

“...And he said unto me...worship God: for...

THE TESTIMONY

...of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” Revelation 19:10

— VERSE OF THE MONTH —

“He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God:” Ps 40:2-3

Vol. XIV

March 2023

No. 3

AS THE WORLD TURNS

Long labored I, weary with load of sin;
And often still I heard a tender voice,
The unwearied sounding of a bell within,
A pleading whisper, “Cast off sin, Rejoice.”

Yet still my pride and folly drew me on.
I still groped feebly through my night of dark.
From maze to mindless maze I crept anon
For still I would not to the summons hark.

Yet often still that gentle voice would come
And bid me join its harmony of song.
At times a clarion call would, like a gong—
That calls to supper, in my breast be rung.

I filled up life with cares, and toil, and toys,
And didn’t pause to smell the lilies of the field.
I wept my griefs, and strove to find my joys,
Yet would not heed the clarion call to come and yield.

The sea of pleasures swirled about my feet
And beckoned me, “O plunge into my foam.
And drink ye of my pleasant waters sweet;
In me ye can find happiness alone.”

I stooped to drink, and found it bitter taste,
A mockery of promises unkept,
And now its swirling vistas seemed a waste
My empty heart un-filling, thirst unslaked.

Continued on page 20...

Philip Hess

THE TESTIMONY

CONTENTS

FRONT COVER	1
AS THE WORLD TURNS.....	1
EDITORIAL	3
“IN THE LIGHT OF AN ETERNAL DAY”.....	3
GENERAL	4
GOD’S FAMILY, GOD’S PEOPLE	4
THE MARK.....	6
PEACE ON EARTH	8
YE OUGHT TO WASH ONE ANOTHER’S FEET.....	12
AS FOR ME AND MY HOUSE	16
MEDITATIONS	18
QUESTIONS TO PONDER	18
GENERAL ITEMS	19
POEMS	1, 18, 20
OBITUARIES	24



EDITORIAL

“IN THE LIGHT OF AN ETERNAL DAY”

The month of March, at least in Ohio, brings the promise of a brighter new season. We have survived January and February. Days are getting longer. The sun shines brighter. Spirits are lighter. Elsewhere, Spring begins in mid-February when the almond trees blossom and below the Equator seasonal changes are reversed from the North. More temperate climes experience less of seasonal changes.

Morning lifts the spirits as the darkness of a long night turns into the dawn of a new day. Human spirits respond to cycles and rhythms. People are affected by the ebb and flow of patterns, sequences, and tempos. With Spring around the corner people seem more cheerful, more congenial, more good-natured.

According to man's calendar, Earth is approximately six-thousand years old. Earth needs a Sabbath rest. Indeed, if we understand Scriptures correctly, God at one point, will intervene, will cleanse the Earth again as in the days of Noah, will usher in a Millennial Sabbath. Try as he will, man cannot know the mind of God nor can he prophecy just how or when this earth-cleansing will come about. The Bible gives hints, but Paul says in Romans 11:33–34 “O the depth of the riches both of

the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?” And again, in I Corinthians 2:16, “For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him?”

Soon is coming the dawning of a New Creation. The Earth is tired after a long winter of darkness, sin, violence, and hatred. Earth is looking for the dawning of a day of peace, love, and light, even as Isaiah wrote (11:6–9), “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them...the lion shall eat straw like the ox... They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.”

Every dawn brings the opportunities and responsibilities of a new day. Every Spring brings promise of a new seedtime and a new harvest. E'er long, the Lord will wrap up this old creation and He will make all things new—a new heaven (or new heavens); a new Earth wherein dwelleth righteousness; a new City of God which is New Jerusalem; a new name; a new song.

Adline S. Kieffer (1840–1904), hymn writer, poet, raised in a Mennonite home, wrote several

hymns included in the Brethren Hymnal. A favorite in my family (Hymn #705, based on Romans 13:12) is as follows:

Oh, the night of time soon shall pass away
 And the happy golden day will dawn,
 When the pilgrim staff shall be laid aside,
 And the kingly crown put on.

What a joyful time when the earth shall gleam
 In the light of an eternal day,
 When the saints shall sing unto Christ their King,
 In the golden glad array.

Chorus:
 We are watching now for the morning light
 For the new Jerusalem to come;
 We are waiting still for the Savior Christ
 Who will call his children home.

Marcus Miller

GENERAL

GOD'S FAMILY, GOD'S PEOPLE

What comes to mind when you hear the word “family”? Unfortunately for some it’s contention, competition, abuse, abandonment. Such is a perversion from God’s design of families.

From Paul’s letter to the Corinthians, we know that families were designed to live in His divine order under the headship of Christ. From His letters to the Ephesians and Colossians we know that husband and wife were to dwell together as one flesh in love and reverence for each other. They are to reflect the unity of our triune God. We learn that when children are part of these families they are to be trained, nurtured, disciplined, guided and encouraged to love one another. They

are to be a reflection of how the Father, Son and Holy Spirit relate to their children.

One theme becomes evident from the reading of Scripture. God has long desired a family chosen from among those He created in His image. Not just any family but one that knows Him and desires to be known of Him. He clearly expresses this desire in over 40 verses from Genesis to The Revelation. This theme is seen in the account of the first parents, Adam and Eve. They walked with God in the garden, and He exposed the glory of His created beings to them as He brought the animals to them to name. When this intimate relationship was separated by sin, the ideal family became flawed and contentious. Jealously entered in.

Still, a righteous remnant was found of Adam's descendants. Noah and his family were saved as God purged the earth by the flood. Undoubtedly, it was an humbled family that abided together in the ark for almost a year. The sin-nature of mankind was not eliminated yet God purposed to call out a special family to Himself through Abram. It is not evident that Abram (Abraham) had training in the ways of the God of heaven. His family was worshippers of pagan gods in the land of the Chaldees. In His divine foreknowledge, God saw a man that would be teachable and faithful. From Abraham's grandson, Jacob (Israel), God called out the children of Israel among all the peoples of the earth to be consecrated to Him.

Yet this called-out people wandered 40 years in the wilderness because they kept drifting from the care and guidance of their heavenly Father. Father continually instructed them and chastised this unfaithfulness. He repeatedly extended His mercy and called them back. It increasingly became evident to them, and later to us, that "...it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23). They needed a Savior. They needed God's abiding presence.

While the Holy Spirit did not routinely live in the hearts of the children of Israel, God spoke through some faithful prophets. Beginning with the prophet Isaiah,

God foretold of the coming Messiah that would save His people from their sins. He would be the Lamb of God to shed His blood to deliver His people from the stranglehold of sin and rebellion. The prophets Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Joel were given the message that the Father would write His laws on the hearts of His people and make them tabernacles for His Spirit to indwell. This new work would be the means to sanctify His people.

Jesus, the Lamb of God, bowed His head on the cross, shed His sinless blood for our sins and was resurrected to impart the resurrected life to His people. In awe and anticipation, His apostles with others of His disciples remembered His instructions to wait in Jerusalem for the power from heaven to descend (see Luke 24:49). God was preparing them to be the nucleus of the church universal, the sanctuary for God's people, the redeemed family of God.

God then poured out His Holy Spirit on those gathered in the upper room. The Spirit descended with signs and wonders. This was the fulfilment of God's prophesy through Joel some several hundred years earlier. It was the time of arrival of the indwelling Spirit (Comforter) promised by Jesus just prior to going to the cross. This fulfilled the promise that God would write His law on the hearts of His people as they received His guidance into all truth (see John 16:13). This Spirit would guide

individually and collectively. Its evidence would be that His people would be a witness to the lost world by their love one for another (see John 13:35). This accountability to our Lord and one another is ordained to first work among brothers and sisters in our local assemblies (see Gal. 6:2). God now had a true witness of His family on earth.

Perhaps we've grown up in a biological family where our experience has been that of nurture, mutual respect, a family altar, and encouragement. If so, we have been blessed with a model of God's family. A great responsibility rests on us. "...For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required..." (Luke 12:48). Can we charitably demonstrate to those raised in less functional homes that the family of God is a loving, healing family. Whether these be within or outside of our fellowship, may our purpose be to be an example of God's people? In so doing we will be following the example of Jesus as He ministered to the marginalized of His day. Such is the work on earth of the family of God.

John The Revelator was given a vision of God's eternal family at the consummation of all things:

"And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be

their God" (Rev. 21:3).

By grace a member of the family of God.

Stanley Boyd

THE MARK

In Jerusalem, idolatry was practiced in the Temple and on every high hill. Also, in the countryside of Judah and Israel. God warned, and warned, and punished, and punished the people of Judah. In Ezekiel 9 the people were committing terrible sins and leading the whole nation into idolatry. God said, "I will neither pity nor spare them." Even if they call for mercy, He would not listen to them. Tell the people to bring their weapons. Six men appeared, each with his sword. One of them wore linen clothing and carried a writer's inkhorn. They went into the Temple and stood by the altar. The glory of God rose from the cherubim. The Lord called to the man with the inkhorn and told him to walk through the streets of Jerusalem and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who weep and sigh because of all their sins. The Lord told the other men to follow him through the city and kill everyone that did not have the mark on his forehead. Ezekiel fell on his face to the ground and cried to the Lord "...wilt thou destroy all the residue of Israel in thy pouring out of

thy fury upon Jerusalem?" (Ezek. 9:8). So they began in the sanctuary, and then went throughout all the city. The man in linen clothes carrying the writer's inkhorn reported back and said "I have done as thou hast commanded me." This was a mark the righteous people wanted to receive. We need to cry and sigh for our own sins and those around us.

We don't know how many people died because they did not repent, but we think that there were many thousands or even more. That was a horrific time.

Let's move now to another era of time when you don't want to receive a mark. We will not get into controversial areas, but we do believe that the church will be raptured before the great tribulation. We are patiently waiting for our Lord's return. The mark will be a test to see if you will live or die. It will not begin in a temple but possibly at a dinner table. Someone trying to feed a hungry child. A lot of people may be forced to receive the mark. In the era of the 1940s there was talk of Social Security as being the mark. Social Security is still in place, and we wonder if it will still be a factor to trace every one to see what they believe.

We are living, we are dwelling in a grand and awful time.

Well, we have looked at some past marks and also, we have looked at the future mark. What about the present? How can we tell if you or I have a distinct mark?

One really good way to tell is to look at the fruit that a person bears. It might be patience, joy, peace, love. By their fruits ye shall know them.

Some people had a mark that was recognizable. Cain comes to mind immediately. We believe Ruth was very recognizable. Moses, Saul, Sampson, Pharaoh, and all the prophets, Ahab and Jezebel were well known. What about the Apostle Paul? Esau was a hairy man. The man that lived in the graveyard and was possessed was very strong. All the apostles, in fact, were men that had a mark on them. Perhaps not a physical mark, but inwardly. We hope that if we were to be tried in court today, would there be enough evidence to convict us that we are Christians. The people that died during the Holocaust had to wear a star of David on their arm or a tattoo of a number.

What about the One who bore the sins and iniquities of the whole world? Was He a marked man? We believe He was, even before He was crucified. Then He bore the scars in His hands and feet and side on that day. And out of His side came cleansing blood. Jesus' mark was political and today it is very possible to be politically marked. He was a perfect Lamb, without spot or wrinkle. He was that way until men gave Him all kinds of stripes on His back and brow that made Him unrecog-

nizable. But for the joy that was set before Him He endured the pain and shame for each and every repentant heart that will believe on Him!

In Revelation 14:1, John saw a Lamb standing on Mount Zion in Jerusalem, and with Him were 144,000 who had His Father's name written on their foreheads. The choir of 144,000 sang a new song in front of the throne of God. No one could sing this song except those 144,000.

In Revelation 14:9 those whose names are not written in the Book of Life and have accepted the beast's mark on their forehead or hand will have no relief from God's wrath.

God encourages His people to patiently endure trials and persecutions.

In II Timothy 3, Paul tells us in the last days it will be difficult to be a Christian. People will only love themselves and money, and they will be proud, boastful, and ungrateful.

They will attend church but will not believe all that the Bible says. They will turn against God.

The whole Bible is given to us by inspiration from God, so that we may accept His salvation and be wise. Reading God's Word daily prepares us to trust and obey Him.

Perilous times will come, and evil men shall grow worse and worse.

We need to cry out to God to give us wisdom to make good decisions. Our battles belong to the

Lord. Pray, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen." God is our refuge and strength and will shelter us in the evil days.

There will only be peace when the Prince of Peace returns and not until then.

Read Matthew 25:31–46. We must redeem the time while waiting on His return and yield to His will. Learn to labor and to wait on this journey. We have hope and must trust His promises.

Marshall and Rosalene Dutter

PEACE ON EARTH

A Testimony from Ukraine

by Anya Hursh

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men! The angels' song took on new meaning this Christmas season as we celebrated Christ's birth in a war-torn land. In a country where folk greet each other with "Glory to Ukraine!" and the expected reply is "Praise the heroes!" the angels' song reminded us of where the glory belongs. No country or leader or warrior is worthy of glory. It is God, the Redeemer, the Prince of Peace, Who became flesh and dwelt among us. It is He Who deserves the glory and adoration of our hearts!

Peace on earth! Our hearts cry for the peace of this country. Living under the clouds of war has a way of wearing one down. The turmoil and pain experienced across the country leached much of the festivity and cheer from the holidays. Empty places at the table are keen reminders that someone loved is gone. Fresh mounds in the graveyards are silent witnesses to the fact that the peace of this country will be bought by blood. Peace for our hearts—this, too, came at the price of blood. And what a gift this peace is! Although the world around us is trembling and breaking, our hearts know a steady peace, a gift of love from the Prince of Peace!

Goodwill toward men! I wonder what that really looks like. Is it possible to experience goodwill toward men, even in a land stalked by hate and hostility, where brother rises against brother in a fight over land? Can Christians do more than remain passive and nonresistant? Will their love for Christ propel them to action, to share goodwill toward all men?

Every year my heart is touched by the Christmas story. This year was no exception. The sacrifice Christ gave when He left His glory in heaven and came to this suffering earth gripped my heart in a new way. Emmanuel (God with us). In our grief and pain. In our sorrow and loss. Jesus knows it all. I thought about this as I de-

scended the steps into the darkness of someone's cellar home. Jesus, too, descended into the darkness. Perhaps, the musty air of a bomb shelter is not so different from the air He breathed on the night of His birth.

In many ways, it was a dark Christmas season. The shortage of electricity, the rising prices of food, and most of all, the missing people, are all keen reminders that not all is well in the world.

But in some ways, it was a most wonderful Christmas season, because in the present darkness that presses over our land, the Star of the East shines brighter than ever. And the glow of that Star is reflected in so many faces. I see it in the volunteer who spent this Christmas in Ukraine, far away from his family. "This has been the best Christmas ever," he said. "Here we can taste the real Christmas, not the commercialized Christmas that I used to know." I see it in the eyes of the children as they sing their Christmas program at church. I catch a glimpse of the Light in the faces of those gathered for worship. We've walked through darkness and loss, but still the light of Christ shines on.

The trips to the east continue. These trips usually affect our whole family. Whoever does not go along, helps pull the workload at home, fill in the gaps, and cover the responsibilities of those who go. And always, when a group re-

turns from their trip, we eagerly wait to hear their stories. It's a partnership of sorts. We are in it together, supporting one another in prayer and encouragement.

Dad and Mom and the younger children are usually the ones who end up carrying the brunt of the workload at home. They send us on trips and cover us in prayer and welcome us warmly when we return. Their support means so much!

In December, they finally had their chance to go. We had long been dreaming of doing a family trip, but with a family of our size, and with as many varied responsibilities as we have, it just was not feasible for us all to go at one time. So Dad and Mom and five of the children took a trip to some of the liberated villages in Kherson oblast.

Years ago we used to dream of someday having a family singing ministry, traveling across Ukraine singing. We never dreamed it would be with the backdrop of bombed buildings or with the background sound of rumbling bombs.

In one village on that trip, the people were all on edge. Our group was warned to turn off their phones and to park the van behind a building where it would hopefully be out of sight of the Russian drones. The day before, a woman had been killed by a rocket while talking on her phone. Although the village was liberated, they

were still not out of danger.

We thank God for protecting them on their trip. They saw sorrow and destruction but were able to bring a ray of hope and cheer to people caught in the darkness of war and suffering.

I spent the last week of the year in Slavyansk with a few of our youth and Brother Genna. Once again, we had services and passed out food parcels, candles, and blankets. Our meetings varied in size, with the largest attendance being 250 people.

Often we help the elderly or feeble recipients carry their food parcels to their homes. In many of the buildings, the elevators are not working, so we get a workout carrying the parcels up many flights of stairs to their apartments which are sometimes on the ninth floor.

"Which floor do you live on?" I asked one babushka as I walked beside her carrying her food parcels. Tall apartment buildings surrounded us, so I supposed that we might have a climb ahead.

She chuckled, but it was not a laugh of mirth. "I live in the basement."

I knew the people of Slavyansk had often spent time in the basements due to fear of missiles and bombing, but most of them still lived in their houses or apartments. "The basement? Do you feel that it is too dangerous to be living in your apartment?"

She pointed to the building ahead. "Do you see that?"

I looked in the direction she was

pointing and noticed a hole near the that top of that building. "That used to be my home," she said. "A missile hit it and destroyed everything. Thankfully the fire did not spread to the whole building, but we lost everything we had." She spoke matter-of-factly. I did not hear malice or bitterness. What happened, happened.

I followed her down the dark steps into the basement below the apartment building. The basement had been roughly bricked up to divide the area into several small rooms. The air was damp, and I fought claustrophobia as I followed her down a crude hallway. She opened the door and ushered me into her home.

A small light glowed from a bulb that hung from the ceiling, and the air was warmer and drier than I had imagined it would be. In the corner I noticed a little wood stove, which radiated a bit of warmth. But still it was a basement. I sat down on the bed across from her and listened as she told me her story.

Olga was a retired math teacher. Life had been hard, and she had buried many of her loved ones. But she was grateful to still have her husband. He was a handyman and together they had fixed the basement dungeon into a sort of home. "It could be much worse," she said. "The hardest part for me is living in this dampness. With my asthma problems, it's hard for me to breathe down

here. I'm always out of breath."

She had been living in the basement since her apartment was hit in July. Only God knows how long it will be until she can move back into daylight. Will she have the funds or the resources to remodel her apartment or buy a new place? Or will she live the remaining years of her life in this perpetual darkness? What does the future hold for her, and for countless others caught in similar circumstances?

"Pass my thank you on to those who donated these food parcels," she said, "Tell them how we live, and thank them for helping us in this way."

I listened as she spoke, a lump growing in my throat. She was not asking for pity. Her voice was tinged with the pain of losses but rang with courage. I left, humbled and blessed by the gift she had given me: a glimpse of a resilient spirit that was not crippled by her circumstances.

One of my brothers spent the last week of the year with some volunteers and medics in Bakhmut, helping care for the wounded and taking food to the civilians left in that battered city. He came home with heart-breaking stories. The despair and horror that many people live with affects them in so many different ways. He related to people who were shell-shocked and nearly crazy with pain and grief from losing their companions.

To get into the east end of the city, one has to drive on a stretch

of road that is in view of the Russian army. It is dangerous, and they had been warned to drive fast in order to lessen the chance of being shot at.

As they were driving, they noticed a woman standing along the road up ahead. Stopping was dangerous, but they felt compelled to offer her assistance. They screeched to a stop and offered her a food parcel. As they were giving it to her, there was a loud explosion as a tank fired, hitting the road a hundred meters ahead of them. Their vehicle had been the target, but because they had unexpectedly stopped to help that woman, the Russian military had misjudged and missed them.

I wonder if that woman was an angel.

Our hearts cry for peace on earth.

Living in a land of war has had its effect on us all. We hunger and hope for peace. And we cling tightly to the Prince of Peace. Please keep praying for peace for this country. But even greater than that is the need for peace in the hearts of men and women on both sides of the battle line. Pray that God would continue to send His angels to protect and keep those who risk their lives to share the message of peace.

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!

Selected by the Editor

YE OUGHT TO WASH ONE ANOTHER'S FEET

In the fertile valley just south of Tiberias along the Jordan River lived a farmer. He was a wealthy man with sprawling orchards and groves and fields. His hands had gotten him all this, but not his hands alone, because work like this is labor-intense and many men are needed to do the work. He had slaves. Slaves he had purchased from the Roman army as they were returning from a victorious battle. Slaves that worked long grueling hours in the hot sun, exhausted and bitter but pushing themselves on because of the cruel taskmasters put in place over them by the farmer, who would spend much of his day on the roof of his house overlooking his vast estate, viewing the production going on and thinking of all the money it meant. The other place on the estate this man enjoyed spending his time was at the whipping post. In an open area in a grove of trees between the master's mansion and the slave quarters, was a lone stump about eight feet tall where the taskmasters would bring disobedient slaves or slaves who had fallen or simply started to ask a question, and teach them what was acceptable and what wasn't. This farmer enjoyed watching this process and he also wanted his slaves to associate his face with this area to remember for whom they were working. He often encouraged the taskmas-

ters to throw the whip a little harder and he himself threw vile words and threatenings at the offending slave.

One slave who was well acquainted with this blood-stained stump was Cedric. Cedric had been a mighty soldier before being captured and sold to the farmer, and the very thought of this forced menial labor was more than his mind could handle. He had attempted to escape many times, including the first night he was there, but each time was caught, returned and beaten horrifically. Cedric lived in constant rebellion, spouting off to the taskmasters, defiantly resting in the middle of the day, and never working any harder in the fields than he thought he could get by with. You see, the whipping post didn't bother Cedric. The physical pain was

nothing compared to the mental anguish of forced subjection and the status of nothing.

After a particularly rebellious stunt by Cedric involving several taskmasters, he nearly met his end at the whipping post. In fact, that was exactly his punishers' intent as they spurred one another on. But though he somehow retained his breath after the beating, he lost much else, including one eye and most of the sight in his other, hearing in one ear and three fingers off of his left hand. His legs were in such bad shape that even after healing, he walked only with severe pain and could only stand for short periods of time. In this state, he was useless in the fields, and so he was brought into the farmer's house to labor there. This was even greater torment for the once-exuberant



soldier than the hard labor in the scorching fields, as he was given simple jobs around the house helping with things like washing dishes, peeling potatoes, and emptying toilets. The position he found himself in was so demeaning and some of his tasks downright despicable, but nothing more awful in his mind than one he was called to several times a day.

You see, every time he heard the front gate shut and the farmer's evil whistle, he was to immediately meet his master at the chair and basin by the front door to wash his master's feet. The job was simple but the concept unbearable. Cleaning the dirty feet of the human being that he hated most in all the world. And often, those feet would kick him in the face when his broken body couldn't make it there quickly enough and often he would get the water thrown in his face when it was either too hot or too cold. And yes, when he couldn't suppress his angry responses he was often taken back out to learn to know the whipping post a little better. But still, the whipping post was more desirous than his post by the feet-washing basin. This post was so intolerable that his mind was in constant planning of how to end it all. He knew his plan was certain death for himself, but it didn't stop him from slipping the meat knife from the basin he was washing dishes into the waistband of his trousers. It didn't stop him from

surveying his master's chest each time he washed his feet and trying to determine where a thrust of the knife would do the most damage. And it didn't stop him from planning the day and the time.

The day came and the front gate clanged shut. He heard the whistle and he hustled toward the front door. Cedric's whole body trembled as he crouched at the basin. But instead of sitting down, the master stopped just inside the front door and announced the names of several slaves who were to report to him immediately.

...whenever he saw his master coming, he would race to the door with a warm bowl of water and lovingly wash his master's dirty, worn feet. Cedric was a new man.

Cedric's name was included, and a taskmaster led him and the others out the front door, through the front gate and instead of turning left toward the fields and the slave quarters, they turned right going out onto the road toward town. What could be going on, Cedric wondered as his body quickly began to burn with the pain of walking. Several taskmasters shouted at him to keep up and snapped their whips. Two fellow slaves

came beside him, supporting him with their shoulders. Before long, they reached the edge of town and as they neared the town square, they began to hear shouts and calls and realized something was going on today. The procession came to a halt near a noisy crowd of people. Cedric couldn't make out what was happening, but a fellow slave with better eyesight told him there was an auction going on, a slave auction. About that time, their taskmasters began leading the small group around the crowd and up onto the podium. After a barrage of shouting and cursing, Cedric found himself again off to the side where his master was talking quietly with an older, slightly balding man with gentle eyes. After their conversation concluded, the other man spoke to the group of slaves with these simple words, "Come, follow me." Confused, Cedric looked at his master who simply nodded his approval. In a minute's time they had left the crowd behind and were back on the road again, the shouts of the auction dying behind them.

The first thing Cedric noticed was the absence of taskmasters or any other helpers with the old man. The man simply walked out ahead of them leading them like sheep. Cedric knew he could make a break for the grove of trees alongside the dusty road and the man would never miss him, but the odds of successful survival

coupled with his intrigue with the old man kept him in line. Something was different here. This master had confidence; not the brash, indifferent kind of the evil farmer before, but an humble confidence that just walked ahead, simply expecting them to follow. The pain of walking was as bad or worse as before, but Cedric hardly noticed. His mind was spinning too fast.

After some time, they finally approached an old, run-down, earthen home beside the road where the man turned in. He was onto the front porch before he finally turned around to face the motley group behind him. When he did, he spoke again with simple words, "I have purchased you. You are mine. But—you have a choice. You are free. You are free to go or you are free to stay. Today you may choose. If you go you never need worry about me forcing you back here. If you stay, there is work to be done in my fields and your every need will be provided for." The group fell silent not believing their ears. Some quickly moved toward the road and ran in case the master changed his mind. Some made it as far as the hedge and paced back and forth, obviously caught up in great decision. Cedric didn't budge. The defiant, free-spirit of yesterday called him to flee, but something inside him kept him motionless. He felt at home. He felt a strange feeling of greater freedom by staying.

The sky was beginning to darken, and after doling out bread and water to each, their master showed the men to their sleeping quarters. Cedric stretched his aching body out onto his mat and slept better than he had slept in years.

The days turned into weeks and yet it all still seemed like a dream. Their master's gentle ways made the work seem like anything but servanthood. Cedric gave his all to be of use in the fields, but it was all too evident, especially to himself, that he was more of a hindrance than a help. But rather than sulk or be self-piteous, Cedric related his feelings to his master and offered his service inside the house. Again, he found himself washing dishes, helping with meal preparation, managing the laundry, but this time was so much different. There was joy in it and it oozed out from within.

And though his master never asked, Cedric kept his eye out the window and whenever he saw his master coming, he would race to the door with a warm bowl of water and lovingly wash his master's dirty, worn feet. He even washed his fellow servant's feet whenever he had the opportunity. Cedric was a new man.

And so I ask one simple question—do you wash feet only because you're commanded to or out of a deep love for your Master and what He has done for you?

Tim Deaton

AS FOR ME AND MY HOUSE

One evening we were enjoying some time with the children on the porch talking and singing and laughing together. In the midst of this special family time there was a melody that came to my mind. It captured my thoughts as it played continually over and over. The realization came that this was a new song the Lord was sending! Sometimes songs are quite insistent on being written and until it is written down it will not leave you alone! It continues to reveal its character. This one was no exception. It insisted on being written down and the sooner the better!

There are many ways songs come. Sometimes the words come first and then you must wait on a tune. Sometimes the melody or tune comes first—like this song did. Then you must wait on the words! Sometimes the words and the melody come at the same time and the song seems like an old familiar tune; except you know it isn't.

As I waited for the words of this song my eyes were drawn to a plaque that hangs in our living room with Joshua 24:15 on it. "But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

My mind went to an old Indian story about a grandfather who told his grandson there were two wolves

fighting within his breast. One wolf is compassionate and generous, and full of love, hope, faith and kindness. One wolf is cruel and selfish and filled with jealousy, envy, fear, and hate. The grandson asked his grandfather, "Which wolf wins?" The grandfather's wise reply was, "The one you feed."

As I continued to meditate on this Scripture and think about which wolf I am feeding, a message started coming and the words for this song flowed quickly. The message the Lord sent is in the song below.

"Choose ye this day whom ye will serve..."

"Ye cannot serve two Masters..."

Matthew 6:24 says, "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other."

Luke 12:15 instructs, "And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."

Ephesians 2:10 says, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

Please contact the author for a copy of this shaped-note hymn.

AS FOR ME AND MY HOUSE

*There's many pleasures men seek
today of wealth and fame untold.
They seek to soothe their weary
souls in any way they can find.
No joy is found where e'er they look
because they do not see.
No joy is found in earthly toys; this
joy is found in Him.*

Chorus

*Ye shall choose this day (this day)
Whom ye shall serve this day.
But as for me and mine (and mine)
We will serve the Lord.
Yes, we will serve the Lord.*

*There's two that war within my
breast and feast upon my soul.
They each desire to be well fed and
want devoted love.
But man cannot serve two within,
he must choose one alone.
The one he feeds is one who wins
when all is said and done.*

*The Lord has placed within each
soul a portion of Himself.
He loves to see what we will choose
to do with His great gift.
He knows and seeks the hearts of
all and He delights to see.
When each of us delight in Him; a
part of Him we see!*

All glory to God our Father
whom we choose to serve with
hymns of joy and songs of praise!

Susan I. Holsinger

I DARE NOT BE DEFEATED

I dare not be defeated, since Christ, my conquering King
Has called me to the battle which He did surely win.
Come, Lord, and give me courage, Thy conquering Spirit give,
Make me an overcomer; in power within me live.

I dare not be defeated, just at the set of sun,
When Jesus waits to whisper, "Well done, beloved, well done!"
Come, Lord, bend from the Glory, on me Thy Spirit cast,
Make me an overcomer, a victor to the last.

— *The Verses of a Pilgrim*

MEDITATIONS

If you don't believe in Jesus, you are an atheist. Jesus and God are one.
When speaking of prophecy, it is okay to say, "I don't know."
Guardian angels always hang close around little children.
Do you live the same at home as you do at church?
The *virus* of gossip can be spread over the phone.
A prophet tells what is ahead, but not when.
Life itself should be continual worship.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

This section offers some questions to think about, or for Sunday afternoon discussions, or to prompt future articles from our readers, etc. Readers are encouraged to offer questions.

The world is full of sorrows. So many children are crying, and parents are crying, too.

Perhaps you have wondered why it must be so. It may be that your own heart has been made very *heavy* just because you have observed someone else's sorrow, and have had no way to relieve it or find a remedy for their grief.

The Bible says that there will come a time when "sorrow and sighing will flee away" (Isa. 35:10). What a beautiful thought!

Perhaps it would be beneficial to ask ourselves some questions about the sorrow that we experience.

Questions:

1. While we know that sorrow is, no doubt, because of man's sin, why is there *so much sorrow*?
2. "*Sorrow is better than laughter...*" (Eccl. 7:3) How can this be?
3. If sorrow is good, why then do I want to do without it?
4. Have there been times when sorrow has worked good in me?
5. Why is it significant that Jesus was "a man of sorrows..."?
6. *Godly sorrow worketh repentance* (II Cor. 7:10). Are there then different kinds of sorrow?
7. What is *sorrow*?
8. How does God want to use it in me?

GENERAL ITEMS

BAPTISMS

Nov. 6, 2022; Cutler Ridge, IN
 Preston Oyler
 Jan. 15, 2023; Columbia River, WA
 Robert Deaton, Jace Robbins,
 Eva Metzger, Emma Metzger, and
 Gianna Wagoner
 Jan. 19, 2023; Living Epistle, NM
 Katherine McConaughy
 Jan. 22, 2023; Mission Valley, MT
 Estee Hess
 Jan. 22, 2023; Modesto, CA
 James Brubaker
 Jan. 26, 2023; Bear Creek, OH
 Emily Flick
 Feb. 1, 2023; Columbia River, WA
 Asher Young

NEW MEMBERS RECEIVED

Jan. 12, 2023; Living Epistle, NM
 Madeline Mohler

COMMUNION NOTICES

Mar. 4, 2023..... West Manchester, IN
 Mar. 4, 2023..... Morning Star, OH
 Mar. 18, 2023..... Dallas, OR
 Apr. 1, 2023 Fair Haven, KS
 Apr. 1, 2023 Mt. Zion, PA
 Apr. 1, 2023 Salem, OH
 Apr. 8, 2023 Modesto, CA
 Apr. 8, 2023 Shiloh, OH
 Apr. 15, 2023 Cascade Valley, WA
 Apr. 15, 2023 Fall Creek, IN
 Apr. 22, 2023 Caldwell, ID
 Apr. 22, 2023 Cutler Ridge, IN
 Apr. 22, 2023 Sugar Grove, OH
 Apr. 29, 2023 Bear Creek, OH
 Jun. 24, 2023 Mountain View, ID
 Sept. 23, 2023 Pleasant View, OH
 Oct. 21, 2023 Stillwater, OH
 Nov. 4, 2023 Columbia River, WA

HARVEST MEETINGS

Aug. 6, 2023..... Maple Grove, OH
 Aug. 13, 2023..... Covington/Sugar Grove, OH
 Aug. 20, 2023..... Salem, OH

2023 ANNUAL CONFERENCE NOTICE

The Kansas and New Mexico districts are working together to hold

the conference at Indiana Wesleyan University in Marion, Indiana, on June 2 thru June 6, 2023, Lord willing. We desire your prayers as we continue in the labors of this meeting.

Your 2023 Committee of Arrangements,
 Foreman: Merlin Kessler
 Secretary: Trenton Wray
 Treasurer: Merle Edgecomb
 Mathan Wolf
 Silas Clark

COMMUNION NOTICE

Lord willing, we anticipate a Communion Service on Sunday, June 4, 2023, at 4:30 P.M. to be held during our Annual Conference June 2–6 at Indiana Wesleyan University in Indiana.

I Corinthians 11:26, “For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come.”

On behalf of the 2023 Committee of Arrangements,

Trenton Wray, Secretary

ANNUAL CONFERENCE SCHEDULE INFORMATION

The Central States Region (Kansas and New Mexico) will be hosting our 2023 Annual Conference at Indiana Wesleyan University, Marion Indiana, on June 2–6, 2023.

The Ohio Region will be hosting our 2024 Annual Conference at the Cedarville University, Cedarville, Ohio, on May 24–28, 2024.

The Eastern Region will be hosting the 2025 Annual Conference. Location and date will be determined later.

May the Lord’s Name be glorified in everything we do!

On behalf of the Scheduling Committee,

Greg Kuns, Secretary

POEMS

Continued from page 1...

The open vistas, grassy lands, and bounding seas,
Now seemed a barren menace, pulsing death;
A wasteland cruel to luckless travelers,
A stagnant stillness lacking warmth and breath.

Where might I shelter? Where for refuge fly;
Where might I find life, love, and fireside,
Where vintage aged, bread to satisfy?
What well stocked fortress where I might abide?

Yet still I shrank from life in palisades.
Though I was in the smallest palisade of all
I clung to my confinement with its shades,
And little knew how dank it was, and small.

And oft I found my spirit trembling
As if in fear that finding what I sought
I might at last discover it a thing
Of more deceit, a promise come to naught.

The gentle voice returned. "Come unto me,
Ye who are weary. I will give you rest.
You too may come." My spirit burned
With throb of hope amid my deep distress.

I saw upon the margin of the moor,
Upon the edges of the surly sea,
A little hut I had not seen before.
And drab—yet oddly beautiful to me.

I ventured cautiously. It ancient was.
And surely musty, soon to fall, so old.
Its paneless sashes, sagging door, and flaking walls,
The sun might keep at bay, but not the cold.

Then next I saw Clematis climbing round,
And fragrance filled the air as I drew near.
And crystal spring, with cheery, bubbling sound
Which from the threshold flowed, entranced my ear.

I stooped again to drink. O this was sweet!
Have I such water ever tried before?
I dabbled, bathed my hot and dusty feet,
Refreshed and cheered! I wondered more and more.

I walked about. There was no other door.
One way to find and know what lay within
I circled back to where I stood before
And pondered whether I might venture in.

Again I heard—with invitation sweet,
As of a joyful bride the words again.
“Come unto me. You shall find what you seek.
You shall find freedom, love, and joy within.”

Dare I to venture in this little hut?
Is this but more of cheats and lies for me?
I want to lose my fear and longing, but—
What hope have I to leave my misery?

I stepped upon the threshold, tried the door.
A howling blast broke full upon my back.
The door to slam and blow me to the moor.
I cried aloud, “Lord save. The strength I lack.”

The door swung wide, from unseen hand within.
The tearing tempest could not keep me out.
A stronger power enfolded, drew me in,
Encircled me with loving arms about.

A brilliant light burst full upon my eyes,
And dazed, I looked about in wondrous awe.
I could not well contain my great surprise
At unexpected visions which I saw.

Instead of little hut, with shuddering walls,
And sieve for roof, and narrow in extent
I stood within a castle vast with giant halls
And sunbathed turrets crowned with battlements.

And thronging thousands dressed in purest white,
Beneath its flying arches came and went,
And all was calm and wonderful to sight
And not a sign of any discontent.

And fragrant flowers, with blossoms rich and rare,
Well kept, its gardens graced with order sweet
Majestic trees lined graceful walkways there
With downy grass to comfort weary feet.

And in the central hall a feast was laid
Of aged cheeses, wines, and tender meats,
And song and merriment were freely made
And ballads sung of errant knightly feats.

And little children toddled more than walked
And played about the knees of aged sires.
And patted heads of fearsome looking dogs
While merry minstrels sweetly strummed on lyres.

And as I looked about, nor understood
There came into my mind an ancient lay,
“Let now your soul delight itself with good,
And you shall find the place you seek today.”

Look not upon the outward lest you miss
The hidden beauty unperceived by sight.
Walk with the simple, never be remiss
To see the low is lofty, weakness-might.

There stands within the world the ancient church
A hovel poor, to all who stand without,
With little outward beauty, and besmirched
By centuries of storms and dust about.

Within, the palace of the King, all glorious,
In robes of rich and rare the courtiers,
Who entering, have become victorious,
Now battle hardened, trusty warriors.

And here you find the ancient feast is spread
Though simple food, yet all you could desire.
And pleasures evermore await instead
Of former woe, for those who would inquire.

And here it is the traveler may come,
Who sought for shelter, weary, sick, and sore,
And tired of folly, seeking after home,
To him that knocketh, opened is the door.

And only when the little hut is seen,
As refuge better than the barren waste,
Against the howling storms that intervene
The weary traveler must come in haste.

And lo, he finds that deeper far than depth
And higher far than height his hopes are set;
And wider far than width, more broad than breadth
With love unbounded, all his woe is met.

Philip Hess

THE STONING OF PAUL

The cruel stones unerring fell up-
on him
Until they deemed his bleeding
form was dead;
His worth and work they knew
not, and they cared not;
Enough, they madly hated what
he said.

God touched him! and he rose,
with new life given;
Nor in his bosom, burned resentful
pain;
And, bye and bye, when need and
call both guided,
He to the stoning-place RETURNED
AGAIN.

Perchance thou, too, hast tasted
cruel stoning
And mightst be glad if call came
ne'er again
To turn to scenes where surely
there awaits thee,
The cruel, cutting stones which
make life vain.

Yet, if "back to the stones" the Fin-
ger pointeth,
Then thou shalt know there is no
better way;
And there, just there, shall match-
less grace await thee
And God Himself shall be thy
strength and stay.

—J. Danson Smith.

From "Springs in the Valley"
compiled by Mrs. Charles Cowman.

Selected by
Louise Garber

**HOW DEEP THE FATHER'S
LOVE FOR US**

How deep the Father's love for us,
How vast beyond all measure,
That He should give His only Son
To make a wretch His treasure.

How great the pain of searing loss,
The Father turns His face away,
As wounds which mar the Chosen One
Bring many sons to glory.

Behold the Man upon a cross
My sin upon His shoulders,
Ashamed, I hear my mocking voice
Call out among the scoffers.

It was my sin that left Him there
Until it was accomplished;
His dying breath has brought me life,
I know that it is finished.

I will not boast in anything;
No gifts, no power, no wisdom,
But I will boast in Jesus Christ,
His death and resurrection.

Why should I gain from His reward?
I cannot give an answer...
But this I know with all my heart!
His wounds have paid my ransom!

—Stewart Townsend

Selected by
Eva Boone

OBITUARIES

FLORA — Gerald Lee, son of Herman and Mary Catherine (Mohler) Flora was born on June 21, 1939, in Flora, Indiana.

He peacefully passed away at his home on Saturday, December 3, 2022, at the age of 83 years, 5 months, and 12 days.

Gerald was united in marriage with Loretta Miller on September 20, 1959. They were baptized on May 13, 1956, becoming members of the Old German Baptist Brethren Church.

Daddy was a farmer in Carroll County, Indiana, for over 50 years and enjoyed having close contact with the soil. His example of optimism while patiently waiting for the harvest was an inspiration. We have also greatly benefited from his steadfast and peaceable ways.

Surviving along with his wife Loretta are three children, Julia (Bruce) Deaton, Jeffrey (Marsha), and Janell; seven grandchildren, Lanita (Arlyn) Meador, Kendall (Mary) Deaton, Jaryl (Rachel) Flora, Eric (Jennifer) Flora, Kyle (Melissa) Deaton, Kent (Christa) Flora, and Lynnae (Ethan) Waggoner; 36 great-grandchildren; a brother, David (wife Milli); sisters-in-law, Judy (Max) Welk, and Joyce (Rick) Root.

He was preceded in death by his parents, a sister, Nancy Brovont; and brothers-in-law, James Brovont, and Doran Hufford.

A funeral service was held at the North Fork meetinghouse on December 8, 2022, by Elders John Hess and Jay Brubaker. Thoughts were taken from Isaiah 40:31.

Burial followed in the adjacent church cemetery with closing comments by Elder Bruce Miller.

We are left with many precious memories and look forward to the time when his heavenly vision is also our reality!

The Family

BENEDICT — Nellie Lou (Long), daughter of Bernice and Ruth (Stoner) Long, was born June 3, 1934, at Pendleton, Indiana. She departed this life at Pratt Health at Rehab, Pratt, Kansas, December 5, 2022, at the age of 88.

She was baptized into Christ July 1, 1951, and was a member of the Old German Baptist Brethren, Beech Grove congregation.

On August 17, 1952, she was united in marriage to Willis Price Benedict. To this union were born two sons and three daughters.

She and her husband were elected to the ministry at Beech Grove on September 18, 1954.

She is survived by her children, Gary Benedict, Rebecca (husband Tim) Allgood, Elaine (husband Quentin) Hirt, Sheldon (wife Kathy) Benedict; 11 grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren; a brother, John Long; sisters, Evelyn Hollinger, Martha Hess, and Ruth Emma Benedict; and many cousins, nephews, nieces, and friends.

She was preceded in death by her husband; infant daughter; parents; father- and mother-in-law, Irvin and Minnie (Good) Benedict; brothers, Robert Long and Wilmer Long; sisters, Mildred Oyler, Margaret Boyd, Nancy Bowser, and Mary Cook.

Mother moved to Kansas in April of 2013 and felt very welcomed by the Sand Creek congregation. The Sawyer community

enjoyed her warm smile and wave from her front porch. As her health declined, she did not lose her cheerful smile. Mother was a homemaker and her love for Jesus was evident in her life.

Funeral service was held December 7, 2022, at Larrison Mortuary, Pratt, Kansas, by minister Nate Kuns. Funeral service was also held at the Beech Grove meeting house, Lapel, Indiana, December 10, 2022. Services were officiated by nephews Daniel Bowman, Sherman Long, and Russel Bowman. She was laid to rest in the Pleasant Valley Cemetery near Pendleton, Indiana.

The Family

BRUBAKER — Donald Oscar was born March 1, 1929, in rural Sawyer, Kansas, to Everett James and Hazel Frances (Montgomery) Brubaker. He peacefully went to be with the Lord on December 22, 2022, answering his prayer to be home for Christmas, at the age of 93. He was surrounded by his family singing songs of Heaven. He accepted the Lord and was baptized August 10, 1947, and was a member of the Old German Baptist Brethren Church—New Conference. On August 16, 1947, he was married to his childhood sweetheart, Arthena Helen Wray, who he fondly called “Babe.” They enjoyed 70 wonderful years of married life together, 66 of those years were on the home place southeast of Sawyer.

Dad and Mother were blessed with four children. In January 1960, they were called to the office of deacon where they served faithfully together. Desiring to fulfill his responsibility and not having the ability to sing, he learned to

sing tunes by listening to mother over and over from the church hymnbook propped up in the dairy barn windowsill. He was quick to respond, being the willing hands at the meeting house or helping a neighbor in need.

The family circle was broken, when their oldest son was carried to be “Safe in the Arms of Jesus” due to a farm accident. With the Lord’s help and the support of their church family, Dad and Mother walked hand in hand through this time of grief.

Dad had a desire to remain in his home and his family graciously granted this and lovingly cared for him in his last months, along with his devoted care giver, Heather Ryan.

After Mother’s death in 2017 he experienced loneliness and desiring companionship, married Phyllis (Austin, Bower) Denlinger on November 29, 2019. They were married 3 years and were blessed to spend two winters together in Florida.

Dad and his brother Joe played together, farmed together, and shared family birthdays, and homemade ice cream together for many years. We will miss their reminiscing of boyhood days and of time spent with Montgomery relatives at Fairview, Missouri.

Dad is survived by his children, Randy Don and wife Carol, Douglas Lynn and wife Kathy, and Joy Elaine and husband Brad Siroky; wife, Phyllis Brubaker, grandchildren, Rachele and Rodney Miller, Regina and Rico Grant, Beth and Darwin Fisher, Darren and Alissa Brubaker, Beth and Ivan Miller, April and Dustin Denlinger, Brandon Siroky, Brandy and Coby Tresner, Bryce Siroky, and Kole Siroky; granddaughter-in-law,

Kim Siroky; 24 great-grandchildren; brother Joel Andrew Brubaker; sister-in-law Helen Wray, stepchildren, Michael and Glenna Bower, Wayne and Angie Bower, Dale and Cindy Bower, Lisa and Hayden Newell; step-daughter-in-law, Susan Bower; 17 step-grandchildren; Gary and Mary Jane Denlinger, Sheryl and Terry Boone, Sandra and Brian Stull, and Danny and Suzanne Denlinger.

He is preceded in death by his parents; wife, Arthana Helen Brubaker; son, Sheldon Gail Brubaker; grandson, Kadi Don Siroky; brother-in-law, Donald Wray; and sisters-in-law, Lorraine Brubaker and Evelyn Peters; and step-son, Donnie Bower.

Funeral services were Thursday, December 29, 2022, at 10 A.M., in the Sand Creek meeting house, which was well attended by brethren, sisters, relatives, and friends. Hymn #463 was sung while the family was seated. Brother Merlin Reece opened the service using one of Dad's favorite hymns, #451. He shared Dad's love of singing and his joy of the Lord being his strength (Nehemiah 8:10, Psalm 16, Psalm 40:1-3, Psalm 59:16,17).

Dad chose for his funeral text I Peter 1:3-5 which speaks to us of a lively hope because of Christ's resurrection and with the promise of our eternal inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you. We then sang of heaven, "Jerusalem My Happy Home," #455. Brother Darwin Fisher, a grandson, spoke of the natural life of farming, seed time and harvest and shared spiritual lessons concerning our earthly walk and heavenly home. We were all en-

couraged to be ready for that final harvest reaping. "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20).

Burial and graveside service was at the Pleasant View Cemetery. While filling the grave we sang some old familiar hymns: "I'll Fly Away," "If We Never Meet Again," "Amazing Grace," "Bless Be The Tie," and "Where The Roses Never Fade." In closing, we sang #403, and Brother Nate Kuns talked about the Kansas weather and the Kansas farmer (both of which are somewhat unpredictable by nature), but God's love to us is wholly predictable because of His provision of Salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Thus, Dad's earthly journey toward heaven is finished. "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (II Cor. 5:1).

The Family

NEAL — Michelle June Witmer, 34, North Manchester, Indiana, met her heavenly Father on December 26, 2022, after a long battle with cancer. The daughter of Stan and Nelda (Wrightsmen) Witmer, Michelle was born on June 7, 1988, in Elkhart, Indiana.

After graduating from Manchester High School in 2007, Michelle studied at IPFW and later graduated from the University of Phoenix with a business degree. She developed a strong work ethic while employed by Timbercrest during her high school years and most recently worked in the kitchen at Whitko High School.

A truly selfless, compassionate woman, Michelle was the embodiment of a faithful servant to the Lord. Her church family brought her comfort and was there for her throughout all of life's trials and tribulations. Before her health began to decline, Michelle enjoyed attending West Manchester Old German Baptist Church—New Conference, where she was a member. Despite her grueling battle with cancer, Michelle never complained about her situation and continuously put others before herself. She did everything with her children in mind. Michelle loved them more than anything in this world; they were the reason for her will to live. Ultimately, Michelle became an inspiration to many in how to love and endure adversity. She was beautiful inside and out and quite special to all who knew her.

The loving memory of Michelle Witmer Neal will be forever cherished by her father and stepmother, Stan (Kim) Witmer, North Manchester, Indiana; mother and step-

father, Nelda (Dwayne Quakenbush) Wrightsman Witmer (Lagro); children, Abigail, Elijah, Thaddeus, and Madison Neal; brothers, Brian Witmer (North Manchester), and Trenton (Maria Zimmer) Witmer (Logansport); sisters, Stephanie (Austin Gall) Baldrige (Claypool), and Jenna (Joel) Reavis (Wonewoc, Wisconsin); maternal grandparents, Everett and Ruth (Blocher) Wrightsman; paternal grandmother, Edna (Wenger) Witmer; and her church family, who she loved dearly. Michelle was preceded in death by her grandfather, Paul Witmer.

Visitation was at the West Manchester Old German Baptist Brethren—New Conference church. Funeral services were held Saturday, December 31, 2022, also at the West Manchester Old German Baptist—New Conference meetinghouse with the Home Brethren officiating. Burial followed at Pleasant Hill Cemetery, North Manchester, Indiana.

The Family

Terms

Subscriptions should be made through the congregational contact or through *The Testimony* office. Subscription price is \$20.00 per year. New subscriptions should be paid (prorated) through the remainder of the current year. All renewals begin at the first of the calendar year. Newly married and those unable to pay for a subscription may receive a free subscription through the agent of their local congregation.

Contributors

Authors of essays, devotionals, poems, etc. are asked to review the Statement of Purpose on the back page of this periodical. Articles should

be based on Scripture. References are appreciated. Shorter focused articles are more desirable than articles that move from one topic to another. Selected material will be considered. Original writings are preferred. It is recommended that writers submit themselves to the Spirit, which reveals the will of God to the Church in every age, according to the varied needs and circumstances.

Written articles should be legible. Typed material is preferred and should be double-spaced. Electronic transmission or CD will be accepted. The author's name and address must be included on all material. An attempt will be made to contact the author of articles that are not accepted.

Old German Baptist Brethren
Church—New Conference

THE TESTIMONY

353 Billman Rd.
New Paris, OH 45347-9102

The Testimony is a Christian publication intended for those who desire nourishment in their spiritual walk, and for writers who wish to express witness to the Truth of the Gospel as experienced in their own lives. It holds the Holy Scriptures to be its only Creed. Its purpose is to bear witness to the Truth of God's Word as it is applied in the daily life of committed Christians. It supports the anabaptist and pietist foundations of the Brethren of Schwarzenau, Germany (1708) including the biblical principle of the community of believers bound by a confession of faith in the Lord Jesus confirmed by adult immersion baptism (Mark 16:16). It strives to promote a life of true living piety among all who confess Jesus as their Lord. It seeks to restore and

maintain a fellowship of true primitive Christianity through the communication of all good things.

Send all communication to:

The Testimony
353 Billman Rd.
New Paris, OH 45347-9102
Phone: (937) 604-9464
thetestimony@emypeople.net

The Testimony Committee

Roger Rapp
Lowell Miller, Editor
Dean Kinsley
Phil King
Tim Deaton

Associate Editors

Marcus Miller
Darryl Filbrun