Tyler

It seems that we are taking two steps forward and then one step back lately. Due to several cases of COVID-19 in our congregation, we took several weeks off from gathering together for church and now are back to a single morning service. It can be discouraging, but we take comfort that our loved ones here have, so far, not been very sick.

Even though COVID-19 has disrupted many of our “normal” happenings, we can still see evidence that God has not changed and that he has not grown weary of directing his children’s steps.

We are thankful to report two engagements in our congregation this past month to remind us that God is still at work! Sis. Valerie Bahler (Bro. Mark and Sis. Benita) is engaged to Bro. Isaac Mogler (Bro. Chuck and Sis. Beth, West Bend, IA). In addition, Sis. Chloe Getz (Bro. Jason and Sis. Sara) is engaged to Bro. Caleb Furrer of Wolcott, IN (Bro. Bruce and Sis. Pam). What a blessing to see and hear of God’s goodness in providing godly mates for these two dear sisters! We pray that each couple’s engagement will be filled with God’s continued provision and his nearness as they look forward to becoming one in Christ!

We also can see God’s hand in providing a change for Bro. Rex and Sis. Tammy Clauss by directing them to move to Valparaiso, IN. Although we will miss them, we know that our fellowship transcends the bounds of location and will keep us close in heart. Their new address is 239 Bridgewater Lane, Valparaiso, IN 47383.

Indiana, South Bend

Joshua Martinez

“But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Cor. 15:57

Our dear Sis. Jocelyn Payton is home with the Lord. Her joyful faith is now sight. Because of the national health emergency, her family has decided to postpone her funeral service until next spring or summer.

Our prayers this month were with those in our church family still healing from recent surgeries, as well as those affected by the virus. Although we are under the shadow of COVID-19, the light of God’s bright splendor still reigns and shines in our hearts!

“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. 12:9-10

Indiana, Valparaiso

Sherry Meiss

Our verse for the month is: “Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise; be thankful unto him, and bless his name.” Psa. 100:4

With Veterans Day on November 11, The Beacher, a weekly newspaper in Michigan City, IN had the honor to speak
with Bro. Robert (Bob) Hoerr, who for more than 75 years ago, served his country in World War II. He is 99 years old and lives with his wife of 74 years, Sis. Marguerite. He was born and raised in Peoria, IL, and then drafted by the U.S. Army in May of 1944. He spent 17 weeks at Camp Berkeley’s medical-replacement training center in Abilene, Texas. He trained to take care of servicemen after they came back. His first trip aboard the U.S. Army Hospital Ship Aleda E. Lutz was to Liverpool, England. Upon the approach of the harbor, they were rudely interrupted by apparent explosions that rattled them from their toes to their teeth. A submarine followed them close enough it was overshadowed by their propulsion system.

They took on 800 patients and returned home to the port of Charleston, N.C., Bro. Bob made three more round-trips crossing from South Hampton, England, bringing back approximately 3,200 passengers. This ship was also used as a troop transport, which included repatriation of 800 German prisoners-of-war working on the farms in the prairie states. On their way back to Cherbourg, France a mine was spotted floating 50 yards off of the starboard bow. It had broken loose in the English Channel and was about 12 foot in diameter. Being on a medical ship was not a cushy job by far.

His ship was added for the invasion of Japan when there were three weeks before the end of the war, but they didn’t know it. When the Japanese surrendered on September 2, 1945, their ship was diverted from Charleston, SC, to New York. Because of casualties in the Philippines, they needed to come back. So, they went to the far East via the Panama Canal, but because of mechanical issues, by the time the repairs were finished the need for transport was over. The crew was sent back to finish out their tour of duty in California and some to the East Coast.

While on furlough, Bro. Bob married Sis. Marguerite on April 14, 1946. A pretty farm girl from Milford, IN who is six years younger and flattered to have his attention. After his discharge from the Army on June 9, 1946, Bro. Bob returned to his career in foundry and pattern making for 48 years until retiring in 1987. Once retired, he started an online business, R.J. Pattern Services, which provided iron and plastic antique stove replacement parts, along with heavy-duty garden gates, benches, and antique furniture restoration. Sis. Marguerite was employed by the Warsaw Soil and Water Conservation District for 24 years. Then, she worked in libraries in Milford and New Buffalo, Michigan, for a total of 48 years until retiring in 1987. Once retired, she started an online business, R.J. Pattern Services, which provided iron and plastic antique stove replacement parts, along with heavy-duty garden gates, benches, and antique furniture restoration. Sis. Marguerite was employed by the Warsaw Soil and Water Conservation District for 24 years. Then, she worked in libraries in Milford and New Buffalo, Michigan, for a total of 24 additional years. They have one daughter, Becky Pelath, and four sons: Robert Alan, Fred, Douglas, and Jeff. Four are Purdue graduates and one graduated from Indiana University.

In June 2013, Bro. Bob boarded an Honor Flight with his daughter, Becky. Described on their website as a “non-profit organization dedicated to honoring those who served and sacrificed for our country,” the national network of independent hubs makes possible all-expenses- paid trips to the memorials in Washington, D.C., for the nation’s veterans. Bro. Bob said there were about 88 World War II veterans and six Korean War veterans on his flight.

Looking back on his days serving his country, Bro. Bob said he’s proud of his time spent on active duty. “The Lord put us where he wanted us,” he said. “In World War II, the general feeling was ‘All gave some and some gave all.’ I’m glad I was able to serve.” Our congregation love and honor both Bro. Bob and Sis. Marguerite with all our hearts.

Prayers for a blessed, grateful, Thanksgiving to you all.

Indiana, West Lafayette
Libby Wahl

Greetings church family.
"And God blessed them, and God said unto them, be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth...” Gen. 1:28

Congratulations to Mark and Heather Furrer on the arrival of their fourth child, Lincoln Mark on November 2.

Also on November 2, our sympathies were extended to Bro. Grant and Sis. Anne Heinold as Bro. Grant’s cherished grandfather, Bro. Melvin Heinold, (Goodfield, IL), slipped away to his eternal home.

Sis. Ada Jones suffered a fall and fracture. Cards are appreciated: University Place...
Our appreciation and thanks go to Bro. Tim Bucher, (Valparaiso, IN) for an energetic midweek message, to our local ministry for so ably sharing the loving Fall memorandum and to our Elder Bro. Nick Gutwein for all his emails keeping us up-to-date on current essentials. We rejoice that Hope Young has claimed Jesus as her Savior and is at peace with God. We look forward to her baptism in the new year.

"Only living things multiply. God has formed the Church as a living thing, to represent His Son’s character and to reproduce His Spirit’s fruit in every part of the world.” S.C. Hawthorne

Indiana, Wolcott

Teresa Earney, Luann Gerber

“But whoso hearkeneth unto me, shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.” Prov. 1:33

There have been several families in our congregation having symptoms of COVID-19. We did not gather for two consecutive weeks to try to minimize the spread. Thankfully, we are gathering again for the morning service only.

Many prayers were sent up for Bro. Bob and Sis. Luann Gerber as they both spent time in the hospital. They are both home now and recuperating.

Congratulations to Takara Lehman (Bro. John and Sis. Tamara and the late Sis. Ruth) and Samuel Frost as they were recently joined as one in marriage.

We warmly welcome Bro. Steve and Sis. Sara Anliker to our Wolcott church. They moved from Illinois and worshipped with the Bloomington congregation.

We rejoice with Bro. Bruce and Sis. Pam Furrer as they announced the engagement of their son Bro. Caleb to Sis. Chloe Getz (Remington, IN). Chloe’s parents are Bro. Jason and Sis. Sara.

“Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.” Psalms 119:18

Iowa, Bloomfield

Kendra Schlatter

Some in our congregation have suffered the loss of loved ones. Sis. Evelyn Metzger’s sister passed away, Sis. Marian Metzger (Lester, IA).

Also, Bro. Lloyd Wettstein’s mother, Verna Wettstein, passed away. We remember them and their families at this time, praying that God’s Spirit would be their comforter.

We were able to hold Holy Communion on a Friday evening in October and appreciate Bro. Brad Funk (Sis. Laura, Garden Grove, IA) for being willing to come help with the service.

We also appreciate Bro. Bruce Frank (Sis. Bonita, Cissna Park, IL) who was here to share the Word with us. We thank them for coming.

Iowa, Burlington

Marilyn Anderson, Angela Steiner

This morning I read Romans 12:10 which reads “Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another.” It challenged me to pause and reflect on the little things that I appreciate so much about my brothers and sisters in our church family. So many times, Satan is out to kill and destroy, and even tempt us to turn on each other! It’s him we must bond together to fight against! We will have the victory if we allow the Spirit to work in our hearts!

We rejoice with our new bro. and sis. in Christ, Courage Steiner and Blessing Steiner (Bro. Mike and Sis. Ivy). They have testified before many witnesses how God has converted their hearts and helped them to have victory over the devil! It’s always so special to have baptisms in Burlington, and we are thankful that Elder Bro. Jon Schmidgall (Sis. Julie, Mediapolis, IA) and Bro. Dale Frank (Sis. Tina, Mediapolis, IA) were able to join us for the joyous occasion.

Although it was a victory for our Sis. Mary Massner (Bro. Lloyd) to overcome death and enter the arms of Jesus, it brought many tears and heavy hearts to say goodbye. It was commented that Sis. Mary was a mother figure in our Burlington church. She will be greatly missed. Our thoughts and prayers continue to go out to Bro. Lloyd and the entire family circle as they adjust and grieve in the coming weeks. We are thankful that Elder Bro. Jon Schmidgall (Sis. Julie, Mediapolis, IA) was able to offer support at her parting service.

As always, we appreciate our visitors that come to share our joy or sorrow, and we welcome them back anytime.
The older generation was so grateful to the single group who took the time and effort to rake their leaves and clean up their yards. Thank you to those that participated. May God bless you for your kindness.

We continue to lift up those in our church family who are sick, shut-in or even in quarantine. There are many ways the devil could tempt all of us with discouragement or isolation, but may we always be quick to pray and reach out to others with love and encouragement!

Iowa, Elgin
Maria Rocke

The weekend of Clayton Schupbach’s testimony and baptism was a great blessing. We praise God for his work in Bro. Clayton’s life! We were also able to partake of Holy Communion that same weekend. We came out of the weekend with renewed zeal as we recommitted to our Lord and to each other. Elder Bro. Lowell Moser (Sis. Karen, Morris, MN) and retired Elder Bro. Wayne Grimm (Sis. Rose, West Bend, IA) were used in many ways that weekend. May God richly bless them!

As we enter the Christmas season of 2020, perhaps different in many ways, may God’s peace rest in each of our hearts. The angels still sing his praise!

"Still through the cloven skies they come,
With peaceful wings unfurled,
And still their heavenly music floats
O’er all the weary world:
Above its sad and lowly plains
They bend on hovering wing,
And ever o’er its Babel-sounds
The blessed angels sing.”
It Came Upon the Midnight Clear, Hymns of Christmas #18

Iowa, Garden Grove
Laura Funk

Greetings from south central Iowa!

Harvest is complete here. The landscape has changed to harvested fields of shades of brown. I enjoy the changing colors and seasons!

"The Seasons of the Soul"
Why am I cast down and despondently sad
When I long to be happy and joyous and glad?
Why is my heart heavy with unfathomable weight
As I try to escape this soul-saddened state?
I ask myself often—
“What makes life this way, Why is the song silenced in the heart that was gay”?
And then with God’s help it all becomes clear,
The Soul has its Seasons
Just the same as the year—
I too must pass through life’s autumn of dying,
A desolate period of heart-bent and crying,
Followed by winter in whose frostbitten hand
My heart is as frozen as the snow-covered land—
Yes, man too must pass through the seasons God sends, Content in the knowledge that everything ends,
And of what a blessing to know there are reasons
And to find that our soul must, too,
have its seasons—
Bounteous Seasons and Barren Ones, too,
Times for rejoicing and times to be blue,
But meeting these seasons of dark desolation
With strength that is born of anticipation
That comes from knowing that ‘autumn-time sadness’
Will surely be followed by a ‘Springtime of Gladness’."
Helen Steiner Rice

We appreciate Bro. Isaac Wofford (Sis. Rachel, Washington, IL) and family visiting our congregation and speaking “The Word”. May God bless you for the efforts put out on our behalf.

We have enjoyed many blessings this past year and will be celebrating Thanksgiving next week with thankful hearts. Our gatherings will be in smaller groups and alternating times and family members. We are serving and thanking the same God.

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow!

Iowa, Iowa City
Diana Butikofer

We were able to partake in Holy Communion on a recent Sunday afternoon, though a little different and delayed from our usual Spring timing. It was a blessing to see and commune with some we don’t get to see much, and we are thankful that no illness spread from this important
assembly, perhaps because of the careful planning and precautions.

We appreciated Bro. Rick and Sis. Komari Aberle updating us on Hospital Lumiere in Bonne Fin, Haiti via a Zoom meeting. May the Lord bless the efforts of all the staff and missionaries there.

As we are in the midst of the Christmas season, we focus our thoughts on Christ’s birth, which started his life here on earth, which culminated in his atoning death and resurrection, which are so important to finding “Christ’s peace of mind.”

“God’s plan fulfilled as He had willed,
Then came the Christ on earth
The star so bright in deepest night
Foretold His blessed birth.
The angel’s throng with joyous song
Appeared to shepherds meek
The angel’s word the shepherds heard
Then went they forth to seek.
The blessed Child so meek and mild
At Bethlehem they found,
In manger low where cattle low
And sheep did gather round.
In swaddling clothes there to repose
And lying on the hay
What glorious sight in that dark night
Where Christ the Saviour lay!
From lands afar led by the star
The wise men came to see
The Saviour King rich gifts they bring
For Christ’s nativity,
This story sweet I would repeat
And praise Him with my voice.
For he who finds Christ’s peace of mind
He cannot but rejoice.”

*The Nativity, Hymns of Zion, #35*

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**Iowa, Lester**

*Kristi Knobloch, Lois Mogler*


Several have established new homes this month. Alex Moser married Kathryn Scott on November 7. His parents, Bro. Wes and Sis. Esther Moser welcome another daughter-in-law into their family. Bro. Cade and Sis. Molly Knobloch were married in Eureka, IL on November 19. We welcome Sis. Molly to Lester as she makes her home here. Parents are Bro. Stan and Sis. Dawn Knobloch and Bro. Bill and Sis. Heidi Wettstein (Eureka, IL). Bro. Brooks and Sis. Kiana Metzger were married on November 15 here in Lester. Bro. Blair and Sis. Julie Metzger and Bro. Travis and Sis. Kathy Knobloch are their parents. Visiting ministers here for the wedding were Bro. Jim Butikofer (Sis. Diana, Iowa City, IA), Bro. Josh Walder (Sis. Tina, Congerville, IL), Bro. Mitch Fehr (Sis. Abbie, Morris, MN) and Bro. Matthew Wulf (Sis. Tara, Morris, MN).

Collin Zollinger of Silverton, OR has moved to our area for employment and we are thankful to have him as part of our congregation. His parents are Bro. Jim and Sis. Tresa Zollinger (Silverton, OR). Sis. Lois Metzger (Bro. Jim) has moved to Tucson, AZ to spend some time with their daughter Sis. Annie Wulf (Bro. Kevin). May both families adjust to the changes that come with being separated by miles.

Hospitalized for health concerns and surgeries were Sis. Estelle Leuthold, Sis. Barb Reutter, Bro. Jim Leuthold (Sis. Betty) and Andres Acosta (Veronica). Prayers continue for those who experience the ailments of the flesh and for those who treat and care for them.

Several families have lost loved ones in recent days. Sis. Jana and Bro. Jerome Metzger and family grieve the loss of their loving stepmother and step-grandmother, Sis. Mary Massner (Bro. Lloyd, Burlington, IA). Also grieving her loss are her siblings, Bro. Gene Metzger (Sis. Delores), Bro. Dale Metzger (Sis. Chris), Sis. Eleanor Popkes, Sis. Barb Reutter, Bro. Bill Metzger (Sis. Charlotte), Bro. Marvin Metzger (Joleen), Sis. Margene Peasley (Bro. Dave), Jim Moser all of Lester and Sis. Jane Klotzle (Bro. Wayne, Rittman, OH). Step siblings of Sis. Mary are Bro. Donn Moser (Sis. Joyce) and
Sis. Beth Metzger (Bro. Gary) both of Lester who will also miss her. Bro. Dave and Sis. Margene Peasley also grieve the loss of Bro. Dave’s mother, Ada Peasley, (Stuart IA). Sis. Harriet and Bro. Bruce Metzger mourn the death of Sis. Harriet’s sister, Sis. Joan Rudin (Bro. Gerald, Cissna Park, IL). May each of these families find comfort in knowing God’s ways are above our comprehension but he still hears our sighs and sees the tears that flow in grief.

“Though the waves of life’s great ocean
Harass us from far and near,
Would humanity’s commotion
Plunge us into sore despair;
Though the Saviour holds His peace,
Seems to sleep and rest at ease,
Naught shall move your faith in Jesus;
Soon the storm and flood decreases.”
Comfort in Distress, Zion’s Harp #38

Iowa, Mediapolis
Laura Kuntz, Janet Lanz

As we make preparations for the holiday season, I can’t help but look back at last year and stand amazed at how much our world has changed since then. We were clueless as to what was ahead, but God was not. We can be thankful that he does not reveal our entire journey to us, lest we faint by the wayside from the weight of it all. Instead, he has promised us grace for the day, and veiled the future so that with each step, we might ask him for strength to carry us through. In that way, we are in constant communication with him, and he remains our focus and first love. Let us discipline ourselves to daily let faith in his almighty power, and trust in his will, overcome our fears.

We extend our love and best wishes to Adam Hay and Debra Ross, who became husband and wife on October 17. Adam is the son of Bro. Paul and Sis. Connie Hay. May God richly bless this dear couple as they establish their new home.

Our sympathy is extended to Sis. Kyrstin Wagenbach (Bro. Clinton) as she said farewell to her grandpa, Bro. Leland Zimmerman, (Eureka, IL). We also extend sympathy to Bro. Tom and Sis. Vera Lindeen on the passing of their brother-in-law, Mike Butcher. May the memories of these loved ones be a comfort to them.

In a world fraught with anxiety, peace is almost a foreign word, but it is still possible in a believing heart. Two of our converts, Jonathan Massner (Bro. Chuck and Sis. Lois) and Holly Massner (Bro. Troy and Sis. Joni), have been announced for peace. We look forward to hearing their testimonies in the future.

We would be amiss if we did not acknowledge the fact that many of our loved ones have been walking in the valley. Here and across the land, we have had those who are struggling with illness, mishaps and difficult diagnoses. We also have had loved ones that we are close to in other congregations pass on to their eternal reward. We do rejoice with each soul that is “Safe in the Arms of Jesus”, but we ache with those who are left behind to carry on and feel the loss. May you feel the prayers of the brethren across the land, and know we care deeply.

Iowa, West Bend
Jenny Banwart, Karen Schmidt

May Bro. Leland and Sis. Kathy Metzger feel God’s nearness as they relocate to southern Iowa and attend our Garden Grove congregation. We miss having them here and trust that they will come back to visit. Sis. Charlotte Fehr (Bro. Marvin) has spent time in the hospital and is back home and recovering well. Our sympathy goes to Bro. Chuck and Sis. Beth Mogler and Bro. Manuel and Sis. Mary Gerber in the loss of their sister, Sis. Joan Rudin (Bro. Gerald, Cissna Park, IL). May they find comfort in the hope of seeing her again one day in heaven.

As we remember the birth of our Lord and Savior during this Christmas time, the words of Simeon in the temple as he held Jesus in his arms come to mind:

“Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.” Luke 2:29-32

Japan, Shioda & Tokyo
Anna Inoue, Marie Inoue, Carrie Ito

The leaves are now falling. Those falling in northern Japan are more vibrant in colors of orange and red. Whatever color, it is beautiful
to see the change of seasons. Surely, "God has made everything beautiful in His time," Eccl. 3:11.

Due to the remodeling of his present facility along with a change in policy our Bro. Teruo Sanada has relocated to a care hospital in Kanagawa Ken. We are glad he can be closer to his sister.

Bro. Kan Umemura shared from Mark 2 at our monthly ladies meeting. We are grateful for his message about Jesus’ healing and forgiveness.

Even with many changes and adjustments we faced this year, we are thankful and grateful to our Heavenly Father for his rich blessings given to us, namely salvation through his Son, Christ our Lord.

Kansas, Bern
Sheri Edelman, Rita Menold
We rejoice with four new sisters who gave their testimony to the church and were baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We welcome Sis. Kari and Sis. Kristi Edelman (Bro. David and Sis. Sheri), Sis. Kenzie Meyer (Bro. Dominic and Sis. Jenny), and Sis. Kate Strahm (Elder Bro. Brad and Sis. Michelle) as sisters in Christ. Thank you to Elder Bro. Randy Kellenberger (Kansas City, MO) who was able to come at the last minute to fill in for another elder who became ill. Also, thank you to Bro. Brent Kellenberger (Sis. Beth, Kansas City, MO) who also joined us and proclaimed God’s Word from the pulpit. It was a blessed weekend and we thank God we were able to hold this event during these uncertain times!

Bro. Marcus and Sis. Amanda Baumgartner are the happy first time parents of Tyrel Allen Baumgartner. His grandparents are Bro. John and Sis. Lori Baumgartner as well as Bro. Dwight and Sis. Anita Rokey. Welcome Baby Tyrel!

Our prayers are with two dear brothers who have been and are having complications with illness. Bro. Arden Stoller (Sis. Dar) and Bro. Wayne Strahm (Sis. Claudia) are under the doctor’s care. We all are saddened when our loved ones are hurting and our church family is exactly that, our loved ones. We pray anyone who is having a health issue can find comfort in the prayers of others and the safety of Jesus Christ.

Kansas, Kiowa
Janice Bahr, Millie Frieden
"And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them. Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you. Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them." Mark 10:13-16

"At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them. And said, Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven... Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." Matt. 18:1-3, 10

Recently, while going to my connection at an airport, the person with me said, "Look at that!” As I looked around, I noticed two young children, one black and one white, with arms outstretched, touching hands and smiling at each other. There was no thought of race or color, just a show of love, one child to another. We discussed the precious joy and innocence of children and why God wants us to become as a child. They do not judge, do not question, they just love Jesus and completely trust and believe in him. May we as believers, go and do the same.

Each year, we get together to pack boxes for Operation Christmas child. The boxes contain useful things like socks, shirts, toothpaste and brushes, pencils, etc. plus small toys, stuffed animals, dolls, color books, stickers, etc. We packed 93 boxes in less than an hour with our children and adults all joining together to work and enjoy doing something for someone else. The boxes will be shipped to children all over the world in the next month. Afterward, we shared pizza and fellowship. We had a lovely day of sharing.
We extend our sincere gratitude to Bro. Curt Rassi, (Sis. Kathy, Tremont, IL), for sharing a Sunday with us this month. To travel so far for one service is a tremendous effort, and we thank them so very much for coming to Kiowa. May God Bless them.

Our dear friend, Erline Farney, went to meet her Lord this past month, at the age of 96 years. She would have been 97 in December. She faithfully attended church every Sunday with her son, Danny. Just before her death, she was not feeling well, but wanted to come to church anyway. We extend our love and prayers to Danny, Stacey and family at the passing of this precious lady.

Love and blessings to all of you as we work together to stay safe from COVID-19 and patiently wait for our Lord’s return.

**Kansas, Lamont**

*Maria Luthi*

Right now, the wind is fiercely howling outside. Though it can’t be seen, its power brings to mind Eze. 37:9-10, “Then said he unto me, Prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord God; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.”

How uplifting to remember that nothing is impossible for God and that he loves to breathe his breath of revival into his people. May we be prayerful for our world, our nation, our communities, and our churches.

Our church has had to return to meeting via Zoom this month and we’re so grateful for our “visiting” ministers, Elder Bro. Greg Lehman (Sis. Mary Beth, Wolcott, IN) and Bro. Cory Metzger (Sis. Jodi, Wichita, KS). Bro. Cory also joined us virtually to assist in reading the Memorandum, which was an evening of great encouragement to our congregation.

As many in our church and surrounding community have been ill, we’ve had opportunities for much prayer. Our prayers have especially been with Bro. Albert Edelman and his family as he continues to face Leukemia and with Sis. Dorene Metzger during her recent hospitalization and surgery.

**Kansas, Sabetha**

*Leanna Hartter, Whitney Hartter*

We are thankful for several visiting ministers this month. Bro. Quinton Snyder (Sis. Heather, Taylor, MO), Bro. Adam Zeltwanger (Sis. Christy, Morris North, MN), and Bro. Troy Metzger (Sis. Gwen, Lester, IA) shared the word of God with us.

Our converts Matt Meyer (Bro. Alan and Sis. Colleen) and Deborah Edelman (Bro. Loren and Sis. Jeanne) have expressed that they are at peace with God and man. Our prayers are with them as they await baptism.

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

Our church was filled with company for the wedding of Sis. Mary Hartter (Bro. James and Sis. Sandy) to Bro. Philip Steiner (Bro. Todd and Sis. Val, Tremont, IL). Elder Bro. James Fehr (Sis. Brenda, Tremont, IL) ministered to us this weekend. We will miss having Sis. Mary here in our church; but pray God will be with them as they begin their lives together in the Lord.

Our prayers are with Bro. Steven Edelman (Sis. Kelly) and Sis. Marci Grimm (Bro. Darin) as the grieve the loss of their mother Judy Edelman (Gene).

As Christmas approaches, we pray that God will give each of us his perfect peace as the world around us seems to grow darker each day!

**Mexico, Ixtlán**

*Ruth Gerber*

“Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness” Acts 14:16-17.

God has been good to each of us, whether we are farmers or simply blessed to partake of harvest time. May we remember and offer thanksgiving to the One from whom all good gifts come.

One of the farmers we will miss is Bro. Samuel Gutierrez. Many of us enjoyed the pumpkins he would share and the joy he
had in showing us his field. His struggle with cancer ended this past month and we are sad, but thankful for the memories and the hope of eternal life. Our heart goes out to his wife, Sis. Maria, his daughters, Raquel and Margarita and his son Samuel Jr. It was a blessing to have visitors here in Ixtlan during the time of Bro. Samuel’s funeral.

Another loss for our church circle was the passing of Sis. Matias Angelito in Barra Vieja. She was the oldest sister in a large family. Among them Sis. Kike Ramirez (Bartolo), Bro. Pablo (Sis. Cruz), Sis. Fernanda Cervantes (Bro. Rogelio), and Sis. Pauli Schambach (Bro. Todd, Elgin IL). We are saddened and pray for strength for the believers in Barra Vieja/Acapulco.

Several from the school board were here for their semi-annual meetings and the fellowship had been long-awaited! Bro. Kevin Wulf (Sis. Annie, Tucson, AZ) served us from the Word and reminded us of the importance of being merciful, since a lack of mercy is on the same list as some of the grave sins that would come to our mind.

We were also blessed to have Elder Bro. Mike Leman (Sis. Deb, Denver, CO) with us and to partake of Communion. We were encouraged in thinking about Jesus’ sufferings and love for us and of his desire towards all those that are not in fellowship with him.

Our children are so happy to be attending Sunday school once again, and we are thankful for each one that is serving. Sis. Socorro Chavez and Sis. Elsa Sibaja are teaching the younger children and Sis. Mely Garcia and Sis. Ruth Gerber are with the older class. What a privilege to share the Word so that our children can do better than simply “walk in their own ways.”

**México, Magdalena**

**Laura Aviña**

With the increase in virus cases in the last month, church services have been canceled again. We are thankful for brothers who continue to teach on Sundays and Wednesdays and for the technology that allows us to watch them live online. This has been a difficult time for the church, the economy, the school system, and each one of us. Especially as we come to the end of the year wondering if there will be more restrictions rather than less, it can be so discouraging. Please continue to pray for us.

>“Who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases.” Psa. 103:3

Recently I have been pondering God as our healer, my healer, the healer. In so many Bible stories, we see him healing hearts and bodies and lands and we want that! We want to see the virus healed, our country healed, our loved ones healed. Sometimes healing for souls and hearts comes through pain. Sometimes healing doesn’t come in the way or the timing that we’d like. Sometimes we try to step up and take God’s place as the healer. But we are not the healers! Even when God doesn’t heal as we’d like that does not change who he is! He is the healer! So I ask him to heal me, to heal the people I love, and to heal the brokenness in this world and I need to trust that he will heal in his way and time even if that is in eternity.

>“He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.” Psa. 147:3

**Michigan, Alto**

**Heidi Kaeb, Renee Steffen**

>“There is coming a day, When no heartaches shall come, No more clouds in the sky, No more tears to dim the eye, All is peace forever more, On that happy golden shore, What a day, Glorious day, that will be. There’ll be no sorrows there, No more burdens to bear, No more sickness and no pain, No more parting over there, And forever I will be, With the One who died for me, What a day, Glorious day that will be. What a day that will be, When my Jesus I shall see, When I look upon His face, The One who saved me by His grace, When He takes me by the hand, And leads me to the Promised Land, What a day, Glorious day, that will be.” What a day that will be, Gospel Hymns, #831
Prayers for the healing hand of the Master for many in our congregation as they deal with health issues. We especially remember Sis. Jeanette Overholt, Bro. Martin Blough (Sis. Michele) and Sis. Elaine Wingeier’s (Stan) daughter Diane.

“Our thoughts and prayers reach far and wide, across the world, to the other side. So many suffering, confused and distressed, from sickness, disasters... many depressed. So easily caught up in the hurt and pain, almost forgotten is the joy we still gain. We’re still loved and forgiven by our Father of grace, we are still given today, to seek His face. We still have His Word with which to study and learn, and the Holy Spirit still moves our hearts to discern. God’s mercy still abounds and is shewn every day, He still hears our groans when we cannot even pray. We still receive comfort if we have faith to believe that He understands and our grief can relieve. We still can sing hymns that as a child we were taught, to give honor and praise or calm to a soul fraught. We still can rejoice or share in someone’s sorrow, and give thanks we need not worry for tomorrow. We’re granted the choice to maintain joy above all, or focus on the negative wherein a pit we could fall. Let us reach for the JOY we are blessed to have, like the soothing melody of a spiritual salve. ibG.res”

**Michigan, Bay City**

**Sarah Knochel**

We were blessed to be able to participate in Holy Communion. We are thankful Elder Bro. Lucas Frank (Sis. Crystal, Detroit, MI) was able to be with us for this special occasion.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Sis. Nancy Ruegsegger (Bro. Mike) as she mourns the loss of her father Clarence Krygier. We also want to remember Sis. Sharon Ramseyer (Bro. Neil) as her mom, Shirley Sermon, passed away. We pray that God’s comforting hand will be with each of these dear families in the days to come.

As the Christmas season nears, it gives us opportunity to reflect on the miracle of hope Christ’s birth gave to the world. As our present world seems to be in distress and seeks “a thrill of hope”, may we continually pray that God’s comforting hand will be with each of these dear families in the days to come.

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"O Holy night! The stars are brightly shining
It is the night of our dear Savior’s birth
Long lay the world in sin and error pining
’Til He appears and the soul felt its worth
A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn
Fall on your knees; O hear the Angel voices!
O night divine, O night when Christ was born
O night, O Holy night, O night divine!”

O Holy Night, Gospel Hymns #876

**Michigan, Detroit**

**Krista Wieland**

Happy Fall/Winter to all! With Thanksgiving and Christmas around the corner, things are going to be vastly different than last year. Who could have dreamed? However, the one true God hasn’t changed. I am reminded how much my home, family, church and the Bible mean to me more than ever. No matter what happens in life here, our relationships with people and Jesus Christ are what will matter eternally.

Although it is comforting to remember our life here is only temporary, there have been a lot of heartaches and no lack of challenges this year and never do I want to minimize that. The reality is that COVID-19, along with other changes, is no respecter of persons and has affected everyone reading this, some much more than others.

There are multiple things causing concern in this country. No matter our individual views, let us look at ourselves in the mirror. I say this because when I do so, it is painful but eye-opening. The division right now is heartbreaking.
But now, more than ever, we need to pray. Christians are called to love and pray for our leaders, along with anyone else whom we do not agree with. Criticism of leadership (and any type of authority) in our country and worrying about the future is like a rocking chair. Like a rocking chair, speaking evil about people gets us nowhere, except more prone to continue our rocking pattern of complaining and worrying.

It is a different thing to take a stand for Christ and what his word says: when people have a conversation with us, especially unbelievers, what are they walking away with after talking with us? Truth in love? We are called to no less. 1 Timothy 2:1-2 reminds us to pray for all mankind, especially those in authority - regardless of whether we agree with them. Let’s pray for a desire to love and I am talking to myself first.

We want to extend our sympathy to Sis. Jamie Bahr (Bro. Scott) in the death of her aunt this past month.

Three of our converts have been announced for peace and look forward to baptism. They are: Graham Bedolla (Bro. Jesse and Sis. Bonnie); Macy Bahr (Bro. Scott and Sis. Jamie) and Quinton Young (Bro. Steve and Sis. April).

Minnesota, Minneapolis
Brenda Messner, Renee Messner

Sending our love and greetings to you, as we look forward to celebrating something good, coming at the end of 2020. With more restrictions recently announced and waiting for the truth to be told in our national election, we hold fast to the most precious good news! Christmas, the birth of Jesus, our Lord and King!

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

Our sincere thanks to Elder Bro. Ron Messner (Washington, IL) and Elder Bro. Ted Witzig, Jr. (Morton, IL) from ACCFS for their topical presentation, Compassion Without Compromise, via Zoom, on November 13. We are grateful for their counsel and understanding how we ALL are BELOVED to God! He extends his grace to every one of us. Each day, through Christ, we need to show respect, love and listen well to others. Prayerfully, we can seek guidance for grace and live in truth. Then we can shine the light and love of Jesus to those around us.

The apostle Paul’s letter to the Philippians is sound advice for us and encouraging as well.

“Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:4-7

Minnesota, Morris
Peg Wellendorf, Brianna Wulf

Greetings to all from the church in Morris. We pray that the Lord is keeping you safe and comforted in this time of increased illness. We are leaning hard and with bold confidence on our Savior’s might and wisdom. Daily prayer requests are made on behalf of those who are alone and distanced from their families. We are filled with gratitude for the caregivers and medical staff who love and tend to the needs of those we cannot be near.

God’s numerous blessings are made evident each day and we stay the course believing that our loving Father is at the helm. We rejoice for the peace within the heart of another believer. Nikki Knobloch (Kevin) has found peace with God and man and desires to be baptized. We are exceedingly grateful for his love and mercy. We pray for her and all converts throughout their journey to the baptismal waters.

“Jesus Loves me,
He who died,
Heaven’s gate to open wide!
He will wash away my sin,
Let His little child come in.
Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me!
The Bible tells me so!”

Jesus Loves Me, Hymns of Zion #176

Congratulations to Bro. Nate and Sis. Ashley Knobloch on the birth of their daughter Jordyn Diane. She was welcomed by her
family on November 2 and is most certainly a blessing. Her arrival is being celebrated by her 3 siblings and by her grandparents Bro. Gary and Sis. Sandy Fehr (Tucson, AZ), Great Grandparents Bro. Lloyd and Sis. Diane Fehr, and Bro. Dan and Sis. Regina Knoblock (Lester, IA).

May the peace and joy of the Christmas season be upon you throughout the new year. We reflect on our Lord who was born to bring us to an eternal life in heaven. Imagine seeing God upon the throne one day. We know all other gifts fall far short of what that glorious day will be like. As mere mortals we can barely grasp the idea that a life in heaven is free for the asking, bought and paid for by the blood of Jesus. That magnificent promise is well simplified for us in

“Ask and it shall be given to you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.” Matt. 7:7-9

What an awesome God we serve. Happy New Year!

**Minnesota, Morris North**

*Kay Feuchtenberger, Natalie Feuchtenberger*

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

If our eyes are focused on the world right now, there are plenty of happenings that would make us very weary. Instead, we choose to keep our eyes focused on Christ and wait on the Lord.

While we are waiting, we have experienced many blessings as a church family. We were so renewed and encouraged to welcome two new brothers to our fellowship. Taylor and Harrison Zeltwanger, sons of Bro. Adam and Sis. Christy were baptized on October 18. Thanks to Elder Bro. Earl Ringger, (Sis. Dixie, Gridley, IL) and Elder Bro. Rod Bajema, (Sis. Sue, Lester, IA) for sharing this blessed weekend with us. It was so encouraging to have visitors with us. We also thank Bro. Matt Wulf (Sis. Tara, Morris, MN), and their family for spending a Sunday with us and sharing in ministry.

Our Sunday school children were happy to pack Joy Boxes to be delivered to children in Mexico at Christmas time. It is a blessing to be able to share materially, but also to spread the love of Christ. We continue to hold up the families that are grieving the loss of loved ones. Sis. Amanda Feuchtenberger, (Bro. Carter) is walking this life without her father, Dan Luthi and we pray for her and her family. The family of our friend, Bob Cin, is grieving his sudden departure and we carry them in prayer. What a comfort it is to know that we can soar like eagles and not become weary or faint in this life if we wait on the Lord.

**Minnesota, Winthrop**

*Julie Schmidt, Ginny Stoll*

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

As we come into this season of Thanksgiving let us praise our Heavenly Father for our bountiful blessings.

We are thankful to have Bro. Tim Schmidt as our new usher, Sis. Julie Schmidt will be helping as a kitchen coordinator, and Sis. Dixie Messner will be assisting with the Silver Lining. We sincerely appreciate those that are willing to help.

Sis. Ginny Stoll would appreciate your prayers as she had surgery and has ongoing health issues.

**Missouri, Kansas City**

*Katy Frantz*

We rejoiced on November 5 with Bro. Jeff and Sis. Julie Webel and Bro. Aden and Sis. Becky Kuenzi (Silverton, OR) on the wedding of their children, Dominic and Holly.

Our Elder Bro. Randy Kellenberger, had major cervical neck surgery on November 5. The recovery looks like a long time. Prayers for continued healing are appreciated.

On November 13 our church packed 200 shoeboxes for Samaritan’s Purse. They will be shipped to another country in time for Christmas. Kids will open the gift and hear the gospel message of God’s greatest gift to men - his son!
November 14-15 we had the joy of listening to the testimony and seeing the baptism of our beloved Sis. Betty Sinn. We have always been so thankful for her involvement in our church, but thank God for his work in bringing her to a place of peace with him.

We appreciate those visiting ministers that shared the Word with us this past month: Bro. Trent Banwart (Sis. Kristi, Fort Scott, KS) earlier in the month and Elder Bro. Gerry Hertzel (Sis. Ellen, Sabetha, KS) during Sis. Betty’s baptism weekend.

**Missouri, St. Louis**

*Michelle Rassi*

We are praising God for additions to our congregation as Brent and Emma Austin have been worshipping with us and desire to be a part of our church body.

We were blessed to have Elder Bro. Kent Heimer (Sis. Jan, Taylor, MO) worship with us on September 20 as he gave us a conference update.

**Missouri, Taylor**

*Lori Marquart, Tami Pflum*

Our Taylor congregation is always grateful for visitors and for visiting ministers who feed our flock. Bro. Virgil Kaeb (Sis. Suellen, Sarasota, FL) ministered to our congregation on Sunday, October 18. Much wisdom was sown in his humble delivery and he reminded us to go beyond the status quo by sharing the hymn, *More Holiness Give Me* (Hymns of Zion #101), which reads in part, “More holiness give me, More striving within; More patience in suffer ing, More sorrow for sin; More faith in my Saviour, More sense of His care; More joy in His service, More purpose in prayer.”

Bro. Kent Wiegand (Sis. Lanae, Goodfield, IL) served us on Wednesday, November 4, for a Bible study entitled “Roamin’ through Romans.” We did just that, focusing on the verbs, justify (just as if I have not sinned), sanctify (active relationship with God the Father, the Holy Spirit, and Jesus Christ), and glorify (glorious liberty of the children of God). Thank you for your service!

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

The following have made known their need for prayer for challenging situations: Sis. Kathy Haab (Bro. Paul), Bro. Arnie Gerst (Sis. Marjorie, dec.), Bro. Eric and Sis. Penny Knochel, Bro. Rich Sutter (Sis. Kay), Doug Hoerr (Amy), Sis. Rita Yackley (Brad), Sis. Jolene Young (Tom), Sis. Megan Grimm, and Amber Gottman (Jeff).

Sympathy is extended to Sis. Trudie Yackley (Bro. Elwood) and her family, at the passing of Trudie’s mother, Sis. Esther “Luann” Knapp on Saturday, November 7. Services were at the Goodfield Apostolic Christian Church and burial at the Goodfield - Congerville Cemetery. Sis. Luann and Bro. Mike moved to the Taylor area with their family in 1975 to farm. In 2012 they retired to the Apostolic Christian Home in Eureka. Sis. Luann lived out Proverbs 31. She supported her husband, met the needs of her children, showed industry and creativity through her sewing and quilting, and she was kind. Her children surely call her blessed.

**New York, Croghan/Naumburg**

*Karen Farney*

Greetings to all from Lewis County, in upstate New York.
“In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.” I Thes. 5:18

Very direct and very firm teachings from God’s word. We have as a church and community been experiencing the sickness of COVID-19, as many of our churches and communities across our nation have been, and looks like it’s going to be with us for a time. We are thankful for the recovery of almost all, with one still remaining in the hospital at this time, but responding favorably.

We believe, in faith, that God is sovereign and knows our beginning and our end. He is in full control of all things, regardless of what those things consist of. We feel the blessings of a brotherhood and the cares and concerns for each other on our life’s journey. So by the grace of God, thru sickness and health, we will give thanks in everything.

After a time of absence from having church, we gathered on November 15 for a morning service only. It seemed to be very evident, as our true purpose is, worshiping God together as his body. Every day is an unknown, and may God bind us together in thankfulness in these times in which we live.

Ohio, Akron
Joelle Indermuhle

It has been a quiet month for our congregation as we maintain the regulations put into place because of COVID-19. Our prayers are with all who have been adversely affected or sickened by the virus.

Ohio, Columbus
Nancy Banks

Thanksgiving will hold a whole new meaning for many of us this year. The year 2020 has brought about changes in our lives that we thought we would never see. It has been a year of political unrest, a rampant pandemic, all-consuming fires, hurricanes, and earthquakes. But we also know that our God is a merciful God, and he is ever faithful. We have had to learn to live in faith and not fear. During those times when fear tries to overtake us, we find comfort in his word.

“Be still, and know that I am God…” Psa. 46:10

We were thankful to have Bro. Marvin Hartzler (Sis. Sue, Rittman, OH) come on a Sunday to help Bro. John on the pulpit. May God richly bless those who extend a helping hand to the smaller churches.

Ohio, Junction
Karen Schlatter

We were blessed to have Elder Bro. Wayne Hartzler (Sis. Camille, Rittman, OH) visit us and share in the reading of the Memorandum. The weekend was extra special as two new brothers were also put into the ministry. Bro. Sam Manz (Sis. Shelby) and Bro. Jim Manz (Sis. Elizabeth) will be sharing the pulpit with our current ministering brothers. We certainly wish them grace and strength from the Lord as they share in this work of service to proclaim his Word.

Bro. Doug Schlatter (Sis. Heidi) and Bro. Andy Manz (Sis. Laura) will be taking over the Sunday school teaching positions that were currently being taught by Bro. Sam and Bro. Jim. May these brothers feel our support as they take on this important work.

Bro. David Maibach (Sis. Larisa, Smithville, OH) and their family visited us recently. We appreciate the willingness of young brothers to visit and share God’s word with us.

Sis. Karen Manz and Eleanor Gerber have been in the hospital recently. May they feel our prayers as they continue to face health challenges.

We learned of the passing of George Flory McMahon. George, his wife and son used to attend church with us on a regular basis several years ago. May his family feel comforted at this time of loss.

Congratulations to Bro. Les and Sis Karen Manz on the birth of a new grandson, Lane Benjamin. His parents are Bro. Mitch and Sis. Allison Manz from Kansas City, MO.

Bro. Ben and Sis. Christa Stoller and their children have moved to our area from Francesville, IN and are attending church with us. We welcome them to our congregation.
Ohio, Latty
Angie Klopfenstein, Carmen Stoller

“When Jesus has found you, 
Tell others the story, 
That my loving Saviour 
Is your Saviour, too; 
Then pray that your Saviour 
May bring them to glory, 
And prayer will be answered—
’Twas answered for you! 
For you I am praying, 
For you I am praying, 
For you I am praying, 
I’m praying for you.”
I Am Praying For You, Hymns of Zion # 31

We always have many opportunities to pray for others, and this month was no exception. Some prayers have been answered as souls have gone on to glory through the power of Jesus. Another soul has been baptized and can go on to tell others the story of our Saviour. Also, we have many reasons to keep praying for a new couple united in marriage, our new brother in faith, and the families of the departed. We continually pray for the lost that many more could come to this saving faith.

Bro. Wayne Stoller (Sis. Dorothy, dec.) finished his fight of faith. Our prayers are with his sons, Wendell (Cindy) and Dwight (Lori), his grandchildren, great grandchildren and great-great grandchildren.

Sis. Emily Harmon (Bro. Howard) also passed into eternity. Sis. Emily worshipped with us in Latty for many years until moving to the Toledo church upon marrying Bro. Howard. We wish God’s peace and comfort upon Bro. Howard; her sisters Sis. Evelyn Hackenjos and Sis. Roberta Stoller; her children, Beth Cabaid (Roland), Bro. Doug Harmon (Sis. Lanna), Sis. Alice Ramsier (Bro. Mark), and Gayle Hebert (Nathan); along with her grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

We are thankful for Bro. Eli and Sis. Janel Schlatter as their daughter, Kristen, was married to Ryan Whitman on November 7. May God richly bless the new couple.

We rejoice with our Bro. Jon Dawson as he was recently baptized in Mansfield, OH. We pray God will bless him with guidance and peace throughout his life.

May we all feel God’s peace and joy this Christmas season and fall on our knees before him on behalf of one another.

Ohio, Mansfield
Katie Miller

“Now it is accomplished! 
I’m no longer mine; 
Lord, I will forever 
And always be Thine, 
For Thou hast created 
And purchased me, too, 
Baptized with Thy Spirit, 
Thou makest me new.”
Now it is Done, Zion’s Harp # 209

Bro. Jonathan and Bro. Matthew Dawson (Bro. Ed and Sis. Judy) were baptized November 1. We witnessed the faith and commitment of these two souls as they made covenants with God. Elder Bro. John Laukhuf (Sis. Marcia, Latty, OH) assisted in this blessed weekend.

We are prayerful for Bro. Greg and Sis. Sharon Sabo and their family in the passing of Sis. Sharon’s mother, Dorothy Spiker. We lovingly think of Sis. Pat Beer as she experiences a challenging time with her health.

Bro. Dan Sauder (Sis. Pam) is recouping from foot surgery. We wish him a speedy recovery.

The Sunday school fall outing was a blessing for the students as they participated in activities. We were thankful to be able to safely hold this much-anticipated event.

Brynlee Mae, a precious baby girl, is welcomed by grandparents Elder Bro. Mark and Sis. Jeannine Masters. Brynlee was born to Nathan and Rachel Masters on November 3. We rejoice with Bro. John Jr. and Sis. Madalyn Ramsey and big sister Heidi in the birth of Isla Madalyn on November 17. Isla’s loving grandparents are Bro. John Sr. and Sis. Dawn Ramsey and Marc and Elizabeth Contrascere.

“I am Jesus’ little lamb, 
Therefore glad at heart I am: 
My good Shepherd watches o’er me, 
And He tenderly cares for me, 
Knows me, loves me e’er the same, 
Even calls me by my name.”
I am Jesus’ Little Lamb, The Children’s Harp #13

Ohio, Rittman
Maria Beery, Julie Steiner

As we soon begin 2021, let us hold to the clear witness of Christian Love. This is under attack,
as we find ourselves sequestered at home, often distanced from each other. Sadly, our human nature is to become self-focused, not others-focused. Times like these call us to a deeper level of loving. May Christ’s light continue to shine forth in our lives, amidst these challenges. Let’s each examine the words of Jesus, “But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again…” Luke 6:35

Several new babies were born this past month. Evelyn Jo Kipfer was born on October 22, to Bro. Dave and Sis. Roxanne Kipfer. She is welcomed by big brother Will, and grandparents Bro. Jon and Sis. Suzanne Kipfer, and Bro. Joe and Sis. Ann Gerber. Two days later, on October 24, her cousin Whitt Isaac Kipfer was born to Bro. Dan and Sis. Maddie Kipfer, their firstborn son. These are such precious gifts from the Lord!

Tyson and Sara Hartzler welcomed their fourth son, Gavin Cole Hartzler, on November 4. This young lad will receive attention from many loved ones, including his older brothers, Ty, Nolan, and Jake, and his grandparents Bro. Tom and Sis. Diane Hartzler, on November 17, Bro. Nelson and Sis. Jessica Stoller (Smithville, OH) welcomed a new daughter, Chloe Nicole Stoller. Chloe’s two older brothers are Connor and Emmitt, and her grandparents here are Bro. Rod and Sis. Jill Steiner. May God fill each parent with loving hearts and daily strength!

Seeking the Lord in humble repentance, we rejoice with our friends Adelynn Steiner (Bro. Scott and Sis. Cindy), and Elmer Zollinger (Bro. Arlyn and Sis. Barb). God has promised to help us, as we seek him with our whole heart. Our prayer is for the Lord to bring more workers into his kingdom.

We extend our sympathy to Sis. Janne Klitzle (Bro. Wayne), on the passing of her sister, Sis. Mary Massner (Burlington, IA). Also, many mourn the loss of Sis. Dawn Maibach (Bro. Steve, Smithville, OH). She was a sister-in-law to Sis. Betty and Zane Bachman, Sis. Karen Riggenbach, and Sis. Sandy and Bro. Gary Dotterer in Rittman.

This past month, we were privileged to welcome visiting minister Bro. John Baumgartner (Bern, KS), and several of his family members. Truly, these times teach us that the Word of God is not bound. Whether in person or virtual, God’s Word continues going forth.

**Ohio, Sardis**

**Renee Blough, Doris Miller**

Youth HarvestCall enjoyed two evenings of soup packing in the semi-outdoor work area at Bro. Dana and Sis. Joy Indermuhle’s metal building. It takes effort on the part of those who plan monthly HarvestCall activities, and we appreciate the work that Bro. Caleb and Sis. Taryn Indermuhle do to coordinate the soup packing. Thanks to Bro. Milan and Sis. Cheryl Indermuhle and Sis. Hannah Maibach for their many Youth HarvestCall activities throughout the year. Like so many other areas of our lives, HarvestCall has needed some new protocols this year due to COVID-19. Sis. Joy Indermuhle plans the activities for the Ladies group and we are thankful for her on-going efforts as well.

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

Elder Bro. Bob Dotterer shared the Memorandum letter with our congregation. The elders often request prayer on their behalf as they address spiritual matters. This is one area where every brother, sister, and friend of the truth can do our part, no matter our age or health.

We hear of many battling various cancers and illnesses and our prayers for strength go out to the afflicted and their families and physicians. Special prayers are on our hearts right now as Bro. Rob Figel (Sis. Angie) has been diagnosed with leukemia. We are thankful that he has confessed that he has complete faith in Jesus as his Saviour and his help. What a wonderful encouragement to us in all our needs.

“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” Phil. 4:13

**Ohio, Smithville**

**Connie Maletich, Millie Stoller**

As the COVID-19 crisis continues, may we not forget where our strength comes from.

“Be still and know that I am God: I will be exalted among
the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.” Psa. 46:10

Aren’t we thankful for our living and loving God providing for us each day.

Bro. Kevin Indermuhle (Bro. Scott and Sis. Patty) and Sis. Crystal Gasser (Bro. Ben and Sis. Sharon) were united in marriage this month. May God bless this new couple.

We are happy to have Jacob Lloyd as a new convert. We rejoice with him, along with the angels in heaven.

After a long struggle with cancer our Sis. Dawn Maibach (Bro. Steve) finished her race here on earth. Her sons, Mitchell (Ashley) and Ian (Abby) and grandchildren will miss her. She is also survived by her mom, Sis. Charlotte Limburger (Rockville, CT) and many loving family members.

Our prayers and sympathy go to Bro. Garth Gucker (Sis. Shelia) as they mourn the loss of his father, Robert Gucker. Bro. Sam Ramsier (Sis. Courtney) also said an earthly farewell to his grandma, Sis. Emily Harmon (Toledo, OH).

Visiting ministers blessing us this month were Bro. Craig Stickling (Sis. Jacqueline, Peoria, IL), Bro Dana Indermuhle (Sis. Joy, Sardis, OH), and Bro. Adam Luginbuhl (Sis. Jami, Philadelphia, PA).

Our hospital patients for the month are  Sis. Inez Ramsier (Bro. Bob, dec.), Boyd Nieman, Nathan Beery (Bro. Dwaine and Sis. Shelly) and Dorrice Beery (Bro. Dwaine and Sis. Shelly). Our prayer for each is healing and strength from our Heavenly Father.

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” Isa. 9:6

Ohio, Toledo
Anne Baumann, Rebekah Witzig

“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:” 1 Pet. 3:18

We were blessed to be able to take Communion with our church this past month. As I was standing there, eating and drinking the bread and the wine, I was reminded of how completely unworthy I am in the presence of an awesome God. Yet through his sacrifice and blood, Jesus Christ has made me completely righteous and worthy to stand before God. I realized how we are worthy because of Jesus alone and not because of anything we can or will do. I believe that this is the heart that Jesus wants us to have as we take Communion. The greatest sacrifice was the just (Jesus) for the unjust (all of us), and I am so grateful to take part in Communion to remember the pain and death of our Savior.

Our thoughts and prayers went out to the family of Sis. Emily Harmon (Bro. Howard) after her sudden passing on November 6. Sis. Emily was the mother of Bro. Doug Harmon (Sis. Lanna). We continue to be prayerful for Sis. Teresa Rywaliski as she continues to recover from previous health struggles, with the help of her daughter.

Bro. Doug Harmon (Sis. Lanna) announced his retirement from the pulpit and gave his last sermon on October 29. We will never be able to fully express our love and appreciation for Bro. Doug and Sis. Lanna’s many years of service on the pulpit.

We were blessed to have Bro. Ned Stoller (Sis. Heidi, Alto, MI) and Bro. Mark Ramsier (Sis. Alice, Sardis, OH) share truths from the Bible with us. Elder Bro. Bill Schlatter (Sis. Emily, Junction, OH) was able to assist Elder Bro. Matt Manz in carrying out Communion. How thankful we are for the love and support we receive from our churches, far and near.

Oregon, Portland
Louisa Gallup

Earlier this month, Bro. Ilija Gavrilovic (Sis. Nada) suffered loss as his sister passed away after a time of illness. Maria Boronka was a sister in the Nazarene church in Kitchener, Ontario. She was preceded in death two years ago by her husband Peter, who was an elder brother in above mentioned congregation.

The families have our prayerful support as they mourn the loss of their loved one. May the Lord sustain them with peace and comfort in their time of sorrow.

As we are moving into the Christmas season, we wish
everyone blessings of good health and opportunities to spend time with loved ones, if only via computer technology since travel may not be a safe option during this pandemic. May the Lord bless and keep us all.

Oregon, Silverton
Lorraine Kuenzi, Teresa Sinn

Collin Zollinger (Bro. Jim and Sis. Tresa) has moved to Lester, IA, for a temporary job assignment. We pray for God’s blessings as he guides Collin’s future plans.

Joe Prince has begun his repentance and desires to be a part of our fellowship. God continues to bless us by adding to the fold, and we pray that he will guide and direct Joe as he puts his faith and trust in him.

Jacob Kuenzi (Bro. Adam and Sis. Lori) has begun his repentance journey! We rejoice with Jacob and pray for God’s nearness and guidance as he looks to Jesus.

Carol Schurter (Jason) also desires to be a member in our fellowship and would appreciate your prayers as she continues to seek him in her life.

Holly Kuenzi (Bro. Aden and Sis. Becky) and Dominic Webel (Bro. Jeff and Sis. Julie) from Kansas City, MO, were married on November 5 with a small group in attendance and then celebrated with a drive thru reception the next evening for the congregation to attend. We rejoice with the newlyweds and pray for God’s blessings on their new beginning!

Sis. Mary Metzger Massner (Bro. Lloyd, Burlington, IA), recently passed away. Sis. Mary was an aunt to many in our congregation and we pray for them as they grieve her passing but look forward to meeting her again in heaven someday.

Sis. Elizabeth Peasley’s grandmother, Ada Peasley from Iowa, also recently passed away. We are thankful for God’s provision in these times of sorrow and trust that he will provide joy in these difficult times.

Sis. Laura Metz’s (Bro. Joel) grandmother, Sis. Marianne Metzger (Lester, IA), passed away this month. Our prayers are with Sis. Laura and the family as they mourn the loss of their loved one.

Our congregation was blessed to listen to Julia Kuenzi’s (Bro. Adam and Sis. Lori) testimony and witness her baptism the weekend of November 14! It was a blessing to share in this event together even though we weren’t all able to physically. Thank you to Elder Bro. Tony Manz (Sis. Denise, Junction, OH), for sharing in the weekend with us and offering to share the Gospel on our behalf.

We welcome Bro. Matt and Sis. Anni Rickets from Peoria, IL, to Oregon! They plan to stay in the Salem area for a couple months for school and work; we look forward to getting to know them!

Please pray for our congregation as we enter into another period where our gatherings are limited to 25 people or less. We are anxious for things to return to normal and pray for the Lord to unite our hearts despite our not being able to fully gather together.

Pennsylvania, Philadelphia
Laura Isch

"Thy love it was which sought me; Thou wast unsought by me, And to the haven brought me, Where I would gladly be; The things which once distressed me My heart no longer move, Since this sweet truth impressed me That I possess Thy love."

Life and Full Abundance in Jesus, Zions Harp, #178

There seems to be so much around us that could distress us. What a blessing when we can focus on Christ’s love and remain unmoved! Let us keep our eyes upon Jesus!

This month we were sad to say farewell to Bro. Ethan and Sis. Jenna Harter as they have relocated to Denver, CO. We know they will be a blessing to the Denver church but will miss having them with us.

Our prayers are with Bro. Daryl Luginbuhl as his sister Sis. Dawn Maibach (Bro. Steve, Smithville, OH) passed away recently. May God be near each one as we seek to serve him.

Tennessee, Nashville
Mike Fritz

We are thankful for the ability to gather for worship and for the willingness of visitors to serve us.
Our recent visiting ministers have included Bro. Byron Stoller (Sis. Carol, Gridley, IL), Bro. Gary Sinn (Sis. Paulette, Latty, OH), and Bro. Brian Wenninger (Sis. Mackenzie, Leo, IN). We have also been blessed by the fellowship of visitors from Congerville, IL and Leo, IN.

We are thankful to welcome Jacob Ursu, who has recently moved to the area with his work.

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, jeremybradbury1975@gmail.com.

Texas, Austin/Bastrop

Candy Meiss

Sending our Love and Greetings from Austin/Bastrop.

"God commended his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Rom 5:8

We give thanks that we continue to hold services at the church and a virtual church service is available for those who are not attending at the church. We have moved into phase 3 of reopening and are having Sunday school outside during our morning service. It was such a blessing that Bro. Ryan Bertsch (Bluffton North, IN) served us via Zoom for services one Wednesday evening. Thankful for his willingness to spend time with us and share God’s love.

Texas, Dallas-Ft. Worth

Sheena Pelsy

“And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.” Ex. 14:13-14

Love and greetings from the Dallas church! We were so blessed to have Bro. Dennis Rassi (Sis. Diane, Austin, TX) and a couple visitors come up for our church services.

As Bro. Dennis preached the morning message, we found ourselves being reminded over and over again how God is God and he is able.

In Exodus 14, we read how God does the impossible and parts the Red Sea for his people to cross and be saved from the Egyptians. Just like God showed up for Moses and the Israelites, he shows up for each of us when we cry out to him for direction. In our Red Sea moments, we as believers can have full faith in knowing God hears our cries and will make a way for us. He knows what is best and can be trusted even when his ways seem impossible because he is God. So, whether you’re crying out to God for direction, in the midst of crossing your sea, or find yourself on the other side, take hope in knowing God is God and he is able.

Vermont, Clarendon

Sarah Wagenbach

We are thankful for Rockville, CT ministers willing to serve us remotely this month: Bro. Brent Walder (Sis. Naomi), Bro. Jon Zahner (Sis. Amy) and Bro. Brad Wiegand (Sis. Deanna). We have been blessed to have sunshine and clear weather to continue having services outdoors. A new addition to our church family is Clara Louise, born on November 5. Thankful parents and siblings are Bro. Phil and Sis. Sarah Wagenbach, Gabrielle, Mitchell and Gretta. Grandparents are Bro. Don and Sis. Marie Wagenbach (Washington, IL) and Bro. Sherman and Sis. Joanne Lanz (Rockville, CT).
The News and Notices section of The Silver Lining provides a way for qualifying non-profit entities to make the brotherhood aware of church-related events, opportunities, needs, and services that would be of special interest to Apostolic Christian Church of America members and regular attendees. Email us at editor@acsilverlining.org for a copy of our advertising policy, which specifies who may advertise, sizes, file formats and deadlines.

News and Notices

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

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For information, contact:
Bro. Jim and Sis. Deb Tilbury
Phone: (507) 281-2875

Light from the Word

Now available by downloadable PDF at www.acpublications.org

After entering the website, click on the item located at the left hand frame entitled, “Light from the Word Reprints”. The entire set of editorials are available in a complete download (June 1987 to current).
2021 Team Schedule

Mexico

Reynosa: Construction  Jan 5-12
Trenton Edelman trentonedelman@gmail.com

Magdalena: Silverton, OR  March 20-27, 2021
Magdalena: Congerville, IL  May 28–June 3, 2021
Magdalena: Washington, IL  June 11 - 17, 2021
Magdalena: Detroit MI & Lamont, KS June 25 - July 1, 2021

Questions about teams to Magdalena?
Contact: Adam Kaeb - operationscve@gmail.com

Jamaica

Awareness Tour  Jan 8-21, 2021  12
Loren Dettwyler  503-580-9629  lmdettwyler@gmail.com

CCCD - JDV  June 4-12, 2021  40
Mark Lindberg  815-641-9065  lindma@hotmail.com

*If you are interested in sponsoring a team to Jamaica, contact Loren Dettwyler - lmdettwyler@gmail.com

Haiti

Les Cayes MEBSH/Construction/Ohio  Jan 8-15  12
Ron Palitto Ronp@palittoconsulting.com  330-336-5373

Les Cayes HWA/ Water Aid  Jan 15-22  4
Rich Kuntz  rrkuntz60@gmail.com  815-848-2420

Les Cayes Haiti Trade Schools  Jan 15-22  4
Andy Getz  andy@getzitdone.com  574-870-5046

Les Cayes MEBSH/Construction/Alto  Jan 22-29  12
Nathan Steffen nds235@gmail.com  616-308-6621

Les Cayes MEBSH/Construction/Silverton 29-Feb 5  12
Harvey Kuenzi  hkloanoak@msn.com  503-932-3128

Les Cayes MEBSH/Construction/Roanoke Feb 12-19  12
Josh Moser  joshmoser92@gmail.com  309-573-6398

Les Cayes MEBVSH/Construction/Peoria Feb 19-26  12
Wes Sutter  wasutter@icloud.com  309-863-1309

Les Cayes / Torberck Haiti Dairy  Feb 26-Mar 5  12
Brent Hodel  htf94@gmail.com  309-231-7467

Les Cayes Haiti Trade Schools  March 5-12  4
Andy Getz  andy@getzitdone.com  574-870-5046

Les Cayes HWA/ Water Aid  March 5-12  4
Rich Kuntz  rrkuntz60@gmail.com  815-848-2420

Les Cayes MEBSH/Haiti Support  March 19-26  HC-CC
Jon Zeller  jczeller1972@gmail.com  309-266-9009

Les Cayes MEBSH/Maintenance  March 26-April 2  12
Jon Zeller  jczeller1972@gmail.com  309-266-9009

AWARENESS TOURS

JAMAICA

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

Our next Awareness Tour is:
Jan. 8-21, 2021. There is room for 12 people.
To learn more, Email or Call:
Loren Dettwyler
lmdettwyler@gmail.com or 503-580-9629

Haiti

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

Currently no trips are scheduled.
To learn more, Email or call:
Rich Bertschi, 309.467.2351
Rick Wuehrich, 219.863.4163
**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

   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

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**En Gedi House Ministry - Mandeville, Jamaica**

**MISSIONARY OPPORTUNITY**

**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
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
   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) 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
Bible Distribution:
Sharing His Word in Love

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

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

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Email: amiller@harvestcall.org or
Phone: 765.250.4295 x108

December 2020    SILVER LINING  53
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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

For additional details for this exciting and worthy service opportunity contact:
Amber Miller - Missionary Care Coordinator
Email: amiller@harvestcall.org or
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**Missionary Support Card Packs**
A Resource Tool to Stay Connected with our Missionaries

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

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


**Contact your Local HarvestCall Representative for Availability**

**Another way to pray for our missionaries.**
Download HarvestCall’s one-page document listing all those serving. It includes prayer ideas and is appropriate for posting on your refrigerator or church bulletin board.

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

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

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

**Isaiah 54:13**

**To Sponsor a Child or School**

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

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| Spouse ________________________ | □ Haiti Student □ Jamaica |
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| Home Ph ________________________ | [ ] Wherever needed |
| Cell Ph ________________________ | If possible, I prefer: |
| Email _________________________ | □ Boy – Age ______ |
|                                  | □ Girl – Age ______ |
|                                  | □ No Preference |

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

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COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER & POTENTIAL BOARD MEMBER OPPORTUNITY

Volunteer Communications Manager
The primary purpose of the Child Sponsorship Communications Manager (CM) position is to build awareness for the ministry throughout the international ACCA brotherhood. In addition, the CM also creates customized communications support for various CS programs and projects as needed to support the CS Committee ministry oversight in five countries.

Responsibilities of Position:

- Develop an annual communication plan that includes strategies, tactics, audiences, and special projects for the coming year
- Utilize existing ACCA media to promote CS to the brotherhood (Silver Lining, HarvestCall Updates, Proclaim & Serve Conference, website, social media, etc.).
- Coordinate story leads/ideas with the CS Committee and our Christian Education Partners in each country to ensure broad representation of CS in ACCA media and material
- Develop sponsor messages that reinforce the value of CS and their important role in spreading the gospel and providing an education
- Create special communications tools as necessary to support the ministry (e.g., conference display signage and material, powerpoint presentations, brochures/handouts, etc.)

Potential Board Role:
- The board of Child Sponsorship consists of 6-7 couples who serve a six-year term, with an opportunity to serve a second term (singles can also serve on the board) – Option to serve but not required.

Requirements for Candidates:
- A B.S. degree in communications is preferred; some level of demonstrated communications experience required
- Strong language skills (grammar, spelling, punctuation)
- Creative writing skills that tell a story and engage the reader
- Ability to prepare an outline and interview sources for articles/stories
- Organizational skills to work with others to meet deadlines

For additional details for this exciting and worthy service opportunity contact Ken Rinkenberger.
Email: kenrink@comcast.net or
Phone: 314-614-0738
The Word of God

[1511] Price: $4.50
To say that the Bible is important is an understatement. Indeed, it is central to every part of Christianity. But why is it important? From where did it come from? How can you understand it? How does it apply to you? The answers to these questions are vital to your continued spiritual growth. The Bible is God’s communication to you. You need to learn to understand the Bible and apply it to your every-day life, and there is no better place to learn about it than from the Bible itself. What do you measure things against to make your decisions about what is right and wrong? Many people are living miserable lives because they are confused about what guidelines to use for their life decisions. God gives us a measuring stick that is unchanging, the Bible. Because God is our authority in every area, we need to make sure that we know what His Word says, and strive to make it our authority in every area of life.

Old Testament Characters [1618] Price: $8.50
This interesting Bible study from InterVarsity Press has been adapted with permission by ACCFS. The study consists of 12 lessons and can be done individually, in small groups, and congregationally. Character studies included in this Bible study: Jonah: Running from God, Hannah: Praying in Pain, Samuel: Hearing God’s Voice, Abraham: Following God’s Call, Caleb & Joshua: Overcoming the Impossible, Elijah: Knowing God’s Power, Achan: Sin in the Community, King Saul: Doing Almost All of God’s Will, Daniel: Tempted to Compromise, Esther: Saying Yes to God, David: Loving Your Enemy, Moses: Seeking Justice

This engaging Bible study from InterVarsity Press has been adapted with permission by ACCFS. The study consists of 10 lessons and can be done individually, in small groups, and congregationally. Character studies included in this Bible study: Anna & Simeon: Growing Old with God, A Throwaway Woman: Redeemed by Christ, A Blind Beggar: Seeing Jesus with Open Eyes, Mary Magdalene: Loving Jesus in Practical Ways, Thomas: Disciple of Doubt, Simon: Bargaining with God, A Jailer: Getting Free from Internal Prisons, Priscilla & Aquila: Practicing Hospitality, Governor Felix: Saying “Wait” to God, Philemon: Bridging Barriers to Brotherhood

This inspiring Bible study from the NavPress Life Change series has been adapted with permission by ACCFS. The study consists of fifteen lessons and can be done individually, in small groups, and congregationally. Topics included in this study: Introduction: Overview, From John to Jesus, The Preparation, Galilean Ministry Begins, Kingdom People, From Town to Town, With Great Authority, On the Alert, Parables and Teachings, The Way to Life, The Son of David, Questions, The End Approaches, Arrest, Trial, and Death, Resurrection and Ascension, and Looking Back.

IN STORE SPECIAL
My First Year In Japan
by Willis Ehnle
FREE while supplies last to walk in customers.
Save the Date for ALive2021 -- May 29-31

Lord willing, the Athens, Alabama congregation plans to host ALive 2021 over the Memorial Day weekend. While the Covid pandemic continues to make plans unpredictable in all of our lives, the Committee is prayerful that the effects of the virus will have run its course by May and are moving ahead with plans.

The event is being planned at The Vision (www.visionministry.org), which is a 300+ acre Christian retreat center with both camping and lodge facilities available. The weekend theme/topics are still being developed. Ministering brothers Brad Metz (Bloomington, IL) and Kirk Plattner (West Lafayette, IN) have agreed to come and speak.

Registration is scheduled to begin on Saturday, January 2.

Check out our website (www.ALiveAlabama.com) or Facebook (@ALiveAlabama) for more details about the weekend and to register. You can also send an e-mail to info@alivealabama.com.

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

Bible Studies offered by the Apostolic Christian Church

Keeping a Quiet Heart in Disquieting Times

A woman’s guide to aligning her heart and habits with God’s Word.

Today more than ever a woman is challenged with keeping her heart and habits aligned with God’s Word so she can remain grounded in faith and be a sound example to others. The purpose of this Bible study is to encourage and help women pursue a quiet spirit and proper focus, especially during unsettling circumstances. Topics included are: Your Top Priority, Time in the Word, Trials, Trust, Talk, Territory, and Testimony. $4.50 [1516]

These Bible studies have been developed by the Apostolic Christian Church of America (ACCA).

Prayer: The Key to a Close Walk

This Bible Study on prayer seeks to help you examine your prayers and prayer life for the purpose of learning to pray more effectively, ultimately resulting in a closer walk with God. The topics included are: what prayer is, what prayer is not, when prayers are answered, and when prayers are not answered. This Bible Study also looks at how Jesus taught the disciples to pray and how His teaching can be applied to your own life. $4.50 [1517]

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Loving as Jesus Loves

— Continued from pg. 3

power and preeminence. God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow. God has “put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.” We as the church, the body of Christ, become the fullness of God, representing him and fulfilling his purposes here on earth.

God not only dwells in Jesus in fullness, but desires “that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may … know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.” When we truly know the love of Christ, we even in our humanness, can be filled with all the fullness of God. We become partakers of God’s divine nature through Jesus, for “of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.” As newborn creatures re-created in Christ Jesus, our “life is hid with Christ in God.” We are “complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.” In him we have everything we need, for in Jesus we find “all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”

God from the beginning has desired that every human would bear his image and know him intimately and fully. “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.” Through Jesus, God reveals to us his perfect image, redeems us from our fallen state, and enables us as brothers and sisters of Christ to be molded into the image of His Son Jesus. He calls us to love as Jesus loves, live as Jesus lives, and serve as Jesus serves, “for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: (and) speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.”

Jesus brought glory to God as a full reflection of His love, and equips us do the same: “Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit… As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; continue ye in my love.” May we be inspired to grow up into the image of Jesus, bringing glory to God and hope to a lost world as we love as Jesus loves.

Endnotes

1 Colossians 2:9-10
2 Matthew 1:23
3 Colossians 1:15
4 John 1:18
5 Hebrews 1:3
6 2 Corinthians 4:4
7 John 14:9, 11
8 John 3:34
9 John 1:14
10 John 14:6
11 John 3:35-36
12 Philippians 2:6-8
13 Colossians 1:20
14 Hebrews 1:3
15 Colossians 1:18-19
16 Philippians 2:9
17 Ephesians 1:22-23
18 Ephesians 3:17,19
19 John 1:16
20 Colossians 3:3
21 Colossians 2:10
22 Colossians 2:3
23 Romans 8:29
24 Ephesians 4:13,15
25 John 15:8-9
way I kind of process those two words because in business training for years and years in my career, motivation is a word that’s constantly brought up. I don’t remember ever, in a business training setting, hearing the word inspired or inspiring. So, it’s just something that I use to sort through some of the things that I encounter in life.

Let’s continue reading and see what God has in store for us as the scripture opens here in the words of the Apostle Paul, 2 Corinthians, Chapter 4.

Now, here we have a man who certainly could tell you, and he does through the Word, that he was motivated during a portion of his life for all the wrong reasons, and yet, those characteristics that the devil – the adversary – was using for wrong, God found a way to use them for good. That’s just fascinating, isn’t it? The very same desires, the very same energies, the very same devotion that Satan was using in the Apostle Paul to motivate the carnal part of his mind – to bring difficulty, even threatening, breaking up families, jailing believers, seeing them to their very death – God could use for good. That’s just fascinating, isn’t it? The very same desires, the very same energies, the very same devotion that Satan was using in the Apostle Paul to motivate the carnal part of his mind – to bring difficulty, even threatening, breaking up families, jailing believers, seeing them to their very death – God could use for good. That’s just fascinating, isn’t it? The very same desires, the very same energies, the very same devotion that Satan was using in the Apostle Paul to motivate the carnal part of his mind – to bring difficulty, even threatening, breaking up families, jailing believers, seeing them to their very death – God could use for good.

Chapter 4 in 2 Corinthians.

“Therefore, seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.” (vs. 1-2)

Could we just stop there for a second and reflect on those two verses? It’s very important when thinking about the ministry of the gospel, to recognize that we all have a ministry. It’s not just a ministry where you’re standing at a pulpit. It’s a ministry of life. It’s a ministry of your example of godly living, godly speech, godly action and thought. That’s all of our ministry. But it’s not our ministry; it’s the ministry of God that we have received, and that’s what the Apostle Paul’s saying here. He says, “We have this ministry, but we receive the ministry.” It’s not ours. We can’t do with it what we want to do because it’s God’s ministry, and through his mercy, it was given to them.

It’s very, very important for us to think about this even if we’re not talking about pulpit ministry though it’s particularly important when we are talking about pulpit ministry. Even if we’re not, this is God’s word. We can’t use it for our own benefit. We can’t shape it or change it just so it fits our life. We need to fit our life into the ministry. We need to fit our lives into God’s ways, and that’s what he’s saying here.

He said they have specifically renounced dishonesty. When he’s talking about the ministry of God, why would the first thing that he says when reflecting on this ministry be about not bringing this in a way that’s dishonest? Why would that be? It’s seems like it’s out of place, doesn’t it? You wouldn’t think about God’s word and dishonesty having any relationship. Well, the dishonesty doesn’t come from God; it comes
from man. It comes from man taking God’s word, trying to use it to their own benefit, shaping it in a way that fits them, and then gathering followers based upon their way of interpreting God’s word. Paul’s saying that is not us. We are not trying to take God’s word and make it our own.

We’re not walking in craftiness. We’re not deceiving. As a matter of fact, “by manifestation of the truth we commend ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.” He uses this word “by manifestation.” It means that when something is manifested, it is an idea or belief that is brought to life by example. It’s like Jesus. Jesus was God manifested. He became a man.

So, the apostle was saying here that the truth is what you see in their example, and he’s contrasting that to every other example of ministry. He’s telling the people this isn’t just the speech about Paul and his ministry. That’s really a secondary point, isn’t it? The Word is trying to tell the church that they need to pay attention and they need to follow the ministry that’s true. They need to recognize that sometimes people bring messages of God to the people, messages supposedly from God, to benefit themselves, and they would use dishonest means. They will be crafty and deceitful in doing it because somehow, they are benefiting from it.

We go right back to the proverb. What motivates the speaker? What motivates the author? What motivates those that are singing the praises of God? We have to understand the motivation to understand the message. You know, probably everybody here today, at least those of a certain age, may remember these televangelists whom had tens of thousands of followers watching and contributing to their ministries. (I’m not bringing judgment on any particular people, but it was so prevalent in the press. I guess now that I think about it, it’s been a decade or probably two decades ago, so not everybody would remember this.) They would promote their ministries, and they grew. They became wealthy, and then it was discovered that they had ulterior motives and that they were really doing it, not as a vehicle to spread the gospel, but as a vehicle to obtain power, wealth, and prestige. Eventually that led to their own downfall. Maybe that’s a stark example. I know none of us are in that particular circumstance. None of us are televangelists, but we could be drawn into the word that other people are sharing because it’s enticing and it sounds good and it connects with some of our instincts. We always, always have to make a judgment as to what the motivation is. What is there for the speaker to gain?

So, continuing on in our reading. Such wonderful and wise teachings.

One of the ways that God provides every single one of us a way of escape from temptation is contained in verse 17. No matter where we are, no matter what we’re experiencing, no matter what our circumstances are, whether very simple or the most dire of circumstances, verse 17 tells us that compared to eternal glory, every temptation we have is light. Every temptation we have is light. So, what God is telling us through his Word is always, always think about the time and make the best of it. The Apostle said redeem the time. When we compare mortality, which is the period of time that we will be tempted, whether it’s minutes, hours, days, or years, compared to eternity, which goes on forever and ever and ever, the temptation never outweighs the glory. We can put up with anything and everything if we put it in context to the reward of eternal life. The most powerful way to overcome sin is thinking about heaven and what’s...
waiting for us there compared to what we have to put up with on the earth. And I’m sure all of us have, in one way or another, at some time in our lives, maybe often, done that very thing. I can do this because I know it won’t last. There are also all kinds of earthly examples for which you could put that into practice. It doesn’t always have to be the eternal, spiritual example.

It’s what we try to teach children. When raising our children, we try to teach them patience. We try to teach them that old saying, ‘Good things come to those who wait.’ Don’t expect reward immediately. Don’t allow yourself to be conditioned for that because it just isn’t the way life works, especially for the believer. Waiting is our earthly schooling. God doesn’t always move quickly, for sure.

Another thing to think about, and I just love this verse, is that we are vessels. I think our ministers could probably attest to this that we try to remind ourselves frequently of the seventh verse. We are earthly vessels, but the treasure is not the vessel. The treasure is IN the vessel. So, if you think about it, a vessel is not as important as what’s inside because it’s protecting something inside. No matter what it is, the vessel is not as important as what it contains. As we approach the pulpit, it’s so important to keep this in mind that what we have to say isn’t as important as what the Holy Spirit brings, and that puts us in a frame of mind to receive what the Holy Spirit has to give. If we don’t – I’ll speak for myself – if I don’t remind myself of that, then maybe the devil could have sway over me like I have something important to say and you need to listen. That doesn’t work. It’s of no long-term spiritual value what my ideas are. It’s what is within me through the Spirit. I’m the vessel. The Holy Spirit is the treasure. That’s what is most important, and that is where the power of God lies – in the treasure and not of us. That is what the Apostle said.

That’s true in all of our lives; now, we’re back to what ministry means. It’s not always a pulpit ministry. It’s the example of our lives, and yet it’s not us. It’s not us giving. It’s not us serving. It’s not us being a good example. It’s God working through us, and that’s where the power comes. If anybody benefits from our example, we can’t take the credit. The credit goes to God because that’s where the power comes. It’s so humbling to think about that, and it’s also so good to constantly remind ourselves that any good that comes from us, comes from God.

Who’s troubled this morning? Who’s perplexed? Who feels like life is bringing persecution to them? Who feels so cast down? We may have those kinds of human feelings today or have had them in the past or will have them in the future, but God’s word inspires us to keep them in perspective. Are we perplexed? Don’t despair. Are we persecuted? We will not be forsaken. Are we feeling down? God will not allow us to be destroyed. Are we troubled? Don’t allow it to bring distress because God is always with us.

It’s human to have those emotions and those feelings and those weights, but what the word tells us is there’s more to life when you’re following Jesus. There’s more to it. Don’t succumb to the weights. Don’t succumb to the battle. Don’t allow them to overtake you, but as you’re casting “about in the body of the dying of the Lord Jesus”, think about the life that he gave you. It’s again about perspective. We can compare anything that we’re experiencing to what Jesus experienced, and we can really just say that nothing we have experienced compares to what Jesus did and that he did it, not because he was deserving, but because he wanted us to have life. It doesn’t get any more inspiring – that Jesus did all he did so we could have life,
so we could have the treasure of
the glory of heaven, so nothing can
hold us back from that.

Except, what can? What can?
Could you answer the question
‘What can hold us back?’ or
‘What is powerful enough to hold
us back from that gift of eternal
life?’ There’s only one thing,
and that is our self-will. If we
give in to our selfish will then
we can’t have it. We can’t have
the treasure. We can’t have the
gift. We can’t have the reward.

But when we set aside ourselves
and all the things that go along
with it – all of our bad habits,
all of our bad desires, all of
our bad friends, all of our bad
inclinations, (I’m using the word
bad; there’s probably a better
word to use) all those things that
have to do with selfishness. When
we set those things aside and give
our heart to God, the blessings
are immeasurable. I don’t mean
what we feel and what we sense
in peace, but that’s good enough.
I mean, that is pretty good, but
that doesn’t even compare with
what the reward is in heaven, and
that’s what he’s saying.

He’s said we need to die every
day. Death has to work in us.

We have to realize that unless we
die for ourselves, we can’t live for
Christ. It’s the great complication
of being born again. We have to
die that we can live.

Christmas Carol
Zion’s Harp #7

Our song of praise to God ascend,
And there with angels’ voices blend.
The day of gladness now is here;
Sing hallelujah with good cheer.
Hallelujah!

From heaven, in the dark of night,
He came and brought eternal light.
Behold now how this light divine
Throughout this pilgrim’s dale doth shine.
Hallelujah!

And in the Father’s image pure
He came earth’s trials to endure.
He leads us with a gentle hand
To that long cherished, happy land.
Hallelujah!

He, who in glory there doth reign,
Did dwell on earth as humble man;
That through His noble sacrifice,
We find the path to paradise.
Hallelujah!

And when our days here are complete,
As brethren, we our Lord shall meet,
And be transformed before His sight
To glory and celestial light.
Hallelujah!
The following document was written by Elder Bro. Ernest Graf, Sr., during his tenure as Elder, from 1922 to 1946. It is entitled to, “TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN,” and likely was written in response to various inquiries regarding our doctrine and belief. Elder Graf is thought to have been a leader among the Elder brothers in his era.

Upon your request, I will give you a brief outline of the History and Doctrine of the Apostolic Christian Church of America. Although in most historical books this church is not mentioned, we believe it is a continuation of that first body of Christians of which Christ was the Head, and by which was carried on the work which the Saviour began. By reason of many persecutions it was at times almost extinct, but at intervals God awakened and endowed men who gave new life and impetus to the work of saving souls. Thus, the flame of its love was kept alive and the purity of its faith continued unto the present day. Its testimony is summed up in the words of the Apostle, “Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.”

About a century ago many congregations flourished in France, Switzerland, German, and Holland. The first congregation in America was organized in Lewis County, New York in 1847. A little later, more congregations were founded in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Iowa, by brethren who emigrated from Europe. Today, there are 60 churches in 15 states, with a following of about 10,000 members and friends (steady attendants who aim to become members) and an almost equal number of Sunday school scholars.

The church has no educational institutions or colleges. It has no paid ministry, neither do its ministers study or prepare their sermons. In preaching the Gospel, they rely entirely upon the inspiration and revelation of the Holy Spirit. In this, they believe to be following the example of the Apostles and early Christians.

Its teaching is, that all men are by nature sinners, having inherited the old Adam’s nature, which develops as one grows to the age of maturity. That we must be born anew through regeneration, crucifying the body of sin in true repentance, burying it in the death of Christ through the baptism of faith (not infant baptism), and arising unto newness of life.

That by the prayer and laying on of hands by the Elders, the Holy Spirit is poured out upon such a cleansed and purified heart, to lead it upon the pathway of truth and righteousness.

Church disciplines require that all members adhere to and faithfully obey the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Apostles, exercising all Christian virtues as exemplified by these (teachings), abstaining from the lusts and pleasures of the world, and from vanity and pride. We believe that members should have their enjoyment in fulfilling the will of God as manifested by His Son, Jesus Christ.

Willful disobedience and degeneracy is handled by expulsion from membership, but unless their error is considered a sin unto death (1 John 5:16), such can be restored again after due proof and manifestation of amendment.

The members of this church are non-combatant, but are willing to perform any reasonable service for the Government aside from using weapons of combatant warfare.

-by Perry A. Klopfenstein
The Light of Hope

The Lion and the Lamb

The Apocalypse of John of Patmos, known to us as the Book of Revelation and the 27th book in the canon of the New Testament, is perhaps the most debated book in the Bible. Full of strange symbols and mixed metaphors and graphic images, it seems to either attract an ardent reader who wants to “put the puzzle together” or, more likely, scare and intimidate us away from reading and studying it. Given the diverse ways of approaching and understanding the Revelation of Jesus Christ, unveiled to John, it shouldn’t surprise us that John, too, seems to also hear and see unexpected, paradoxical images and experience his own confusion.

One of these surprises that I have come to appreciate and really enjoy thinking about is the lion that is a lamb. In chapter 5 we read “And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, ‘Who is worthy to open the scroll, and to loose the seals thereof?’ And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.” (vs. 1-4)

Visualize yourself in John’s position. The anticipation and weight of the words contained in the scroll must have been tremendous, because when he hears that no one in heaven or earth is worthy to open the scroll, it drives him to tears. Have you ever wanted to know something so much that you wept because the answer was unable to be found? Thankfully for John and us, the tears did not last long, for in the next verse we read “And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book...” (vs. 5) What relief John must have felt when he heard those words “weep not, for the Lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed!” In life we all have face crises, and though not every situation has a happy ending, the euphoric sigh of relief when good news is received is something we can all relate to.

Imagine John, disheartened and holding his tear-filled face in his hands, then hearing these words, and with great hope lifting his eyes to look upon the mighty conquering Lion... and “behold... in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain.” (vs. 6) But, I thought the elder said it was the Lion who was worthy to conquer? Yes, yes, the lion who is the lamb, and the lamb who conquers by being conquered. The Gospel is the wisdom of God, and, at times it seems like foolishness to us. Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift!

-by Blake Widmer
But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

Isaiah 40:31