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... In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

John 16:33
By reason of use

This issue contains reader submissions on “How do you keep your daily time in the Word and prayer from getting stale?” In this edition is rich in practical applications that can enhance our time in the Word. Finding a method(s) that work for us individually is important to our spiritual discernment and wellbeing. Becoming stale compromises our ability to apply and share the gospel with others.

The writer of Hebrews expresses it so articularly as he admonishes on the results of becoming stale and how active time with the Word increases our ability to discern. Purposed and disciplined exercise increases our physical strength, endurance, and effectiveness. Likewise, exercising our time in the Word will produce the same results in our spiritual wellbeing.

“For when for a time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For everyone that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness; for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of a full age, even those who have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.” Hebrews 5:12-14

In Christian love,
Jeff Grimm and Greg Lehman, Counseling Elders
Loving as Jesus Loves - Caring for Society’s Outcasts

“And when the scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto his disciples, How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?”

Throughout the four Gospels, Jesus repeatedly sought out and showed loving care to society’s forgotten ones. We have a compassionate Savior, Jesus Christ, who while He walked here upon the earth, established the manner we as His followers should treat our fellow mankind - regardless of social status.

Jesus was no stranger to rejection. Being the express image of God, he made himself of no reputation, and took on Himself the form of a servant. In becoming the “Son of Man” on earth, he was tempted in every way we are, yet without sin. Included in those temptations was rejection, a common theme for the outcasts of our society - the last, least, lost, and lonely people. Of Jesus Himself, it was prophesied: “He is despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised and we esteemed him not.”

The outcasts of society were common recipients of Jesus’ attention. In His time, outcasts consisted of the poor, lepers, physically disabled, mentally ill, sexually immoral, demon possessed, tax collectors, the religiously and racially mixed Samaritans, and women. The recipients of many of the Lord’s miracles were just these kinds of people! To encourage John the Baptist while he was in prison, Jesus sent him a message of hope: “The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached unto them.” Rubbing shoulders with the marginalized wasn’t something Jesus did merely on occasion; this was his manner of living, and the very faith-building reminder he sent to John the Baptist. This way of living magnified our Savior’s compassion for the lost and broken.

Just as Jesus’ “outcast” ministry encouraged John the Baptist, so the Gospel writers’ emphasis on serving this people group should be a great boost to our faith as well. Think about groups in our culture who are marginalized or “on the fringes”: illegal immigrants, the uneducated, the homeless, and even the oppressively wealthy. Imagine trying to share a message and promote a leader to the world, while highlighting that leader’s engagement with the very people the culture rejects ... not a solid political strategy! If the Bible, as it is recorded, was falsified and merely written to convince the world to follow Jesus, human sensibilities to the popular and famous would have been prioritized. The writers surely would have focused on Jesus’ interactions with politically safe individuals and groups. Instead, we see the opposite, which highlights Jesus’ heavenly origin and lends credibility to the Gospels’ authenticity as they describe the heavenly Kingdom. Jesus’ upside-down kingdom was revealed by more than His radical teaching - it was revealed by His life.

The first recorded interactions of Jesus in the book of Matthew clearly demonstrate who Jesus is and outline the heart of His gospel, which is played out in everything Jesus says and does. Jesus is not bound by normal social barriers as he calls fisherman to be his disciples, interacts with unclean lepers in one moment and wealthy noblemen in another, and heals women and culturally ostracized demonics. Jesus was in no way constrained by the cultural, political, social, and economic barriers of his day. In fact, He broke down those barriers in astonishing ways that must seize our hearts with humility and repentance as we, all too often, seek to rebuild them.

Chapter nine of Matthew’s gospel seems to be the capstone for this message of unbounded love — Please turn to pg. 64
Good evening. Welcome to worship. I don’t know if The Solid Rock (Hymns of Zion #99) was called off because we seem to have a large number of students here tonight or if it was inspired by My Anchor Holds (Combined Hymnal #334). I was struck by the similarities of “Though the angry surges roll over my tempest driven soul” and “in every high and stormy gale my anchor holds within the vale.” We’ve gotten a lot of storms lately.

At work, part of my duties are to make sure Country [Insurance] sets aside enough money to pay for all the storms, and there’ve been some interesting conversations lately. When the spring hits and the storm season strikes, I’m always drawn back to a verse in Hosea; actually, Tara printed it off for me to sit on my desk. Hosea 6:3 talks about “let’s press on to know the Lord; his going out is as sure as the dawn, and his coming forth is as sure as the spring rains.” I love that image of pressing on to know the Lord, and he is as sure as these spring rains that have been battering us.

Let’s open the word together tonight to the Psalms. We seek to press on and know the Lord. We’re going to read from Psalm 10 tonight. In going through the Psalms, I don’t know if it would be one a lot of students would come home from Sunday school memorizing. It gets to a pretty weighty topic. One that, as we sing about the tempest, the high and stormy gales, my anchor holding, and the angry surges, addresses those situations. Psalm 10 addresses these. Let’s start with verse 1.

“Why standest thou afar off, O LORD? Why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble?” (v 1) and that sets the tone. Students that are joining us tonight: I was struck by the fact that I have a three-year-old and a five-year-old at home that like to know where we are, and can you remember a time when you lost sight of one of your parents? You didn’t know where they were. Maybe you were having trouble, and you just didn’t know where they were, but you needed them. It just felt like they were really far away. Maybe you can identify with the psalmist here. It feels like right now, in life, you just need God. Where is he?

You look around as the psalmist does in verse 2. “The wicked in his pride doth persecute the poor: let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined. For the wicked boasteth of his heart’s desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom the LORD abhorreth. The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts. His ways are always grievous; thy judgments are far above out of his sight: as for all his enemies, he puffeth at them. He hath said in his heart, I will not be moved: for I shall never be in adversity.” (vs 2-6) We have a portrait, a picture here. We sang hymn # 99 The Solid Rock together, and there’s often this phrase that Christians use of standing on the rock or being tied to the rock and not being moved in our foundation in Christ. Here the psalmist flips that and talks about how he’s seeing in the life of the wicked that assuredness that the believer is supposed to be rooted in, as in verse 6, the wicked says “in his heart, I shall not be moved: for I shall never be in adversity.”

“His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and fraud: under his tongue is mischief and vanity. He sitteth in the lurking places of the villages: in the secret places doth he murder the innocent: his eyes are privily set against the poor. He lieth in wait secretly as a lion in his den: he lieth in wait to catch the poor: he doth catch the poor, when he draweth him into his net. He croucheth, and humbleth himself, that the poor my fall by his strong ones. He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten: he hideth his face; he will never see it.” (v 7-11) There’s an appropriate page break in this Bible. That’s the picture that the psalmist is looking out at, the picture of the state of the world.
As we look around us, we could probably say the same thing today. It looks like “what is going on?”

Verse 12: The plea, the prayer of God’s people. “Arise, O LORD; O God, lift up thine hand: forget not the humble. Wherefore doth the wicked contemn God? he hath said in his heart, Thou wilt not require it. Thou hast seen it; for thou beholdest mischief and spite, to requite it with thy hand: the poor committeth himself unto thee; thou art the helper of the fatherless. Break thou the arm of the wicked and the evil man: seek out his wickedness till thou find none. The LORD is King for ever and ever: the heathen are perished out of his land. LORD, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear: To judge the fatherless and the oppressed, that the man of the earth may no more oppress.” (v 12-18)

So often today – I’m trying to decide whether I need to say the word Christians or God here; either one, fill in the blank whatever you deem appropriate – gets the bad rap for being judgmental. God is the judge, and Christians are to be his light in this world and point to God’s truth. We’re not to judge on our own morals or standards but to point to the truth. But people talk about ‘how can you believe in a God who would punish people?’ When you look through Psalm 10 and see those that oppress the poor, that go after the widow and the fatherless, that seek how they can increase themselves at other’s expenses, and you see in verse 18 where it says that God will judge, see how that can become hope. For God comes, and his justice will reign. He will lift up those that are oppressed, and to much of the world, justice isn’t something to be feared but something to be longed for.

“Why standest thou afar off, O LORD? Why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble?” (Psalm 10:1) As I opened to Psalm 10 this week and read that verse, I found it to be very interesting in its juxtaposition with Easter. In Psalm 10, we get a picture of the psalmist looking for God and wondering why he’s so far away. We’ve just come through an Easter season where God has come and made himself very personal and up close.

We’ll turn to the New Testament and meditate on that, but first let’s share a hymn together. Out of the combined hymnal, a song of praise to our Savior, to our God, and to he who is just: Hymn #584 The Doxology.

Let’s turn together in the New Testament, the book of Colossians, chapter 1. What are we supposed to do, church, brothers and sisters, when Psalm 10 is so real or seems so real in our lives, and those in our lives come to us and say, “So who’s in charge of this world again? Who do you put your trust in? It seems like the evil’s winning.” Colossians 1 is where we find our hope. Chapter 1, verse 1 of Colossians.

Do you hear the difference in the tone from Psalm 10? Do hear this encouraging and this reaching out of Paul to a church? In this moment, I wish I’d studied up on Colossae, but I’m pretty sure that they could look around and say many of the same things that the psalmist had said in Psalm 10. Yet, there is this energy there. Do you know when you’re walking in spring? When’s the last time you walked outside and you just noticed what was around you? I read an article recently about how people are becoming ‘plant blind’ because they just don’t notice what they’re walking past outside anymore. When’s the last time you walked outside and you noticed what’s around you in the springtime? Do you ever feel this anticipation of the earth ready to burst forth in bud and in leaf and in life? That’s the sense I get when I read Colossians 1. There’s this energy of the church ready to burst forth into life.

Verse 12 again: “Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.” (v 12-14) So when we look at state of the world from the perspective of Psalm 10,
Rebuilding Homes, Renewing Hope and Restoring Faith

USA Committee

When Hurricane Harvey made landfall on the Gulf coast of Texas, the category 4 storm swamped coastal areas. In the days following, the fury of the winds weakened as the storm system stalled, dumping a year’s worth of rain in less than a week. Flood control reservoirs breached resulting in yet more flooding. Hundreds were rescued by boats and helicopters.

Orange County lies roughly 30 miles inland from the gulf. While damaging winds did not impact this area, flooding reached historic levels. Areas that had never before been flooded were underwater. Depending on location, homes had from several inches of water to being fully submerged. For many, a long and difficult road to recovery lay ahead.

Rebuilding Homes

One can scarcely imagine the despair and discouragement that many homeowners experienced. With little or no resources to recover, families had no option other than waiting for help to arrive. In this case, that meant waiting for more than two years!

Renewing Hope

For some of our homeowners, promises of recovery help that never materialized had added further to their despair and distrust. Following an early meeting with one family to discuss plans to build them a new house, an expression of skepticism and disbelief was shared by the father. Thankfully, upon seeing the work actually begin and experiencing the love and genuine care of the

New Spiritual Developments

Rural Gospel and Medical Missions of India

When the Rural Gospel and Medical Missions of India was established many years ago the main church was in the small village of Khardi. This outpost was located northeast of Mumbai. A church, medical facility, and boarding home for orphans were the main activities. However, over time there were a number of changes in the growth of the local economy, hostile attitudes from the area, and poor management of the school and medical facility which caused limited activity. A large school had been constructed fifteen years ago which provided learning for many local children but the spiritual activity was minimal. During one of the trips to India two years ago, board members had a special prayer that a revival could occur on this specific campus. God has certainly answered that prayer as over 20 souls have been baptized in recent months. The local Pastor has also begun an outreach to a small gathering a short distance away and the school has employed...
teams, his heart was changed. A smile on his face and expressions of gratitude and hope replaced the negativity and doubt that had bound him. The love of Christ made the difference. Hope was restored. Praise God!

**Restoring Faith**

The primary goal of HarvestCall is to share the gospel message of salvation through faith in the finished work of Jesus. Deeds of service — building homes in this case — are the vehicle by which relationships are established, which opens opportunities to share this glorious message. Many of the families we served already had a relationship with Jesus and had been connected to a local church. However, the strain of their devastating loses and difficult living conditions had forced them into survival mode. They were consumed by the enormous task of eking out a meager existence. For many, depression, despair and hopelessness had overtaken them.

Our families varied greatly in their professed relationships with God. They range from one who was innocently naive to the gospel — yet receptive, to a man who has preached for 50+ years and is determined to preach as long as God gives him breath. Others desire to get back to serving God in a meaningful way and still others seem calloused or possibly just overwhelmed.

The full impact of the ministry is difficult to measure. Beyond the homeowners, there are countless other lives touched; weekly volunteers, the leadership team, local suppliers, our partner organizations, our host church and others. While we do not often see the end result...God does and it's his grace and goodness that makes it happen. The Pastor of our host church commented to the effect — while you cannot turn hearts to Christ, you are turning heads to look at Jesus. A local county official expressed — “People have told me over the years that they wish they could see the face of God. When I look into the faces of the many volunteers that have dropped everything to come help out in Orange County in the name of Jesus, I’ve seen the face of God.” To God Be The Glory!

The threat of COVID-19 brought about the early termination of this year’s ministry. As we look back from our current perspective, we see God’s hand of blessing in moving the work along toward an early completion. Thankfully, all of our commitments were met before leaving. He knew what was coming when none of us did. We serve an awesome God!

— by Les Schambach

more Christian teachers. The attitude has been very positive from the local authorities as well. At a recent school recognition program, over 1,200 parents and extended family members were present and God’s word was shared prior to the activities of the day. USA visitors marveled at the transformation that has occurred on this campus.

During the same visit in January 2020, two new Elders were ordained. This event was held in a field near the rural church of Tembha. Over 2,000 people came to the event which was held under a very large tent. Some walked, others used two wheeled motor bikes, and many came packed in cars or by Jeep transport. Elders Tom Klotzle and John Lehman from the USA, using Zoom video, were asked to address the two candidates and those in attendance outlining the responsibilities of this additional work being laid on these two godly men. Despite the large crowd at both of these events, there was no interference from local authorities and praise was given to God for the very orderly manner this was conducted. — by John Lehman

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Reflecting God's Connection in Marriage

One of our deepest needs as humans is for connection. God created us in His image and in His likeness. Among the characteristics of “God likeness” is a desire for relationship. The triune God Himself is in relationship. One God, in three persons, enjoying and taking pleasure in communion with one another. God likewise calls us into relationship and deep communion with himself. God uses metaphors throughout scripture to help us understand our need for connection with Him and others. In Psalm 1 we see that flourishing as believers is analogous to “a tree planted by the rivers of water.” For the church, Paul uses the analogy of a body – 1 Corinthians 12:12 “For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.” And, the well-known passage in John 15 reminds us that apart from Christ we “can do nothing.” It is out of this connection with, attachment to and abidance in, that we find security, rest, and life.

Similarly, scripture emphasizes marriage to be a metaphor of our relationship with Christ (2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:22-33). Deepening our connection and bond with our spouse flows out of an abiding communion with each other. When securely connected to our spouse we experience more peace, rest, and resilience to engage the journeys of life. On the flip side, a loss of connection is painful and distressing. Threats of losing connection can lead to fear, anxiety, and grief. Several places in Psalms illustrate the pain and distress of not experiencing a response or connection with God. Consider Psalm 22:1-2 “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the day time, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent.” In Mark 15:34 we read of Jesus crying out this same message to His Father. Likewise, couples experience distress when not feeling connected or attached to their spouse. Maintaining this secure connection and attachment to our spouse can be challenging at times. Below are four factors to consider when exploring a thriving and flourishing marriage connection: past influences, accessibility, responsiveness & engagement.

What Influence does Your Past Have on You?
One of the first considerations in deepening the connection with our spouse is growing in self-awareness. How have we been shaped by our past and how does this influence the way we behave in our marriage? The reality is each of us have been shaped from past experiences in life. Past experiences don’t determine who we are or who we will become, but they do have an influence over how we engage relationships and interact in the present. Our past experiences are particularly accurate when we think about the early years of our life. Learning how to interact in this world was modeled partially by how our parents interacted with us. Early years are formative in understanding what love is, who God is, how we treat others, etc. Our early years can teach us things like: Is it okay to ask for comfort? Does asking for comfort when in distress actually lead to comfort? Are you better off not relying on others? Are others dependable and trustworthy? How do you navigate through negative emotions?

This idea that our past experiences influence present interactions is seen in Scripture. We see it in the life of Jacob as he is returning to meet Esau. We see it in the life of Joseph’s brothers after Jacob dies (Genesis 50:15). We see it in the life of Peter as well as Jesus’s desire to redeem that past denial through his three subsequent questions of Peter’s devotion and love. Perhaps the question we should ask is how has my past shaped my present reality, behaviors, and interactions with my spouse? What is my default response when I am in distress? Do I reach out and
ask my spouse for comfort? Do I withdraw and go silent? Where did I learn this? What past experiences influence my current interactions with my spouse?

**How Accessible are You?**

*Romans 5:1* “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” Christ is the means by which we access the Father and by which we receive grace and power. In the gospel of John we are reminded Jesus is the “door” (*John 10:9*). Just as God is accessible to us through Christ, an important component of building a secure connection and deep communion with our spouse is the idea we are accessible to our spouse. This means there is an openness to your spouse even when you may have stress, doubts, and feelings of insecurity. It means inviting our spouse to help make sense of experiences and emotions, so experiences and emotions are not overwhelming. Consider how you may respond to these questions using a continuum of always—sometimes—rarely:

- I can share my deepest fears and feelings with my spouse.
- It is evident that, aside from God, my spouse shows me that I come first with him/her.
- I can get my spouse's attention easily and consistently.
- I do not feel lonely or pushed out in my marriage relationship.

**How Responsive are You?**

*Psalms 34:4* “I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.” Our great God is not just accessible He is also responsive when we cry out to Him and His responsiveness leads to comfort, relief, and security. A secure connection in marriage is one where a spouse can rely on the responsiveness of his/her spouse when reached for. In *John 15* Jesus speaks of “abiding in” or remaining in Him. Being “tuned into” Jesus should thus translate to being “tuned into” our spouse. This means showing our spouse how we are deeply impacted or moved by their sharing of fears, insecurities, and vulnerabilities. Jesus exhibited a sensitive responsiveness to the affliction of others that touched them emotionally and calmed their fears. God calls us to this beautiful picture in marriage and wants us to prioritize our spouse's emotional signals and respond in comfort and care. Consider how you may respond to these questions using a continuum of always—sometimes—rarely:

- When needed, I can get reassurance about how important I am to my spouse.
- If I need comfort and connection, my spouse will be there for me.
- I find it helpful to lean on my spouse when I am anxious, stressed, or struggling with doubt.
- Even when we disagree, I know I am important to my spouse and we will find a way to come together.

**How Engaged are You?**

The story of the woman with an issue of blood (*Luke 8:43-48*) is a beautiful picture of Christ’s engagement with those who reach for Him – *Luke 8:47-48* “And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before him, she declared unto him before all the people for what cause she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately. And he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace.” It took tremendous courage and faith for this woman to reach and touch Jesus, since she was considered unclean. Jesus, moved by her vulnerability and act of trust, stops and engages with this woman. Christ responds to her need for loving connection with tenderness. Our marriage

Please turn to page 65
As we all are aware, however, changes in the world around us seem to happen by the minute sometimes. Because of this, our Administrators are constantly sending out updates regarding our policies and current status during COVID-19. Please go to our website (www.aclifepoints.org) to see the most recent updates about LifePoints at the time you are reading this article.

We once again want to give thanks to all who have made sacrifices to keep our residents safe and bring joy to their lives. Families have given up their usual in-person visits for phone calls and video chats. Residents have had to give up their beloved work programs for the time being, as well as outings they had been anticipating. You, our church family, have given up time to fellowship with LifePoints residents at events like our monthly hymn sings, Sunday school, and the Gospel Sing. Staff have given even more of themselves as they come to work with a positive attitude in the face of uncertainty and disrupted routines, working tirelessly to provide comfort, love, and hope to our residents. Each and every member of LifePoints has sacrificed so much during this time, and words cannot fully express our gratitude.

Despite all of the sacrifices that have been made, life is certainly not dull at any of our residents’ homes. We have been blessed with really creative staff members who are full of ideas to keep spirits lifted! As soon as the stay-at-home order was issued in Illinois, we started Spirit Weeks for staff and residents. It’s been pretty special to see everyone “dress up through the decades,” wear pajamas all day, and style their hair in the craziest way possible! Scavenger hunts, LEGO® competitions, gardening, walks outside, and so many crafts have all helped to keep our residents engaged and entertained.

We have been so encouraged by the love that has been demonstrated in our homes, especially during these uncertain days. Love from residents, staff, families, and from a God who always was and still is good, loving, all knowing, all powerful, and in control. Thank you for your continued prayers and support of LifePoints. Let’s abide in His love and be filled with joy.

Gateway Woods Apostolic Christian Children’s Home
Ed Graf — Executive Director

We are living in times of much uncertainty in light of the situation with the COVID-19 outbreak. So uncertain, that by the time this article is published, things may look completely different than what it does at the time of its writing. Regardless, some of you may have been wondering how this recent
epidemic has affected Gateway Woods, and we wanted to share some thoughts.

First of all, we are thankful that our government and the Department of Homeland Security deems organizations like Gateway Woods – social service agencies that are helping youth and families during this season of uncertainty – essential to society. There are so many people who depend on the services we offer and would be hard pressed if we had to completely shut down and turn everyone away.

I heard it said recently that it’s okay to have a healthy amount of fear – enough fear to prepare ourselves, but not so much that it paralyzes us. I think also of 1 Timothy 1:7: “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” Those are wise words that we are attempting to live by here at Gateway Woods, and that means some changes for our physical campus, our staff, and the people we serve.

We wanted to inform you of some of the issues for which we would so appreciate your prayers.

• We are continuing to deliver quality care. Our staff is dedicated to our mission, especially at this time of so many unknowns.
• We are complying. We are obeying all local and national directives and continue to stay in contact with those making decisions that affect our organization.
• We have closed our campus to visitors in order to protect our staff, staff children, and the people we serve.
• We are utilizing technology. As many of our staff as possible are working remotely, and we’re still able to provide necessary counseling services to our residents, their families, foster families, and the like.
• We are postponing any in-person events or church presentations.
• We continue to prepare for our annual auction on August 1, 2020 even if our meetings are via teleconference.
• We are spreading the good virus of hope. Tune into our social channels to hear some good news for a change!
• We expect better days are coming. As my late mother used to say, “This too shall pass.”
• We seek to embrace God’s Spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

Gateway is blessed to be the recipient of your love and prayers. We pray you stay healthy, find meaningful ways to connect with those you love, and take every opportunity to show gratitude in this season that will soon be past.

News:

• We have an urgent need for Houseparent Couples and Assistant Houseparents. We currently have 2 out of the 5 houses on campus closed due to lack of staff, which means fewer young people are hearing the Gospel. We would invite you to join in the Kingdom work of pointing hurting teenagers to Christ! We would ask you to pray about filling this need. Perhaps God is leading you to Gateway Woods! If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to call Jeff Waibel at 260.376.1724.
• We also have these openings at Gateway Woods: Teacher, WillowBridge Community Advocate Couple, and LARC Coordinator. For more information, please see our ad in this month’s edition of The Silver Lining or visit the Careers page on our website at gatewaywoods.org/careers.
• We are searching for a Summer Volunteer Coordinator for 2020. Please contact Bro. Keith Schambach at keith.schambach@gatewaywoods.org for more information. This is a great opportunity to impact the lives of the children on our campus!
• We are also searching for our Summer Education Intern. Please contact Bro. Brock Williamson at brock.williamson@gatewaywoods.
org for more information. This is a great opportunity to gain some experience while impacting our residents!

• We also have a summer internship opportunity in Gateway Farms. This is a great opportunity to work directly with residents as you plant and harvest bountiful gifts from the garden. Please contact Bro. Eric and Sis. Marissa Bahler at gwfarms@gatewaywoods.org for more information.

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

Alabama, Athens
Lisa Aschliman, Kristy Moore
“It is of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.” Lamentations 3:22-23

Things have certainly changed in the last month, but we still cling to God’s promises that He will not leave us or forsake us. Since we are no longer permitted to meet in person, our congregation has started to use an online platform to have Sunday and Wednesday night services. It is different, but we are thankful that there is still a way to see everyone and worship in a new way. We pray that we will be able to gather together soon and will welcome any visitors that are passing through.

We are preparing for our second year of ALive over Memorial Day Weekend. However, due to the current concerns, the committee will make a final decision on if they will hold this event by May 1.

“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

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

“Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?” John 11:25-26

It is the time of year we celebrate our mothers, and though mine has been gone over seven years, I still hear her voice in my head and think of her often. She would take the last part of that verse, “Believest thou this?” and make it personal, with a smile because, really, who talks like that? But she would wait for the answer, ready to discuss who Jesus is and how personal that knowledge should be. She was someone who studied her Bible and sought to know more about God and His Son all the time – not just every day, but throughout every day. As I became more and more a student of the word, I enjoyed talking with her about current events and what they might mean in relation to prophecy. I would love to have a chance to discuss with her the things that are taking shape now and get her perspective on all of it. I trust she is watching from that better place, and I am very thankful she escaped all the pain and sadness here in the time she has been gone. But I do miss her. I appreciate her instruction and example of having a personal Savior who is always present and cares for me. Knowing Jesus this way and having His Holy Spirit dwelling within me makes me miss her a little less and look forward a little more to the time we will all be communing together again.

I sometimes wonder how much interest those who have gone before have in the things of earth. I do believe they are aware and possibly involved in our realm, based on Scripture, including Moses and Elijah meeting with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration and the story of the rich man and Lazarus. When I imagine being in Heaven, it
is mostly about being overwhelmed in the presence of God and simply wanting to praise Him. The possibility of not being concerned with what happens to my loved ones here on earth seems so unlikely, and yet there would be a lot of distractions. As much as I enjoy thinking about Heaven, I also know all the things I imagine about it are not anything like it will be, because we are told that, as well (1 Cor 2:9). Still, we are given some information (1 Cor 2:10, Matt 13:11, Luke 10:21, Rev 1:1, to cite a few) and it is fun to think about our incorruptible bodies and the throne and angels, and especially meeting Jesus in person, and all those who have gone before us. The prayers, witness and teachings of my mother have had a wide influence through her life and the lives of her ten children and their children, and even to the next generation. As promised (Deut 7:9). I am very grateful for the time I was able to spend with her, and I pray I might be used to pass on the same knowledge and relationship with Jesus to those I encounter.

“Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates.” Proverbs 31:30-31

The Phoenix church has been observing the social gathering restrictions put in place by our government. We have been blessed by online services from our local ministers and some other “virtual” meetings. Our HarvestCall activities have continued with the restrictions being observed, and we have prepared masks and sanitizing wipes for health care providers and essential workers in our community. We are looking forward to the time, hopefully soon, when we can resume our usual services. As of this writing, we have not had any of our members stricken with the virus. We continue to pray for our leadership – both in the church and government - during these trying times, that the Holy Spirit would clearly guide them and fill them with wisdom from above, and for the Lord’s protection over our congregation and greater church family.

Arizona, Prescott
Autumn Rokey

Who is Jesus? We were reminded Easter Sunday on our Zoom church service that Jesus and His resurrection is more than just a story. Our Sunday school children shared that Easter is not just about a good man who did miracles. The story does not end with the cross. In fact on the third day, when the women that followed Jesus found the empty tomb in the dawn hours, it was truly just the beginning; the beginning of life for each of us where we are not bound by the weight of sin. Jesus brought us freedom and eternal life. As you read this, we may still be under quarantine or we may be getting back to normal life. Either way, take encouragement from these verses that our Sunday school shared.

“Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.” John 11:25
“... I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.” John 6:35
“But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” John 4:14
“I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.” John 10:9
“I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.” John 10:11
“I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.” John 15:5
“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” John 14:6

Arizona, Tucson
Dean and Jackie Knobloch

As everyone is experiencing the realities of this pandemic, I keep thinking that God must have a perspective, that we as men and women, would have difficulty comprehending. The verse in 2 Chronicles 7:14 comes to mind:

“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”

As a congregation, we are using AC Central and Zoom to stay
connected, to have Bible studies and to hear the word preached. I am truly thankful for the insight that our Elder body had in establishing AC Central, the podcasts and Around the Table. They have been a life and soul saver.

We continue to pray for all who are in poor health and dealing with decreased contact of loved ones. May God ever grant patience, and may we respond with the love that He has shown to each one on a daily basis.

California, Los Angeles/Altadena
Kali Sauder

Church looks different these days, but it is still the same in many ways. It is still made up of people, a community, a family, not a building or a physical gathering. Ephesians 2:19-22 tells us that we, the church, are “fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone; in whom all the building fitly framed together growth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” This vivid picture of the living church speaks of a strong conduit of the unstoppable Spirit of God continuing to grow and build His Kingdom, regardless of circumstances.

We have experienced this in perhaps even mightier ways since the pandemic shut down our in-person gatherings at a physical location. Now as we gather weekly via technology, we are still encouraging each other and building each other up in the Spirit. We are buoyed by seeing each others’ faces and hearing one another’s voices. The Gospel is still proclaimed, and, as often happens when we face trials of various kinds, the Word is powerfully alive in meaning and application. We are strengthened and sent out to a world that is reeling and looking for hope.

In stark contrast to the changes and upheaval of all our lives in this current situation, our God is the same yesterday, today, and forever!

California, San Diego
Lillian Wagenbach

Our hearts ache with the Fulop and Gasser families in the passing of Sis. Lizzie (Fulop) Gasser, Smithville, OH. She will be deeply missed by her husband, Bro. Todd Gasser, baby daughter Juniper, parents, Bro. Dennis and Sis. Joy Fulop, siblings and extended family. As a church family, we come alongside and share in their loss.

“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.” Revelation 21:4

As King Hezekiah met with overwhelming challenges, he “laid it before God”. As we face loss, disappointments, and headwinds of life, where better than to take them to our Heavenly Father in prayer. “Pray without ceasing.” 1 Thessalonians 5:17.

We reviewed the triumphant entry of Christ into Jerusalem just prior to Passover. He came to die that you and I might live! And He is coming again!

What a thrill to journey back to the empty tomb and be reminded that “He is not here: for he is risen, as he said.” Matthew 28:6.

In difficult times, sometimes the most important thing we can do is point ourselves and each other toward our loving Father’s embrace. We often find God does not settle our hearts with logistical clarity, but offers Himself as the answer to our worries.

Our church family is thankful to be able to still see each other through Zoom Bible studies and church services but look forward when we can physically gather again to worship.

Colorado, Denver
Tess Leman

In this time of incertitude, we’re thankful and excited to announce three engagements! Some good news!

Bro. Ryan Schlipf (Bro. Rich and Sis. Kathy, Milford, IN) announced his engagement to Sis. Alisha Bahler from West Lafayette, IN (daughter of Chris and Sis. Teresa Bahler, Wolcott, IN) Bro. Luke Zarkovacki (Bro. George and Sis. Lily Zarkovacki) became engaged to Sis. Sarah Lehman (Bro. Dean and Sis. Mary Lehman) from Milford, IN. Our Bro. Rod and Sis. Cindy Schmidt are excited to announce the engagement of their daughter, Sis. Erika to Bro. Allen Huber (Bro.
Ryan and Sis. Terri Huber), both from Bloomington, IL.

There is much joy and much to learn for these precious couples as they embark on a new phase of life. We pray that God will be their guide and delight during this time of engagement!

We have been grateful for technology during this time of separation. Zoom teleconferencing Sundays have been such a blessing as we get to “see” and interact with our church family!

Connecticut, Rockville

**Julie Bauman, Heidi Beutel**

Greetings of love and prayers for the well-being of our brethren and friends around the globe.

Sis. Barb Hangartner passed from this world into the arms of her Savior on April 7. While her didn’t have any earthly children or grandchildren, the entire congregation felt as though she was a mother and grandmother and was loved by her. Our prayers are with her extended family as they will deeply miss her. She was such a special woman who will be missed.

A small graveside service was held due to the required social distancing but once again we were thankful for the technology as many of us were able to attend virtually and say our earthly farewells to Sis. Barb. We look forward to the day when we can see her again.

We, as many of the other congregations, have been having our services online. While it is different than the norm, we are so thankful for the technology that allows us to continue to hear God’s word brought forth week after week. We recognize the extra effort from not only the ministering brothers but the brothers leading the sound system. We are also so thankful to the work that is being done to help the most vulnerable. From our HarvestCall group sewing thousands of masks, the group responsible for preparing meals to be delivered to those in isolation or working on the frontlines in the hospitals, the army of individuals willing to go shopping for the elderly, to the ministering brothers willing to give of their time to communicate to us about the latest updates on the virus.

Another change due to COVID-19 is that we have started teaching Sunday school via Zoom. I teach first grade and to see the kids faces brings me to tears each week. It is also wonderful to see how they react to seeing one another. Every time a face ‘pops’ on the screen into the virtual room the kids will exclaim a joyful greeting to their friend. The younger classes have been taking time to mail colored pictures and letters to the singles, widows and widowers to bring some joy to their day. I have heard reports of the older grades staying in the virtual classroom for hours after Sunday school has ended – to simply spend time with their church friends. What a beautiful gift we have in this technology to remain connected. I can’t help but believe that this will have a lasting imprint on these children’s hearts, and they will have a closer bond throughout their lifetime.

In spite of all the changes we have been facing, it was wonderful to have the ability to have a ‘visiting’ minister. We were blessed to have Elder Bro. Duane Farney (Sis. Karen) from our congregation in Croghan-Naumburg. Bro. Duane preached the Word from his home and with the wonderful gift of technology it was brought forth through the Rockville line. It was beautiful to feel connected through the isolation.

This weekend was reserved for the testimonies and baptisms of three dear souls: Connor Hany, Lydia Welti, and Jeremy Zahner. Due to the quarantining and social distancing, it was decided to move the date to a later time when we can all be together in rejoicing with them and their families.

While we are living in unprecedented times, one thing remains constant: our love for one another, and even in these times of isolation and quarantine, our bonds of love are only strengthened. I have coworkers who live alone in small apartments and their primary source of connection to people is through work. It made me realize the precious gift we have in the relationships we have in our church family. I have heard of potlucks being hosted through video conferencing, game nights connecting families across the country and even singings hosted online. It is so uplifting to see that in a time when the devil could use it to separate us the reaction has
only been one of finding ways to become even closer.

District of Columbia, Washington  
Henrietta Meyer

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

I am sure this is the desire of many believers in this day and time. My report usually shares news of our caretakers and visiting ministers. We have had neither since the last report. Our thanks to Bro. Barry and Sis. Doreen Steffen for checking on the church/house and doing what needs to be done.

While we have not been able to assemble in person, several of us are joining Philadelphia’s virtual services. We are also grateful for ACCentral and opportunity to listen to our “Home” churches.

We pray the stay home orders are lifted soon and we will again be able to travel. We are looking forward to caretakers and visiting ministers.

If you are planning to visit Washington, D.C. area for vacation or business, please contact Sis. Henrietta Meyer at 703.904.8301 or hmeyer2831@gmail.com for assistance and to let us know how many to expect for Sunday services.

Florida, Fort Lauderdale  
Renee Mangold

This past month, sadly, there were no visiting ministers. We are all experiencing the effects of the coronavirus on so many different levels and nuances in our lives.

With traveling and gathering not being options, we have started a twice weekly Zoom meeting where we pray together, sing hymns, have devotions and share what’s new in our lives that week for a time of fellowship.

In Jesus Calling I read “I am training you in steadiness. Too many things interrupt your awareness of Me. I know that you live in a world of sight and sound, but you must not be a slave to those stimuli. Awareness of Me can continue in all circumstances, no matter what happens. This is the steadiness I desire for you.”

Perhaps we can take this difficult time and isolation to draw even closer to our wonderful God who holds us in His right hand.

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

Florida, Fort Myers  
Mary Masters, Terri Young

"Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us. Selah." Psalm 62:8

The coronavirus has certainly impacted our church family deeply, as it has in every church. The ability and privilege to gather and worship together is something that we probably take for granted. One of the blessings from this outbreak would be that we value more the face-to-face interactions with our brothers, sisters and friends. We have had to postpone several events that are important to us. The testimonies and baptism of Ryan and Rachel Hollan, as well as communion, have been postponed until such a time that it is safe to gather together again. We also had to cancel our 3-church potluck this year that would have taken place at the beginning of May. Inconveniences and challenges, but we serve a sovereign God who is working out His plan day-by-day. We are grateful to know that our hope and trust is in the One who has all things in His hands, including us.

The New Beginnings

“In Christ alone my hope is found, He is my light, my strength, my song This Cornerstone, this solid Ground Firm through the fiercest drought and storm. What heights of love, what depths of peace When fears are stilled, when strivings cease My Comforter, my All in All Here in the love of Christ I stand.”

-Keith Getty/Stuart Townend

Life in isolation has brought about a lot of contemplating and soul searching, especially for those who live alone. Sometimes loneliness and depression, and other times a deeper peace and intimacy with our Lord! Strip us down of everything and we will realize our identity is in Christ alone…and that’s more than enough!

Arzu’s nursing classes are online, so she keeps two year old Demir home from day care. It has
been sweet to watch their bond grow even closer as they spend more time together. She has found creative ways to fill their hours together and make some very precious memories. They go biking a lot, “swimming” in the plastic blow up pool, kick ball and reading together. She is getting very good grades in school and continues to grow as a parent and as a Christian woman. It hasn’t been easy for her, as she is a very outgoing and social person, and sometimes battles discouragement, anxiety and even mild depression in the midst of this social distancing. As you continue to pray for this ministry, please lift up a special prayer for this dear mom and her child.

Once again, we would ask for you to pray along with us for God to bring the right Executive Director, moms, mentors, and Christian counselors. If you feel God calling you or if you know of someone that might be a good fit, please contact us.

TNB has made some modifications to our program so we are using this ‘quiet’ season to implement these changes by updating the website, handbooks, and forms, in preparation for new moms and children. We continue to reach out to individuals and agencies to inform them about our program and our availability for new residents. Like everyone else, we are meeting through Zoom, email and good old phone calls. This crisis will have adverse effects, but let’s rise above the anxiety and fears, to peacefully trust our God, and find the purpose and lessons that He would have for us.

**Florida, Sarasota**

**Sandra Kaeb**

“Before the dawn of Easter, There came Gethsemene… Before the Resurrection, There was the hours of agony… For there can be no crown of stars, Without a cross to bear. And there is no salvation, Without Faith, Love and Prayer. And when we take our needs to God, Let us pray as did his son. That dark night in Gethsemene; “Thy will, not mine, be done”. HSR

This month we uphold in prayer our Bro. Gordon Bryant, Bro. Dick Van Deest, Bro. Otto Schlatter, Bro. Terry Miller and Bro. Rod Stoller as they struggle with health complications.

As we are in the midst of COVID-19, our small church records small audio clips from each other and play them after Sunday services to stay in contact. It’s nice to have updates on each other’s lives and know how everyone is doing. Our prayer is that each of us will remain healthy, use this time to let our Christian light shine and be of help to those who are truly in need.

**Haiti, Bonne Fin - Hospital Lumiere**

**Rick and Komari Aberle**

Greetings in Jesus from Hospital Lumiere. The missionary team here would like to extend our appreciation for the many thoughts and prayers on our behalf and on behalf of the people of Haiti and the mission here. As we feel the prayers lift us, we remember how critical prayer is, and how it brings our hearts before the throne of our Lord. We also want to express our thanks for the many offers of assistance as we have prepared for the potential onset of coronavirus here.

Sis. Komari Aberle and children, and Ruth Feucht were to return to Bonne Fin in late March. However, the new travel restrictions we all have experienced prevented this. At present, their return dates remain uncertain. The rest of our missionary team is in Haiti at present.

In these times of uncertainty, it is always a comfort to turn to the Word. It clearly reminds us that God is sovereign and in control, yet continually keeps us in His care. Jeremiah expresses this and gives us comfort.

“Thou didst say, Woe is me now! for the LORD hath added grief to my sorrow; I fainted in my sighing, and I find no rest. Thus shalt thou say unto him, The LORD saith thus; Behold, that which I have built will I break down, and that which I have planted I will pluck up, even this whole land. And seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not: for, behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh, saith the LORD: but thy life will I give unto thee for a prey in all places whither thou goest.” Jeremiah 45:3-5

**Haiti, Les Cayes**

**Mike and Susie Walder**

Bro. Les and Sis. Christine Kaeb have relocated back to Francesville, IN after working for several years
to lay the groundwork for the Good Vision Dairy Farm here in Torbeck. They have been very instrumental in developing the vision, securing good community relationships and maintaining the pace for the construction and growth of the dairy program as we know it today.

We want to thank the Kaebs for sharing their gifts of hospitality and encouragement to bless so many of us here. We praise the Lord for the great things He has done and wish you God’s blessing in your transition home! We are looking forward to your return visits as well as your ongoing assistance state-side.

Before moving to Haiti we had some training on dealing with change and with the unexpected. We assumed we would face these difficulties, and we often do. Just because we were warned hard times were on the way doesn’t mean we like them any more than you do.

In the same sense, you didn’t sign up for the huge interruption that COVID-19 has become. You had no warning it was coming and how much things would change. Dealing with this change has been a real learning curve for everyone. How have you been responding? God never wastes the hard times to continually teach us things!

Illinois, Belvidere
Darcy Steffen

The purple martins have returned to northern Illinois for the spring, and every year I am amazed that these birds return to the exact same location every time. How do they know how to get back home? It is a reminder for me that we, too, should know how to return home to our Father’s heart. This world makes us weary, but we can be so grateful that we remember where our rest and provision is and find comfort there.

We are extremely grateful for God’s provision in the form of technology during these times. We have been using Zoom for our church services and it has been such a blessing for our little congregation. We were even blessed to have visiting ministers this month! We thank our Elder Bro. Duane Rocke (Sis. Bonnie, Minneapolis, MN) and Bro. Bruce Frank (Sis. Bonita, Cisna Park, IL) for sharing God’s word with us online.

We were also able to use Zoom to have an Easter program of sorts. The different families with children in Sunday school were each assigned a portion of the Easter story to act out. It was such a joy to witness the children and their families reenacting this life changing account. Costumes and props were even involved! We pray that this is something they will not soon forget, and that someday, Jesus’ death and resurrection will mean even more to them.

We rejoice with Bro. Joe Darlington (Chicago, IL) and Sis. Ashley Bollier (Indianapolis, IN) on their marriage. Bro. Joe is the son of Jerry and Sis. Sandy Darlington. We are thankful that even during these different circumstances, they were still able to begin their married life together in the service of the King!

Please remember Sis. Edie Anliker (Bro. Gary, Elgin, IL) in your prayers. She was diagnosed with cancer and has begun her chemo treatments. Sis. Edie is Bro. Brian (Sis. Peg) Anliker’s mother.

Illinois, Bloomington-Normal
Sara Anliker, Kinsey Dotterer

“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” 2 Timothy 1:7

As our church navigates these unprecedented times, it’s been a pleasure seeing the church family reach out to each other in many ways. We all look forward to gathering in person again, but in the meantime we are so thankful for the technology to still be able to virtually gather. A special thanks to our ministers for preaching with a camera on them and for the Sunday school teachers who are making the effort to still meet with their students.

We praise God for our new convert Amy Kieser (daughter of Bro. Duane and Sis. Alissa). We also heard the testimony of Sis. Erika Schmidt and welcome her to our Bloomington church family.

We mourn along with Peggy Schieber as her father Bro. John Schieber recently passed away.

Congratulations to Sis. Erika Schmidt (Bro. Rod and Sis. Cindy) and Bro. Allen Huber (Bro. Ryan and Sis. Terri) on their engagement.

Our Easter church services didn’t look the same this year, but we were still able to have a special service to celebrate our risen Lord and Savior.
With so many events and gatherings that have been canceled this was such a good reminder: Faith is not canceled. Hope is not canceled. Love is not canceled. Prayer is not canceled. Gratitude is not canceled. Relationships are not canceled.

Illinois, Bradford

Becky Endress, Lena Stoller

A month ago, I thought there wouldn’t be much news to report in the coming days, knowing that we wouldn’t be able to gather together at church. Surprisingly, that is not the case. As we listened in to church services, there were two engagements announced in the last month. Bro. Bob Baer (Janna, Wyoming, IL) is engaged to Sis. Hannah Schrenk (Bro. Steve and Sis. Linda, Junction, OH). We look forward to meeting and welcoming Sis. Hannah to Bradford when we are able to gather together again. We also heard of Bro. Matthew Endress’ engagement to Sis. Allisa Stoller. Elder Bro. Bruce and Sis. Elizabeth Endress and Bro. Nate and Sis. Sherrill Stoller are thankful for God’s leading in the lives of their children. We pray that God would bless these couples as they plan their weddings during this unique time we are living in.

Donna (Roy) Ehnle, of Camp Grove, passed away at the Eureka Home after a time of declining health. She was the mother of our Sis. Karen (Bro. Bill) Ringger, as well as Gary (Carole) Ehnle (Buda, IL), Donn (Tracy) Ehnle and John (Sara) Ehnle both of rural Bradford. Even without a visitation to personally convey our sympathies to the family, we pray that they could feel our love and prayers.

Sis. Char Dietz and Reghann Pyles (Chad and Jessie’s daughter and Bro. Denny and Sis. Becky’s granddaughter) were hospital patients in the past month. May God grant them healing and strength in the days ahead.

We were thankful to hear Sis. Jamie Joos returned safely from helping with the HarvestCall winter work project in Texas, but were disappointed we were not able to gather with her at church before she moved to Sardis, OH, for employment. We wish her God’s blessings and look forward to her visits.

Illinois, Champaign

Brent Young

It was a month ago today that the shelter-in-place order was issued for Illinois. We haven’t had any in-person events for the past month, but our church family quickly sprang into action, supporting one another.

We’ve begun video streaming sermons and we sincerely appreciate the ministers and sound technicians that labor on even though it must feel peculiar.

We’ve enjoyed several fellowship hours via Zoom, which has now become a weekly custom. Our Wednesday evening Bible studies have also gone well via Zoom as well as Sunday school classes, youth night, and small group studies.

We extend our appreciation to Bro. Andrew Rassi (Sis. Sandy, Morton, IL) for bringing us the word. Bro. Andrew was scheduled to visit just before the lockdown, so we all tuned in to the Morton livestream instead.

One of our families posted a sign in their window ‘Also highly contagious: kindness, love, joy’. Another chalked the church parking for Easter morning with several messages including ‘Easter is not canceled: He is risen!’ Yet another sent out Easter cards that included a picture of the church’s stained glass. Our Sunday school students made thank-you cards for the medical professionals among our church family.

Many have shared food: retired folks caring for couples with young children, young families caring for singles and widows, and deliveries to needy families in the community. Recently, we delivered a milkshake to one of our shut-in brothers. His retirement home is locked-down so we have to pass it to a person at the door, who informed us that it was his second one that day!

We’ve added signs to the church yard sharing directions for access to the online services, so hopefully the neighbors are curious.

All these efforts encourage our hearts and remind us that we are still bound together in Christ!

Illinois, Chicago

Diana Eisenmann

In March we transitioned to virtual services on Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings as well as
for special events including Good Friday. The size of our congregation is a good fit for videoconferencing, which has been a blessing. We have appreciated the opportunity to not only hear a live sermon from our ministers, but also to see one another through sharing our webcams. While it isn’t a substitute for gathering in person, it is a very welcome opportunity for connection while we’re apart. We are thankful for the efforts of our ministers and Sunday school teachers who have quickly adapted to teaching through an electronic format.

The Stewardship Planning Team shared a recorded presentation regarding future plans and direction for our church over the next year. We are thankful for their work in gathering church input and putting together strategic plans as we move forward. The SPT has also been instrumental in putting forth ideas for support and connection during this unique time. It has been encouraging to see how our church family has come together to fulfill needs within our body.

We rejoice with Bro. Joe and Sis. Ashley Darlington as they were married in Indianapolis in early April. Their parents are Jerry and Sis. Sandy Darlington (Belvidere, IL) and Bro. Ron and Sis. Edie Bollier (Indianapolis, IN).

Illinois, Cissna Park

Denise Kaeb, Joan Rudin

"Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy; To deliver their soul from death, and to keep their soul alive in famine. Our soul waiteth for the Lord: he is our help and our shield. For our heart shall rejoice in him, because we have trusted in his holy name. Let thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us, according as we hope in thee." Psalm 33: 18-22

The above Bible reference was sent to a group of people as an encouragement to all that is going on in this world. I am humbled by the kindness and love that has been expressed through text messages, emails and phone calls during this unprecedented time. Even though we are physically isolated, we are able to comfort one another and I am so thankful for that! We serve a great God!

Our convert, Pete Bauer, was hospitalized. We pray for peace and healing for him.

There was an added blessing on Easter Sunday as Abby Walder was announced for baptism. She is the daughter of Bro. Dan and Sis. Pam Walder. We look forward to her testimony soon!

I would like to express thanks to our ministers for their diligence in delivering messages to us on Sundays and Wednesday evenings. I am sure it has its own unique challenges for each of you, but trust that God has blessed each one of us with your efforts!

Also, a thank you to those who have supported them with the necessary technology to fulfill this. We appreciate your talents, and pray God blesses you for it!

I am amazed at how the recordings of the Zion’s Harp and other songs have been used during this time! God knew when that work was being done that it would be used for this purpose. Even in that small miracle, it bolsters my faith.

Illinois, Congerville

Mary Knapp, Erica Steffen

On March 20, our beloved Bro. John Schieber passed away after a brief illness. Our prayers have been with his dear wife, Sis. Alice, as well as his sister Phyllis Schieber and the rest of this family. Bro. John will always be remembered for his kindness and ability to encourage with a smile. A death of a loved one at any time is difficult, but especially difficult during a time where we cannot comfort our loved ones as we would wish. We trust that the God of all comfort will fill in where we as mortal men must fail at this time.

"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

Unprecedented. We hear this word thrown around a lot lately, and it has given me pause to consider the implications of this word. While certainly only a handful of people alive today can claim any living memory of a pandemic of this scale, most of us have no precedent for this sort of season in our life. We’re called to stay at home, or maybe go to work with an increased threat to our health or safety. We are restricted in where we can go, what we
can do and even what we can purchase. But if we step back, are we really living in unprecedented times? Esther was called “for such a time as this,” when her people faced unprecedented annihilation, and she faced a threat to her own life at the order of one of the most powerful rulers in the known world at that time. Moses had never led a million plus people into the wilderness. Job had never lost his children, possessions and his own health all in the course of a day. Paul had never been thrown in prison. John had never seen prophecy fulfilled. Jesus had never been nailed to a cross. But in all these things, the faithfulness and glory of God was revealed to men. God has set the precedent for our lives to be faithful to us whatever our life may bring. May it be so for us today as we face instability, isolation, and anxiety. May we find hope in the Light and joy in our resurrected Savior.

“Illinois, Elgin
Amy Gasser

“For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land;” Song of Solomon 2:11-12.

It is always a blessing to come to this time of the year after the cold winter months and see the signs of new life come forth.

A new baby boy, Thomas Hugh, was born to Meghan Forbes on April 3. First-time grandparents are Bro. Jay and Sis. Jen Cox.

Although our Sunday school Easter program was cancelled or postponed this year, we can still reflect on the beautiful Easter story of Jesus’ death and resurrection.

“Low in the grave He lay—Jesus my Savior!
Waiting the coming day—Jesus my Lord!
Vainly they watch His bed—Jesus my Savior!
Vainly they seal the dead—Jesus my Lord!
Death cannot keep his prey—Jesus my Savior!
He tore the bars away—Jesus my Lord!”
Chorus:

“Up from the grave He arose, With a mighty triumph o’er His foes;
He arose a Victor from the dark domain,
And He lives forever with His saints to reign.
He arose! He arose!
Hallelujah! Christ arose!”
Christ Arose, Tabernacle Hymns, #205

Our prayers are with Sis. Edie (Bro. Gary) Anliker, who has begun cancer treatments.

“Illinois, Eureka
Debra Blunier, Lavonne Schumacher

As our lives have been modified in the last month and we have had to make sacrifices and adjustments, we can be thankful that the constant in our life is our Heavenly Father and Saviour Jesus Christ!

“Our prayers are with Sis. Edie (Bro. Gary) Anliker, who has begun cancer treatments.

“Then rejoice, His children dear, In His guidance and protection; Death may come but do not fear: There shall be a resurrection.
When the final trump shall call, From the graves awaking all!”
Jesus Lives!, Zion’s Harp #120

How we long for that great day when we can be in those heavenly mansions!

As we have just experienced the Easter Season, we rejoice in our Risen Lord and are so thankful for the price He paid on the cross for our sins.

“On Christ the solid rock I stand,
All other ground is sinking sand,
All other ground is sinking sand!”
The Solid Rock, Hymns of Zion #99

We greatly miss assembling with our brothers and sisters in church but we are glad that we can still hear the sound of the word in our homes every Sunday and Wednesday evening and feel the spirit alive and well. We would like to give a special thanks to each of our home ministers for their willingness to speak the truth to us even in times like these.

Our Sis. Nathalia Getz (Bro. Allan) bid her sister, Sis. Lorine Hackenjos (Bro. Myron) of Latty, OH a final farewell. We grieve with Sis. Nathalia but know she is thankful for the hope of reuniting on yonder shore.

Our sympathy is also extended to three granddaughters from our congregation (Sis. Sara Zimmerman (Bro. Matt), Ann Ledergerber (Dan) and Sis. Abby Ehnle) in the passing of their grandmother, Donna Ehnle of Bradford.

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“In my Saviour’s resurrection, there is comfort; I am blest. In His life my hopes renewing, In His love my soul shall rest Everything I have in Thee, Life and hope and victory.” Christ the Resurrected, Zion’s Harp #183

Illinois, Fairbury
Kati Meiss, Trish Steidinger

Jesus Lives! Even though we were apart from each other this Easter season, there was still reason to rejoice because we serve a living Savior.

We are thankful for our ministers and Sunday school teachers who have made extra efforts these last few weeks to reach out to our church family. Whether it’s preaching a sermon to an empty building over the airwaves that each of us can still worship in our own home, delivering Sunday school lesson papers for the students to color, or videos of the next Sunday school lesson for the students to watch and learn; each effort is greatly appreciated and the absence one from another is a little easier to handle.

Bro. Denver and Sis. Sharon Rassi are thankful for the safe arrival of Saylee Anne. Cayden, Brendal, Kenna, and Myla are her excited siblings. Saylee’s grandparents are Bro. Dennis and Sis. Diane Rassi (Bastrop, TX), Bro. Morris Kaeb, Chuck and Brenda Mueller.

We are prayerful for little Brynna Plattner as she has spent some time in the hospital. Brynna’s parents are Bro. Joel and Sis. Amber Plattner.

Illinois, Forrest
Carissa Knapp, Marsha Lanz

“Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;” 2 Corinthians 1:2-3

In these times of uncertainty, may we rest in God’s wonderful peace and continue to look to Him, as we trust that He will see us through.

With church and other events being cancelled, we are very thankful for the many ways that we can still worship and communicate through technology. Even though we are not able to gather together in body, we certainly are joined together in spirit.

Bro. Josh and Sis. Amber Coffey are parents of a new baby boy, Liam Henry. Welcoming Him home are big brothers Lyndon and Layton. Grandparents are Bro. Reuben and Sis. Devra Stork and Bro. Kevin and Sis. Denise Coffey.

“I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.” Luke 15:7

We are so thankful and rejoice with Martha Carson (David), who has begun her repentance. She is the daughter of Sis. Virginia Hilti.

“The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.” Numbers 6:24-26

Illinois, Goodfield
Amy Hinrichsen, Judy Knapp

“Our world is a lot different right now than it was a few months ago. There are a lot of unknowns and fears with the COVID-19 sickness going on and we’ve all been affected by it in some ways. Social distancing is not easy but we were reminded recently in one of our church services, that Jesus understood what it is like to be alone. Most of his close friends ran or forsook him when he was arrested. He felt the ultimate separation from His Father when He died on the cross. He understands when we feel lonely or concerned so go to him in prayer. “Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.” 1 Peter 5:7. We as Christians do not need to fear. We can be lights to others during this time. It’s our time to shine for Jesus and help those who are hurting or fearful.

This past month has brought a lot of joy for several families in our church! Bro. Alex and Sis. Cassie Knepp joyfully welcomed a baby boy, Rhodes Chadwick on March 24. His excited siblings are: Dierks, Hudson, Crue, Wren, and Indie! Paternal Grandparents of Rhodes are the late Bro. Rich Knepp and...
Janet and Randy Pomeranke (Roanoke, IL). Maternal Grandparents are Bro. Roger and Sis. Trish Gerber (Goodfield, IL).


On April 6, Bro. Jason and Sis. Abby Schick welcomed their first baby, a boy, named Steven Lee! Paternal grandparents of Steven are the late Bro. Steve Schick and Sis. Ann and Bro. Dave Zobrist (Goodfield, IL). Maternal grandparents are Warren and Sis. Cindy Edelman (Forrest, IL). Our church family is very blessed to welcome these babies to our congregation!

Our dear sister, Mildred Heinold went to be with the Lord on April 4. Our prayers are with her children and their families: Terri and Bob Abner (East Peoria), Bro. Mike and Sis. Pam Heinold (Morton), Dave and Kathy Heinold (Eureka), Sis. Pat and Bro. Dave Kuntz (Goodfield), Scott and Molly Heinold (Washington), and a foster daughter, Lydia Reyes of the Philippines.

We are also prayerful for Bro. Alfred and Sis. Marie Kieser as he recently lost his youngest sister, Alice Snodgrass.

There have been several sick or in the hospital lately that could use our prayers. Bro. Gary Wiegand had a recent hip surgery done. We are praying for his recovery. Sis. Carolyn Ott has been struggling with some health issues and is now on hospice. Our prayers go out to them and to those within our church and community who have been infected with the COVID-19 virus.

“But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.” Isaiah 53:5

Good Friday and Easter looked a little different this year. Thankfully we could still celebrate our Savior's death and resurrection! We were thankful to have church services online as well as a special sunrise service which featured some of our Sunday school kids telling us the Easter story through video. It was a very uplifting weekend and good to focus on Christ and the amazing story of His love. Our hope is found in Christ Jesus. Thank you Jesus for paying the price for us and for rising again.

Illinois, Gridley

Perry Klopfenstein

The nation and all of us have been put to the test with the coronavirus. It is certainly an experience we are not accustomed to. Yet, God is providing. We have means of worshiping, even if by use of technology and we surely have the avenue of prayer to commit our concerns to God. And we have the Bible to read each day. As much as anything, we can see that progress is being made to curb the virus; and more and more the nation is being extricated from the lockdown.

Church activities and schedules have been minimal. Call-in services are available. Life goes on, and we try to meet the national protocols to keep the germs at bay -- in hand washing, distancing, and keeping gatherings to a maximum of ten.

Henri Finck is having tests for a health condition. We are thankful he has begun coming to church, and is seeking his soul's salvation. Bro. Orlan Miller, who has been struggling with cancer for a long period, has been placed on long-term hospice. May the Lord provide for him.

Two or our sisters, Sis. Marjorie Witzig (Fairbury Home) and Sis. Anna Marie Reutter (Roanoke Home), have celebrated their birthdays. They are both well into their nineties. We certainly wish them well and are thankful that God has given them many years of life.

Owing to the uncertainty and potential peril of the coronavirus, my mind has often gone to the lyrics of the song "Walking With God" (Zion’s Harp 68):

God is ever present!
Let us now adore Him,
And in reverence come before Him!
“Holy, holy, holy!”
Angel bands are singing,
And incessant praises bringing!
Bow Thine ear,
Lord, and bear,
As we in submission,
Offer our oblation.

We can take solace as well in the words of the Lord Jesus, who said, “…and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen” Matthew 28:20.
Illinois, Morton

Annette Tanner

 Needless to say we are experiencing a very strange and trying time in our lives. Because of the social distancing, many events have been cancelled and plans altered, but we are thankful for God’s provision.

We are happy to share that the ordination of our Bro. Ted Witzig, Jr. (Sis. Donna) was able to take place on Saturday afternoon March 21. Because some changes had to be made to adhere to the present circumstances, there were only a few people present for the vows and ordination prayer led by his dad Elder Bro. Ted Witzig, Sr. We thank Elder Bro. Marvin Dotterer, Forrest, IL, who had the opening prayer, Elder Bro. Jeff Grimm, Goodfield, IL and Elder Bro. Ron Messner, Washington, IL for adjusting their schedules so that this important work could be carried out. When the times allow, and we are able to gather as a congregation in our church again, a service with exhortations and a receiving line will be planned. We wish God’s abundant grace and unending love to surround our new Elder Brother Ted, Jr., Sis. Donna and their daughters Sis. Coreena and Sis. Julia as they assume this leadership role in our Morton church.

We thank Elder Bro. Ted Witzig, Sr. and Sis. Cindy for their many years of service to our Lord, our Morton congregation and our national church elder body.

We extend our sympathy to Bro. Mike (Sis. Pam) Heinold in the passing of his mother Sis. Mildred Heinold of Goodfield, IL. Our thoughts and prayers are also with the family of Betty Walls of Wisconsin who passed away on April 12. Her son Matt (McKenzie) Portscheller worships with us.

We are thankful we were able to watch and listen online as our ministering brothers brought us the stories of Palm Sunday, Good Friday and Easter. May our hope for the future rest in the promise of a home in Heaven that Jesus Christ’s death on the cross and resurrection brings us.

As we continue to shelter-in-place and wonder when “things will get back to normal,” may we be encouraged by the following verse:

“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.” II Chronicles 7:14

With not only our country, but countries around the world dealing with the coronavirus pandemic, may we remember to pray for all government leaders and those in authority, that they might turn to God for guidance and direction in making decisions on how to handle this unprecedented situation.

“God is our refuge and our strength, A very present help indeed; He in the time of trouble sends His grace to meet our every need Safe in His tender loving care, We have no fear of what shall be, E’en tho’ the earth should be removed,

And mountains cast into the sea Sure, in the city of our King, Secure we rest from all alarm; For God is in the midst of her, To shield His people from all harm. While heathen rage and kingdoms move, And desolations sweep the land: The Lord of hosts is with us still, To save us by His mighty hand. Soon will the day of vict’ry come, When wars shall cease in all the earth; Soon shall eternal peace be ours, And new Creation have her birth God is our refuge, God is our refuge, With mighty arm revealed, He is our help and shield, God is our refuge and our strength.”

God Is Our Refuge» Hymns of Zion/Tabernacle Hymns #4

Illinois, Peoria

Bonnie Bach, Crystal Wettstein

In the first days of this pandemic, the Peoria church sent out an email that was very encouraging and included ways to prayerfully respond to the ongoing crisis. Pray for the virus to end, for government leaders, for church leaders, for the vulnerable, for honest reporting, for a spirit of generosity, for a posture of trust, and for the spread of the Gospel. This was and continues to be a very good way to pray during a time of such uncertainty. We are so thankful God is in control!

“Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us.” Psalm 62:8.

We have been forced to become very creative with alternatives
to gathering in person when all church activities have ceased and the typical Easter festivities had to be cancelled. Modern technology has been very helpful with AC Central, Facebook Live, live video streaming, email, podcasts, Zoom, GoToMeetings, and likely many other ways. How thankful we will be when we can once again meet to worship and fellowship together and a reminder that “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” Matthew 18:20.

The father of Lisa Hoerr (Bro. Mike) passed away, Bro. Kenneth Dill (Tremont, IL). We pray for Lisa, Bro. Mike, and their son, Bro. Alex to be comforted, especially since a traditional visitation and funeral were not possible during this pandemic.

Prayer for a Pandemic by Cameron Wiggins Bellm:
May we who are merely inconvenienced remember those whose lives are at stake.
May we who have no risk factors remember those most vulnerable.
May those who have the luxury of working from home remember those who must choose between preserving their health or making their rent.
May those who have the flexibility to care for our children when schools close remember those who have no options.
May we who have to cancel a trip remember those who have no safe place to go.
May we who are losing our margin money in the tumult of the economic market remember those who have no margin at all.
May those who settle for quarantine at home remember those who have no home.

Another poem, author unknown:
The churches are empty – but so is the tomb.
And Jesus is victor over death, doom, and gloom.
So this year at Easter, let this be our prayer,
As the virus still rages all around, everywhere.
May the world see hope when it looks at God’s people.
May the world see the church is not a building or steeple.
May the world find faith in Jesus’ death and resurrection.
May the world find joy in a time of dejection.
May 2020 be known as the year of survival.
But not only that – let it start a revival.

Illinois, Princeville
Melinda Christ, Cherie White

During this time of shelter in place, we have enjoyed gathering our Sunday school classes together online via Zoom for a half hour of lesson and sharing. The three smallest classes were able to record some verses to send out to the church on Easter Sunday. We also have been blessed by our home brethren preaching two services on Sunday and one midweek via AC Central and phone lines. Certainly we miss coming together and worshipping in person with the brethren.

“I thank my God upon every remembrance of you.” Philippians 1:3

During this Easter season with more time on our hands, we trust more reflections were placed on what our Savior did for us, dying on the cross, shedding His blood and then arising again the third day that we may have this hope of salvation.

“While Jesus whispers to you,
Come, sinner, come!
While we are praying for you,
Come, sinner, come!
Now is the time to own Him,
Come, sinner, come!
Now is the time to know Him,
Come, sinner, come!”
Come, Sinner, Come.,
Gospel Hymns #410

Our retired minister Bro. Joe Stoller celebrated his 90th birthday on April 17. We thank him for all of his years of service, being a Godly example and pillar in our faith.

Our thoughts are with Sis. Julie Hanson (Bro. Jared) on the passing of her grandmother, Donna Ehnle (Roy) of Bradford. We are also saddened to hear of Sis. Anna Lou Grimm’s sister’s passing, Sis. Lorine Hackenjos (Bro. Myron) from Latty, Ohio. We extend sympathy to Sis. Doris Christ (late Bro. Walter) of the passing of her sister-in-law Liesle Christ in Germany. It is always hard to lose a loved one, but especially now during this time when we are not able to travel and be with family for the services. May the Lord comfort and grant peace to each one.

Happy grandparents, Bro. Roger and Sis. Darlene Herrmann, are rejoicing on the birth of Wakely
Elizabeth born to first time parents, Rob and Larissa Burroughs on March 23. Louis John Robertson was born on March 25, a new great grandson to Sis. Doris Christ (late Bro. Walter). Parents are Jon and Amber Robertson of Michigan. On April 4, Katelynn Esther was born to Bro. Cody and Sis. Maria Blunier, excited big sisters Raelynn and Adelynn welcome home their sister.

"Onward! Strive to reach the goal, Heaven’s Fatherland!
Though the tempter grieves thy soul,
Jesus guides thy hand.
So, safely on;
After conflicts here shall end,
We to glory will ascend;
In this rejoice.

Doth the burden and the heat,
Fill thy heart with fear?
Doth it seem a heavy yoke,
What thou hast to bear?
O, then behold,
Jesus cross which He once bore,
And the curse He did endure,
To save His fold."

Forward, Zion Harp #92.

Illinois, Roanoke
Judy Sauder, Barb Schwind

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

During this time of uncertainty and quarantine, how thankful we are that our God can give us courage and strengthen our hearts when we focus and wait on Him!

We rejoice in the birth of two new babies. Grandparents Randy and Janet Pomeranke welcomed Rhodes Chadwich born to Bro. Alex and Sis. Cassie Knepp (Goodfield, IL) on March 24. Bro. Tim and Sis. Cathy Hohnulin’s granddaughter, Josie Marie, was born April 17 to Bro. Tofig and Sis. Amy Mammadov (Bloomington, IL). We wish these families God’s blessings as they raise these little ones.

Sis. Betty Hodel (Bro. Bill, deceased) went to be with the Lord on March 29. Her survivors include her sons: Bro. Brent (Sis. Marge), and Bro. Brad (Sis. Patty); daughters: Sis. Boni Stoller (Bro. Ed, Denver, CO) and Barb Jones of Roanoke, IL; 12 grandchildren, 30 great-grandchildren, and a brother, Bro. Allen Zimmerman (Sis. Melba, Forrest, IL). Bro. Bill and Sis. Betty served the Roanoke church for many years in the ministry. She was a loving, encouraging sister, who touched many lives and will be missed by all.

Sis. Deb Fischer (Bro. Bruce) has been sent by OSF to serve at a hospital in Chicago for several weeks. We appreciate Sis. Deb and all our healthcare workers, including those at our nursing home, and essential workers, who are serving us during this pandemic. Our prayers are for their safety.

Due to travel restrictions and the current medical situation related to the COVID-19 pandemic, Bro. Fred and Sis. Jodi Leman and their children have returned to the U.S. from Papua, New Guinea, where Bro. Fred served as a helicopter pilot.

We pray for those with health issues, including Wally Leman (Sis. Marilyn), Bro. Bob Zimmerman, and Bro. Dave Schwind (Sis. Barb), and for safety for all during this time of global pandemic.

We thank our ministers and the brothers working with technology and sound for helping us to worship together, encouraging us through e-mails and videos during this shelter-in-place time.

Every weekday, Dave and I drive to Peoria for his radiation appointment and see this sign: “When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, “Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.” Fred Rogers. Helpers are such a blessing! We thank all our brothers, sisters and friends, who are helping and reaching out to others in so many ways during this difficult time in our country.

Note of thanks:
I want to thank each of you for your prayers during this uncertain time, and for those who sent encouragement, Easter and birthday cards, and gifts. Your kindness will never be forgotten.

Sis. Anna Marie Reutter

Illinois, Tremont
Debbie Aberle, Anita Koch

Bro. Corbin Steiner (Bro. Todd and Sis. Val) and Sis. Esther Kaehr (Bro. Jon and Sis. Juli) were married in Bluffton, IN on March 18. Due to the limitations on gatherings, they were unable to have the full wedding they had planned. We rejoice with this dear couple and look forward to being able to congratulate them.
in person at a later date. May God bless them richly and we welcome Sis. Esther to Tremont!

"There is a calm beyond life’s fitful fever,
A deep repose, an everlasting rest;
Where white-robed angels welcome the believer
Among the blest, among the blest.
There is a Home, where all the soul’s deep yearnings,
And silent prayers shall be at last fulfilled;
Where strife and sorrow, murmurings and heart burnings
At last are stilled, at last are stilled."

Multiple families in our congregation are grieving the loss of loved ones. We lift each one up in prayer and pray they feel God’s comforting presence. Each loss seems somewhat greater without the ability to show our love and support in person. Bro. Greg Blunier (Sis. JulieAnn) said goodbye to his mother, Sis. Marjorie Blunier (Roanoke, IL). Jason and Lisa Leigh lost Jason’s father, James Leigh (Mapleton, IL). Sis. Sandi Koch’s (Bro. Nate) grandma, Rosetta Stoller (Fairbury, IL), passed away. Allison McKey (John and Pat, Gridley, IL) lost her battle with cancer. She is the granddaughter of Sis. Carolyn Bolliger. Bro. Dirk and Sis. Erika Koch’s family is grieving the loss of Sis. Erika’s brother, Ferenc Molnar of Hungary.

Our Bro. Ken Dill has reached his eternal home. We extend our love and sympathy to his wife, Sis. Sandy, his children, Lisa Hoerr (Bro. Mike, Peoria, IL), Laurie Rummel (Nick, Morton, IL), Kyle Dill (Delynn, Iuka, MS), and Kevin Dill (Jody, Tremont, IL), and his grandchildren. We also remember his siblings, Bro. Glenn Dill (Sis. Marilyn) and Sis. Wilma Bliss (Bro. Floyd), both of Tremont, and Sis. Margaret Mauer (Bro. Adam) of Bloomington, IL.

"There is a Hope, to which the Christian, clinging;
Is lifted high above life’s surging wave;
Finds life in death, and fadeless flowers springing
From the dark grave, from the dark grave.
There is a Crown prepared for those who love Him;
The Christian sees it in the distance shine,
Like a bright beacon glittering above him,
And whispers, “Mine!” and whispers, “Mine!”"

Our prayers are with Bro. Sam Wegman (Sis. Rosemary) and Bro. Paul Michel (Sis. Helen) as they have spent time in the hospital and are recovering. A large number of our congregation work or volunteer in the health care field. We are praying for their protection and for the opportunity they have to shine Christ’s light each day.

"There is a spotless robe of Christ’s own weaving;
Will you not wrap it round your sin-stained soul?
Poor wandering child, upon thy past life grieving,
Christ makes thee whole!
Christ makes thee whole!
There is a Home, a Harp, a Crown in Heaven;
Alas! that any should Thy gift refuse!

The awful choice of life and death is given
Which wilt thou choose?
Which wilt thou choose?"

Sis. Kathy Rocke has a new granddaughter, Sierra Kay, born to Bro. Dean and Sis. Maria Rocke (Elgin, IA). Sis. Kathy Rocke’s (Bro. Glenn) grandson, Rylee, Myra, Natalie and Jerry. Bro. Curt and Sis. Kathy Rassi welcomed another grandson. Isaac Nathan of Tremont, and Sis. Cyrena, Joel and Luke Rassi (Kansas City, MO). We continue to pray for our ministers and thank them for their continued efforts during this time of live streamed services with no physical church attendance. Bro. Dave Huette (Sis. Susan) spoke on the book of Micah during our monthly Family Night. Elder Bro. James Fehr (Sis. Brenda) did a topical on “a Biblical response to the stimulus package and other relief programs”. He shared seven principles to keep in mind as we navigate the uncertainty ahead. They are integrity, honesty, generosity, faithfulness, stewardship, diligence and perspective. He also posed this question: “What is the ripple effect of our lives?”

Note of Thanks:

We are deeply grateful to so many who reached out to us during Marvin’s illness and passing. Whether it was a phone call, a card, a personal visit or a food item, please know how much it was appreciated! Thank you and God’s many blessings, The Marvin Frank family.
Illinois, Washington
Lillian Pfaffmann

Despite COVID-19, life goes on... There have been two precious babies born! Bro. Bradley and Sis. Katherine Ricketts had another girl, Lilah Grace, whose birthday is April 12. Her big sister, Brielle, helped welcome her home. Russell, Henry, and Lewis Blunier now have a sister, Willa Mae; born to Warren and Heather on April 10.

A wedding engagement! Sis. Hannah Hofstetter (Bro. Kevin and Sis. Ann) was announced to Bro. Jakob Spitzer (Angie Houck and Stephen Spitzer), both of Washington. We truly wish them God’s richest blessings as they plan their lives together as one!

Shelter-in-place continues and all church related activities play out online. Truly there have been many changes in everyday living, i.e. how we “do” things, how we interact with people, and how our lives are directly or indirectly affected. Some may be positive and some, negative. The greatest consolation is that our God IS in control! He’s already in the future so He knows what lies ahead of us. Our job is to learn increased trust, deeper faith, and greater dependency on Him to prepare ourselves for whatever lies ahead. If you haven’t surrendered to Jesus and repented for your sins, please do not wait till tomorrow…”

“Haste and seek your soul’s salvation,
Heed the word of God today!
Haste to flee His condemnation;
Seek the straight and narrow way,
Evil are the worldly pleasures,
Leading to eternal fire,
Seek the everlasting treasure,
Ere the day of grace expire.”
Repent Ye, Zions Harp # 52

Indiana, Bluffton
Suzie Fiechter, Liana Reinhard, Olivia Steffen

“Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength, and He will make my feet like hinds’ feet, and will make me to walk upon mine high places.” Habakkuk 3:17-19

It’s easy to feel a sense of loss at this difficult time. We grieve what we cannot have or do. It’s hard to not see our loved ones, to not be able to hug our grieving family when husbands, parents or other loved ones pass into eternity. We are frustrated to cancel celebrations of marriage or graduation or births or other times of great joy.

Yet, we have a wonderful opportunity to rejoice in the Lord! He has given us the gift of time, and now we don’t have so much of it scheduled. We can focus on our sadness, or we can look to God to show us ways to magnify Him. After all, isn’t that what life is all about?!

A few days after their son, Bro. Samuel, was married to Sis. Erika Gerber (Bro. Al and Sis. Joli), Bro. Jon and Sis. Juli Kaehr gave their daughter, Sis. Esther, to Bro. Corbin Steiner (Bro. Todd and Sis. Val, Tremont, IL). Because of the upcoming travel bans, they were married on Wednesday morning in front of a mostly empty church. It was a blessing to be able to stream the service and be with them in spirit! We will miss Sis. Esther and her beautiful smile, but know that she will bless our Tremont church.

Sis. Cordin Gerber (Bro. Ked and Sis. Joanne) and Bro. Logan Koch (Bro. Justin and Sis. Marcia, Washington, IL) have felt the Lord’s direction to serve Him together. They both reside in Leo, IN. We wish them God’s blessing!


We pray for God’s special grace to carry those who have been ill, including Sis. Renee Reinhard (Bro. Steve), Corey Steffen (Bro. Ramon, dec. and Sis. Lorena), Bro.
The Lord has called Bro. Bruce Bedwell home. He leaves his wife, Sis. Nancy and children, Corey Bedwell and Tracey (Sarah) Bedwell of Bluffton, Shaunda Opdycke (Nathan) of Holgate, OH, Ryan Bedwell (Jenna) of Seattle, WA, and Kristen Springmeyer (Andrew) of Batesville, IN. Also surviving is his father-in-law, Herman Fiechter (Sis. Phyllis, dec.).

Sis. Mary Jane Yergler passed into eternity on March 23. Her grieving family include husband, Bro. Claire, children, Sis. Renee Reinhard (Bro. Steve), Sis. Pam Reinhard (Bro. John), Sis. Angie Topp (Bro. Dean) and 44 grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Also mourning are her brothers, Bro. Carl Fiechter (Sis. Mary, dec.) and Herman Fiechter (Sis. Phyllis, dec.), and sister-in-law, Sis. Maxine Fiechter (Bro. Charles, dec.).

Our love and sympathy are extended to Bro. Mike and Sis. Carmon Bertsch, Bro. Stan and Sis. Cindy Bertsch and Bro. James and Sis. Christy Bertsch on the death of their sister, Nancy Bertsch Kunz.

We pray for Bro. Carl and Sis. Evelyn Hackenjos, as their sister-in-law, Sis. Lorine Hackenjos (Bro. Myron, Latty, OH) passed away.

We also grieve with the family of Bro. Walter Bertsch (Sis. Lillian, dec.): Bro. Lonnie and Sis. Pat Bertsch, Bro. Tom and Sis. Brenda Bertsch, Bro. Jeff and Sis. Jodi Towle, Bro. Wayne and Sis. Jeanne Steffen, stepbrother, Bro. Richard (Sis. Elaine) Reimschisel and 32 grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Praise God for another convert, Lydia Baumgartner (Bro. Nick and Sis. Leah). We are praying that the Lord will use this special time to call many more to Himself!

Indiana, Bluffton North
Rhonda Maller, Tiffani Schladenhauffen

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


We are so thankful to serve a Sovereign God who is worthy to be praised, to sing and praise His power, to thank Him for His presence, to know that He inhabits our praise.

This past month, we have celebrated a new birth with Bro. Zach and Sis. Julie Reinhard, who along with their children, Bree, Boden, and Beckham, welcomed a precious baby brother, Bru Wesley, on March 19. Bro. Gene and Sis. Darlene Reinhard are the happy grandparents.

We also rejoiced in the celebration of rebirth with Tiercell Schwartz, who repented at the cross and began a new life with Christ. Tiercell is the son of Bro. Ernie and Sis. Robin Schwartz.

And at the other end of the spectrum comes the time to say goodbye. Our congregation extends sympathy to Sis. Kathy and Bro. Steve Longenberger, Sis. Peg and Bro. Tony Fiechter, and Sis. Karen and Bro. Mike Todd as they said goodbye to their father, Bro. Vernon Kaehr, on March 27. Bro. Vernon was also survived by a fourth daughter, Jenni (Jeff) Milholland.

We sympathize with Sis. Jodi and Bro. Jeff Towle and Bro. Lonnie and Sis. Pat Bertsch, who also said goodbye to their father, Bro. Walter Bertsch on April 14. Though we couldn’t go to visitation or attend the funerals of these men of God who left a legacy of godly living, we can always pray for the families and uplift them before God’s throne.

Prayers ascend upward for Sis. Mary (Bro. Herman) Baumgartner, Bro. Harry T (Sis. Lois) Gerber, and Rochelle Gerber, who have spent time in the hospital this past month and are recovering at home.

Indiana, Francesville
Jacki Huber, Connie Linback

God is so good!! Isn’t it like God to bring good out of challenging, or even awful, situations? Personally, an empty social calendar has been a nice time for me to enjoy some extra quiet time, reading, walks, and doing some things with a slower, more relaxed pace, but for many, there are increased responsibilities and stresses at this time of social
distancing. One blessing we all received recently was an Easter program that we could watch, a compilation of songs, verses, stories, plays, piano playing and thoughts from families at home. This is found on Francesville’s facebook page (it is not necessary to be a member of facebook to access it).

It was precious to see the children, from small babies to young men and women, sharing the joy of the Easter story from their homes!

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

Our sincere sympathy is extended to the family of Sis. Anne Ward. We were saddened to hear of her unexpected death and will miss her presence! At this time of not being able to gather, we “come boldly to the throne of grace” for help to all in these difficult situations. We especially extend sympathy to her husband, Bro. Dale and their dear children, Brian (Dana, Owensboro, KY), Angela Mainstone (Larry, Estero, FL), Kerri Westerhouse (Rodney, West Lafayette, IN), Brad (Anna, Carmel, IN) and Nicole Wireman (Sam, Wheatfield, IN).

Also seeking “grace to help in time of need”, have been dear ones with recent or ongoing health concerns. Our prayers are with Lisa Pedigo, Sis. Janice Gutwein (Bro. Jerry) and Sis. Sarah Leman, granddaughter of Bro. Dennis and Sis. Linda Leman, daughter of Bro. Randy and Sis. Mara Leman (West Lafayette, IN).

Because of not being able to gather as a congregation, Bro. Jerod Putt (Bro. Brian and Sis. Tami) and Sis. Jayla Wettstein (Bro. Mark and Sis. Karen, Lamar, MO) chose to exchange wedding vows on a different date and at a different place than they had originally planned! On Sunday, April 5, they exchanged wedding vows in an empty sanctuary in Francesville, instead of at Minneapolis, MN where Sis. Jayla had been attending school. Because the Lord blessed them with a beautiful day, many were able to offer congratulations by driving through the parking lot of the Fellowship Center and extending blessings through opened vehicle windows! What a time of unique experiences this has been! Our thanks to Bro. Mark (Sis. Jayla’s dad) for assisting our Elder Bro. Randy Gudeman with the wedding ceremony.

We rejoice with the angels in heaven over a soul who has turned to Jesus! Liam Gutwein (Bro. Nick and Sis. Sandra Gutwein) has recently acknowledged his need for a Savior and we are so thankful!

We are thankful for so many freedoms we enjoy and continue in prayer for leaders and all in authority, for wisdom at this time and always.

**Indiana, Indianapolis**

**Edie Bollier, Kaylin Bollier**

Our church was privileged to have Bro. Chad Kaeb and Bro. Keith and Sis. Emily Schambach share with us about Gateway Woods on a Wednesday night. We were also blessed to have the Mortonaires visit and bless us with the ministry of their beautiful singing. Our visiting ministers were Bro. Dan Pfister (Sis. Sherry, Bluffton North, IN) and Bro. Jeremiah Psinas (Morton, IL). Our church family was able to gather for a HarvestCall back pack filling night which is always a nice evening of service and fellowship.

We continue to pray for Bro. Bert Aeschliman as he recovers from a recent surgery and awaits another in the near future.

Bro. Ron and Sis. Edie Bollier were able to go to Japan for their grandson’s birth. While they were there, their sister-in-law Stephanie Bollier passed away unexpectedly. They were able to fly back for the funeral. Joy and sorrow meet, as Bro. Makoto and Sis. Anna Inoue’s baby boy, Zenji Adrian was born the morning of the funeral. Thankfully, Bro. Ron and Sis. Edie were able to fly back for the funeral and then back to Japan to help their family. Our sympathies and prayers go out to Phil Bollier and his family.

Bro. Bob Conrad visited our church and blessed us with his teaching on Bible translation. What a challenge and inspiration he is to us all!

We rejoice with Bro. Ben and Sis. Suzanne Graham with the adoption of the four children who had been living in their home for the past 3 and a half years. We are thankful that Tristan, Adrian, Elias and Malaya are now Grahams. Sis. Ginny Zeller is their grandmother and they all live together in her home.
And then the COVID-19 became real and our lives all changed! We have been having Zoom services, Bible studies, prayer meetings and informative calls with our doctors and nurses on the front lines who attend our church. We have all been missing meeting together and appreciating each other all the more. With this change of COVID-19 and the effects on travel and jobs, it affected Bro. Joe Darlington (Chicago, IL) and Sis. Ashley Bollier’s wedding plans. Parents are Bro. Ron and Sis. Edie Bollier and Jerry and Sis. Sandy Darlington (Belvidere, IL). They were married on April 4 in a small service with many in attendance on Zoom. How flexible we have to be in these changing and unprecedented times! Our prayers go out to all those affected with sickness and those with job loss, those in nursing homes with no visitors allowed, all the doctors and nurses in hospitals and our leaders making weighty decisions that affect us all! Thankfully we know we have a God who is sovereign over all and He is very near and giving peace and calling all to repentance and salvation!

Indiana, LaCrosse
Meagan Frank, Julie Rocke

“Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the LORD hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted. But Zion said, The LORD hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands…” Isaiah 49: 13-16

My husband and I have been reading through the book of Isaiah, and we continue to be awed by the depth of God’s love and compassion for His people. What blessed solace that we can rest in His timeless promises!

We are so thankful to be reminded of those promises each Sunday and Wednesday evening, as our ministering brothers share the word with us through technology. While it can never replace being able to greet our loved ones in person, we appreciate these blessings. The children are also enjoying “seeing” each other through cyber Sunday school. An added blessing is that the ministers from our neighboring Valparaiso church, Bro. Tim Bucher (Sis. Julie) and Bro. Jon Pratt (Sis. Sharon) have been sharing the pulpit with our home ministers. Bro. Joe Gerst (Sis. Connie, Iowa City, IA) was also here on a special visit, and brought forth the word. We sincerely thank each of these brothers, as well as our home ministers, Sunday school teachers, and technologically gifted members for their efforts and willingness to serve.

Like bursts of sunshine amidst the unpredictable spring weather, news of the arrival of precious new babies never fails to brighten our day. Sweet Elva Mae Troxel was welcomed with love by Bro. Joel and Sis. Amy, along with big siblings Titus, Rhoda, Onita, and Xandrea. Grandparents Bro. Ed and Sis. Carol Troxel, and Bro. Joe and Sis. Connie Gerst (Iowa City, IA) are thankful to welcome her home as well. Bro. Glen and Sis. Sandy Heinold are also rejoicing in the arrival of a precious grandchild, as Peter Glen was recently born to Mark and Katie Heinold of Madison, Wisconsin.

We take so for granted being able to “rejoice with them that do rejoice” in person, that it pains us to do so from a distance. That doesn’t lessen the prayers and love we offer for them! Bro. Elvin and Sis. Jan Nuest are rejoicing in the marriage of their granddaughter, Sis. Jayla Wettstein (Bro. Mark and Sis. Karen, Lamar, MO) to Bro. Jerod Putt (Bro. Brian and Sis. Tami, Francesville, IN) in our Francesville church. Sis. Jayla and her family hold a special place in our LaCrosse family, and we look forward to when we can welcome them back.

“Therefore the redeemed of the LORD shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head…and sorrow and mourning shall flee away.” Isaiah 51:11

Indiana, Leo
Jan Beer

Sending greetings of love through Christ to you from the Leo church family. Trusting this time of self-quarantine, isolation and social distancing brings us all into a closer relationship with our dear Savior, Jesus Christ.

Easter was, indeed, celebrated a lot differently this year because of
the COVID-19 virus sweeping the world, but blessings were received from the creative efforts made by many brethren. Because of modern technology, there was no lack of observing numerous congregations’ celebrations of Good Friday, sunrise service and Easter. Thanks to all who shared their creativity and talents with us. We were blessed.

My apology for failing to report the loss of a parent for two of our dear sisters. On February 16, Sis. Judy Stoller’s father, Bro. Rudy Luginbuhl of Rockville, CT, finished his time on earth. Also, on March 24, Sis. Heidi Pence lost her mother, Sis. Lorine Hackenjos of Latty, OH. Our prayers are with these sisters and their families as they adjust to their loss, but they can look forward to a grand reunion in Heaven.

COVID-19 can change our plans, but it cannot stifle God-given love. March 20 was the day for a private wedding in Roanoke, VA for Simon Schlatter and Abby Williams. Bro. Phil and Sis. Judy Schlatter, Simon’s parents, plan to host a reception this summer to celebrate this union that God brought together. Announcement has been made of the engagement of Sis. Cordin Gerber and Bro. Logan Koch and Sis. Sarah Lehman and Bro. Luke Zarkovacki. Both sisters are currently assistant house parents at Gateway Woods. Parents of these happy couples are Bro. Ked and Sis. Joanne Gerber, Bluffton, IN, Bro. Justin and Sis. Marcia Koch, Washington, IL, Bro. Dean and Sis. Mary Lehman, Milford, IN and Bro. George and Sis. Lily Zarkovacki, Denver, CO. We are thankful that in these uncertain times, God continues to work in the hearts of His people.

Our fervent prayers have been with Bro. Jeremy and Sis. Kristi Reinhard for the safe arrival of their baby. On April 7, Silas Allen was born by emergency C-section. Silas weighed 2.26 pounds and is in critically stable condition in NICU. We continue to pray for Sis. Kristi’s recovery and for God’s healing hand to be upon dear baby Silas.

This time of forced isolation can be very frustrating, but have you thought to make a list of all the good things that can come of this time? Number one on my list would be a revitalized love of gathering with my church family to corporately worship God. The acute awareness that God is in control and this is no surprise to Him, is a great blessing. Now we have time to pray for each other. Now we have the opportunity and time to reach out to others in a non-physical way to show love and encouragement. We have a lot of time to spend with God and His Word, if we so choose. We can reach out to and pray for those who do not put their trust in our unchanging God. What would be on your list?

Indiana, Milford

Heidi Beer, Anne Wilson

A month of history in the making has passed, and we face the uncertainty of the future. However, God’s beautiful promises never change and we have the hope of Salvation because JESUS LIVES! What a beautiful Easter season even if it was celebrated in our homes.

We have had an exciting month in Milford with the announcement of two engagements. Bro. Ryan Schlipf of Denver, CO (Bro. Rich and Sis. Kathy) is engaged to Sis. Alisha Bahler of West Lafayette, IN (Chris and Sis. Teresa, Wolcott, IN). Sis. Sarah Lehman (Bro. Dean and Sis. Mary) is also engaged, to Bro. Luke Zarkovacki of Denver, CO (Bro. George and Sis. Lily). We wish them God’s blessings in the months to come. We rejoice with grandparents Bro. Rich and Sis. Kathy Schlipf as they welcomed Silas Allen Reinhard into this world on April 7. His adoring parents are Bro. Jeremy and Sis. Kristi Reinhard of Leo, IN. We have many things to praise God for as we reflect on the month! May you all experience the peace that only God can give as we lean on Him.

Indiana, Remington

Jenni Honegger, Marcella Tyler

We rejoice with the angels that Thad Bahler (Bro. Tim and Sis. Lynnette) has seen his need for a saviour, repented of his sins, and turned toward Christ for his redemption! It’s so encouraging to see evidence that even in these tumultuous times, God is still on His throne calling sinners to Himself and working in the hearts of men. We pray that Thad will learn to follow closely in Jesus’s footsteps on his new path of life.

Sis. Diane Waibel (Bro. Gene) is mourning the loss of her mother,

As a somewhat extroverted person, it is hard for me not to see, greet and talk in person with any of you during this pandemic crisis. I think about what a positive difference it will make to our fellowship and our relationships when we finally can see each other face to face again. It reminds me of the verse in Corinthians about how right now we see through a glass darkly, but then we will see face to face. I feel like I’m getting a tiny little taste of how sweet it will be someday to see Jesus face to face after all this time here on earth away from Him. Let’s pray that our longing for Christ can be even more fervent than our longing for each other’s fellowship!

Indiana, South Bend
Joshua Martinez

“Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;” Romans 12:12

We are thankful that our friend Sterling Goins returned from Indianapolis after serving in the National Guard’s COVID-19 relief efforts. We also wish to encourage Bro. Don Lehman (Sis. Jill), who has been assigned to the Elkhart County COVID-19 Incident Management Team.

We’d like to extend special thanks to Bro. Otto Schlatter (Sis. DeAnn), for helping us broadcast the Good News to our church family. The coronavirus has brought fear and uncertainty to the world. However, the Lord offers us a spirit of peace in place of fear and a spirit of hope in place of worry. Faith is an antidote to fear, and nothing strengthens our faith like the promises of God.

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

Indiana, West Lafayette
Libby Wahl

Life continues (as we all know) even as we distance ourselves physically... sharing together as a local body via AC Central and online video chat. Born March 25 was Georgi Faye to Clayton and Abbey Walder, Bloomington, IL and born March 26 was Roman Henry to Kyle and Kori Walder, Buckley, IL. Special, double events are blessing paternal grandparents, Bro. Russ and Sis. Darlene Walder, of our congregation. Maternal grandparents Eric and Nancy Schieler, Elgin, IL and Steve and Bonnie Balk, Buckley, IL respectively are also rejoicing.

Looking forward to life together in the Lord, engagement congratulations go to Purdue graduate Braden Beyer and Honor Schrock, Harlan, IN and also to Sis. Alisha Bahler and post-Purdue graduate Bro. Ryan Schlipf, Denver, Colorado (originally of Milford, IN).

More good news... Alivia Pritts (Bro. Nathan and Sis. Kelli Pritts) surrendered her life to Jesus Christ in faith and repentance.

Little Brooklyn Gutwein (Mark and Emily Gutwein) endured a brief hospital stay after ingesting a non-food item. We are so thankful for prompt care and her quick recovery.

Much appreciation goes to our leadership and local online team for the research to implement guidelines and navigate online ministering. Perseverance is defined as continued effort and determination.

“Seek the LORD and his strength, seek his face continually.” I Chronicles 16:11

Indiana, Wolcott
Teresa Earney, Luann Gerber

“In times like these you need a Savior
In times like these you need an anchor
Be very sure, be very sure
Your anchor holds and grips the Solid Rock!
In times like these you need the Bible
In times like these, O be not idle
Be very sure, be very sure
Your anchor holds and grips the Solid Rock!
In times like these I have a Savior
In times like these I have an anchor
I’m very sure, I’m very sure
My anchor holds and grips the Solid Rock
Chorus:
This Rock is Jesus, Yes He’s the One
This Rock is Jesus, the only One
Be very sure, be very sure
Your anchor holds and grips the Solid Rock!”
This has certainly been an interesting month for all of us, but the Lord is in the midst of this coronavirus and assures us that He will provide! For this we are so thankful!

We would like to apologize for omitting the birth announcement of Bro. Larry and Sis. Lynell Blume’s precious little grandson! Wattson Hewitt arrived and blessed the hearts and home of Bro. Clint and Sis. Holly Blume (Latty, OH) and they are truly enjoying this little bundle! Wattson’s maternal grandparents are Bro. Todd and Sis. Pam Stoller of Latty, OH.

We were thrilled to hear the engagements of two couples this month! Sis. Kenzie Bahler (Bro. Mike and Sis. Jody) is engaged to Bro. Trenton Kyburz (Bro. Phillip and Sis. Sasha). Also, Sis. Alisha Bahler (Chris and Sis. Teresa) is engaged to Bro. Ryan Schlipf of Denver, CO. His parents are Bro. Rich and Sis. Kathy (Milford, IN). We pray God will richly bless these couples as they prepare for their weddings! May they keep Christ in the center of their plans!

God is still present in the Wolcott church! A “cluster” group was set up so that we can all keep in touch with each other. It has been such a wonderful blessing as we listen to a family’s children sing, see the Sunday school children still having their Bible lessons, encourage each other with thoughts so we don’t feel so alone during this time...we are still very connected! Praise Him!

**Iowa, Bloomfield**  
**Kendra Schlatter**

Bro. Dan and Sis. Barbara Rokey welcomed a son, Tanner Jacob, into their home. His older sisters are Faith and Grace and thankful grandparents are Elder Bro. Doug and Sis. Clara Schock and Bro. Ken and Sis. Phyllis Rokey (Goodfield, IL).

We are thankful Sis. Charlotte Teubel (Bro. Paul) has come through surgery ok. We are missing being able to gather as a church family but know that God knows each of our needs and always provides. We are thankful he has provided for Sis. Clara Schock (Elder Bro. Doug) to be home safely after her extended rehab stay in Phoenix, AZ.

God is continuing to provide for Bro. Joel Wuthrich (Sis. Shirley) with his new diagnosis of cancer. Our prayers are with him and his family. We also continue to lift up Sis. Mary Wiegand (Bro. Dave) in prayer as she is alone in the nursing home and her health is failing.

Our prayers and sympathy continue with the Wuthrich family as they have lost a brother, Robert Wuthrich. He was a brother to our Bro. Russell Wuthrich, Bro. Joel Wuthrich (Sis. Shirley), and Bro. Bill Wuthrich (Sis. Gloria). Robert also has several nieces and nephews in our congregation.

We are happy as Blake Wettstein (Bro. Lloyd and Sis. Carol) announced his engagement to Whitney Madden. We wish them God’s blessings as they take this step in life together.

Congratulations go to Harrison Birkner (Bro. Jeff and Sis. Angie) and Jacob Knobloch (Bro. Virgil and Sis. Katrina) as they both graduated from high school. May they:

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

May we reflect on this verse as we commemorate Mother’s day this month:

“She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her.” Proverbs 31:27-28

**Iowa Burlington**  
**Marilyn Anderson, Angela Steiner**

“Be still, my soul:  
The Lord is on thy side:  
Bear patiently the cross of grief or pain;  
Leave to thy God to order and provide;  
In every change He faithful will remain…”  
Be Still My Soul, Hymns of Zion, #191

These words become more alive than ever as we closed our church doors to congregational gathering on March 22 due to the COVID-19 restrictions. Although the world around us in an uproar of fear and unknowns, we are peacefully still at heart because we know Who’s in control. Our home ministering brothers continue a rotation and take turns preaching at our
church building where the sermon is streamed live over the phone. Burlington has a Sunday morning and Wednesday evening service, giving us the opportunity to “visit” other churches for Sunday afternoon.

Because of the mentioned restrictions, our church family has postponed baptisms for our convert, Ashely Anderson, and our Holy Communion. We continue to lift up Ashely in prayer that she can grow in this time of waiting.

Our gentle Bro. Mike Schumacher, was in the hospital briefly. We are thankful he is back home with his sweet wife and regaining health again.

While our church family cannot assemble together, that doesn’t mean we are apart. This season brings multiple opportunities to write a card, send an email/text or make a phone call to reassure one another that we are still united in Jesus’ love. Many have reached out to our elderly by assisting in grocery shopping, singing outside of their windows, or dropping off home-cooked meals to bring cheer. The building itself is not the church. Rather, it’s every individual brother and sister that makes up the body of Christ; WE are the church! We continue to pray for one another; those who are sick, vulnerable, in leadership positions, without jobs, home with children out of school, and for our church body to have faith, courage, and wisdom. We praise our great God and leave all to Him to order and provide, having confidence that in every change, He faithful will remain.

**Iowa, Elgin**

**Maria Rocke**

“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” 2 Timothy 2:16

Elder Bro. Wayne Grimm (West Bend, IA) has retired after serving as counseling elder of the Elgin church for 15 years. Bro. Wayne would often encourage us with this verse from 2 Timothy. We express our deep appreciation to him and Sis. Rose for their many labors of love as they served us from a distance. They also made the effort to be here several times each year. May God bless them now and in eternity. As Elder Bro. Lowell Moser (Morris, MN) steps into this role as our counseling elder, we trust he will feel the love and support of the Elgin church.

Tierra Getz (Bro. Kent and Sis. Betty) and Jesse Kaeb (Merlin and Ida Lou, Arrowsmith, IL) were united in marriage on March 21. May God bless them as they establish their home together in Illinois.

We haven’t been able to gather together as a church for a while now. May we remember each other in prayer as we look forward to worshipping and fellowshipping together again.

**Iowa, Garden Grove**

**Laura Funk**

We were blanketed with 11 inches of beautiful white snow over the past 18 hours. It was a beautiful blessing to behold, watching from the confines of my home. The snow glitters with a million lights as the sun shines brightly on this gift from God. Giving the children a different activity while social distancing.

Thanks to the AC Central, our family has enjoyed many visiting ministers. And they didn’t have to travel! Another blessing!

While spending more time at home, I have been investigating what treasures I might find in the many stored boxes! I found this book of poems titled Sacred Poems written by Bro. Henry Kipfer of Grabil, IN dated 1965.

*Why Doubt and Worry?*

“Why should we doubt or worry Upon our pilgrim way? Each step in one day nearer To a happier day. Why should we doubt or worry About tomorrow’s cares? When blest with abundance And grace for trials He shares. Why should we doubt or worry When each battle is begun? We have a sword, the Word of God, Which has each victory won. Why should we doubt or worry When Jesus is so dear? Just drawing near to Him Will dry the anguished tear. Why should we doubt or worry Who are the heirs of promise? There surely is no blessing Being a “doubting Thomas”. Why should we doubt or worry When His marvels we behold? We often gaze and ponder At His beauties untold. Yes, all will doubt and worry Who the load of sin still bear.
We remember all about it
When we were in despair.
You will always doubt and worry
As long as life remains,
Unless you fine the healing balm
To ease those smarting pains.
Why should we doubt or worry?
We will resurrected be,
In His likeness, in the Morning
Of blest Eternity.
Why should we doubt or worry?
When Glory is so near?
The Mansions are awaiting
Above this world so drear.
Why should we doubt or worry?
In death we find the key
That opens up the portal
Where we His Glory see.
Why should we doubt or worry?
When He takes us as His flower?
He only will transplant us
In His Eternal Bower.

Iowa, Iowa City
Diana Butikofer

Bro. Joe and Sis. Connie Gerst are rejoicing in the birth of another grandchild. Elva Mae Troxel was born March 29 to Bro. Joel and Sis. Amy Troxel (LaCrosse, IN).

As we celebrate Mother’s Day in May and Father’s Day in June, let’s consider these words of wisdom from Proverbs 6:20-21.
"My son, keep thy father’s commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother: Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck."

Iowa, Lester
Kristi Knobloch, Audrey Metzger

“The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the word of our God
shall stand forever.” Isaiah 40:8

“For I am the Lord. I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob, are not consumed.” Malachi 3:6

“Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.” Hebrews 13:8

So much of life has changed as of this writing, and we often wonder how long it will be before life returns to “normal” …and what that normal state will look like and when that occurs. In the midst of all these changes, we are so blessed to be able to remember that we serve an unchanging God whose word is unchanging through the ages.

How blessed we were to still be able to participate in our Good Friday and Easter services as well as our regular Sunday and mid-week services! The available technology is another reason to be thankful…a blessing we wouldn’t have had a generation ago! We are thankful to our ministering brothers across the land, often delivering sermons to an empty assembly, but to an eagerly listening congregation!

May God bless their efforts, as well as the efforts of those involved in making services, including sermons, Sunday school lessons, and Bible studies, available to us by these “virtual” means. Although we miss our precious fellowship, how empty life would be without the encouragement of hearing the Word!

We remember prayerfully those who have spent time in the hospital during the past month: Kathy Knobloch, Gilbert Knobloch, Bro. Wes Moser (Sis. Esther), and Jax Hoogendoorn (infant son of Melinda Popkes). Our wish for them all is restored good health and grace for the journey they are on.

Two new babies blessed homes in our congregation during the past month! On April 4, Bro. Chad and Sis. Lynelle Knoblock and big sister Larinda welcomed Thane Martin. Also rejoicing are grandparents, Bro. Troy and Sis. Donna Knoblock and Bro. Rodney and Sis. Lois Mogler.

The home of Jeff and Traci Nord and big brother Evans was blessed by the arrival of little Isla Jan on April 10. Isla came several weeks early and remains in the hospital as of this writing. Her grandparents from Lester are Bro. Roger and Sis. Janet Knoblock. We wish both of these families God’s blessings as they strive to raise these little ones to know and love Him!

The decision has been made to cancel the annual services scheduled in Clyde Park, MT this coming June. We look forward to having those back on the annual schedule next year, Lord willing. “We don’t know what the future holds, but we know Who holds the future.”

Iowa, Mediapolis
Laura Kuntz, Janet Lanz

“Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.” 1 John 4:4

These are words that have echoed in my mind many times in the past month, as we experience these unprecedented times. With all of the uncertainty that we are facing, it is such a comfort to know that God is bigger than all of the current and future ramifications of this pandemic, and that we can trust Him in every way. Things
have changed dramatically in so many ways, and yet…"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever." Hebrews 13:8

We miss our church family! We look forward to the time when we can all worship together again! That being said, we are very thankful for our ministers and our sound system brothers who have been coming to church on Sundays and Wednesday nights to livestream church services. It is so good to connect around God's word together as a church, even though we are physically apart.

Our Sunday school kids 5th grade and older look forward to Zoom Sunday school class meetings on Sundays. It felt very strange to not gather together for Good Friday and Easter services. Nonetheless, we are grateful for the price Jesus paid for our sins, and we rejoice in His glorious resurrection!

From my perspective of having teens and younger children at home, this time of quarantine has provided unexpected blessings. Having our calendar emptied has freed up much time to appreciate one another's company and do things together as a family that we don't always seem to have time for. However, we are mindful of those who are experiencing loneliness, illness, and other heartaches and difficulties in these times. We pray for God's provision in all of these challenging situations.

We look forward to meeting two precious little babies when regular church services resume! Emery Joan is the sweet new daughter of Trevor and Allison Massner. Bro. Troy and Sis. Joni Massner, Jeff Klenk, and Beth Hines are Emery's grandparents. Bro. Mitch, Sis. Renae, Treyton, Larae, Kale, and Tobin Schulz are thankful to welcome little Kade Dietrich into their family circle. Also welcoming Kade are grandparents Roger and June Schulz and Bro. Keith and Sis. Tonya Lanz.

We are thankful to have a new convert, as Jonathan Massner (Bro. Chuck and Sis. Lois) has begun his walk with the Lord! We rejoice with him and pray he will “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” 2 Peter 3:18

We extend our deep sympathy to Sis. Phyllis and Sis. Arlene Siegle in the passing of their nephew, Mark Siegle. Our prayers are with his family.

Iowa, West Bend
Jenny Banwart, Karen Schmidt

Knowing God will be their rich rewarider, we thank our Elder Bro. Wayne and Sis. Rose Grimm as he has retired from the elder and minister position. They have given many years of service, guidance and encouragement to our church. We’re thankful to have Elder Bro. Rod Bajema (Sis. Sue, Lester, IA) as our interim elder.

“Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.” 1 Timothy 5:17

Little Cooper Frank (Bro. Abram and Sis. Jessica) spent some time in the hospital after a fall. We’re thankful he is doing well. Trent Banwart (Bro. Ken and Sis. Marlene) was joined in marriage to Hailey Douglas (Sonia Orwig and the late Chris Frazier). May God bless their union.

All of our lives have changed a bit since the last article came out. A little quote I saw that gave me some food for thought was: “In the rush to return to normal, use this time to consider...which parts of normal are worth rushing back to.”

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

As we continue with our home church services we are thankful to the Lord for providing when we are not able to all meet together. We are thankful for the Word of God and can follow along with those ministering to us. There are many efforts done by faithful brethren to provide this service. Our hearts grieve for all of those experiencing sickness and death as a result of COVID-19. We pray that many will seek the Lord during this time of great uncertainty.

In Shioda church, because our numbers are few, we had gathered only for morning services, but with the emergency status now, only the Itos and one other family gather at church. Others listen on AC Central. In the afternoon, we enjoy Skyping with believers from both Japan churches for Bible study.

For Easter, we typically gather at a mountain area to sing and read the Bible and we decided to continue this tradition, though standing
apart and with masks. We may do this style of service again as it is wonderful to see each other. Tokyo church has been meeting via Skype for the morning service. As we are a small group, we enjoy hearing each other’s voices and seeing faces after listening to the Word together.

A few days ago the Lord saw fit to take our dear Sis. Yoshiko (Utsuki) Sakuta, 78, to her heavenly home. She suffered from Parkinson’s and experienced wonderful care from her dear husband, Shoji, and 2 adult children, Seiji and Keiko and 2 grandchildren. Her labors in the vineyard of the Lord along with many memories flood our hearts. “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.” Psalm 116:15. Due to restrictions of the virus the funeral will be held at a later date when we are allowed to gather.

Kansas, Bern
Sheri Edelman, Rita Menold
Greetings of love to each of you! Trusting this finds each of you blooming with grace, as we adjust to our new routines due to our national pandemic. We are so appreciative to everyone in our congregation who have gone the extra mile to keep our heartfelt connections alive – ministers, Sunday school teachers, bible study groups, friends… the list goes on. We certainly need the prayers of those we love during this time!

Easter Sunday was different this year. We worshipped from home; no extended family meals together. In Kansas, the weather was very dreary. The day just felt funny. No matter what situation we are in, there will always be rejoicing in Christ’s resurrection from the grave!

It seems it is not far from our minds to do everything we can to not spread this virus that is moving across our nation. There are some things that are also highly contagious in a good way – kindness, patience, love, enthusiasm, and a positive attitude. Life has thrown us a curve ball. The whole family is home. All day long. We love each other. We get on nerves. Some days are great! Some days are hard. Some days we laugh till we cry. Some days we simply cry. Praying that each of us will be the carrier of joy! Love and prayers to each of you. There is hope on the horizon.

Kansas, Ft. Scott
Maria Bahr
We spent much of the month of March experiencing weekly changes to our worship services. We went from many still meeting at church while vulnerable groups stayed home, to pairing down smaller and smaller gatherings, even brown bagging our lunches to continue breaking bread after service. Shortly after, toward our month end, we were told to stay at home or meet in small groups. Many of us were blessed on Sunday, April 5 to virtually attend the beautiful union of Sis. Jayla Wettstein to Bro. Jerod Putt. We also celebrated a Good Friday service and began Zoom meetings to join those at home to our minster on the pulpit, with a small group in the church.

On Easter, we again met online and some in small groups and family groups. We did a round table check-in online to get highlights from our brothers and sisters, taking prayer requests and hearing stories of how each family is fairing. We sang Happy Birthday to Bro. Jerry Bahr, and found out Benji Banwart also had a birthday on the horizon, Happy Birthday and God’s Blessings to you Benji!! We all long to gather together and raise our voices, hearts, and prayers in one unified voice, but our Kansas governor continued the stay home order until May 3. So, from a distance, we will continue to pray for each other and were encouraged today to use the time we have to strengthen our walk.

Kansas, Kiowa
Janice Bahr, Millie Frieden
Greetings to everyone, everywhere, as we are presently going through some perilous times with the pandemic virus hampering our lifestyle. Here at the Kiowa Church, we have been worshipping via Zoom, the new technology which enables us to be able to see and hear one another during our Sunday morning meetings. We have had to be content until such time as the guidelines are lifted and we can once again assemble in our church and enjoy one another’s company firsthand!

Our ministering brothers who have helped Bro. Matt Schupbach this month have been Elder Bro. John Lehman (Bern, KS) and Bro. Tim Lehman (Taylor, MO).
In just a few short weeks, just like He did with the plagues of Egypt, God has taken away everything we worship. God said, “you want to worship athletes, I will shut down the stadiums. You want to worship musicians, I will shut down civic centers. You want to worship actors, I will shut down theaters. You want to worship money, I will shut down the economy and collapse the stock market. You don’t want to go to church and worship Me, I will make it where you can’t go to church”.

“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land” 2 Chronicles 7:14

Maybe we need to take this time of isolation from the distractions of the world and have a personal revival where we focus on the ONLY thing in the world that really matters. Jesus.

Kansas, Lamont
Maria Luthi

What a month this has been! While at first glance the church (building) may look empty and idle, the church (brotherhood) has been anything but that! Our church has been incredibly blessed to be able to meet via Zoom throughout the past month both midweek and on Sundays. We have all treasured these highlights in our week when we see each other through the cameras and can extend our love. One of our ministering brothers referred to this technology as a “crutch.” We’re so very thankful to be able to use it but we’ll also be glad when we can throw it away and meet in person again! I think this sums up the feelings of each one of us! There’s no replacement for the real thing!

We wish to extend our gratitude to all those who have worked hard to conduct church in this new format. There are many who put in time behind the scenes and it is much appreciated. We are also thankful for our “visiting” ministers this month via Zoom: Bro. Mark Wettstein (Sis. Karen, Lamar, MO) shared a Good Friday message with us and Bro. Cory Metzger (Sis. Jodi, Wichita, KS) joined us in sharing a service on Easter Sunday.

It has been so beautiful to see Christ’s hands and feet still working, unhindered by the virus and social distancing. Many are finding new ways to reach out, serve, and encourage. Several have been sewing face masks in their homes for our local hospital to use. Truly, “… in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast.” Psalm 57:1.

God is NOT participating in social distancing. He’s as near as ever. May we all rest in that truth.

Kansas, Wichita
Niklaus and Sara Schrader

We have been having church service via Zoom since March 22. It’s been a needed blessing during this time of uncertainty. Praise God for the opportunity to stay in touch and experience God’s Word even within a global pandemic. We sincerely thank all those in the health profession who have been working very hard to keep people safe and healthy. Relying on God’s Word in this time is absolutely necessary for our spiritual well-being. We find encouragement in Isaiah 41:10, which says: “Fear not; for I am with thee; be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.”

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

These are just two of the many uplifting scriptures God provides us with, but there are many more declaring God’s promises, faithfulness, and love. One blessing we can still focus on is the
fact that social distancing allows us to spend more time in God’s Word and in holy meditation.

We lift up our widows, especially Sis. Ann Warner who has been hospitalized recently. Certainly it is extra difficult to be alone during this strange time, so we pray for God’s nearness.

Sunday, April 19, we had the pleasure of Elder Bro. John Lehman (Bern, KS) ministering to us through Zoom.

“Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the Lord thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.” Deuteronomy 31:6

“Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul,and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle’s.” Psalms 103:1-5

Mexico, Ixtlán
Ruth Gerber

“And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.” Galatians 6:9-10

Weary… I think in general most of us are weary of the limitations all the COVID-19 health measures have put on us. But we trust it will be only for a season and we can use this time to learn new ways to do good to all men.

It has been a blessing to see the believers in Ixtlán connecting through WhatsApp and phone calls; sharing greetings, sermons, songs, verses and news. Each one is finding different opportunities to do good. There have been several food drives that have blessed some of the needier households and several small groups have gathered on occasion to listen to the Word and fellowship. We have much to be thankful for.

As we pray for God’s mercy on our household of faith and on the community around us, we trust that the Lord will have His way in this plague, that His name will be glorified and that His kingdom will be furthered.

México, Magdalena
Laura Aviña

We send greetings to all of you and pray the Lord is providing for you physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually during this time! Due to precautions against spreading COVID-19, we have not had services since March 15 and that is planned to continue through the end of May. We are thankful for the brothers who faithfully record and send out devotionals every Sunday and Wednesday!

I don’t know about you, but changes in my schedule and routine provoke anxiety, so adjusting to changes on a weekly, sometimes daily, basis over the past month has been a challenge. The following poem helps remind me of the One who will never change!

The Rope by LMRA

'I hung in the space of existence, Held by the ropes in my hands: Relationships, family, knowledge, and love Talents, home, honor, and lands. Occasionally one rope would slacken And I would cling tight to the rest. Safe in my basket of shelter, I felt I could face any test. But then the ropes began fraying My confidence shattered like spray As the wind rocked my haven of safety, I feared I would drop with each sway. Grasping for something with promise, I soon let go of near all Til but one rope held firm in the chasm. It was God who would not let me fall.'

Michigan, Alto
Heidi Kaeb, Renee Steffen

Greetings of love to each of you from our Alto congregation. As we all long to fellowship with fellow believers once again, our hearts are drawn closer to the truth of God’s Word when we are privileged to hear or watch a sermon through technology. It seems almost painful to be apart from one another.

We continue to lift up those in prayer who are struggling with health issues, some of which we might not even be aware. Our thoughts and prayers ascend to the Father for all the difficult
situations affecting so many: those working on the front lines, those who have lost jobs or face other financial hardships, the widows and widowers, those in nursing homes and hospitals. We know it is a painful and uncertain time for all households who are experiencing a different way of life than they’ve ever known and are trying to make it all work somehow. As believers, our hope and confidence lies in the Lord Jesus Christ who has redeemed His own and will return to restore all things. We can be sure of the future and share this hope to everyone around us.

We extend our sympathies to Brenda Blough (Carlton) and their family in the passing of her father Paul Dykstra. We also mourn with Sis. Michelle Oesch (Bro. Tom) in the loss of her grandmother Lois Slivatz. Our hearts go out to those grieving a loved one during this time of isolation. May we all still reach out and most importantly lift up in prayer. Our thoughts and prayers are also with those on the mission field who continue to love and serve those around them.

We pray God’s blessings upon the marriage union of Cameron Steffen (Bro. Terry and Sis. Laurie) and Sophia Ou.

We are thankful Bro. Jon and Sis. Amy Gerst and their children are safely arrived back in the States from Ethiopia. They have shared with us the wonderful good that God is bringing in Ethiopia because of this worldwide pandemic. Our prayer is that all would believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved.

“We have been given a wake-up call or maybe just a another chance, to focus on what God is trying to teach that you may have missed at first glance. Our Father is trying to get our attention, He’s not allowing this for no reason at all. So each new day of mercies He gives we have the choice to smile or bawl. Think of how your thoughts have turned from a focus that was about money and time. Now we are longing to fellowship again, at church with brethren of the Divine. Realizing that we are to grow in faith which no doubt can be painful and slow, may we march on in this battle for the Lord letting the world see the light from within us glow.”

ibG.res

Michigan, Bay City
Sarah Knochel

Greetings of love in our Savior’s name!

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

As I write this article, I reflect on the changes the last month has brought not only our congregation but to most churches, families and individuals within the United States. Phrases like social distancing, stay-at-home, and essential services have now become a regular part of our vocabulary. We pray that God’s gentle hands of love will bring peace and calm to each one as our new “normal” evolves during this time.

We want to remember those who spent time in the hospital over the last several weeks. We pray for Sis. Betty Wieland (Bro. Morris) and Bro. Daryl Wieland (Sis. Edie) as they heal and regain their strength.

Our dear friend Bob Stange passed away recently. Our thoughts are with his many cousins who attend our congregation as they mourn his absence.

Our convert Bob Weiss passed away in early April and we pray for his dear family during this time. We especially want to remember Sis. Maureen, their children Rob (Sarah), Aaron (Rebecca), Jessica and all of their grandchildren.

“Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power: That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.” 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12

Michigan, Detroit
Krista Wieland

I hope you and yours are well as you read this. It’s easy for us to take our health for granted, isn’t it? It’s easy to forget and/or start to minimize something that we cannot
see, right? I know I did. I recently started at a new job at a new hospital. There was a gap of several weeks in between when I stopped my previous job and started my new one, and I had not been near a hospital for an extended period. Reality hit quickly. I came home after my first day of work a little dazed and overwhelmed with what I saw. I did not have a full picture of how difficult this pandemic was until I was working at the new hospital. Our prayers are with the essential workers as they continue their efforts in this difficult time.

This country’s social distancing and the unknown due to the virus has a spiritual connotation to me. As we are forced, so to speak, to stay home more due to this real but mostly unseen disease, God is calling us to really evaluate our belief in the very real but physically unseen Jesus who is coming again to claim His own. Just as this virus came on so suddenly, Jesus will come suddenly and swiftly. What a gift this time at home can be for spiritual revival and refocus! How good our God is that we are still able to connect via technology with family and friends. Is it the same? No. I miss my out of state family and friends terribly. But do I have more time with my husband and daughter? Definitely. More time for devotions? Yes. When life goes back to normal, whatever that means, let’s not let our Christian lives slide into normal again, if normal is a rut. If we have become closer to God in this time, that doesn’t have to change! God will ALWAYS make a way for His people!

Our church was shocked and deeply saddened by the unexpected passing of Sis. Darlene Kujawa. She was a vital part of our church family and did so many things for others. She will be sorely missed. Our deepest sympathy and prayers during this difficult time are extended to her husband, Bro. Bill Kujawa and to each of their children: Becky Kujawa, Laura Stevens (David), Dan Kujawa (Christina) and Jeff Kujawa. Our prayers are with Bro. Hartzell and Sis. Mary Kaisner in the passing of Mary’s sister-in-law Donna Enhle (Roy) from Bradford, IL. We also offer our sympathy to Bro. Tom Knochel in the passing of his brother-in-law Bob Weiss (Sis. Maureen) from Bay City. We are thankful that Bob professed his need of Jesus as his Savior a few weeks ago. Our prayers are with the entire family as they grieve.

Our prayers also are extended to Bro. Milan and Sis. Joyce Germaine in the passing of Bro. Milan’s father Mike Germain from Dearborn, Michigan. It is difficult because we cannot physically be near them to give a hug, but we offer our earnest prayers that the Holy Spirit will be their Comforter at this time.

We rejoice with Logan Frank (Bro. Lucas and Sis. Crystal) in his decision to give his heart and life to the Lord!

Our church recently voted and expressed support for Bro. Lucas (Sis. Crystal) Frank as an elder candidate to be interviewed in Rittman, OH this coming August. We are grateful for the love and peace that our church has shared in this process.

There are so many reasons for us to all be prayerful for each other right now. We’re thankful that we serve a great and powerful God and nothing is too hard for Him (Jeremiah 32:27).

**Brenda Messner, Renee Messner**

Greetings and love from Minneapolis. We are staying at home because of our governor’s order. We are grateful to our gracious heavenly Father, the cases of Covid 19 virus remain low in our state.

During this pandemic, we are thankful for the advancements in technology. Zoom meetings allow us to listen, view church services and participate in Bible studies. We are prayerful and thankful for our ministers: Elder Bro. Duane Rocke (Sis. Bonnie), Bro. Kent Mogler (Sis. Mary) and Bro. Dewayne Dill (Sis. LaRae) along with their families, for all the extras they are doing for us! If it be sharing their musical gifts or the technical knowledge, helping us communicate while we must stay at home, we appreciate how you are providing a way to pray together and worship our great God.

On April 5, we rejoiced with our dear Sis. Jayla Wettstein and Bro. Jerod Putt, as they joined in holy matrimony, in Francesville, IN. Officiating their wedding was
Elder Bro. Randy Gudeman (Sis. Becky, Francesville, IN) and Jayla’s father, Bro. Mark Wettstein (Sis. Karen, Lamar, MO). Jerod’s parents are Bro. Brian and Sis. Tammy Putt, from Francesville, IN. Only immediate family could gather at church, although prayers were lifted up and many were able to witness their union via Facebook.

He is Risen! These strange times did not keep us from the joy of Jesus, and celebrating His resurrection! After our service on Easter Sunday, we heard from our teens and children in their reciting of the attributes of Jesus. They shared the hope, strength, what He does in their lives and the salvation He provides.

Jesus stands at the door knocking...how wonderful when that door is opened! We rejoice as Kai Rocke (Elder Bro. Duane and Sis. Bonnie) has answered His call. Our love and prayers surround their family.

In late March, we learned of the passing of Mary Lou Boxrud, of Rochester. Mary Lou was the daughter of Ernst and Martha (Moser) Feucht, who grew up in Lester, Iowa. She was a nurse at Mayo Clinic for many years, before succumbing to ALS. We remember her family and pray for them during this difficult time.

During these unprecedented times we need to stay uplifted, have faith, and trust in our Abba Father.

Here is a good example: the New Ulm Journal newspaper, which is near our home town, featured an article about Erna Zahn. She just turned 112 years old on April 14. Erna is our oldest living Minnesotan! Way back during the Spanish Influenza epidemic of 1918, Erna was a ten year old girl. She does not remember much about it, other than no one in her family died from it. She credits her longevity to her strong faith in God, loving family, and prayer to overcome her life challenges. God is still using her and her smile to brighten up the other residents in Oak Hills Living Center, where they are in lockdown. Since she and I share favorites of smiles, coffee, and dark chocolate, I would love to visit her someday and listen to her life story! Praise be to God and all the glory to Him for the trials of life.

**Minnesota, Morris**

Peg Wellendorf, Brianna Wulf

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

We wish Jake Moser (Jon and Lori Moser) and Kirsten Sharpe all the best as they joined heart and hand on March 27 in a private ceremony. May they seek God’s blessing as they form a new family unit!

We were saddened to hear of the passing of Wally Feuchtenberger, father of Sis Kim Koehl (Bro. Eric). We pray they feel God’s comforting arms around them in this time of loss.

We have been thankful for technology so we can continue to be encouraged by the Word on Sundays and Wednesdays via AC Central and call-in! Our prayers are with all those dealing with the pandemic, whether it’s those who are sick, their family members, and healthcare workers, or those who are struggling with the isolation. We think especially of our elderly with the long lonely hours without visitors and lift them up to God.

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

**Minnesota, Morris North**

Kay Feuchtenberger, Natalie Feuchtenberger

This has been such a strange few months and yet we have a lot to be thankful for! We have three new converts, and lots of time to spend at home with our loved ones focusing on relationships that often get neglected or thrown to the side in more normal schedules. Not only that, we have a prime opportunity to draw closer to God and really lean on His promises.

“I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread. He is ever merciful, and lendeth; and his seed is blessed.” Psalm 37:25-26.

What a comfort to know that we are in the palm of His hands and that all of the stuff going on around us is in His control.

**Minnesota, Winthrop**

Julie Schmidt, Ginny Stoll

“Hallelujah! The Lord arose. Our ransom now is paid. The Son is victor over death, Whoe’er believes is saved.”

Chirst Arose! Hymns of Zion #257

Our congregation missed having our annual Easter breakfast
but it was a precious time to gather through technology to celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. In these troubled times we can trust in the promises of our Heavenly Father never to leave us nor forsake us.

An interesting thought was posed to our children after a Zoom church service. What if we are never allowed back in church buildings as a group? How would that affect us?

Our prayers are with Bro. Dick Van Deest (Sis Nancy) as he has begun treatments.

**Note of Thanks:**
From Bro. Marvin Messner: Thank you to all who have remembered him with cards and wishes for his recent birthday.

**Missouri, Kansas City**

*Julie Webel*

During these times of uncertainty and the world feeling discouraged and anxious, it is good to know that our God is still on the move and working miracles!

We rejoice with Bro. Phil and Sis. Cyrena Rassi on the birth of their baby boy, Isaac Nathan. We pray that God will give them wisdom to raise their growing family and bless them along the way.

We also rejoice with Anna Emch who has chosen to seek the Lord in repentance. May He be her source of strength and courage in this ever changing world we find ourselves living in and a solid foundation to build on for the future.

**Missouri, Lamar**

*Mindy Wettstein*

We are thankful and blessed to have the opportunity to connect with other congregations via live streaming services and Zoom for this past month.

We extend congratulations to Bro. Jerod and Sis. Jayla Putt on their wedding that took place April 5 in Francesville, IN. Parents of the newlyweds are Bro. Brian and Sis. Tami Putt of Francesville, IN and Bro. Mark and Sis. Karen Wettstein.

The majority of our congregation worshiped virtually with the Lamont, KS brethren for Good Friday and Easter Services. On Saturday, April 11, a small group of us “Easter-caroled” to the residents of a Senior Center. We caroled outside of the windows a safe distance away; it was such a blessing to see the familiar faces and their lips moving and singing with us.

**Missouri, St. Louis**

*Victoria Eberhardt*

Happy Easter to all. What a strange holiday season it must seem to be staying so close to home and not gathering as is our norm. Let us take joy in the fact that this time provides us a perfect opportunity to look within and focus on the sacrifice our Lord performed for us. Let us take time to be more thankful than we ever have before. Let us take the time to teach our children more about what our Savior did for us.

**Missouri, Taylor**

*Tami Pflum*

We have prayed many prayers for Bro. Steve and Sis. Deb Sutter’s daughter-in-law, Angela (Craig) this past month, as she was hospitalized and awaited COVID-19 test results. We are thankful to report the results were negative and she is back at home recovering. Angela has expressed great thanks to the body of Christ for loving and praying for their dear family during what proved to be a very difficult time.

Almost the entire world has been affected to some extent by the coronavirus pandemic. As we all adjust to a new normal, how thankful we can be for the accessibility of technology “for such a time as this”. While we aren’t able to visit in person, we have many options for reaching out to our loved ones, via text, email, video calls, etc. Our church family has been especially blessed by the willingness of our local ministers to conduct online worship services using GoToMeeting, where we can not only hear them sharing the Word, but also have the option of viewing their familiar faces. In addition, we have begun a new tradition of “virtual fellowship”. At the end of our worship services, whomever wishes may stay online, with open cameras and unmuted microphones to share a time of fellowship together. What a joy to see and hear each
other, even as we wait for the day we can once again assemble at church, in full fellowship.

During our Easter services, Elder Bro. Kent Heimer shared that churches may be empty on Easter Sunday, but so was the tomb, as Jesus rose victorious! I recently spent some time alone in the quiet assembly room at church, and was struck by the thought of those who may one day come to the church seeking answers, and find it empty; not because of a virus, but because Christ has returned for His Bride. May we all be watching, waiting and ready for the return of Jesus, our soon-coming King!

**New York, Croghan/Naumburg**

**Karen Farney**

As we have not been able to assemble for some time now, we missed our Good Friday and Easter Sunday services along with the children's Sunday school program. I pray we don’t ever get comfortable with the way we are having to live our lives now. I long for the time when we can once again assemble in our congregations to hear and see our ministers bring forth the message from God, and to be with our blessed congregations.

On Good Friday evening we missed the opportunity to gather at church and hear the message about the unjust trial that our Lord and Saviour went through, and to be placed on the old rugged cross. His side was pierced and He shed his blood for the sins of the whole world.

> “When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.” John 19:30

Then on Easter Sunday we were unable to assemble to hear the Good News that He arose from death and grave.

> “Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master. Jesus, saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and my God, and your God.” John 20: 16-17

We are thankful for the technology we have that we can call in and listen to our ministers bring forth the teachings that God has for us.

May we continue to look to our Heavenly Father to carry us through until we are called from this life.

**Ohio, Akron**

**Joelle Indermuhle**

Bro. Trent and Sis. Molly Gasser, along with older siblings Oliver, Amelia, and Leo, welcomed Madeline Grace into their family on April 13. Thankful grandparents are Bro. Roger and Sis. Sue Gasser (Junction, OH) and Timothy and Kimberly Hanzie.

Our sympathies and prayers are with those in our congregation who have lost family members recently. We are thinking of retired Elder Bro. Eugene Pamer and his wife, Sis. Eleanor, in the passing of Bro. Eugene’s sister, Alice Graf of Copley. Our thoughts also go out to Jerry and Sis. Cindy Hann in the passing of Jerry’s mother, Virginia Hann, of Arizona. May the Lord be near each one in times of sorrow.

**Ohio, Columbus**

**Nancy Banks**

My first thought as I sit down to write this column is “What do I write”? I don’t really want to write about the virus as I feel we have all heard enough about it by now. Then the thought came to my mind as to what this period of time has taught us (our family, our church family and our neighbors).

1. When the word comes across the bulletins that we are to stay home, we actually wonder...
if that is something we can accomplish. We have found that we can do this and it’s not so bad after all. I am thankful for living in the country as there is a lot to do in the wide open spaces. We were finishing our maple syrup season, the baby calves were being born which keeps us on our toes and the farm work never ceases.

2. We are also thankful for the shelves of canned food and the stocked freezers which help to stretch groceries over a longer period of time.

3. We found more time to listen to the birds and watch the wild turkeys glean the corn fields. The woodpeckers are hammering away on their favorite tree and the chirping of tree frogs welcomes the early evening hours. I can’t remember the last time I stopped to listen to the beautiful sounds of spring.

4. Last but most importantly, how does one worship on Easter Sunday when all churches are closed and families can’t gather together? We are so thankful for the services that are provided via AC Central. We have enjoyed bible studies through Zoom, FaceTime, and many different services provided on line. Letters and phone calls have passed back and forth as church families check up on their loved ones. We will all be relieved when “normal” returns. Our little church prays for each and every one to remain healthy, strong and thankful during this time of adversity. May each one find a few blessings during this troubling time and thank our Lord and Saviour for His provision of peace when fear would try to overtake us.

**Ohio, Junction**

**Karen Schlatter**

As we attempt to adjust to this new way of worshipping the Lord, may we remember one another and lift each other up in prayer. May each one of us take some time to reach out to others as we worship separately in our homes. It is important that we continue to grow spiritually even though we are separated physically.

Sunday, March 22 was a special day for Sis. Hannah Schrenk (Bro. Steve and Sis. Linda) and Bro. Bob Baer (Janna Baer, Bradford, IL) as their engagement was made known. Most of us heard the announcement over our phones but it was still a special moment to realize God is still bringing loved ones together.

Our Bro. Matthew Monti left on Sunday, March 29 to move to Idaho for approximately six months to work on a ranch. We want to remember him in our prayers during this time he is far away.

Sis. Verginia Manz’s son Aaron has completed his basic training for the US Army and is now stationed in Kentucky. He would appreciate cards and letters. His address is as follows:

PV2 Manz, Aaron  
C-co Room 347A  
7039 Toccoa Rd.  
Fort Campbell, Kentucky 42223

Our sympathy goes out to Ava and Silas Foltz in the recent loss of their dad. We trust they feel our love and prayers.

We rejoice to hear that Jesse Schlatter (Bro. Warren and Sis. Cindy) has turned to the Lord in repentance. The Lord is still calling souls to serve Him. That gives us much to be thankful for!

The Easter season has come and gone but the words in this hymn should ring loud and clear to all believers:

“Hallelujah! The Lord arose.  
Our ransom now is paid.  
The Son is victor over death,  
Whoe’er believes is saved.”

*Christ Arose, Hymns of Zion, #257*

**Ohio, Latty**

**Angie Klopfenstein,**

**Carmen Stoller**

Greetings of love! We are thankful that God is still working in hearts and pray that He will continue to be with Julie Sinn (Bro. Mark and Sis. Diane) as she professes peace with God and man and now is awaiting baptism.

Sis. Lorine Hackenjos has finished her fight of faith here on earth. Our love and prayers are with her family including her husband, Bro. Myron and three daughters: Sis. Melanie, Annette Nygaard (Bro. Doug), and Sis. Heidi Pence (Bro. Jason, Leo, IN).

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

“Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.” Colossians 3:2

The events of the past few months have given us a special opportunity to live Colossians 3:12-14, allowing the peace of God to rule in our hearts. By God’s grace, we remember that this world is not our home.

In addition to the changes that many of us have collectively experienced, Bro. Fred Domka (Sis. Connie) is facing newly diagnosed health concerns. Bro. Dave Baumann (Sis. Luci) had recent surgery requiring a time of recovery. We pray that both of these loved ones feel God’s nearness. Let us all make an intentional effort to find ways to encourage each other as we miss fellowshipping together.

“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.” Revelation 21:4-5

Ohio, Rittman
Maria Beery, Julie Steiner

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

Amidst the challenges and uncertainties of life, may we count our blessings and give thanks in all things! We certainly miss assembling with our church family but take comfort knowing our great God is in control and always present. We are thankful for two new converts, Brittany Gasser (Bro. Aaron and Sis. Deb) and Josiah Henry (Bro. Buck and Sis. Taunia) and wish them God’s blessings as they put their trust in Him.

Our sympathy and prayers are with Bro. Robert Widmer, Bro. Harold Widmer (Sis. Carole), and Sis. Jeannie Stoller as they recently laid to rest their brother, Joe Widmer (Marlene). We were saddened to hear of the loss of Sis. Marie Gasser’s granddaughter, Sis. Lizzie Gasser (Bro. Todd, Smithville, OH). We trust God will comfort them and each one grieving during this time.

We also want to remember Bro. Tim Hartzler (Sis. Sharon), Jan Hanzie (Larry), and Bro. Miklos Bozzay (Sis. Aranka) as they spent time in the hospital this month. We pray they will continue to heal.

We rejoice with Bro. Derek Stoller (Bro. Dave and Sis. Jan) and Sis. Annaliise Graf (Bro. Eric and Sis. Erika) as their engagement was made known.


“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.” 1 Thessalonians 5:28

Ohio, Sardis
Renee Blough, Doris Miller

We rejoice together in knowing that the Holy Spirit continues to work in the hearts of the lost as Kolton Dotterer (Elder Bro. Bob and Sis. Laura) has made a beginning in repentance. Our prayers are with him as he seeks to draw close to the Lord and by God’s grace make a change in his life.

Our ministers are faithfully preaching the word from their homes and giving access via Zoom for a time as the government is requesting we stay socially distant due to the coronavirus outbreak. We appreciate being able to stay connected in this way, though the desire to be able to assemble again is often on our minds. We look forward to greeting our new convert, witnessing the baptism of one who has found peace, gathering for communion, and so many important and special events that we have on the calendar. By acknowledging that God is ultimately in control of all things we can have patience and hope as we wait.

“Oh who among the sons of men, By word or song or deed or pen, Can ever fittingly convey The meaning of the blessed day. It gilds the holy sacred page, It brings to ev’ry clime and age, To ev’ry people tribe and race The story of redeeming grace.” Easter, Hymns of Zion, 89.
When we review the events in the life of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ that surrounded His death and resurrection it fills our hearts with gratefulness and awe that we, who are so unworthy, can be redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.

Ohio, Smithville
Connie Maletich, Millie Stoller

"In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God. Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us. Selah." Psalm 62:7-8

Since we have not been able to assemble together in the last month due to COVID-19, there are no visiting ministers to report. However, we would like to thank our elder Bro. Vic Bauman, our home ministers, and those across the nation who have gone to great efforts to keep us spiritually fed by so many different means. May God richly bless you.

We rejoice in the birth of three new babies this month. Juniper Joy Gasser was born to Bro. Todd and Sis. Lizzie Gasser. Grandparents, Bro. Ken and Sis. SueEllen Maibach (the late Bro. Greg Gasser) and Bro. Dennis and Sis. Joy Fulup (San Diego, CA) welcome this sweet little girl into their lives. Bro. Warren and Sis. Erika Stoller and big sister Kori are also thankful for the safe arrival of Kyra Jo. Bro. Scott and Sis. Charlene Stoller and Bro. Steve and Sis. Amy Dotterer feel blessed to have a new granddaughter. Likewise, Bro. Eric and Sis. Lindsay Steiner, Kaily, Will and Drew were happy to welcome a little brother, Tyler Eric into to their homes. Little Tyler’s grandparents are Bro. Rich and Pat Steiner and Bro. Wayne and Sis. Linda Edelman (Bern, KS).

Congratulations to Bro. Greg Bachman and Sis. Natalie Indermuhle as they were joined in marriage on Palm Sunday, April 5. Their parents are Scott and Ruth Bachman and Bro. Scott and Sis. Patty Indermuhle.

We were thankful to hear that Carlie Schlatter, (Bro. Carlton and Sis. Candi Schlatter), has yielded her heart to the Lord and has begun her repentance journey. What a blessing to her, her family and our whole church!

Our deep sympathy is extended to Bro. Todd Gasser and little Juniper in the loss of their dear wife and mother, Sis. Lizzie Gasser. Lizzie was the beloved daughter of Bro. Dennis and Sis. Joy Fulup (San Diego, CA). Mourning with Bro. Todd are his family, Bro. Ken and Sis. SueEllen Maibach (the late Bro. Greg Gasser) and Bro. Dennis and Sis. Joy Fulup (San Diego, CA).

Ohio, Toledo
Anne Baumann, Rebekah Witzig

Love and greetings from the church in Toledo. God is not surprised by any calamity, Matthew 24:7, but He promises victory to the overcomer, Matthew 24:13. As the hymn begins,” in times like these…”, we do need a Savior. Yet, truly we need Him anytime and all the time.

The last face to face assembly as a congregation was for the ordination of Bro. Matt Manz (Sis. Deanna) as the first home Elder of Toledo on Sunday, March 22. Together, with their children, Troy, Lanae, Tyler, Reagan, and Gabe, Bro. Matt and Sis. Deanna were surrounded by family and our small congregation as current Elder Bro. Bill Schlatter (Sis. Emily, Junction, OH) and visiting Elder, Bro. Mark Masters (Sis. Janine, Mansfield, OH), Elder Bro. Vic Bauman (Sis. Brenda, Smithville, OH), and Elder Bro. John Jackson (Bay City, MI) carried out the service supported by Elder Bro. Tony Manz (Junction, OH) who was also in attendance.

We are thankful for Bro. Matt’s willingness, by God’s grace, to take on this responsibility, and pray that he and his family will continue to feel the love and appreciation of our home church.

Our prayers go out to Bro. Walt and Sis. Sharon Rager and their son, Kurt who resides in a group home locally. Sadly, two of Kurt’s roommates passed away due to the COVID 19 virus within the last month, and while Kurt has not exhibited any symptoms to indicate the illness himself, he had been isolated preventing Bro. Walt and Sis. Sharon from visiting him. Prayers continue too, for Bro. Jim Harmon and his wife Norma. Bro. Jim, during recovery from a recent fall, is residing at the home of his son, Tim. Due to a “no visitors” policy, Bro. Jim is not able to spend time with his wife,
Norma, who lives at a nursing home in the area. In addition, Sis. Teresa Rywalski remains in a rehabilitation unit of Heartland at ProMedica, not able to receive visitors, and is being remembered in our prayers. The many restrictions on visitors can lead to emotional distress on residents and added stress on family members. So, we pray for these and all families facing separation currently.

During this unique moment in history, we can be thankful for such wonderful opportunities through technology to continue to worship together in spirit. In Toledo we have been blessed by live call-in sermons, Sunday school video lessons for our younger students, and Zoom meetings for older students. Tomorrow evening, we are looking forward to a belated Easter Program from our Sunday school via Zoom. As we listen from our living rooms or around the dining table, we feel reassured to hear the true word of God as it has always been. We are so grateful that God does not reside in a building, but that He lives in our hearts.

In closing, about a month ago, someone sent me a video entitled, “Silent City 2020” from YouTube. The two-minute instrumental and video clip featured actual footage of Chicago after the lockdown. While the images seemed somewhat surreal, it reminded me of the first verse of the 1970 gospel song, “The King is Coming” by Bill and Gloria Gaither, and Chuck Millhuff.

“The marketplace is empty,
No more traffic in the streets
All the builders’ tools are silent
No more time to harvest wheat
Busy housewives cease their labors
In the courtroom no debate
Work on earth is all suspended,
As the King comes thro’ the gate…
O, the King is coming,
The King is coming!
I just heard the trumpets sounding
And now His face I see
O the King is coming,
The King is coming!
Praise God, He’s coming for me."

As we move through this time of COVID-19 and most likely return to what seems normal, may we never forget the thoughts of II Timothy 1:7 and live a life of joyful surrender to Him. Then, with open arms, He will welcome us through the gate whether at the end of our life or at His return.

Ontario, Kitchener
RoseLynn Metzger

“Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.” Hebrews 13:8
Greetings of love, peace and blessing to all! The world has changed significantly in the last month, but we can be strengthened by the knowledge that our God never changes. Ever. This brings tremendous comfort to us, especially during this time. I thought I would provide a brief update on how Canada has been affected by COVID-19, and how it has affected our community and congregation.

To begin, our church services have changed! All in person church gatherings have been cancelled, and to compromise, we have now transitioned to online services via Zoom. Even though we can’t be physically together, we enjoy this fellowship and are blessed by the Word of God. Because of the connections many of us have to the Mennonite community, we have been given a unique out-reach opportunity. Since their church does not have the technology to broadcast sermons, many listen in (via phone lines) to our services. Other community members and friends from other congregations join us as well, and it is truly a blessing. With the borders being closed, we miss the visitors that so often join us, and really appreciate ‘seeing’ them online! Also, our congregation was looking forward to the baptism of Emily Mathiesen on Easter weekend. It was with sad hearts that we decided to post-pone this special day until the pandemic is over. May we keep our converts supported by prayer.

For the children/youth, elementary and secondary schools, as well as universities and colleges, have all been closed. Public schools are just beginning to transition to online learning, and universities have already done so. Non-essential businesses have closed, leaving many unemployed. We pray for these families during these challenging times, as well as the many front-line workers.

This month we celebrated the crucifixion, death, and resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ. This message of hope and life was such a welcome contrast to the daily flow of information. With media flooding us with updates, it is easy to become discouraged. Isn’t
it wonderful that we serve a God who is full of Life, giving us Hope everyday, and showering us with love! Today’s sermon emphasized the importance of showing love to others. It is by our love that others can see Christ in us. It is not our works, but God’s love that draws souls, and we are called to vessels of His love. What an amazing purpose! May we continue in prayer during this season of uncertainty, trusting in the One who is in control. Blessings to all!

“He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.” Psalm 91: 1-2

Oregon, Portland
Louisa Gallup
It has been a month since we have had no services in Portland because of the Covid-19 pandemic. We miss our church family dearly, but are thankful that as of this writing, everyone is well. Some of us had loved ones who were sick recently and we thank the Lord for His healing powers. During this pandemic, I had the opportunity to witness to a dear relative of mine who became ill with the coronavirus. She is not a believer but said she was touched and very thankful that we were praying for her. She fully recovered. The Lord is good.

We are thankful for the modern technology to be able to have “live” church services and appreciate the work behind the scenes that is being done to accomplish this.

May The Lord keep us healthy and ever faithful.

Oregon, Silverton
Lorraine Kuenzi, Teresa Sinn
We are prayerful for Sis. Peggy Young (Bro. Terry) as her and her family mourn the loss of her mother, Rosetta Stoller from IL. Even though not all the family could meet for the funeral service we trust that God’s comfort and the prayers of His children united each one in spirit.

Ashley Schurter (Jason and Carol) has begun her walk with the Lord! We are thankful for God’s mercy and are prayerful for Ashley, especially in this time when fellowship is limited.

Lori Walter (Bro. Chad and Sis. Megan) and Hunter Meissner (Ron and Michelle) were joined in marriage March 22. Even though things were not as originally planned, we are thankful for them and pray for God’s richest blessings and guidance in their marriage!

Bro. Mark and Sis. Nicole Dietrich along with Brianna and Elaina welcomed a little one into their family, Leo Harvey, on April 8. Grandparents are Jim and Joan Dietrich and Bro. Harvey and Sis. Jennifer Kuenzi.

Even though we may not be able to gather as a congregation and see each other face to face, we are thankful for the Holy Spirit that unites us all and provides a peace that goes beyond our earthly circumstances.

Pennsylvania, Philadelphia
Laura Isch
Fear seems to be all around us. It has been sobering for me to consider if I have been trusting in God or in the earthly things: paychecks, the economy, the government, modern medicine, etc. If we are truly trusting in God, will we be shaken when the world around us seems to be out of control? If we are in fear and distress right now, have we been trusting in God, or in earthly things?

“The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?” Psalm 27:1

We are thankful to have the technology to continue to “meet” virtually for church services. We were also blessed to have Bro. Jeff Gerber (Sis. Carole, Rockville, CT) minister the word to us via technology. May God bless all the ministers for their continuing efforts to preach the Gospel even through changing means and circumstances.

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

Easter is such a time of hope and joy! Our church was blessed to remember Christ’s suffering and to celebrate His victory and resurrection. We have His promise of His peace and presence as we surrender our lives to Him. Let us rejoice that He has overcome the world!

“Because He lives, I can face tomorrow;
Because He lives, all fear is gone. 
Because I know He holds the future, 
And life is worth the living just because He lives.” 
Because He Lives, Gloria and William Gaither

Note of Thanks:
We would like to extend our thanks to each one of you who has sent cards, texts, phone calls, and prayers to us during the passing of Ben’s father. It is a true manifestation of Christ’s example to show love one to another and may God bless you for your thoughtfulness.

The Ben Wiegand Family

Tennessee, Nashville
Mike Fritz

We offer our sympathy and prayers for Bro. Jeremy and Sis. Jillian Bradbury and their family for the recent passing of Bro. Jeremy’s father.

We have nothing to report this month in the way of visitors because of the city-wide and then state-wide pandemic lockdowns. We are thankful for the technology that allows us to “gather” remotely for audio and video sermons and fellowship, as well as remote work and distance learning.

If you have the opportunity to travel to or through the Nashville area, please plan to fellowship and worship with us. We meet for worship every Sunday (when there is not a pandemic lockdown). Please contact us ahead of time to confirm our schedule. Contacts are Bro. Jeff and Sis. Cynde Stoller, 309.530.5760, cyndelynnstoller@gmail.com; Bro. Jordan and Sis. Emily Fritz, 615.852.9109, jordanmfritz@gmail.com; or Bro. Jeremy and Sis. Jillian Bradbury, 765.993.8917, jeremy.bradbury1975@gmail.com.

Texas, Austin/Bastrop
Candy Meiss

Sending our Love and Greetings from Austin!

“The cross was a reality. And on that cross Jesus laid down His life for you, for me, for all humanity. The tomb was also real; and inside that tomb Jesus lay lifeless and still. But the power of God won the victory over death and darkness. The tomb is forever empty. Jesus is alive: and because He lives, we too have life. We are freed from sin and the grave, free to serve the living Lord. We do not grieve over His death we celebrate His life. He is alive!”

This was a narration from a song called “Celebrate! Medley” that our Phoenix Sunday school and girl’s group ‘Blessing’ sang each Easter sunrise service, written by Mosie Lister.

This month we are meeting virtually and we are thankful to feel connected with video conferencing. We were blessed from the word by Bro. Kent Mogler as we joined the Minneapolis church for Good Friday services. Bro. Klint Beyer (Sabetha, KS) and his family were on their way to our Austin/Bastrop church for our minister rotation service when the shelter-in-home was recommended, requiring him to return home. He plans to join us virtually on April 19. We are thankful for his willingness to serve. We are so thankful for everyone in our Austin/Bastrop church who took part in our virtual Easter program. It was such a blessing to hear the Easter story in verse and song. We were happy to have people join us from across the nation.

“I serve a risen Savior; He’s in the world today.
I know that He is living, whatever men may say.
I see His hand of mercy; I hear His voice of cheer;
And just the time I need Him, He’s always near.
He lives, He lives:
Christ Jesus lives today.
He walks with me and talks with me
Along life’s narrow way.
He lives, He lives,
Salvation to impart!
You ask me how I know He lives?
He lives within my heart.”
I Serve a Risen Savior, by A. H. Ackley

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

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

Note of Thanks:
Bro. Dennis and Sis. Diane Rassi and family would like to thank everyone for their prayers,
gifts, texts, calls, expressions of sympathy, care, and concern since their daughter Destini’s death. They have felt the prayers of so many and continue to be thankful for them during this time.

**Texas, Dallas-Ft. Worth**  
*Sheena Pelsy*

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

Love and greetings from Dallas. We thank the Lord that all of us are doing well in a time of sickness. Even though the Dallas church is not currently meeting for services we still find hope and encouragement in streamed services and our daily quiet times. What a time to be thankful for the technology that not only keeps everyone connected but also brings messages of truth and assurance.

Throughout the Bible, you see that God is very purposeful in where He places His disciples. A great example would be Paul. God placed Paul in places where he could preach and teach the Gospel, but that didn’t mean there wouldn’t be obstacles. In his journey, Paul spent time in prison yet God still found ways to use him. For Paul, prison might have seemed like a pause on his mission just like quarantine seems like a pause on all our lives. We may be asking ourselves ‘how might God give us purpose in our pause right now?’ Well, we might not be witnessing to a king like Paul, but we still have an opportunity to be used by God. It could be a small act like checking on your elderly neighbors or writing a letter to a friend far from home. In quarantine or not, our purpose remains to be a light and example to those around us.

God is getting our attention through all of this. Let us not ignore it but be patient and see what He wants to show us.

**Texas, Zapata**  
*Mary Plattner*

Each of you have been in our prayers. We think of all our loved ones who traveled back to their home this spring and those we have grown to love and meet this winter season in Zapata.

We had several visiting ministers participate in rotations to Zapata this winter and we certainly did appreciate and enjoy each one that made the effort to come to South Texas and to share God’s Word.

One thing about being a small congregation we can still meet on Sunday for services, although our seating arrangement is spaced. It is a blessing to be able to join in song and services. Most of our winter residents have returned home but with our current situation several couples have decided to stay longer in Zapata rather than travel home at this time. We appreciate having them extend their stay.

Without a doubt, most everyone’s schedule has been changed as well as ours. Anyone coming to South Texas is most welcome to visit us. Call before coming to make certain we are having services in Zapata.

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“Trust in Him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is our refuge for us.” Psalm 62:8

**Vermont, Clarendon**  
*Sarah Wagenbach*

How thankful we are that our God is in control amidst the uncertainties, anxiety, isolation and sorrow that we are all experiencing. Our prayers extend to the many who are directly affected by this pandemic. We are thankful to be able to “gather” for Sunday school and worship services through technology with other congregations and our Vermont church family. Ministering Bro. Don Manz (Sis. Connie, Junction, OH) was scheduled to be with us and he graciously held a mid-week service via video meeting instead. While we missed seeing and greeting them in person, we thank them for this special effort and wish them God’s blessings.
Within the last 4 ½ years, two “moves” have helped my Bible reading and devotions become fresher, more meaningful, and more attention-getting.

First of all, I bought a KJV journaling Bible, a regular Bible with lines for writing along the outside edges of the pages. I have written comments on many pages through these years, including reactions, prayers for grandchildren, myself, and others, questions, joys, other concerns, and appreciation of the Lord’s words. When rereading a chapter, I may add to, correct, and, of course, reread the previous journaling. I also have used six different-colored highlighters, a blue/black pen, and a recently added red pen. I use yellow to emphasize important verses. Green highlights God’s actions and words in the Old Testament. For the New Testament, green mainly denotes Jesus’ words while also marking what God has said. Lavender points out words that a Scriptural section repeats (e.g. “covenant”) or specific repetitions of phrases or thoughts for emphasis. Orange first highlighted the word “strangers” but expanded to include those who are “poor” and “needy,” or references to neighbors to whom we should extend love and care. Pink shows where the Old Testament presents God as Lord of all or when someone expresses belief that He is. Aqua blue reveals where Christ and others proclaim our Lord and Christ, God His Father, and the Holy Spirit within the New Testament. With the ordinary pen, I write in the margins, along with underlining and boxing important words and ideas or circling repeated words. So far, I have reserved the red pen for two words: “woe” in the Old Testament and “behold” in both Testaments. Undoubtedly, you can personalize how you would use a journaling Bible. Many of you may like to create pictures, while I am more comfortable with words. Either way, God’s Word gives something new and wonderful with each new day.

Secondly, perhaps while reading in Leviticus, I felt the need within the last year or so to read more than one chapter each day. At this point, I read two Old Testament chapters and one New Testament chapter each day. Presently, I am in I Samuel and Ezekiel and Acts. At first, I thought I would just continue through the Word as it came. However, when I reached the end of Revelation, I realized I still had so much to read in the Old Testament. Appreciating that our services traditionally have readings out of the Old and New Testaments, I believe the Lord directed me to start back at the beginning of Matthew each time after finishing Revelation. I have become excited about how often the Old Testament speaks of Christ and how often the New Testament refers to the Old through Christ’s, the disciples’, and Paul’s words. With help from Holman’s KJV Verse-Reference Bible, I keep track of such references and write them in.

Also within this timeframe, I read a book about the history of the King James Bible. I was quite overwhelmed by the translators’ time and effort alone and in corporate decision making and their reverence in creating this Bible, which they believed was God-breathed. I have always respected it, and other versions have usually started with it to further the reach of God’s Word. The awe I felt when reading that history remains with me as I delight in reading and studying His Book. –by Kathy Schlatter, Chicago, IL

— Please turn to pg. 54
WHILE WE ALL worship the same God, the ways we approach Him in our daily devotions may vary by individual and circumstances. After our children were grown, my wife and I struggled to find the right (for us) time and approach to daily reading and praying. We had different “favorite” parts of Scripture. (I gravitated toward Old Testament readings, particularly prophecy, while she was more into New Testament doctrine and its applications to relationships and daily living). The chapters I selected to read did not always address her needs. Similarly, a random opening of the Bible did not always provide a passage relevant to what was on our hearts at that time. She eventually suggested that we begin with the “Our Daily Bread” devotion booklet, which includes a short essay and a relevant Scripture reading for the day, and it has worked well. It uses a wide variety of Old and New Testament readings coupled with personal experiences — which invariably remind us of other related Scriptures and lead to sharing thoughts and concerns facing us, our children, and our church family. Finally, we’re reminded of the things we need to thank God for and the specific requests we need to bring to Him for that day. —by Ron Menold, Tremont, IL

LIKE MANY of you, I set a New Year's resolution of reading through the Bible in a year, but I decided to do it differently than in prior years. I chose a plan that varied the daily readings between 7 different genres in the Bible. It has been both encouraging and renewing to see how the Bible’s intricate themes and messages are so interconnected. For my prayer time, an older Brother inspired me several years ago to have daily prayer cards with 3-4 specific names of people and charitable organizations that I pray for on that specific day. I keep these consistent for a few months before choosing different names or varying which day I pray for them. If the person's name comes to mind during the day, I pray for them and try to send a text or email with an encouraging Bible verse. It is powerful to see the Holy Spirit at work as He speaks truth to the recipients through these verses. This also helps keep Scripture in my mind during the day. God’s faithfulness and goodness becomes all the more real, which motivates me to dive deeper into the Scriptures and to keep praying for others. May we all be encouraged in this endeavor (2 Timothy 2:15)!

—by Karissa Poppen, Gridley, IL

AS THIS LIFE throws distractions, making and finding time to sit at the feet of Jesus is a daily pick up the cross. Yet, each moment with the sweet manna of the Word refreshes my weary soul and gives me living water to share with others. A structured Bible study helps me focus on God’s Word by guiding me through specific topics. Apostolic Christian Counseling and Family Services and Apostolic Christian Publications have seemingly endless materials available both on line and at their buildings in Morton and Goodfield. While the cell phone can be a formidable distraction, it can also be a good resource for staying connected with the Word of God. Whenever I find myself waiting or taking a break each day, the YouVersion app on my phone becomes a ready source of the scriptures. I appreciate the app’s daily devotions and search engine for verses. It even comes lit up, so I can access it in the middle of the night if I have sleepless moments when I just need to hear reassuring whispers from the loving Shepherd and counting sheep is not enough. Another fun feature it has is the ability for me to access my photos and add a verse to some of my favorites. With these morsels of wisdom and special life memories, I can share the #sweetmannaoftheword with those I love and create my own special devotional photo books. All these joys provide rich blessings because God’s Word is the best thing to "share!"

—by Susan Zobrist, Congerville, IL
WHEN JESUS revealed himself to the disciples at the Sea of Galilee, He gently said to them, “Come and dine,” and then served them bread and fish (John 21:1–14). “Come and dine!” My heart hears these beautiful words in the morning as I seek Him in my daily devotional time. The word “stale” does not describe the feast that He sets before me!

A few practical attitudes and behaviors have helped me seek Him with all my heart, enjoying rich communion with my Lord. I find it helpful to make it a priority, keep it simple but varied, and connect the disciplines to each other.

Make it a Priority
Inspiration comes by perspiration; there is no sweat-free way to exercise (discipline) yourself for the purpose of godliness (1 Timothy 4:7). Meeting Him each day is non-negotiable and must be free of distractions.

If at all possible, designate a special place to commune with Him. I have equipped a simple desk (near a window since I am “solar-powered”) with all of my useful tools nearby: my Bible, notebook, memory cards, prayer lists, pens and highlighters, reference materials, and a cup of coffee. I have found it beneficial — or should I say necessary — to keep my phone turned off and my task list out of sight until my soul is filled with manna for the day.

Keep it Simple but Varied
Dietitians advise their clients to eat small meals, selecting items from an array of food groups. Likewise, I have found simplicity coupled with variety to be most effective in keeping my mind focused and my heart engaged.

My early morning Bible time follows a simple, three-step pattern. First, I spend a few minutes on memory verses — to wake up my brain. Then, I read the Word. Lastly, I open my prayer notebook, pouring out requests for my family, church, and neighbors. Often, my Bible reading provides inspiration for my supplications.

Each day, my Bible reading looks a little bit different. On Monday, I go back to the passages from sermons on Sunday and write out key verses. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, I follow a previously selected Bible reading schedule. On Wednesday, I meditate on a Psalm, sometimes writing out the entire chapter. Friday is catch-up day for any Bible study or topic that has captured my attention, or to prepare a Sunday school lesson.

Connect the Disciplines
Every time I connect one good habit to another, I find that I am more successful with both behaviors. This is so true for exercising the spiritual disciplines (reading, prayer, worship, scripture memory, fellowship, and journaling).

For example, when a friend shares a concern with me and I commit to praying for her, I then seek out a verse (reading) to use as my guide for prayer. I write that verse (journaling) next to her name on my prayer list (prayer), and follow up with a card of encouragement in a few weeks (fellowship). When that person comes to mind, I try to recall the verse (scripture memory) and meditate on it. As the prayer is answered, I lift up my praise to Him (worship) for hearing my request. I cannot overstate how vibrant the Word has become because of this practice! I love it when one action sends me to another (worship) for hearing my request. I cannot overstate how vibrant the Word has become because of this practice! I love it when one action sends me to another.

I have found it beneficial — or should I say necessary — to keep my phone turned off and my task list out of sight until my soul is filled with manna for the day.

— Please turn to pg. 56
"Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest: And he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it. And ye shall offer that day when ye wave the sheaf an he lamb without blemish of the first year for a burnt offering to the Lord (Leviticus 23:10-12)."

These Scriptures remind us of Abraham’s sacrifice of Isaac in correlation of Christ’s death upon the cross as the sacrificial lamb for our sins. Brothers and Sisters in the Lord, may I share an admonishment? As Christians, this exhortation promotes sacrificing the firstfruits of our day. Designating time early in the morning as sacred sanctifies our time as unto the Lord. To seek the Lord in prayer and reading the sacred scriptures, we must seek the face of the Lord, encounter the Lord, and thereby walk circumspectly. The Lord wants our best, the choicest, or the firstling. Anything devoid of this brings dishonor to the Lord.

According to Jewish custom, once a tree was planted, they harvested nothing until the fourth year. In the fourth year, they gave the fruit of the tree to the Lord as an offering. Then, the fifth year and beyond, the earlier years’ actions thereby sanctified the fruit for the Jews to use as needed.

The Lord admonished the original Jewish believers to offer the firstfruits of the harvest to Him. The origin of firstfruits means the first in regards to place, time, order, or rank. As sojourners who tred this earth for but a brief time, the Lord has to be the first priority in our pilgrim lives. May God bless us to this end.

—by Michael Lehman, South Bend, IN

Reader Submitted: Word and Prayer … — Continued from pg. 55

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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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**Giving Single Moms a Hand up not a Hand Out!**

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

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

**QUALIFICATIONS:**

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

**RESPONSIBILITIES:**

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

Salary commensurate with experience and education.

Please pray about this opportunity and if you feel God may be calling you to this ministry, send your resume to: mwrmasters@aol.com, to learn more of the details of the position.
Dare to Be A Daniel: “Be strong and of a good courage” is a command that God delivers to his people in several instances throughout the Old Testament. His plan is for His people to follow Him intentionally and completely; He calls us to consistently choose good over evil and to do so without becoming discouraged. Dare to be a Daniel is a Vacation Bible School theme written to help the church teach and apply principles of courage, faithfulness to God, and the benefit of good spiritual habits. Throughout the week, students study the stories of Daniel, his three friends (Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego), Joshua, Joseph, and David. Prior to and in the face of adversity, each of these men made intentional choices to trust and serve God rather than fear the actions of men. The habits that they had developed earlier in their lives enabled them to remain faithful to Him in challenging circumstances.

No matter where we are living daily life – at school, at work, or at home – we, too, are developing habits and making choices each day that will either lead us toward God or toward deep destruction. This week of VBS is designed to remind all of us of the importance of faithfulness in small things, for those are the things that teach us to trust, and that become our ‘Ebenzers’ when we find ourselves in greater trials.

Parables of Jesus: Throughout His time on earth, Jesus told many parables. The themes and teachings of these stories often contrasted greatly with the way that humans typically think and live. For instance, Jesus many times talked of a kingdom, referring to a heavenly one, but the people around Him looked for an earthly king. He taught that money and earthly possessions aren’t what make us truly rich. Obviously, there are countless other examples throughout the Bible. As you teach and discuss throughout the week, spend some time considering how these stories really are radical, convicting teachings that turned and continue to turn people’s worlds upside down! Jesus did not come to the earth just to tell stories that had no real value or meaning. Instead, Jesus taught others of God’s great love for them, and their need to repent and change the way they were living! The “progression” of the parable themes throughout the week mirrors a lost person becoming a believer and looking heavenward. The parables of the lost sheep, coin, and prodigal son remind us of God’s love for each lost person and His joy over one person who repents (Monday). After we give our hearts to Him, God continues to sanctify our hearts and lives, continually teaching us how to live rightly for Him (Tuesday). He teaches us to keep a heavenly focus, on His Kingdom, not on this world (Wednesday). Even though we don’t know exactly what His Kingdom will be like, the parables of the mustard seed, pearl, and hidden treasure can give us a glimpse of God’s

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Opportunity to Serve - Resident Caretaker Needed
Rochester Christian Guesthouse - Rochester, Minnesota

Due to the pending relocation of the current caretakers at the Guesthouse, an opportunity to serve is available starting in the Spring of 2020.

The position is part-time and on an as-needed basis, similar to hosting guests occasionally overnight in our own homes. It is an ideal ministry for a family, young couple, or empty-nesters, who would enjoy relocating to Rochester for a time, and whose regular employment would accommodate it.

If an opportunity to serve those from our denomination who are in Rochester seeking medical treatment at the Mayo Clinic is of interest, the Guesthouse Board would like to hear from you.

The general arrangements and responsibilities are as follows:
- Commitment length of 3-5 years is preferred, but any length will be considered.
- The upper two floors of the residential home are available for use by the caretaker family, under a favorable financial arrangement.
- The bottom floor of the home has three private rooms that are available for those connected to our denomination to use, on a free-will-offering basis.
- The caretaker duties in general are as follows:
  - scheduling appointments for use of the Guesthouse facility
  - answering any questions or concerns
  - cleaning of the Guesthouse facility
  - buying supplies: cleaning, paper, coffee, sometimes food, and parking passes
  - paying bills for services and supplies used by the Guesthouse
  - if needed, providing rides to medical appointments at the area clinics or hospitals
  - Seeking to be hospitable including hosting guests occasional for meals or evening dialog, and providing a listening ear for guests that desire fellowship or empathy

Further details and a full description of the opportunity, history, and mission of the Guesthouse can be provided by sending an email to: cmschmidt4@yahoo.com or by calling Bro. Clint Schmidt, Board Chairman, at (612) 280-3818. Additional information is available on the Minneapolis congregation's website at www.minneapolisacchurch.org/guesthouse.

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

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

Mid-week Services:
(3rd Wednesday in Rochester area)
For information, contact:
Bro. Jim and Sis. Deb Tilbury
Phone: (507) 281-2875
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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

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**FACILITIES MANAGER**

OPENING at Hospital Lumiere, Haiti

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

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

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

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

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**MISSIONARY SERVICE OPPORTUNITY**

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

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

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

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.

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**Jamaica Awareness Tour**

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 our new Awareness Tour. This is a quick trip that gives interested parties the opportunity to meet our missionary families, learn more about our Jamaica ministry as well as other outreach supported by HarvestCall. The trip will be over a weekend and include worshiping with a deaf congregation.

**To learn more, Email or Call:** Kent Mogler at 612-360-4361 or moglerkent@gmail.com

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**Haiti Awareness Tours**

If you’d like to see the ministry of Hospital Lumiere 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 Awareness Tours. These are quick trips that give you 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 ministries in southern Haiti.

**To learn more, contact:**
Rich Bertschi at 309.467.2351 or hospitallumiere@harvestcall.org
Rick Wuethrich at 219.863.4163 or rick@wuethrichfarms.com
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Continued Articles

Loving as Jesus Loves

— Continued from pg. 3

and unrestricted interaction. The chapter begins with Jesus healing a paralytic and then calling a man despised by the community as his disciple - Matthew himself, a collector of taxes. This sets Jesus up for the first recorded criticism of his unconventional compassion, his willingness to rub shoulders with anyone and everyone: “Why is your Teacher eating with the tax collectors and sinners?” the Pharisees ask.5 Jesus’ answer takes on powerful, conviction-filled meaning when seen as the answer to all he has been doing, all he has been saying, all whom he has been loving: “But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”6

Beginning in the book of Deuteronomy we are warned not to be a respecter of persons.7 This exhortation is found numerous times in scripture.8 Human nature tends to seek reciprocity in service – misquoting the golden rule as, “Do good to others as they do good to you,” but Jesus clearly taught that reciprocal service only brings temporal benefit. “For if ye love them which love you, what benefit have ye? For sinners also love those that love them. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what benefit have ye? For sinners also do even the same.”9 We have been blessed for generations with a close-knit fellowship in our Apostolic Christian church. Established practices and obedience to the Word bind us together as a brotherhood. The potential downside of any close fellowship is to become exclusive and show partiality to those who fit a certain criteria or lifestyle. If by grace we follow the example of Christ and the teachings of the scriptures, we will reach out to the less fortunate and serve them rather than build walls and become a respecter of persons. Wisdom from above is without partiality (not a respecter of persons) and without hypocrisy.10

The healthy do not need a physician, but the sick do. We must recall Jesus’ words and example and let them serve as a banner for our interactions and service to mankind. It should strike our hearts deeply as we consider the questions and conviction that seem to come from considering our Savior’s way of loving. Can we see the boundaries we’ve drawn between ourselves and the rich, between ourselves and the diseased, the mentally ill, the oppressed and the oppressors, the unclean, the prostitutes, the sinners, between ourselves and other races, other cultures, other peoples? Do we comprehend that such boundaries are merely figments of our imagination, walls built of dust, fences built of ashes?

Can we imagine Jesus saying, “Go and learn who I am and who you are. Learn that you are sinners saved by grace through faith, which is the core reality that connects you to every other person on the planet, and your boundaries will crumble - exposed for what they are: dust and ashes. Then, and only then, will you learn compassion, and the righteousness that will be yours through Me, will cover your sin-stained heart and enable you to love, like Me, without boundaries.”

Endnotes

1 Philippians 2:7
2 Hebrews 4:15
3 Isaiah 53:3
4 Matthew 11:5
5 Matthew 9:11
6 Matthew 9:12-13
7 Deuteronomy 1:17
9 Luke 6:32-33
10 James 3:17
relationship is to reflect this intimate engagement and allow our spouse to know we value them and desire to keep them close. It means being emotionally present with them by being intentional about connecting and listening, while exhibiting physical touch and genuine forgiveness. Consider how you may respond to these questions using a continuum of always—sometimes—rarely:

• I feel safe enough to take emotional risks with my spouse.
• I feel very comfortable with being close to my spouse.
• I can confide in and trust my spouse with almost anything.
• I know my spouse cares about my joys, fears, hurts, and dreams.

Conclusion
God has given us the greatest gift He can give us - Himself. Both in the Old and New Testament God is the one who hears the cries of His people and responds compassionately. Jesus shows us over and over what it means to be accessible, responsive, and engaged with those around him. May God grant us grace and humility as we seek to follow this model in our marriage relationship and deepen our connection with our spouse.

ACCFS has recently released Keys to a Healthy Marriage, a bible study written by ACCFS staff focused on strengthening and encouraging marriage relationships. This ten lesson study includes teaching, discussion questions, and activities based on common themes in marriages. Please visit our website at www.accounseling.org/biblestudies to find this study and other resources we offer.

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people who recognize the darkness that is around them can often have two responses – right? – or rather the same response from two different motivations and two different plans of action. You can have the person that looks at this from the nonbiblical viewpoint and says, “something is wrong; there is oppression” because we are not alone, brothers and sisters, in recognizing that there’s something wrong. People can approach this problem from the humanitarian viewpoint which is good in the actions that it produces. People who aren’t believers are out there trying to help the poor, feed the hungry, and take care of the widow and the orphan, but the sad thing is, they’re not seeing the root of it. They see this energy, and they have to pour all of themselves because they are viewing themselves as the solution and trying to, on their own power, work this work.

What Paul calls the church’s attention to is the fact that, on this other side, you have the church who is called to feed the hungry, to build up the broken, to take care of the widow and the orphan, and to help the poor all the while recognizing that they were once part and parcel of the problem. In verse 13, as we read “Who hath delivered US from the power of darkness.” [emphasis added]

If you go back to the Psalm, you’ll read in Psalm 10:7 about the wicked man: “His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and fraud.” If you turn forward, in Psalm 14 starting at verse 1, you would read along the same lines. “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good. The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good. The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one.” (Psalm 14:1-3) Paul, in a different letter, echoes Psalm 10 and Psalm 14. He writes this in the book of Romans: “What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; as it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one.” (Romans 3:9-10) If you have a Bible at home that references passages that are quoted and cross referenced, look up Romans 3, and then look back at all of the Psalms that are quoted and Isaiah and Proverbs. “There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.” (v 11-12) This is where he quotes Psalm 10. “Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes. Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.” (Romans 3:13-20)

We could flip back to Colossians right now and continue on just as Paul will in Romans, but let’s read it first in Romans because this is what changed. You see, I was struck by the first verse of Psalm 10: “Why standest thou afar off, Oh Lord? Why hidest thyself in times of trouble?” I read a study note on Psalm 10 that talked about how the wicked were supposed to be punished by the Davidic king. This was a Psalm that everybody could pray and could hope for the justice of the Davidic king that was supposed to come and make things right. Echoing Romans 3 though shows all the kings, even David, were
broken. They lived in a time that was broken. They had the law that showed them what it took to repair their relationship with God, but it also demonstrated just how broken they were. In a sense, Psalm 10:1 was true. God was far off because mankind had separated himself by sin, no matter the attempts that mankind made. Just like today people try to repair on their own power what is broken, but they couldn’t make it perfect.

So, church, what are we called to do? The answer is in the second part of Romans 3 and in the middle of Colossian 1. I'll read it first in Romans, and then we’ll flip to Colossians. This is what it says: “But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” (Romans 3:21-26) And in Colossians 1, starting again at verse 12, “Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.” (v 12-14)

We want to chip away at Psalm 10 and the picture that it paints. We have to realize that the root of it is in Christ who can translate us out of the darkness into the kingdom of light. Who is this Christ? Verse 15: “Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all consist.” (v 15-17) Here Paul will draw a line with verse 17 and talk about Christ, the word by whom the world was created, and now we will move forward in verse 17 and 18 and beyond to talk about Christ, who is in the new creation, pre-eminent as well. Verse 17 again: “And he is before all things, and by him all consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell.” (v 17-19) If we try to bring fullness and richness and justice to the world of Psalm 10 on our own, we’ll fail. We must be rooted and looking to him who is the beginning, to him who is “the firstborn from the dead,” and in him in whom all fullness dwells.

“And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in his sight: If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; Whereof I Paul am made a minister: Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body’s sake, which is the church: Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations.” (Col 1:20-26)

Go back to Psalm 10:1. The psalmist, knowing that God is a God of justice, knowing that God has a heart for the poor, knowing that God is good,

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questions. Can you picture the desperation of the psalmist as he cries out, “Why standest thou afar off, O LORD? why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble”? The psalmist, knowing that God’s heart is to reconcile mankind to himself, had to see a mystery as he looked around and wondered “how is it going to be done?”

We see that, throughout the ages from Abraham through David to the prophets, it was a mystery. “But now,”—Colossians 1:26—“is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles;”—what is that mystery?—“which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom: that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.” (v 26-29)

God became flesh. The word became flesh and dwelt among us. We have come through a season where we have celebrated the life, the death, and the resurrection of God become man. We can look around at our world and view it through the lens of Psalm 10, and so often we do. As we look around, we say, “God, where are you? It seems like the wicked don’t care. It seems like the poor are being down trodden.” It seems. It seems. It seems. God, where are you?

Church, I would encourage you to remember the next time you’re tempted about that. (Maybe a disclaimer before I say this next sentence: We should anticipate Christ coming again. We should anticipate Christ, in all his might and all his fullness, coming again, for when the judge will come, justice will be proclaimed and wrongs will be made right, and the widow and the orphan and the poor and the downtrodden and those that have been persecuted will find justice. Those that have wanted God, been oppressed and persecuted, will find justice as well. We, as a church, should look with anticipation for that coming.) Right now, we also should not ignore the fact that this reconciliation has already happened through this mystery somehow that Christ is in you and has redeemed you, the church.

As we look backwards and see this redemption on Easter, and as we look forward to Pentecost and a time where the Holy Spirit will come to dwell in the believer, there’s never been a time in history where God has been so close. It’d be fun to have a conversation about the Garden of Eden compared to now, but I’m going to just throw out this statement, maybe erroneously, that there’s never been a time in history when man and God have been so united; God has come to direct his church and as we read, to be the head of the body, the church.

So, church, I would encourage you. We have a world that looks around. We have a world that is seeking as the psalmist was and saying, “God, if you’re there, why are you standing so far away? Why are you hiding yourself in this time of trouble?” I would encourage you, like Paul, to labor, striving not according to your strength but to his working “which worketh in you mightily” just as in Paul. Look at the brokenness of this world. Look at those in desperate need of a Savior. Let’s proclaim the gospel. We are called to redemption. We are called to stand on the preeminence of Christ, and we are called to move into this darkness and to proclaim the kingdom of his dear son.

I was struck as I was getting into my car tonight to come here. Our neighbor has a beautiful tree; it’s called a redbud—the ones with the little pink blossoms. From early on in spring until now, this redbud was in full bloom, and it was beautiful. I got here a little bit early and was able to walk around, and I saw that we have several on the church property. If you get a chance, take a walk around and look; the blooms were full of life. That vibrancy is like how I can
feel around Easter time. I can feel just this renewal of spring and this joy of my hope in the resurrected Christ. As I got into my car tonight, I looked over at this tree, and the buds were still there, still beautiful. But among them, you start to see the green of the leaves that are blooming too, stretching out, spreading forth. Those buds have done a very good work in the life of that tree. Those leaves will proceed to grow and continue the good work of growth. If I was a scientist or a biologist, I probably could make a more poignant analogy about what starts the tree’s growth and what continues it deeply.

I was just struck that I’m called to do more than simply be awestruck by the power of the resurrection. I’m called, just as Paul was called, to look from this “kingdom of his dear son” into the darkness. Look into the darkness of Psalm 10, and proclaim, “Here’s the Savior. Here’s the one that will bring justice. Here’s the one that will redeem and that can save, not only the poor, not only the widow, not only the orphan, but can save the wicked too.” I’m called to reach in to the brokenness in grand ways. There are ministries that do this in grandiose ways, and sometimes, church, we can say, “but I’m not doing as much as them.” My guess is, if you looked at your own life and at your own family, there is some of the darkness of Psalm 10 lurking on the edges or some lies that Satan’s saying. There’s something your friends or your family may be believing that needs to be brought to the light and redeemed. We’re called, as in verse 29, that from the vantage point of having been translated into this kingdom to labor striving according to God’s working which worketh in you mightily.

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**GATEWAY WOODS**

Are you looking for an opportunity to do something challenging that has eternal significance?

Do you have a desire to provide mentoring and accountability for teens and young adults? Gateway Woods is looking for a couple to live in the WillowBridge apartments and manage the day to day operations there. Responsibilities would include building community with tenants, serving as an in-house mentor as well as overseeing the security and upkeep of the property. The couple we are looking for will need to resolve conflict well, practice good discernment and serve gracefully while drawing and enforcing clear boundaries. If this sounds like you, call or email Rob at rob.parker@gatewaywoods.org or 260-376-1719.

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**GATEWAYWOODS.ORG**
The following are remarks given by Elder Bro. Loren Stoller of the Latty, Ohio congregation at the 1972 General Conference at Gridley, Illinois. This was given nearly 48 years ago and these Spirit-filled exhortations are as applicable today as they were almost five decades ago. Nearly 1000 attendees were present. Elder Bro. Stoller served as Elder from 1971 to 1990. This presentation is in two installments.

The Appreciation of True Faith

On this subject, “The Appreciation of True Faith,” if we could go from person to person in this room, we would hear many fine expressions of appreciation of our true faith. But, as God told Samuel, the Lord is not necessarily impressed by words, because he looks at the heart. And the true appreciation of faith is actually expressed by the way that we live.

Two things stand out in my mind and they’ve come up over and over in the past year. One of them is the question: What’s going to happen to our children and our grandchildren? Another thing that I’ve heard - and I think somebody is trying to tell us something - when some of these old elder brothers die off, you are going to see a big change. There doesn’t dare to be a change, because the Word of God does not change. How do we prevent this thing (change)? Why does there have to be a change because a younger man of one or two generations steps in and an older man dies away? The prescription for following this kind of life, and the answer to what’s going to happen to our grandchildren doesn’t rest with your elders, with your preachers, with your teachers - it rests with all of us together.

And there is no new Word (of God) in this twentieth century. The twentieth century hasn’t found anything to replace the Ten Commandments. And when Israel was being taught to love the Lord, this is the way they were told to do it: In Deuteronomy 6, verse 7: “And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children. Thou shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou riseth up.”

And if we could go to the first chapter in Joshua, it speaks a similar kind of language: “And thou shalt meditate on the book of this law day and night. It shall not depart out of thy mouth.” That’s the way it’s done, because it’s prescribed in the Word of God.

Our church at Latty, Ohio stands about an eighth of a mile back from a main highway. And when you go by...and it really gives me a lift when I drive by that building. Because this is where my brethren assemble together, and this is where we praise our God, and this is where we get our strength. Because we love each other. And when we go among our brethren and we break bread with them, and when they reach out and take the cup (and sup), remembering His blood and His suffering upon the cross, one brother and one sister after another have tears running down their cheeks.

This is an expression of their appreciation of true faith. And when we greet each other in the Saviour’s precious name with a holy kiss, we do it from the heart, because this is an expression of true faith. It’s the word of God.

***Editors note: In the second installment (next month) Elder Bro. Stoller, in a moving exhortation that held the assembly in rapt attention, gives the example of his grandchildren, and their reaction to the their grandfather’s Latty church as they might drive by it twenty years down the road. What will their attitude be? Will they embrace a true faith as we have come to love it, or will they reject it?

-Compiled by Perry A. Klopfenstein
The Light of Hope

A Word from The Word - Ebenezer

The word “Ebenezer” occurs only 3 times in the Bible and has a very interesting meaning. Two of those occurrences are used as the name of a town or place. (See 1 Samuel 4:1 or 5:1)

But the third time this word is used, it’s meaning is explained.

“Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto hath the LORD helped us.” 1 Samuel 7:12

The Hebrew word is Eben-ha-Ezer, which was translated into English as Ebenezer.

It is actually a compound word, where the first part (“Eben”) means “stone” or “rock,” and the last part (“Ezer”) means “remembering,” “memorial,” or “help.” So the complete word means “stone of remembering” or “memorial stone,” or “stone of [God’s] help.”

The account of the Israelite’s battle with the Philistines is in 1 Samuel 4 - 7.

The Israelites were defeated in a “very great slaughter,” and the Ark of God was captured. Seven months later the Ark was returned, but another battle took place. This time, however, the Israelites had confessed their sins and the Lord “thundered with a great thunder.” To memorialize this time when God had helped them, Samuel set up an “Ebenezer.”

Although the word “Ebenezer” only occurs in 1 Samuel, there is another Bible passage that also has a central theme of “remembering.”

Crossing the Jordan

At the end of their 40-year “wilderness” journey to the Promised Land, the Israelites had to cross the Jordan River. This was accomplished under the direction of Joshua, but with the miraculous help of God. As soon as the feet of the priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant stepped into the river, God caused the waters to roll back so His people could cross on dry land. God instructed Joshua to cause one man from each of the 12 tribes to remove a stone from the river bed. These were carried to their encampment at Gilgal where they were to serve as a memorial for future generations.

“And it came to pass, when all the people were clean passed over Jordan, that the LORD spake unto Joshua, saying, Take you twelve men out of the people, out of every tribe a man, And command ye them, saying, Take you hence out of the midst of Jordan, out of the place where the priests’ feet stood firm, twelve stones, and ye shall carry them over with you, and leave them in the lodging place, where ye shall lodge this night. . . . That this may be a sign among you, that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean ye by these stones? Then ye shall answer them, That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off: and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever. . . . ” Deuteronomy 4:1-3, 6-7

One final comment about the word “Ebenezer.”

It is interesting to find that the word occurs in Verse 3, of Faith’s Confidence, Zions Harp # 87, “His love in time past forbids me to think He’ll leave me at last in trouble to sink; Each sweet Ebenezer I have in review Confirms His good pleasure to help me quite through.”

-by Ron Heiniger
Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

Romans 5:1