

The Anchor



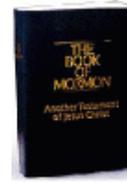
The Great Lakes Restoration Branches

Magazine/Newsletter

Vol. 4 - 37

Issue 102

Winter 2018



News From Around the Region

Algonac-Atlanta-Dowagiac- Garden City- Lima-Oakwood Otter Lake-Port Huron-Sanilac-
St. Johns

“By faith all things are fulfilled: Wherefore, whoso believeth in God might with surety hope for a better world, yea, even a place at the right hand of God which hope cometh of faith maketh an Anchor to the souls of men, which would make them sure and steadfast, always abounding in good works, being led to glorify God.” Ether 5:3b-4

Algonac Branch



By: Val Bradley

“Be afflicted for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds

through Christ Jesus.”
(Philippians 4:6, 7)

Our Branch business meeting for election of officers was held after our preaching service on Sunday, November 12. Elder Gary Holmes was unanimously approved to continue his role as pastor. We are grateful that he and all other officers, directors, and coordinators have graciously agreed to remain in the positions they held. A big thanks to our pastor and all others for the time and effort they give to our congregation. Our prayers remain with them. We enjoyed a

delicious pot luck meal and great fellowship following our meeting.

The Children's Thanksgiving program, directed by Cory Eliason, took place on November 19. Cory gave the welcome, the congregation sang "With Thankful Hearts," and Nina Powers brought the opening prayer. Cory shared the history of Thanksgiving, and told the story of the Legend of the 5 Kernels, while the younger children (in costume) were on the rostrum in a cardboard ship (the Mayflower), crafted by Cory. Addie Yaney, Ames Eliason, and Vivian Yaney played the part of pilgrims. Laurel Yaney, Bryer & Briggs Eliason played the part of Indians.



The children then sang, "God Is So Good," "If You're Thankful and You Know It," and "Oh, I Love America." A reading was done by Val Bradley and the congregation sang, "America the Beautiful." The older children then took part in a skit depicting a family at home on Thanksgiving night. Kelli Williams played the Mom, Eric Eliason played the Dad, Ava and David Nagy played the daughter and son, and Dayna Harm played a neighbor. Each teen read a different parable from the Bible (Prodigal Son, 10 Lepers, the Widow's Mite) and then the family discussed what they meant and what true thankfulness is about. They sang

"Amazing Grace" along with Kelli Williams. Then each of the children shared what they were thankful for. Cory Eliason read Abraham Lincoln's Thanksgiving Proclamation in her closing remarks. The congregation sang, "Come Ye Thankful People Come," and Kelli gave the closing prayer.

In November members of our branch had the honor of donating a wide variety of items and gifts to our military men and women. Wendy Holmes and Elaine King dropped the donations off at the Masonic Temple in Romeo where many gathered on November 18 to assist in packing all items and preparing them to be sent to deployed service members.

During the holidays we were also able to offer our support and donate funds to a single Mom and her children living in our Algonac community, to help them get back on their feet again.

Sunday, November 26, was a very special day for our congregation. It started with our 11:00 service. The Eliason brothers brought the special music. They sang a song about Nephi. Elder Gary Holmes gave a sermon on the various ordinances of the church, in particular, the laying on of hands. He explained that an ordinance is a law, statute, and that we are commanded to observe the ordinances. They are permanent, eternal, and can't be altered or done away with. He cited many Scripture verses. His sermon was a very good lead in to the service that would take place later in the day. Afterwards, we shared in a pot luck meal and fellowship. That afternoon our members

(along with others from the Pt. Huron and Sanilac branches) were pleased to be able to share in the Baptismal/Confirmation service of Briggs and Bryer Eliason. Elder Todd Moses brought the welcome and call to worship and the congregation sang a number of hymns. The Charge to the Candidates was brought by the boys' grandfather, Elder Don Cutshall. Bryer was baptized by his Dad, Elder Eric Eliason and Briggs was baptized by his uncle, Priest Clayton Cutshall. Elder Todd Yaney then gave the Charge to the Congregation. The Moses Trio (Todd, Liz & Bethany) brought the Ministry of Music. Bryer was confirmed by Elder Eric Eliason, assisted by Elder Don Cutshall. Briggs was confirmed by Elder Barent Eliason, assisted by Elder Don Cutshall. The benediction was brought by Elder Barent Eliason. We thank the Pt. Huron/Sarnia branch for the use of their sanctuary. We were honored to share this special day with the Eliason family. We are proud of Briggs and Bryer and the commitment they made. We welcome them into our Algonac church family and will keep them in our prayers as they continue in their walk with the Lord.

On Wednesday, Nov. 29, we met at the church early to decorate for Christmas. Afterwards we had our women's and men's meetings, then met in the fellowship hall for snacks and visiting. It happened to be Hod and Nina's 65th wedding anniversary, so we had delicious cake and ice cream in their honor and congratulated them on their wonderful milestone! We are thankful they are a part of our church family, and they are such an inspiration to all! May the Lord

continue to bless them, as they have blessed the lives of so many others.

Our annual Christmas Bazaar and Bake Sale, organized by Wendy Holmes and Elaine King, was held at our Branch on December 1st and 2nd. As always, the fellowship hall was decorated in holiday style and all set up and ready to go by the start of the sale on Friday. Wendy and Elaine would like to thank Kelli Williams, Tim Holmes, Marilyn Canham, and Sheila Carter (Aunt of Wendy's granddaughter, Lexi) for helping to set everything up. It is a lot of work and their assistance was much appreciated. They'd also like to thank Marilyn Canham, Connie Burns and Val Bradley for working at the sale. Of course, many thanks to all the Algonac ladies who donated clothes and household items, as well as a myriad of home-baked goodies. As always, those went quickly, especially the annual favorites: Nina's pineapple upside down cake and Elaine Harm's whoopie pies! We had a lot of newcomers, as well as the "regulars" who come year after year. There are always a lot of good stories to share about the customers and we were able to help many of them out who were in need of clothing for themselves, family members or friends. Wendy reported that the men's suits that were left over from the sale were donated to the Huron House in Port Huron. This is a halfway house for men that have been in trouble in the past and are trying to get back into the job market and get their lives straightened out. They were so appreciative and we enjoy serving the community in this manner. This event was very successful ...

we had the most items to offer and took in more money this year than any of the previous years. The best part however, is making our presence known in the community and sharing God's love with others. What a blessing! A big thanks to our Community Outreach Coordinators, Wendy and Elaine, for all their hard work in organizing this event and ensuring it all ran smoothly!



On Friday, December 15, the Algonac saints met for a Christmas dinner celebration at Dimitri's restaurant in New Baltimore. As always, the ladies did a gift exchange. We enjoy giving to each other and it's fun discovering which sister our special gift came from. Our Women's Leader, Nina Powers, gave each of the ladies a cross tealight holder and the men each received the booklet, "Finding Peace at Christmas." To show our appreciation for all she does, the ladies gave our sister Nina a gift card to one of her favorite stores. We had a great turnout, delicious food, and wonderful fellowship with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

On Saturday, December 16, a practice was held at church for the Children's Christmas program. Kelli Williams, Todd Moses, and Eric Eliason made sure the stage

props were all set for the following day. The children practiced their lines for a while, then took a break for a snack and a party, where they were given Christmas gifts from Kelli. They also made a craft (tree ornaments) in the fellowship hall, with the assistance of Tina Yaney. They practiced a few more times, then went to Subway and enjoyed lunch together before heading home. It was a fun day for all who attended.

Our Children's Christmas Program, directed by Kelli Williams, took place at 10 a.m. on December 17. She welcomed the congregation, and Nina Powers gave the opening prayer. The children took part in a skit entitled, "The True Meaning of Christmas." There were two different store fronts set up on the rostrum. The opening scene took place with our older youth (Ava Nagy, Dayna Harm, David Nagy) looking into a modern store front with all kinds of toys displayed. They talked about how attracted they were to all the "stuff" and what they'd like to buy. Then they heard music coming from the shop next door, which was called "Blessings Boutique." (Bethany Moses singing "Mary Did You Know?") The teens walked over to that store front and saw a manger in the window. They were bored at first, but then decided to sit on a bench to watch and see what was going on. Scriptures about Christ's birth were read by the narrator, Val Bradley, while the younger children reenacted the Christmas story. (Mary was played by Laurel Yaney, Joseph was played by Briggs Eliason, the angels were played by Addie, Vivian, and Nichole Yaney, Ames

Eliason played a shepherd, and Bryer Eliason played a Wiseman.) In between the Scripture readings, hymns were sung by Todd Moses, Bethany, the youth choir, children's choir, and the congregation.



After the Christmas story was portrayed, the teens stated how much they enjoyed it, and it helped them to remember that Christmas is not all about Santa, the bright lights, and the toys. They all agreed that they could live without all the “stuff,” but they couldn't live without Jesus. What a great lesson for us all! A big thank you to Kelli for organizing and directing the program, to Todd Moses, our pianist and music coordinator, and for the assistance of Cory Eliason and Amy Nagy. Thanks also to Eric for making the store fronts, and to Kelli for the great stage props. Last, but not least, we thank the children for their hard work and for doing such a great job! We are thankful to the Lord for the youth in our congregation and appreciate the ministry they bring.



On Wednesday, December 27, we had a candlelight service to close out the Christmas season and welcome in the new year. Elder Todd Moses gave the opening prayer. Our pastor, Elder Gary Holmes shared the story of Christ's birth through various Scripture readings from Isaiah, Luke, and Matthew. Gary sang “What Child is This” accompanied on his guitar, and the congregation sang many of our Christmas hymns. After the reading of Scriptures, we all lit our candles while Todd Moses read the children's storybook, “Candle in the Window” by Grace Johnson. It was a modern-day retelling of the message in Matthew 25:36-41 (“... inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me”). Elder Hod Powers gave the closing prayer. We always look forward to this service and it gives us a chance to once again ponder the wondrous miracle of Christ's birth that we just celebrated.

On Sunday, January 14, our Sunday School Director, Kelli Williams, was in charge of the Children's Promotion ceremony. The congregation sang “We Take These Children in our Arms.” Kelli read a poem, “Preparation.” She recognized each child for their completion of one class and their promotion into the next class. Primary students Briggs Eliason, Laurel Yaney, and Bryer Eliason were presented with Certificates of Recognition (and a little treat from Kelli) as they have been promoted into the Junior High class. Primary teachers Kelli and Cory Eliason said a few words of thanks to their students and wished them well as they moved

on. Kelli did a reading, "God's Greatest Gift." Junior High students Ava Nagy, Daynna Harm, and David Nagy were presented with Certificates of Recognition as they will now enter into the Senior High class. Junior High teachers Nina Powers and Val Bradley stated their appreciation for having them in their class. Bethany Moses was recognized for completing the Senior High class, taught by Eric Eliason. She will now be a part of the Adult class (whenever she's in town!). We are so proud of all our youth and happy they are a part of our Algonac church family! We are thankful for all Kelli does as our Sunday School Director, the time and preparation of our teachers, our students, and especially appreciate the parent's support in bringing them to Sunday School.

In January our Branch implemented the Junior Church program for children from ages 5 through 18. It will take place at 11:00 a.m., the 3rd Sunday of each month and will be taught by Cory and Eric Eliason. They will be reviewing Bible stories, learning the books of the Bible and Book of Mormon, learning the six principles of the gospel, the armor of God and Levi's vision. The first part of the program will be conducted like a church service, with a hymn, prayer, offering and short prayer service for those the children in attendance have mentioned to pray for. Then there will be a lesson and games for review, and a craft. The first one took place on January 21. There was a good turnout, and the children seem excited and eager to learn. This is an excellent way to bring ministry to our children. We are grateful to Eric and Cory

for taking this on and pray the Lord will bless the children through this ministry.

News & Notes:

In January our annual home ministry program was started up again by Elders Eric Eliason and Todd Moses. It is their desire to visit and bring ministry to each and every one of our saints. By going into the homes, the priesthood are able to get to know the members better and learn of their needs, desires, and concerns. Thus, they are better prepared to shepherd and care for the flock, as they've been instructed to do. Our prayers are with them as they meet with each family.

The beginning of January Todd Moses presented our congregation with a "House of Blessings" initiative. He placed a glass "house" on a table in our fellowship hall and provided blank cards for our members to fill out. We've been encouraged to write down the ways in which we have been blessed by our Heavenly Father each week, and place the cards in the blessing house. In the Fall (around the Thanksgiving holiday) the cards will be read as a reminder of the Lord's love and goodness to us.

In October, Bethany Moses was accepted for the Disney College Program to be a Character Performer. Her move in day was February 5th. She is already settling in nicely and reports that her roommates are amazing! She said they are so sweet and almost all of them are Christian, as well. She will be working at Epcot, but doesn't know yet who she'll be FRIENDS with (what character) or where in the park she will be. She

stated, "I am very excited for this incredible 6-month opportunity. Thanks for all the love, prayers and support over the years!" We are very happy for her. We will miss her and our thoughts and prayers will be with her as she embarks on this exciting new venture! If you would like to stay in touch with her, her mailing address is:

Bethany Moses
Vista Way Apartments
13501 Meadow Creek Drive
Apt. #3107
Orlando, FL 32821

After 7 months of undergoing physical therapy at The Regency Nursing Home, we are thrilled to report that Marge Holmes is back home again! We are so happy for her and Gary, and continue to pray for good health, strength, and energy for both of them.

Our sister Elaine Harm had to postpone her annual trek to Florida this winter due to skin cancer. She has been undergoing a series of surgeries to remove tumors on her forehead, followed by a skin graft procedure. She is doing well, but is still in need of prayers for a complete healing. As soon as she gets approval from the doctors, she will be headed to her place in Florida to rest, relax, and renew for the remainder of the winter. She will be missed!

Prayers would be appreciated for Tim and Wendy Holmes, Dick & Connie Burns, Elaine King, Kelli Williams, Ray Moses, Elaine Harm, Jim Bradley, Gary & Marge Holmes, Nina Powers, Bruce and Barb Krinkie. We are keeping you and your congregations in our prayers, as well.

Garden City



By: Kurt & Susan Fishwild

Guest Ministers - Many thanks to our guest ministers over the past few months – Elder Shaun Turner from Oakwood Branch in December and Elder Brian Daggett from Port Huron Branch in January. We appreciate these men visiting our congregation to bring ministry. We enjoyed sharing fellowship with their families also.

Prayers – Our Garden City Prayer List is posted monthly on our website which is gardencityrestorationbranch.org. Please pray for those listed.

Sunday School– Our branch is excited to have three children starting a pre-baptismal class taught by Elder Carl McKiddie. We would appreciate prayers for these young children.

Business Meetings – In January two business meetings were held. The first meeting was for the election of officers. Elder Jeff Stoker will continue as our pastor for this year. Our second business meeting was to review our branch's finances. Even though we are a fairly small group, we were blessed to have a surplus in 2017.

Upcoming Activity - Book of Mormon Day Review (Saturday, March 10 from 10:00 to 4:00)

Younger Youth Retreat – Nov. 17-19 (Submitted by Betty Lou Newman)

The youth at the Younger Youth Retreat took off on an adventure on

Friday evening that lasted the weekend. It was an exciting trip with other young people who were on a quest – “The Kingdom Quest”. Elders Rex Monarch and Fred Brown Jr. helped them climb the Mountain of Faith, descend into the Valley of Repentance, and plunge into the Lake of Baptism in search of God’s salvation. Now comes the struggle along the narrow Path of Endurance. It is an adventure of a life time and one must always beware of “Dee Seever”.

Thank you to the CITs for their kitchen assistance as potato peelers (yummy mashed potatoes), apple peelers (delicious apple crisp) and dishwashers/dryers (clean dishes for every meal).

There were the “always messy and gooey” but “yummy to eat” s’mores for all ages as they gathered ‘round the fire at Port Huron. The CITs directed the songs of action and laughter followed by the quieter, more serious songs to prepare for the closing message and prayer.

Campers again enjoyed the Scripture Belt Activity. As they searched the scriptures and fulfilled the requirements of each level, another belt was added to their bookmark. To earn a black belt, you must be able to say or sing the books of the O.T., N.T., and Book of Mormon in order.

“Village in The Sun” was written by Madelyn Galbraith to introduce the Book of Mormon. This was the church novel that the CITs used for reading and discussing at the Fall retreat.

See you at the Spring Retreat at Port Huron!

Christmas Program (Submitted by Betty Lou Newman)

All generations joined together to present “The Christmas Account” in scripture and song. On December 24,

our little angel greeted us with the news that “Jesus is born”. Then the Christmas account, which was blended from the gospels, was read by the adults and youth. Woven between those verses were the corresponding Christmas carols that we enjoy singing.

At the close of the presentation, each youth was presented with a book which was first read for everyone to see and hear. The book is called “The Parable of the Pine Tree”. Small poinsettias were also given to the youth while the adults received a larger one to take home and enjoy for the week. “Go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born”.

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

Please note that the Windsor (Essex County) group continues to meet one Sunday a month in Windsor, Ontario. The services are generally held the first Sunday of the month. Services are held at 6:00 p.m. The church facility that is used is approximately 20 minutes from the Ambassador Bridge. This small group is always looking for guest ministers. Please contact Elder Kurt Fishwild (519) 978-3621 or (519)796-6198 if you are available to provide preaching ministry.

Oakwood



By: Kathleen Modders

RENOVATIONS: The church is repainted, the carpet has been replaced, the pews have been upgraded, new curtains in front of the

baptismal fount have been hung, and now we are replacing the blue hymnal books with the new Purple hymnal books. It's like a new church! It all looks beautiful.

The Congregation collected money for five families for Thanksgiving and Christmas. The families were very grateful and it helped feed them through Thanksgiving and Christmas.

In November for Thanksgiving, after service, Kathleen & Mike Modders with the help of their kids, Joshua, Mallory and Jonathon, cooked a Thanksgiving dinner for the congregation. Turkey & ham, stuffing, mashed potatoes and gravy, veggies, rolls, ham rolls and relish & veggie tray, they even had pumpkin, apple and cherry pie! It was a great meal with wonderful fellowship with all the saints.

December 9 was a fun packed day for the women of Oakwood. About 37 ladies and young ladies participated in our annual Oakwood Women's Christmas party. We started the day with a worship service with the theme "In Mary's Shoes." Kathi Havener, Kim Gilchrist, Dawn Modders, Deana Smith, and Kathleen Modders each gave a short talk about living in Mary's shoes. Each woman brought their favorite appetizer and recipe to share, and Kathi Havener made a big pot of chicken tortilla soup. We also had a cupcake bar for dessert where everyone could choose their favorite frosting and sprinkles! Later we played games, and Chrissy Vandenberg, Wendy Nagy, and Reese Nagy and Raven Franks all got dressed up to be dates for Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer, complete with pantyhose antlers! It was so much fun cheering them on! We divided up into 4 groups and dressed each

reindeer! It was so "Deer" LOL! We ended the day with a white elephant gift exchange. It was a wonderful day filled with the Good Spirit, fellowship, and lots of laughs!

Our women's study group have been reading/ discussing scripture in the books of Ruth and Esther. We're asking "What's God's message to us?"

Our Christmas Program this year was a one man show. Elder Jay Havener dressed up like a shepherd and recited to us: A Shepherd's perspective, by "Jacob the Shepherd"! Where are you little one? I hear ya! It's a nice clear night. Been a Shepherd all my life. Fathers made a good life being a Shepherd, out among God's creation. Taking care of a flock of sheep that needs him. We're low on the social order, but that's okay. Not everybody can be a Shepherd. I like to look at the sky. So many years ago, I witnessed such a wonderful thing. I was 10 years old. I convinced my father to help watch the flocks. My dad, brothers, cousins, heard such wonderful stories, maybe it would drive away some. The cane, the curve is to take care of the lambs. It's a weapon to hit the wolves. Also, for finding the lost sheep. Shepherds go wherever the lambs go. We'd lay our life down for our lambs. It's a special flock. Not too far away is a little town Bethlehem. We've been here for hundreds of years. First time I went with my dad, I watched my dad on a rock. Every time I looked at my dad he was watching me. Whistle we'll come! He didn't think I could handle myself. I went back to our fire we called it a cove. That's where we would have our meals. It was during one of these shifts when all of a sudden it was the strangest commotion. It was about midnight. All of a sudden it was light as day. I could hear my father and

family had their staffs, trying to find out what was going on. Then standing before us all, was a heavenly being. An angel, he supposed. We backed away; because even as he stood the heavens opened up and as far as we could see. There were more, and the glory was all around us. And we were taught that you cannot behold the Glory of God if you were not perfect. And we knew we weren't perfect. And we thought that God would somehow smite us. But then the angel spoke to us. He said behold I bring you tidings of great joy. For in the city in a manger, the Christ child is born, the savior to all men! And then the angel left and we were left to talk among ourselves about this wonderful thing, because that spirit had developed, was still amongst us and we wondered what to do; because the angel told us to go and see. You don't say no to angel! How would we go and see? We couldn't leave our sheep, shepherds don't do that. Then finally we decided we'll go see him. We'll take our sheep with us. We must have been a spectacle with a bunch of sleepy eyed sheep who were just as confused as we were. Probably more so, they didn't understand the angel, but here we're are going through the streets of Bethlehem to find this place where Jesus, the savior lay. We found him! Ya know I often wonder what people thought when we passed by, because our sheep were anything but quiet. They were making all kinds of racket! Their bells were going, but we found the baby Jesus just where the angel said he would be. To stand in the presence of that little baby, knowing that he was the Savior, the King of Kings, the all mighty God! Wonderful Counselor. All of those things we have been told from a young age up. That the prophet Isaiah had taught. We were awe struck. I can't imagine what Joseph and Mary thought! Bunch of shepherds showing up, with a large

flock of sheep. But they received us. As a matter of fact, they asked us why we were there. And we told them of our experience about the angel coming. And as we were telling, a smile started to form on the corners of Mary's mouth. And she kept quiet, but she had this little smile. Well after a while it seemed like we were there for a couple of hours, but it was probably only a few minutes. We left and went back to the fields but the discussion was "What do we do about the rest of the story the angel told us? To go and tell everyone." We couldn't all go. We drew straws. Unfortunately, I had to stay with the sheep, with my cousins. My father and his brothers went, and started to share the story around and about. I asked Dad about that later. He said people kind of looked at us oddly. What do shepherds know about such things? But we witnessed and told them. "But didn't it excite them?" I asked. "Well some, others not so much." He said there was one particular man by the name of Simeon who was pretty interested in this little baby. He received us. He had us tell our story over and over about our encounter out in the field. Well these years have come and gone and they have passed by and I often wondered; why a Shepherd? Why were we the ones that the angel come to? Well, I suppose in the order of shepherds were probably the most favored. I don't know if that's the word we want to use. But the flock we took care of was special. It's where the lambs came from that they sacrificed in the temple. Over yonder, not too far, there's a tower called the tower of the flock. Been there for thousands and thousands of years. My father, Jacob, build it for a memorial to his wife, who passed. But, it's the place where we take our ewes when they're pregnant. There is good shelter there; and always has clean bedding. And we

take our pregnant ewes there. And that's where they have their little lambs. We take special care of those little lambs. First of all, we inspect them when they come out, to see if they are unblemished. If they are we wrap them up keep them clean and pure. We allow them to nurse their mother. But then the temple priests will come at some time, and they will look over these little lambs, and they will choose one to take for a sacrifice. We're the only shepherds that watch over this flock. And my family has been watching this flock for hundreds of years. We take our job seriously! We don't go to the temple and see the sacrifice. No, were too common for that. But it gives us a good feeling to know that were doing something to remember our God. And to remember that he brought us out of captivity many, many times. It's nice to know that us lowly shepherds can help commemorate these things. We do our praying. We do our fasting. But we do it quietly, and we do it reverently. We do it where nobody sees us, because who's out in the fields with us? No one! Just us and our sheep. But as we are able to do that, it gives us warmth to know that as our Lord grew, and when he went to the temple, and he participated in those rites; that our lambs were the lambs that he saw there. We see him wander through from time to time. And he always stops and talks to us. Such a marvelous person, Jesus Christ! He's so kind and loving, and he treats us as if we were kings of the world. We know that we're not perfect, He knows we're not perfect. But ya know what, he doesn't judge us. He simply tells us to just try and do better in your life. Take care of these lambs; they are important. Why did he say that? Well, I remember hearing when Jesus started his ministry. He went to be baptized, and as he walked to the river Jordon, John said behold the

lamb of GOD! Now when I was told that story, I wondered about that. The lamb of God! Our lambs were lambs of God. And our lambs were sacrificed. Would this Jesus be sacrificed? Because when they talked about lambs, they were talking about the purity of them. It wasn't just your run of the mill lambs. They talked in terms of pureness, of unblemished. And if there was ever a person without blemish, it was Jesus Christ. We could tell that, even when we looked upon him in the manger. He was a perfect child. He was a holy child. So, we look about us this time of year, look up at the sky, and we remember that time; when the angel stood before us. My father and his brothers are long gone, now. But I just, sometimes, in the quietness in the night, as I look at the night, this time of year, almost can hear a chorus of the angels singing "Glory to God in the highest! Peace on earth and good will to men!" And when he said men, when he spoke to us, we were men, we weren't shepherds, we were just as special as the priests in the temple in his eyes! Each of us are just as if we were his only friend. Each of us was blessed by his presence, and the joy we have when we think about the good shepherd, Jesus Christ. He called himself the good shepherd. And that makes us feel really good. Ya know Moses was a shepherd. Aaron, Joshua, there's been some pretty important shepherds in the history of our people. And I guess Jesus saw that in us, when he stopped and he talked to us. And he says I am the good shepherd. My sheep hear my voice. Just like our sheep here. You can holler and call for those sheep until you're blue in the face and they're not going to pay any attention to you. But they'll hear my voice. Why? Because they know that I'm there to look out for them, and I care for them. And I care for them sometimes, more than my fellow

man. We're a strange lot, us shepherds, cause sometimes our sheep are the only friends we have out here. And we talk to them like I'm talking to you. They all have names. And they all know our voices and when they hear our voices. They find comfort, and peace. And when I hear the voice of Jesus Christ, I find that same comfort, and that same peace. He's a good shepherd. The Shepherd! He's the shepherd I would like to be someday. Well, I probably should get back to my flock. Those little lambs are pretty skittish tonight. I don't think there is anything out there. I've been keeping an eye on the shadows. I don't have a sense of any immediate danger, but, maybe it's just this night, the same sort of night that happened so many years ago, when I was just 10 years old. When I stood at a manger. I could just barely peak over and I saw a little babe, and somehow knew that this little babe was just like my little lambs. Without any blemishes, and I guess maybe, I knew even then that he was going to be a sacrificial lamb. I've taken up a lot of your time. Got to get back to my flock.

Christmas eve service Elder Fred Brown Jr. shared a lesson from Paul Harvey, he was a voice on the radio some time ago. The man whom I'm going to introduce you to was not a scrooge. He was a kind, decent, mostly good man. Generous to his family, kind and generous to his fellow man, but he just didn't believe all that incarnation stuff, which the churches proclaimed at Christmas time. It just didn't make sense, and he was too honest to pretend otherwise. He just couldn't follow the Jesus Story. About God coming to earth as a man. "I'm truly sorry to distress you." He told his wife. "But I'm not going with you to church this Christmas Eve." He said he'd feel like a hypocrite. He said he'd much rather stay at home but

that he would wait up for them. So, he stayed and they went to the midnight service. Shortly after the family drove away in the car. Snow began to fall. He went to the window to watch the flurries getting heavier and heavier, then went back to his fire side chair; and began to read his newspaper. Minutes later he was startled by a thudding sound. Then another and then another. Sort of a thump or a thud. At first, he thought that someone must have been throwing snowballs against his living room window. But when he went to the door to investigate he found a flock of birds huddled in the snow. They'd been caught in the storm, and in a desperate search for shelter, they had tried to fly through his large landscape window. Well he couldn't let the poor creatures lie there and freeze and he remembered the barn where his children stabled their pony. That would provide a good source of shelter if he could lead the birds to it. Quickly he put on a coat, galoshes and tramped through the deepening snow and went out to the barn. He opened the doors wide and turned on a light. But the birds did not come in. He figured food would entice them in. So, he hurried back to the house, fetched breadcrumbs, sprinkled them on the snow, making a trail to the wide open yellow lighted doorway of the stable. But to his dismay, the birds ignored the breadcrumbs, and continued to flap around helplessly in the snow. He tried to catch them. He tried shoo-ing them into the barn by walking around waving his arms. Instead they scattered in every direction except into the warm lighted barn. And then he realized that they were afraid of him. To them, he reasoned, I am a strange and terrifying creature. If only I can think of some way to let them know they can trust me. That I am not trying to hurt them, but to help them. But how? Cause every

move he made tended to frighten them, confuse them, they just would not follow. They would not be led or shooed because they feared him. If only I could be a bird he thought to himself. And mingle with them and speak their language. Then I can tell them not to be afraid. Then I can show them the way to the safe warm barn. But I would have to be one of them so they could see and hear and understand. At that moment the church bells began to ring. The sounds reached his ears above the sound of the wind. And he stood there listening to the bells, listening to the glad tidings of Christmas. And he sank to his knees in the snow. Sister Deanna Smith sang Oh' Holy Night and Elder Mick Ruch sang Mary Did You Know.

In December: Oakwood had Safe Night New Year's Eve Party. Kathleen and Mike put together a game night and pizza party. There was a movie playing, there was canasta, Euchre and other fun games. Elder Jay Havener gave a toast to bring us in to the New Year (sparkling grape juice!). It was a great night had by all. And none of us made it to the new year!!! We were all cleaned up by 11pm!

**Upcoming Birthdays:
 03/04 Jamie Moore, 03/06 Brandon Embree, 03/10 Heather Mervyn, 03/14 Chet Slagor, 03/18 Cody Ruch, 03/20 Lilly Konkle, 03/25 Derrick Embree, 03/28 Beth Everhart, 03/29 Jamie Modders, 03/29 Cheryl Slagor, 04/01 Michael Ruch, 04/03 Gloria Smith, 04/08 Emma Turner, 04/09 Christina Mervyn, 04/26 Morgan Bean, 04/29 Andrew Konkle, 04/14 Dennis Smith, 04/14 Rebecca Servin, 04/15 David Mueller, 04/17 Gustavo Servin, 04/17 Samantha Servin, 04/18 Chris Vandenberg, 04/20 Chris Nagy, 04/24 Jackson Nagy, 04/26 Rebecca MacDonald, 05/06 Jay Havener, 05/12**

Mary Richards, 05/13 Noame Holcomb, 05/15 John Stokes, 05/22 Mike Danicki, 05/27 Eric Slagor

Port Huron-Sarnia Branch



By: Sharon Smerer

**Greetings Saints:
 Happy New Year to All!**

To start off this 2018 year we want to let everyone know that Elder John(Jack) Tynan is doing so much better, that he isn't using his canes, to assist his walking. That is an answer to many prayers. Also, Terry Fagan had his other hip surgery and he too, is doing great. Many prayers went out for Terry and his family. GOD, is an awesome GOD!!

I would like to make a correction. On the last issue I stated that Priest Bernard Pearl was at the Romeo Nursing Home. It should have read, Elder Bernard Pearl. I want to thank Bernard for correcting me. He is driving again and we are thankful for his participation in our Sunday School Adult Class.

We would solicit your prayers for Bob Harris, his cancer is back and is in his kidneys. He is fighting courageously. Larry Scheffler is in remission with his cancer and it was great to see him out at the Children's Christmas Program. Prayers are our only way we can talk to God for others, who are in need of prayers.

I asked Andrew Kercher how the progress was going with getting medals for the family of Sgt. Shepard. He told me, "We are still trying to move things along without federal level legislators. The Army Board of Review will also have to take a look at things. He thinks this will wind up being a pretty long and involved process, so we'll see how it goes."

Carrie Britz works for Cutting Edge Health and Fitness in Wadhams, Mi. Carrie is now a Personal Trainer. If anyone is interested in seeking moves, I'm sure Carrie can help you or she can direct you to the right exercise program. Your church family is proud of your accomplishment. Carrie is the wife of Jason Britz and the daughter of John and Barbara Tynan.

Gillian Bolt was in another play, "Noises Off," which, was held Nov. 3 and Nov. 4, 2017, at the Citadel Stage. A crafted comedy, with every line and movement perfectly designed to culminate in a huge disaster! Gillian is the daughter of Scott and Amy Bolt and the granddaughter of John and Barbara Tynan.

November 4, the Marysville High School Viking Regiment Band march off the field after a run-through of their show, "The Bells of Christmas," on Friday. The band is competing on Saturday at the Michigan Competing Band Association State Championship at Ford Field in Detroit, Mi., and Lydia DeBell was a freshman helper for the Viking Regiment. They came in fourth place in the State. Lydia is the daughter of Jim and Marnie DeBell.

November 11, anyone knowing Mona Maxwell was invited to her 95th

birthday celebration held at the Community of Christ Church on Lapeer Rd., Kimball, MI from 2 pm - 4 pm.

November 12 was our scheduled Business Meeting for the Budget and Election of Officers.

November 16 was our last luncheon with the ladies for 2017. We met at Cheap Charlie's and Sherry and Maggie gave us a small bag of goodies for Christmas.

We want to thank them both for their thoughtfulness. See you ladies in the Spring.

November 17 - 19, Port Huron Restoration Branch hosted the Younger Youth Retreat. The Theme was, "Kingdom Quest," for grades 3 - 8 and Betty Lou Newman was the Director, with help from many other people who were teachers and CIT's.

Some of you may have inquired about Neil Steede's health. After he and David Brown were here in October for the Book of Mormon Day, we were told that Neil had another stroke. Neil's wife, Trudy, called for Elrey Goheen to administer to Neil, with the "Laying on of Hands," and then she phoned for an ambulance. He was then transported to Truman West Hospital. He was in and out of consciousness and not really knowing where he was at. By the end of the first day they checked all the signs for a stroke, and they found no signs of a stroke were present. He says, the doctors were hoping to find some Mexican germs. But, alas, none of these were found either. Thus, ends day three. He was released on day four with a clean bill of health. Neil says, he believes the prayer from Elrey and prayers from the Saints, on his behalf, resulted in a Father's blessing.

November 26, our church hosted the baptism and confirmation of Briggs and Bryer Eliason, twin sons of Eric and Cory Eliason. It was a very nice service where Cory's father did the Charge to the Candidates. Cory's brother, the boys Uncle, Priest Clayton Cutshall took part in the invocation and baptizing of Briggs, and Elder Eric Eliason, father baptized Bryer. Charge to the congregation was done by Elder Todd Yaney. Music was performed by Todd, Liz and Bethany Moses. Todd Moses, did the Welcome and the Call to Worship. The congregation sang, Hymn 11, "O, Jesus the Giver of All We Enjoy," Hymn of Baptism was Hymn 418, "Prayer of Consecration," and the confirmation of Briggs was done by Elder Barent Eliason and assisted by Elder Don Cutshall and the confirmation of Bryer was done by Elder Eric Eliason and assisted by Elder Don Cutshall. The closing Hymn was Hymn 330, "O Jesus I Have Promised," and Elder Barent Eliason did the benediction. A wonderful day and a Day of Remembrance for Briggs and Bryer. So glad Eric and Cory, we could assist and accommodate, thank you for a wonderful day.

November 27, Betty Milett is a sixth-grade student at Brown City Upper Elementary. Betty was nominated by the BCES Librarian, Ruth Kuhlman who said, "Betty is one of my exceptional helpers in the library in the morning. When she walks in the room her friendliness beams and she is ready to work with her classmates to pull the library together for the day. Her talented art work for our Star Wars theme is an asset to the library this year." Betty is the daughter of Joe and Jennifer Milett and granddaughter of John and Connie DeBell.

December 7, our church hosted the Christmas party for the Blue Water League of the Blind. They had a potluck, and the Chicken was furnished by the Blue Water League of the Blind. They had a raffle to give away presents to all that was present. They also had Phil Larson that did the entertainment. Good food and fellowship had by all. A thank you to one of the ladies who for the past two years, has made cookies for the children of our Branch for their Christmas program. Thank you, the children and the adults liked them also.

December 17 was the Christmas Program with the children doing scripture readings and several of the children playing instruments. They all did a fine job reading and playing. Thank you goes not only to the children but also to: Christina Kercher and Jennifer Milett, Sherry Purcell, Joe Milett and the Bolt family and Elders John DeBell and Ron Giles for doing the prayers. Sherry presented the presiding Elder, Ed Smerer and his wife, Sharon with a lovely card with a couple of gift cards. Our thanks for your thoughtfulness and we pray you all had a very Merry Christmas and a healthy and blessed New Year. Everyone don't forget the Christmas cookies and candies a lady from the Blue Water League of the Blind donated. Yummy good!!

December 18, Betty Milett along with 18 other fellow students from Brown City Schools, won County awards in this year's First Impressions Competition. The annual contest is sponsored by the Sanilac County Talent Development Consortium and is held at the Career Center. Students from all seven Sanilac County school districts competed in categories

including poetry, non-fiction, fiction, artistic poster, video clip and photography. The theme for this year's competition was "Seasons." Betty is the daughter of Joe and Jennifer Milett and the granddaughter of John and Connie DeBell.

Our church family will be donating money to help children who are transitioning out of the foster care system. If you would be interested in making a donation or a donation of much needed items such as toiletries, or hygiene products, please see Amy Bolt or Marnie DeBell.

At our Christmas Eve morning service, we had all the Bolt Family, Bruce Reid, Sue Fagan and Carrie Britz enlightening the congregation with singing and playing of Christmas music. It was beautiful, just like the first Hymn the congregation sang, which was Hymn #107, "Angels We Have Heard on High."

We pray that all the Restoration Branches had a Merry Christmas and that your New Year will be Healthy and Prosperous.

There was no meeting of the group, NarAnon for December 25 or January 1. They met again at our Branch on January 8, 2018. Any questions can be referred to Charlene Burgett at 810-334-4867 or Marion at 810-887-7579.

The Congregation would like to express our gratitude to Jim and Donna Doan for their donation to our Branch in honor of their son Glenn's birthday. God bless you both!

Starlites dance team traveled to the Ameridance Buckeye Open Dance Nationals in Columbus, Ohio. The

Starlites youth team, Ava Slossar, finished first in the pom and hip-hop divisions. The Starlites Junior team, Allison, Brianna and Abby Slossar, placed first in pom and second in the jazz and lyrical divisions. The Starlites senior team, Adrienne Slossar placed second in the pom, jazz and lyrical divisions while third in hip hop. The senior lyrical team was also awarded an at-large bid to represent Ameridance at Dance Worlds in April. The Slossar girls are granddaughters of Larry and Debbie Sheffler. Great job girls!

Jan. 20, 2018, Elise DeBell started playing the trumpet in the Fifth Grade Band. Owen DeBell plays the flute in the Seventh Grade Band. Lydia DeBell, is a Freshman and plays the saxophone and she received a First division on her solo and second division of her duet at MSBOA solo and ensemble event. Great job, Lydia!

We had a Fellowship Potluck, on January 21, 2018 immediately following the 11:00 a.m. service. It was a soup, salad, sandwich, veggie and dessert Potluck. The lunchmeat and soups were provided. As usual everything was very tasty. Thank you to everyone for good food and fellowship.

[Sanilac](#)



By: Kathleen Palmer

Trust in the Lord with all of your heart. Proverbs 3:5

It has been a good old-fashioned winter this year. Cold and snow. Lots of it and days we want to be by the warm fireplace with a good book in hand.

We all enjoyed a delicious Harvest home dinner on Nov.12th. We do this every fall and enjoy fellowship with one another.

On November 15th, Mary Morris, mother of (Kathleen (Wm) Palmer, grandmother of Debbie (Randy) Des Jardins, great grandmother of Gary and Emma, passed away. She was 97 and had lived a wonderful life. She lived alone on the family farm and drove a car one week prior to her passing. She loved life and always had a smile. She liked to come to church when she could and loved our Mother/Daughter Banquets. Her family was her life. We are left with many special memories.

Barent and Barb Eliason were to leave the end of Nov. for Missouri to be with family and friends for the holidays, but Barents health issues prevented them from going until later to enjoy Christmas with their family and friends.

A business meeting was held in Nov. for election of officers. Elder Eldon Preston was elected as our new pastor. We are very happy to have Eldon and his wife Janel and his mother Donna in our church family. Elder Barent Eliason has been a pastor for 50 years but has health issues which prevent him from continuing as pastor. He has been and will continue to be a dedicated servant of the Lord. His wife, Barb, has been by his side helping and being a big part of his years as pastor. He will continue to preach and be a big part of the church.

We met on Dec.6th to decorate the church for Christmas. We also enjoyed pizza for all our hard work. There were many present to enjoy this time together.

Dec. 10th, we had the Christmas Program with many participating. Denise had the children up front to present, "A Straw filled Christmas". The children were Brian, Brandi, Emma, Avery, Brendon, Sequoia and Paisley. Thank you, Denise, for being in charge of this special Christmas Program. We all enjoyed a delicious potluck dinner after church. Gifts were exchanged and Barent and Barb Eliason were honored for all the years of dedication. They were presented with a wooden Angel. There were notes of appreciation on the angel from everyone. Engraved on the cross was this scripture, "Trust in the Lord with all your Heart." Proverbs 3:5.

Emma Des Jardins played her flute and Sydney Parker her clarinet on Dec. 12th for the 5th grade holiday concert. They both did a great job and the beginning band sounded great!

Barent had to go to the hospital for more tests and the results were surgery for an aorta valve replacement, which has been scheduled for March 1. The Dr. told them they would use a pig valve for a replacement, at which they told the Dr. they would rather have a cow valve, as they had been dairy farmers!!! It took the Dr. by surprise and after a delay, the Dr. began laughing. Oh, these two!!!!!!!!!!!!!! They would appreciate prayers for a successful surgery for Barent.

Gary Des Jardins, son of Randy and Debbie, and Rebecca Bradley, daughter of Jim and Stacey Bradley, are engaged to be married Nov, 3rd of

2018. We wish them many blessings as they prepare for their life together.

Mary Lee Cove needs prayers, as she fractured her neck in a fall. She has to wear a neck brace until April. Also, Bev Miller and her husband are having health issues and need prayers.

Michael Palmer, son of Kathleen and Wm Palmer and brother of Debbie has cancer. We would ask for prayers for him and his family as he takes chemo to battle this disease.

Congratulations to Justin and Aubree Kurtinsky as they moved to their new home in Cass City. Brenden, Sequoia and a new little one, arriving in Sept, will be enjoying their new home. We wish much happiness and may the Lord continue to bless you.

The Lord blesses us with the traveling priesthood who come to our little church to bring inspirational messages to us. Priest Bob Harris, Elder Brian Daggett, Deacon Kerry Horton, Elder Mick(Shawn) Ruch, Elder Gary(Marge) Holmes and Elder Ed McDonald. Thank you.

We are blessed by our own priesthood who feed us the word of God. Elder Barent Eliason(Barb), Elder Jim McLeod(Jean), and Elder Eldon Preston(Janel). Also, to all of those who help out in any way and share their God given talents.

We extend an invitation to all to attend our annual Mother/Daughter Banquet May 5th at noon. The theme this year is, "MEMORIES OF GRANDMA'S PANTRY." I wonder what Grandma could have in that PANTRY !!!! Please join us and find out.

We from Sanilac wish you a very Blessed and Healthy Spring!

Regional Activities for the Next Quarter

**March 10th Saturday, *11 a.m. – 2 p.m.*
Ladies Tea Luncheon & Exchange
Port Huron/Sarnia Restoration Branch**

**April 13 – 15
Younger Youth Retreat
Port Huron/Sarnia Restoration Branch**

**May 5th Saturday, Noon
Mother/Daughter Banquet
Sanilac Restoration Branch
Theme: “Memories of Grandma’s Pantry”**

From the Editor’s Desk - Contact info:

**Jim Bradley
69250 Campground Rd.
Romeo, MI 48065
Email to: zionswatchman@sbcglobal.net**