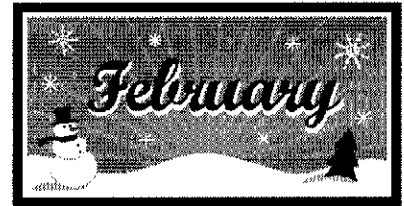


The Church Organ

February 2010/Volume 16 No. 2



From Your Pastor's Pen

God's Love for a New Year

"This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers."

(1 John 3:16)

That is a lofty verse, but it is not so easily attained. Therefore, we have chosen to make this our focus for a second year. I have never done that in the past, but I believe that this virtue is of such importance to develop in my own life, and to encourage more and more in your lives as well, that a second year will make it even better. I doubt there will ever be a time, this side of eternity, where we can say that we have arrived at perfection in the Christian walk. There will always be times of falling short of the perfection we desire to have. Paul understood that in regard to the church in Thessalonica, for he mentions it twice in his first letter to them. He wrote in 1 Thes. 3:11-13 that they were loving, but they needed to "increase and abound in love," and that is our challenge as well. He reiterated that in chapter 4:9-10 where he acknowledged that they loved each other but needed to "do so more and more." Again, that is our challenge.

It is interesting to note that Paul sees a connection between our ability to increase and abound in love and our hearts being established "blameless in holiness at the coming of our Lord Jesus." Part of our lives in sanctification has to do with a proper and true love being extended to one another. A second connection is with gaining the respect of outsiders by living in love and righteousness. That is why we see a second year emphasis on love as being a good thing whereby we can abound in this virtue to the glory of God and the bringing of unbelievers to Christ.

Peter also saw the advantage of reminding them of these things. He wrote in 2 Peter 1:7-8, 12 that we must be diligent to add to our faith several virtues ending the list with "to **brotherly affection, love.** For if these qualities are yours and are **increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ...Therefore I intend always to remind you of these qualities though you know them and are established in the truth that you have."** Reminders are a good thing. Last year we were able to

begin to think about these things, and now, we can abound in them as we continue to reflect on and seek ways to implement God's love into our lives and focusing that love on others. As we noted many times last year, God's love is seen in the world today through the expressed love of his people. Somehow we must break ourselves free from the many things that get in our way and keep us from being the channels of God's love to others that God intended us to be. It will mean that this must become a greater priority in our lives, seen and expressed in our putting aside our

own desires and needs and seeking to be a means by which God can show his love through us.

If we make this a priority, and we begin to think creatively about how we might grow in this grace, then

God's name will be exalted and he will receive the praise due to him. What does that love look like? Again, Jesus is the model of that love. He demonstrated that love by laying down his life for us. All last year, we considered ways that this love can be emulated in our lives (go back and

(Continued on page 7.)

"We who have experienced God's love are to be the living expressions of that love. We must have a growing love for the lost and a willingness to go beyond ourselves to see people come to faith in the Christ we say we love."



Branches on the Oak Lake Family Tree

If you would like a good chuckle, ask Irvin and Marion Brieses where their cat, Icky, (short for Ichabod) likes to spend much of his daytime hours. His favorite spot for sleeping is in big paper sack on the edge of their kitchen floor. It's funny to watch Irvin dig him out of the sack and pet him. Their affection for their pet and other amusing stories about him are fun to watch and listen to. Why don't you ask them how they discovered Icky's love of paper sacks?

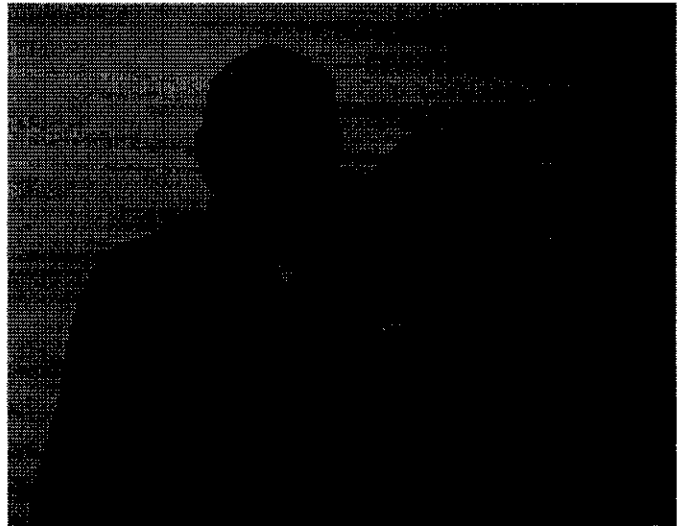
Brieses began attending Oak Lake several months ago. They learned about the Evangelical Free Churches through friends here in Lincoln. They were also looking for a smaller church that was close to their home. Oak Lake fit them well for this stage of their lives.

Both Irvin and Marion spent much of their growing up years in the ranch country of central Nebraska near Bartlett. They actually graduated from high school together in a class of 13 students. However, they were both so "afraid of each other," that they didn't spend time together outside of school activities.

After high school, Irvin attended UNL and received a degree in accounting. During his college career, he and 8 other college students helped rebuild an orphanage in Germany. The orphanage had been bombed heavily in World War II. It was during this time that he began to sense God's call on his life to become a pastor.

After college was over, Irvin worked for the Standard Oil Company in Venezuela, South America as an accountant. He returned home after 5 months because his father passed away. During this time, he paid a visit to his pastor, who encouraged him to consider the pastorate as a career. Soon he was on his way to a Lutheran seminary in Columbus, Ohio.

After Irvin's first year at seminary, he was returning home and by chance met one of his high school classmates, Marion Currie, at the bus depot in Columbus, Nebraska. Marion had moved to Omaha after graduating from high school, and she was on her way to visit her family, too. They became reacquainted and Marion invited him to attend the wedding activities of a friend in Omaha. Irvin did do that and a romance blossomed. Brieses were married June 9, 1951.



After completing seminary, Marion and Irvin served in the pastorates of 5 different Lutheran congregations. Two of these were with Mexican churches. They also spent 5 years in Mexico City, Mexico serving a bilingual church.

Brieses have three children. Rachel is a flight nurse and a teacher at Bryan West Hospital. She also works for a firm that installs new monitors in hospitals. Rachel and her husband Ron have two adult children, Angie and Roger Lee. Their son Roger has worked at state and federal offices. He is now self-employed, enjoying the freedom of his own agenda. Ruth, their third child, is an assistant stage manager at Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. She and her husband, Brian, have two small children, Zoë and Abrielle.

(Continued on the page 7.)

February 2010

Oak Lake Evangelical Free Church

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																																															
	<i>1</i> Elders' Meeting 6:15 PM	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i> Choir 5:30 PM AWANA 6:55 PM ELL 7:00 PM	<i>4</i> Investigative Bible Study 1:15 PM Food Distribution 3:00 PM	<i>5</i> Men's Bible Study 6:30 AM Phares' Small Group 7:00 PM	<i>6</i> Men's Prayer Breakfast 7:15 AM Parenting Discipleship Forum 9:30 AM Emma Haas Ranelle Stucky																																																																																																															
<i>7</i> Communion PM Young Adults @ Steiners Rod & Susan Church - 1981	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i> Ladies' Bible Study 9:00 AM	<i>10</i> Choir 5:30 PM AWANA 6:55 PM ELL 7:00 PM John Preston	<i>11</i> Investigative Bible Study 1:15 PM Food Distribution 3:00 PM	<i>12</i> Men's Bible Study 6:30 AM	<i>13</i> Music & Worship Committee Meeting 8:30 AM Jim Hart																																																																																																															
<i>14</i> VALENTINE'S DAY!	<i>15</i> Elders' Meeting 6:15 PM	<i>16</i> Heidi Bartsch Sue Block Lori Haas	<i>17</i> Choir 5:30 PM AWANA 6:55 PM ELL 7:00 PM	<i>18</i> Investigative Bible Study 1:15 PM Food Distribution 3:00 PM	<i>19</i> Men's Bible Study 6:30 AM Phares' Small Group 7:00 PM Helen Klaus Jason Masten Rick Hattan Cindy Wiens	<i>20</i> Caroline Ribble Joel Church																																																																																																															
<i>21</i> Ned & Lori Tucker - 1987 Dale Ribble Patrick Tripp	<i>22</i> ELL Staff Meeting 7:00 PM	<i>23</i> Ladies' Bible Study 9:00 AM Jerry Haas	<i>24</i> Choir 5:30 PM AWANA 6:55 PM ELL 7:00 PM	<i>25</i> Investigative Bible Study 1:15 PM Food Distribution 3:00 PM Benjamin Hartman Hannah Juhl	<i>26</i> Men's Bible Study 6:30 AM Pizza Bunco Party 6:30 PM Kaylyn Rosecrans	<i>27</i>																																																																																																															
<i>28</i> Angelina Ceraolo Poppi Steiner Sherry Ubben	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr> <th colspan="7">Jan 2010</th> <th colspan="7">Mar 2010</th> </tr> <tr> <th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>T</th><th>F</th><th>S</th> <th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>T</th><th>F</th><th>S</th> </tr> <tr> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td> <td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td> <td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td> </tr> <tr> <td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td> <td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td> <td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td> </tr> <tr> <td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td> <td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td>31</td><td></td><td></td><td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>31</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td> </tr> </table>						Jan 2010							Mar 2010							S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S						1	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	28	29	30	31				31													
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Oak Lake Activities and Digest

FAMILY LIFE Presents A Weekend To Remember

For over 30 years, Family Life has helped more than a million couples make their marriage stronger and healthier. In 2009, one man from Lincoln shared with the entire conference that his wife and he came when they were engaged and now they have been married for 20 years . . . to NOT wait that long before attending again!

This great conference will be here in Lincoln March 26-28, 2010 at The Cornhusker Marriott. Register early (until one day before the conference) and save \$80 off the regular rate. The regular rate is \$258 per couple. For more information about registering, pick an information brochure about A Weekend To Remember from the table in the church foyer. When you do this, pick up an information sheet from the table that tells how to register for the \$80 off of the regular rates.

Timberlake Ranch Camp Summer Camps 2010

The season to begin thinking about sending your kids and teens to camp will be here soon. Timberlake Ranch Camp is a quality Christian camp where youth have a ton of fun and learn many spiritual truths from God's Word. Many young people from our church have attended and look back on this time with great memories.

Camp information is available on the foyer counter. This year there is no an early registration discount. So the church office will **not** be registering those who wish to attend camp. The church discount of \$25 is available, and a discount is offered of \$25 if more than one child from a family attends camp. Complete information is available in the camp brochures which tell you how to register on line (www.timberlake.org), or by completing the forms and mailing them. Pick up your brochures from the foyer counter today.

Pizza Bunco Party!

Have the winter blues got you down? Would you like to have a **FUN** evening filled with pizza and Bunco? This is an evening the whole family will enjoy. Bunco is a lively game where you will interact with number of people. It is sure to cause a few laughs, too! So bring along a prepared pizza and a salad or dessert and join us on Friday, February 26 at 6:30 PM. We will add the pop and table service. If you have an extra card table, bring it along.

We would like to make this a Help Haiti Awareness Night as well. Throughout the evening, facts about the crisis in Haiti will be shared, and a time of group prayer will take place. An opportunity will be made to give donations to help Haiti through the EFCA Earthquake Relief Organization. There will be a donation box in the foyer, beginning Sunday, January 31 for this purpose. Please prayerfully consider how you can help those in need. Thank you!

---Stephanie Phares and Sandy Vance

God Is Alive and Moving

By Barb Lee

God never stops amazing me. Although Haiti is thousands of miles away from Lincoln, He continues to personally touch our lives through an unspeakable tragedy, the earthquake that hit on January 12, 2010. I am a witness that God is alive and moving!

Steve Spellman, a friend and missionary from Brazil, who our church supports, is in Haiti right now through the Evangelical Free Churches of America. His team is there delivering food and water. He reports seeing an "orphanage, completely destroyed and yet after 11 days still without any contact from relief agencies. Of the 140 kids, 56 have survived with director, nurse and main caretaker all passing away in the earthquake." He and his team plan to stay in Haiti as long as possible. Check out his letter on the bulletin board.

My friends, Scott and Kristin Heaton, from Roca, are recipients of God's grace this week...maybe a little more than usual!!! For almost four years they have been trying to adopt two little girls from Haiti. With the Haitian government so dysfunctional, adoption seemed impossible. But "impossible" is God's specialty!

This week I witnessed Him saving the Heaton's daughters through a series of miracles. Two young American sisters were caregivers of the BRESMA orphanage who were taking care of the Heaton's children. Jamie and Ali McMutrie were on their way home from getting groceries in Port-Au-Prince when the earthquake hit. Upon arriving home, the three buildings of the BRESMA orphanages had partially crumbled, but not on the 150 children or their nannies. Americans were immediately advised to get out of the country. God moved Jamie and Ali's hearts to stay with their "family" of children rather than going home to America. God moved the "local" nannies' hearts to stay and help with the orphans even though they have their own families. He then protected them all while they lived out in their yard for days and days. God moved the gangs in the neighborhoods to leave their orphanage alone night after night. God allowed the Haitians to pile up dead bodies right beside the orphanage with a smell that became unbearable. Days and days passed. No help. No sign of rescue.

God moved hundreds of people in America to hear of BRESMA's plight in spite of no electricity and telephone service in Haiti. God moved strangers to allow Ali to contact her family in America with their cell phones. God allowed word of BRESMA to spread like wild fire through the internet social networks Facebook and Twitter. Many people contacted Senators, Congressmen, Governors and the President.

He moved the media, CNN, to broadcast their story across America. Many other stations followed with similar reports. He moved quiet, shy Kristin Heaton to plead for the orphans on not only Lincoln and Omaha news stations, but also the Pittsburgh news. He then pushed her out further from her safety zone to talk nationally on "The Early Show". And now the New York Times, with 8 million readers, is running a story on them! The plight of orphans across the world has a small voice being broadcast to millions. God certainly moves where and when He chooses.

God moved Governor Rendell of Pennsylvania and Congressman Altmire to assist in getting our orphans home, including the Heaton's girls. Jamie and Ali are from Pennsylvania. God moved someone to help the 150 orphans to get to the airport safely through a torn up country. God moved both the French and Netherland governments to come and get their children. He then moved a corporation in America to send a plane for the rest of the kids, Jamie and Ali. The plane arrived but the American government stated they would allow only the American orphans that were almost through the adoption process to come home. God moved Jamie and Ali's hearts to be strong and stay together. The plane that came for them had to leave without them. Five hours later, the women's request made it to the White House and permission was given for all the children to come home through God's grace.

God kept a little two-year-old, Emma, asleep in a van. After several head counts, Jamie and Ali realized Emma was missing. Jamie went back to get her. Emma was found, but meanwhile the plane had to leave. Jamie and Ali would be separated for a time. They were determined to not leave even one behind.

God moved the Air Force to provide a huge transport plane to bring Ali and the children to Florida. They arrived safely in Miami in the middle of the night. He moved the corporate folks to send the plane to Florida to get the children. God then moved the State of Pennsylvania and the City of Pittsburg to supply a place (Children's Hospital) and medical exams for the children. God protected the kids with no ailments, other than colds, so none had to be quarantined! He then allowed Jamie to bring little Emma to Pittsburg on a commercial flight. The "family" was reunited. God moved the State of Pennsylvania to not put the children into their foster care system as they had planned, but let the children go with their American families. The families had gathered at the hospital and waited several days to finally hold their children.

Then God let the Heaton's come home with their two, sweet little "refugees". Scott says "refugees, NOT...they are our daughters!!!" Although they have a lot of paper work to get through and adoptions to be made, the Heaton's have their two little Haitian daughters safe in their arms.

Many thanks to all of you who have prayed for the Heaton's over the years, and especially this week. God is good. He answered "YES" to our prayers. He is alive and moving.

How can we not be moved by this amazing story? If God can use something as horrible as a major earthquake to bring home two little girls, can He not move your heart? Pray for all of the relief teams, especially Steve and his group. He needs us. Find the box tagged for Haiti and give. Find the time to attend the upcoming Bunco party and donate to Steve's organization, EFCA TouchGlobal Crisis Response. Take time every day to pray for the Haitians. Take time everyday to pray for the world's orphans. Be the arms of Jesus so He can be glorified. Remember Haiti. Be alive and move, like Him!

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

-3-

MATTHEW 3:13-17

W	W	J	O	H	N	B	A	P	T	I	Z	E	D	D
P	E	B	P	S	P	I	R	I	T	O	F	G	O	D
L	N	R	R	G	A	L	L	L	E	E	F	G	J	C
E	T	Y	O	A	L	I	G	H	T	I	N	G	E	O
A	U	A	P	G	Y	M	H	E	A	V	E	N	S	N
S	F	N	J	I	M	T	E	A	V	U	U	S	S	E
E	A	R	M	O	M	E	N	T	T	S	S	E	N	D
D			A	O	O									
J	G	P	G	R	A	U	U	N	W	V	D	T		
O	A	R	D	M	Y	S	O	N	A	O	A	E		
R	L	O	O	M	N	N	N	T	T	I	N	D		
D	I	P	D	O	V	E	E	E	E	C	N	D		
A	L	E	W	E	L	L	S	S	R	R	D	E	Y	G
N	E	R	Z	L	D	E	S	C	E	N	D	I	N	G
P	U	Z	Z	L	E	M	A	D	E	B	Y	J	I	M

Solution to *The Baptism of Jesus*
Word Puzzle By Jim Hart

(*Pastor's Pen* continued)

read each "Pastor's Pen" article again). We must train ourselves to think about what love looks like. Ask yourself, "How do I want love expressed to me?" Then think of ways you can express that love to others. Remember what Jesus commanded his disciples in Matthew 7:12. "*So, whatever you wish that others would do to you, you do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.*" However you would like others to show love to you, you do to them. Instead of waiting for someone else to begin showing love, you be the first and see if God won't use you to get things going. Let's make it our aim over the year ahead to make Oak Lake Church the most loving place on earth after our homes.

If we can do that, then we will also accomplish the next goal; to take God's love out into the world. The world is a difficult place to live and see God's kind of love. We who have experienced God's love are to be the living expressions of that love. We must have a growing love for the lost and a willingness to go beyond ourselves to see people come to faith in the Christ we say we love. I believe that God has wanted to do a great work in this area in our lives for some time. We are making small strides in that direction; but I would like to see it happen in a spectacular way.

If each of us begins to pray right now for one person that we can express the love of Christ to with the intention of showing God's love to them until they come to faith, then by the end of this year, we will see the goal for new growth in our church blossom. You will also see the excitement that comes with sharing Christ with others. Jesus said to Nicodemus, "*For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life*" (John 3:16). If God loved the world by sending his Son so that none would perish, then doesn't that suggest that we take the message to those who have not yet heard or responded? Paul wrote to the Corinthians that God has made us ambassadors of reconciliation calling others to him through us (2Co 5:14-15,18-20 NIV).

So, as we go into this new year seeking to do God's will, let us determine to fulfill this love command to God, to the brethren and to those "outside." This will mark us as a church who is serious about loving and serving God, and will closely identify us with the God of love. Remember what John wrote, "*Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God*" (1 Jn. 4:7). There's the challenge! Now, will we as a church pick up the challenge and run with it? May we trust God to make it a glorious reality.

"May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (2 Corinthians 13:14)

--Pastor Dale

(*Branches* continued.)

Throughout their different pastorates, Marion has remained in the role of a wife, mother and homemaker. Irvin retired in 1991, and they moved to Lincoln, Nebraska to be near their daughter, Rachel, and her family. During the next 10 years, they worked with 5 different Lutheran churches in Eastern Nebraska as the interim pastor.

Both Irvin and Marion have several hobbies. Marion loves to cook, spend time with family, read biographies and inspirational books. She presently enjoys knitting and crocheting afghans, scarves and hats. The afghans she has donated to the Salvation Army to help provide warm blankets for those who need them. The scarves and hats she gives to the Belmont Elementary School for those children who have a need. Growing flowers and vegetables is another enjoyable past time for her.

Irvin enjoys traveling. Together Brieses have made two trips to Europe and one to Argentina. Irvin likes stamp collecting, and he tells me that he has quite a large collection. He also enjoys growing flowers.

(Continued on page 8.)

(Branches continued.)

Marion became a Christian in 1944 as a result of being invited by a friend to revival services being held at a Nazarene Church in Omaha. For Irvin, the process of becoming a Christian was one that began as a young child in Sunday school where he heard many Bible stories. Both of them recognized their sin and their need of Christ to receive forgiveness for them.

Irvin's favorite verses are Ephesians 2:8-9 which say "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." Marion's favorite verses are Psalms 103:1-5 which say, "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." Marion tells me that many nights she recites these verses to herself before she falls asleep. What a great way to end any day when you walk with the Lord!

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

MATTHEW 3:13-17

W W J O H N B A P T I Z E D D
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N E R Z L D E S C E N D I N G
P U Z Z L E M A D E B Y J I M

Solution to *The Baptism of Jesus*
Word Puzzle By Jim Hart is on
Page 6.

BAPTIZED	MOMENT
CONSENTED	MY SON
DESCENDING	PLEASED
DOVE	PROPER
GALILEE	
HEAVEN	SPIRIT OF GOD
JESUS	WATER
JOHN	WELL
JORDAN	WENT UP
LIGHTING	VOICE