Celebrating The Incarnation
Who are Seventh Day Baptists?

If you've never read The Sabbath Recorder before, you might be wondering who Seventh Day Baptists are.

Like other Baptists, we believe in:
- salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.
- the Bible as the inspired word of God. The Bible is our authority for our faith and daily conduct.
- baptism of believers, by immersion, testifying to our acceptance of Christ as Savior and Lord.
- freedom of thought under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- the congregational form of church government.

Every church member has the right to participate in the decision-making process of the church.

The seventh day

God commanded that the seventh day (Saturday) be kept holy. Jesus agreed by keeping it as a day of worship. We observe the seventh day of the week (Saturday) as God’s Holy Day as an act of loving obedience—not as a means of salvation. Salvation is the free gift of God through Jesus Christ. It is the joy of the Sabbath that makes SDBs just a little bit different.

If you would like more information, write: The SDB, (608) 752-5055; FAX, (608) 752-7711; E-mail: sdbgen@inwave.com and the Web site: www.seventhdaybaptist.org

Are you wondering what to do next summer?

Are you wanting to serve God?

In the Summer Christian Service Corps you can serve God and get acquainted with some of our fantastic youth. See what it’s like to commit yourself to a challenging experience.

For applications, contact:
Linda Camenga, 209 First Ave.
Daytona Beach, FL 32114
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SCSC@sbwboard.org

Corps member training: June 21-28
Director training: June 19-24
Project dates: June 28-July 29

Scripture Memorization corrections for 2001

Two names from the Daytona Beach, Fla., church were omitted from the list printed in October: June Kenyon and Clara Thompson.

Alan Crouch's name should not have been included.

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Features

Celebrating the Inarnation
by Doreen Sanford Davis
As the door is open, this is the time of year to witness to others about Who that baby "away in the manger" really was.

Building family Advent memories
by Susie Fox
How could a mother of four young boys bridge the gap between "the perfect Christmas" and reality?

He turned the world upside down
by Kevin Butler
A kindergarten student unwittingly becomes the teacher at a school winter pageant.

White Christmas 2001

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Celebrating the Incarnation
by Doreen Sanford Davis

Foreword:
Every Christmas since 1959, Carlton E. Mouse, the Sanford family historian, pens an epistle to the mouses. While the exact identity of the "mouse behind the mouse" remains a mystery, it is no secret that the letters (first called 'The Parsonage Mouse' and later 'The College Street Mouse') have always been popular with kids and kin. Over the years, Carlton has detailed the life and times of the Sanford clan, as told by a discreet mouse in the house. I am very grateful to Carlton, who so lovingly chronicled my life and times of the Parsonage. In the 1960 edition of The Parsonage Mouse, I found the following account:

Little Doreen Michele... our almost three-year-old, is the delight of our lives.... This year's Christmas holds much more meaning for her. She loves to look at the manger scene creche which the family put out again. She kept putting her own little doll in the stable along with Mary, Joseph, the baby, the shepherds, and the wise men.

Each time her mommy took it out, Doreen would become indignant and put it back. Finally she said, "No, Mommy; that's for Baby Jesus to play with. I want it for Him!" She's to be an angel in the Sabbath School Christmas program this year. All have their fingers crossed in the hopes that she will be angelic, as well as look angelic.

The facts of Christ's birth
That year marked the beginning of my Christmas pageant theatrical career. Whether it was typecasting or because I was such an enthusiastic singer, my parts seemed to gravitate to angels or one of the heavenly hosts—although I did play the part of Mary once.

I soaked in the facts surrounding Christ's miraculous birth as the drama unfolded around me each year. I understood as much as my little heart could, although I do remember reciting Isaiah 9:6b: "...and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." The words "Bernie" was so impromptu about were from the movement. For Unto Us a Child Is Born. "And his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." This time I knew what it had to do with the Baby Jesus.

A turning point
The turning point in my relationship with the Incarnate Christ occurred during my junior year at the University of Wisconsin in Eau Claire. The week before Christmas break, the faculty advisor of our Chi Alpha Christian Fellowship led a Bible Study on Philippians 2:1-17. As he announced the study text, I remembered thinking, This is odd. Shouldn't he be reading something from Luke, or Isaiah or something? After all, it is Christmas...

But I obediently turned to the familiar text and, suddenly, the Incarnation words like you mean them! This is the Messiah you are singing about, not the butcher, the baker, the candlestick maker.

The facts of Christ's birth...
nate God was staring me in the face as He never had before.

"Our attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: who being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!” (Philippians 2:5-8).

...but now I see

I was overwhelmed at the enormity of Jesus' sacrifice, which began not in Gethsemane leading to Calvary, but in Nazareth leading to Bethlehem.

After I removed the proverbial "two-by-four" from my cranium, I was able to hear the rest of that quiet "hoo-by-four" variation, but in Nazareth leading to Bethlehem. Not in Gethsemane leading to Calvary, but not in Gethsemane leading to Calvary. Not in Gethsemane leading to Calvary, but in Nazareth leading to Bethlehem. Not in Gethsemane leading to Calvary, but in Nazareth leading to Bethlehem.

Traditions old and new

In the 20 years since this personal "epiphany," I have continued to celebrate the Incarnation in the many traditions of our culture, using various springboards into a deeper relationship with Jesus, God with me.

Sometimes it's a good children's book, like Max Lucado's *The Crippled Lamb*, or a historical novel like Marjorie Holmes' *Tues From Galilee*; pleasurable reading that refreshes my outlook.

This is the time to share

While I find the Incarnation a deeply spiritual and personal subject, I also find that it is most easily shared during the holiday season. The door is already open, so we can witness to others with wild abandon about Who that baby "away in the manger" really was, and what He can do right now to bring them peace, and joy, and everlasting life.

So how will Jesus become more real in the Davis household this year? Since our son is almost three years old, I will leave my collectable white porcelain nativity scene in the box, put out our resin-cast (nonbreakable) set, and leave plenty of room around the Baby Jesus for toy trucks and dinosaurs. Relationships begin early. S

Doreen and David Davis are members of the Seattle (Wash.) Area Seventh Day Baptist Church, and serve as co-chairs of the Tract Council's Sabbath Recorder Committee.

I have continued to celebrate the Incarnation in the many traditions of our culture, using various springboards into a deeper relationship with Jesus, God with me.

"Long ago in the city of Nazareth..." *I lived a young woman named Mary.*... *One day an angel appeared to Mary..."* recited the Wes and Martha Greene family as they demonstrated the 24-part story their family repeats each December.

It was the beginning of the Family Advent Workshop held at the 2001 General Conference sessions in Lindsborg, Kan.

Teenagers from both the Greene family and ours shared their thoughts on Family Advent activities over the past years. All of them agreed that they looked forward to each day's activity especially when they were younger, and now realize how much they have learned from the experience:

I had reached a pinnacle of frustration realizing the huge gap between "the perfect Christmas"—decorations, baking, exchanging gifts and cards, special crafts, caroling, entertaining, and more—and the reality of life with a family of four young boys.

Why a family advent?

Our Family Advent got started about ten years ago just after our fourth child was born. I had reached a pinnacle of frustration realizing the huge gap between "the perfect Christmas"—decorations, baking, exchanging gifts and cards, special crafts, caroling, entertaining, and more—and the reality of life with a family of four boys ages 8, 6, 3, and new baby! And so, I began to think about what I re...
of Christmas Every Day" by Linda Blackerby (Moody Monthly, November 1987) which I had saved a few years before. The author shared how using a family Advent calendar helped them pace their December activities and build family traditions while helping them focus on the Incarnation as well.

"Before" and "after"
What caught my attention was her "before" description of a compulsive, guilt-ridden, frantic pace to get everything done (and done right) until she collapsed in exhaustion once Christmas was over. I felt like that!
Then she shared the "after" description of daily Christ-centered activities throughout the month of December—involving the whole family—that seemed to energize and result in happy memories. I wanted to feel like that!

A new tradition begins
And the rest, as they say, is history. That year, over Thanksgiving, we made a big banner with a collage of different size pockets, and numbered the pockets with glue and glitter to get everything done (and done right) until she collapsed in exhaustion once Christmas was over. I felt like that!
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Variations on Advent

Instead of an Advent Banner, try one of these:

- Envelopes with numbers written on outside
- Small packages for each day
- Paper chain with message written on the paper link—add or take away one link each day
- Repeat a poem or scripture divided into 24 parts—add a new phrase each day
- Family scrapbook to look at and add to
- Large candle that you burn a little each night
- Nativity with 24 objects, adding one each night
- Advent Calendar with windows to open daily

It worked! Teaching and memory building were taking place. It gave us a forum for explaining the Incarnation and how it fits in with all the other traditions and cultural activities that are included in the Christmas season.

Go with what works
We learned that some things work better than others. Twenty minutes is too long to keep the whole family together; ten minutes is about right. Not every night was a success, but more of them were successful than not.
Each year we repeated some favorites and added some new ones. When we missed a night, we either skipped it or did two pockets the next night. Not every night was a success, but more of them were successful than not.

What's in today's pocket?
I had planned activities that we would probably do anyway if we had enough time, but might not take the time to do if we got too busy. Some nights we just had candy or a treat; most nights included a prayer by one or more members of the family.

Instead of just writing the daily message on a piece of paper, try one of these:

- Write a short poem—corny is OK!
- Write the clues on wrapping paper
- Hide bigger object behind a picture, under couches, infrequently used drawers with a clue where to find it
- Write on the back of old Christmas cards
- Putting the clue in a sealed envelope adds to the "suspense"
- Send a clue to your family in the mail

The important thing is to have a regular mechanism for daily activities. The Greens have a tradition based on a story they read several years ago. Each person puts a piece of straw in the manger which represents anonymous good deeds they do for someone else throughout the month of December.

Weekly vs. daily
Someone asked during the Conference workshop.
ence workshop if the same benefits could be realized from having a weekly service using the traditional Advent wreath of five candles. Both families agreed that although a weekly service can be meaningful, having a more frequent reminder and a way to pace our activities daily makes it especially helpful for us.

Where to find information
So what are some examples of activities and where can you get information and ideas? That was the rest of the workshop.

Be sure to use the Bible itself with a weekly service can be meaningful, giving us many fun family times. Having a more frequent reminder and a weekly service can be meaningful, giving us many fun family times.

From ornaments to internet
In the early years, I would try to pick up a new book and box of ornaments for the next year. Ornaments can be used by having each person share a favorite memory, thought, or prayer request as the ornament is hung on the tree.

The Internet opens a wide variety of new sources of information. A search on "Advent" will give you addresses of several on-line Advent calendars filled with activities and information on Christmas traditions around the world. I recently ordered some frankincense and myrrh over the Internet (www.frank-incense.com).

Some of the best sources, however, are your own memories and things you were going to do anyway.

Focusing on God's great plan
Looking back over the past decade, celebrating Family Advent has developed several family traditions, and has been a wonderful teaching opportunity, giving us many fun family times. For weeks, he'd been memorizing songs for his school's "Winter Pageant." I didn't have the heart to tell him I'd be working the night of the production.

Unwilling to miss his shining moment, I spoke with his teacher. She assured me there'd be a dress rehearsal the morning of the presentation and that all parents who couldn't come that evening were welcome to sit in on the rehearsal. Fortunately, Nicholas seemed happy with the compromise.

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Because the public school system had long since stopped referring to the holiday as "Christmas," I didn’t expect anything other than light commercial entertainment—songs of reindeer, Santa Claus, snowflakes, and good cheer. So, when my son's class rose to sing "Christmas Love," I was slightly taken aback by its bold title.

Nicholas was aglow, as were all of his classmates, adorned in fuzzy mittens, red sweaters, and bright snowcaps upon their heads. Those in the front row held up large letters, raising them at the appropriate point in the song to spell out the title. The performance was going smoothly until we noticed that a small, quiet girl in the front row was holding the letter M upside down—totally unaware it appeared as a W. The audience of 1st through 6th graders snickered at this little one's mistake. But she had no idea they were laughing at her, so she stood tall, proudly holding her W. The teachers tried to shush the children, but the laughter continued—until the last letter was raised, and we all saw it together.

A hush came over the audience and eyes began to widen. In that instant, we understood—the reason we were there, why we celebrated the holiday in the first place, why even in the chaos there was a purpose for our festivities. For when the last letter was held high, the message read loud and clear: CHRIST WAS LOVE. I believe He still is.

An unattributed story of the season from the Internet.

He turned the world upside down
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The library is an excellent source of information, although many of the best Christmas books are hard to find during December so you have to think ahead. After-Christmas sales are a great source for picking up new items to pack away for the next year. From ornaments to Internet (www.frank-incense.com).

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White Christmas 2001

Can you help our Missionary Society’s outreach?

• Bicycles for both the women in leadership and the pastors in most of our countries. These bicycles will cost from $200 to $400 depending upon the country. Countries included are: The Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Malawi, Rwanda.
• Medical supplies and medicines are needed for Rwanda, Malawi, The Gambia, the Philippines, and Cameroon.
• School supplies, books and equipment for The Gambia, India, Malawi, and the Philippines.
• Funds to purchase uniforms for the ladies in Malawi and South Africa.
• Funds to purchase uniforms for children attending school in Rwanda, The Gambia, Haiti, and Malawi.
• Sewing supplies and material for Malawi, The Gambia, Ghana, Rwanda, and Nigeria.
• Money to purchase blankets for the refugees and camps in Rwanda and the hospitals in Malawi.
• Bibles and study materials, including The Helping Hand, for our sister Conferences and churches.
• Children’s Bibles in The Gambia, Ghana, Indonesia, and the Philippines.
• Church roofs in Rwanda, Malawi, and the Philippines.
• Funds to help ship boxes of clothing and supplies to different countries. This is expensive and is often done by the Missionary Society, but lately some churches have gathered children’s and baby clothing and shipped directly from their local church. The church group usually pays for shipping but sometimes requests for help are sent to the Missionary Society office.
• Leadership materials and supplies for most of the sister Conferences and churches.
• Keyboards for many churches in our sister Conferences. These will cost between $400 and $800.
• Hymnals for the churches in Guyana and Rwanda.
• Funds to support the literature used in outreach in all of our sister Conferences and churches.
• Computers and printers. These will need to be purchased in the country where they are to be used. The amount of duty taxes are so great that you end up paying almost as much as it costs there anyway. Also, repairs and upgrades are available locally when you purchase in the country. Need five.
• Photocopiers for our churches. Advice, same as the computer. Need over eight.
• Scholarships for Makapwa Bible School (Malawi). $500 per semester.
• Funds for building plots and roofs in Rwanda. $200 to $500. Still need five.

Please send your gifts or questions to the: SDB Missionary Society 119 Main Street Westerly RI 02891 (401) 596-4226 sdbmission@edgenet.net

I asked someone where they wanted to be spiritually and where they thought they were now. They in turn asked me the same question. So here is my response...

Hey, I'm working on it! Actually, I think I'm doing pretty good right now. I suffer occasional setbacks, but that's part of the greater scheme, right? Aiming for the "higher plane," or whatever you want to call it.

To become a master equestrian you’re bound to be kicked, stepped on, knocked down, run over, bitten, dragged, pawed, squashed, thrown off, "hijacked" (runaway horse), rubbed off (by a tree or some other handy object), or refused (to be obeyed) at some point. Maybe you've already had the privilege of experiencing all of the above!

But the important thing is to "get right back on" and correct the problem. And the sooner the better, both for the horse and handler. The horse has to learn manners, and the handler has to learn how to handle the horse correctly. Otherwise, problems will persist or even worsen, resulting in a fearful, incompetent horseman, and a spoiled horse that could be dangerous to both the rider and bystanders.

You learn as you go, working through trials and overcoming new challenges as they arise. Often, you can figure things out for yourself, but sometimes it’s necessary to ask for help from those who are more experienced.

Read. Research. Compare advice and ideas to see if they make sense. Once you find sound ideas, test them and try them for yourself. Then you’ll know if you’ve found a solution that works for the right purpose.

If you do some studying before running into problems, you’ll be better equipped for dealing with them. Timing is an important part of correcting an unfavorable action, particularly if you don’t want that action to become a bad habit. Once it does, it’s all the more difficult to correct. It is much more expedient to deal with problems as soon as they appear.

If you try to ignore trouble or take the wrong action (delaying, for instance), your problems will only get worse. But if you take the time to think things out, and move as quickly as possible once you have a plan, the situation will quickly improve. The relationship between horse and rider becomes a joy.

Thanks to various horses and ponies, I have experienced it all, from being kicked to dealing with simple disobedience. The blows were none too comfortable at the time, but they pale in comparison to the overall good I’ve experienced. I am not a master equestrian; but I’m a good one. I’ve developed good balance, and I’m comfortable around horses. I respect them and I know about their behavior, care, and training. Yes, I’m no expert, but I’m not a novice. I have grown over the years,

The important thing is to “get right back on” and correct the problem.
Event more important than the date

"What you worship as something unknown, I proclaim unto you." (Acts 17:22)

When Paul visited the Athenians, he observed that they were very religious, but they did not know the object of their worship.

This indictment of the Athenians could be made of many today. Beginning in October, I have received countless cards and stationery. Not one of them conveys any mention of the "Reason for the Season."

An editorial entitled "Christmas—Festivals" appeared in the December 23, 1852, Sabbath Recorder. Its author, Rev. Thomas B. Brown, pointed out the dilemma that Christians have faced for many years: the pagan adaptation of a Christian event.

Brown wrote:

Many thousands of people are under the impression that the twenty-fifth day of December is the veritable anniversary of the birth of Christ. We shall not go into any discussion of this question, as we consider it to be of no importance. The fact itself, that "the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us," is very important to be believed; for "every spirit that confesses not that Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God."

The Scriptures, accordingly, set forth this fact with much circumstance. All those particulars of his miraculous conception and birth, which, taken in connection with his subsequent history, go to prove that the fulness of the Godhead had become embodied in human form, are presented with a minuteness of detail sufficient to satisfy the faith of every humble inquirer.

But of the time when this wonder of wonders—the manifestation of God in the flesh—began first to be displayed, the Scriptures say nothing, save that it was some time during the reign of Caesar Augustus, and while Herod was king of Judea. This, to our mind, sufficient proof that an annual recognition of the time by his people does not devolve upon them with any obligation.

Not an annual recognition of the time, but an habitual recognition of the fact, of Christ's incarnation, is the great duty which devolves upon believers; for the Christian life is sustained, not by the devout contemplation of these facts in which our redemptrion stands.

Accordingly, Christianity presents us with no festivals. It recognizes the existence of the weekly Sabbath, it is true—a festival which celebrates the creation of the world—but it does not originate the observance of it, nor is anything having a resemblance to it.

Should it be said that the Eucharist is a festival, because it commemorates the Lord's death, we reply it is not strictly a festival, because no specified time is set for the celebration of it. It may be attended to at any time. Whereas festivals always imply set times for their observance.

It was contrry to the genius of Christianity to institute festivals. History establishes no fact more striking than that of the continued profaneness of men to make their religion consist of devout observance of times and seasons. Give men, whether Jew of Gentiles, a system of religion which embraces a great number of such observances and they very soon show their disposition to rest upon them, to the neglect of the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith. It was no unnecessary alarm, therefore, that the Apostle to the Gentiles felt, when he saw the Galatians turning to such observances; and no unnecessary admonition to the Colossians, that they should beware of incurring censures on this score (Gal. 4:10-11; Col. 2:16).

What then is Christmas, what is Easter, what is Good Friday, and a host of other festivals which have long been more or less honored in the Christian Church, but so many encumbrances by which the power of the Christian System is employed to promote the life of God in the soul is hindered, not to say destroyed? Such we sincerely regard them. Christianity is simply a scheme for rendering sinners just before God. And as this justification is accomplished—not by the works of the sinner, but solely and wholly by the cont. on page 26

All those particulars of his miraculous conception and birth are presented with a minuteness of detail sufficient to satisfy the faith of every humble inquirer.

One year ago—December 2000

This month's issue is a 24-page, full-color glossy called, "Journey of a Lifetime," Author Jeanne Yurke presents our Seventh Day Baptist beliefs in an allegorical form, accompanied by a beautiful layout designed by Pat Cruzan.

Special thanks go to the Raritan Valley, N.J, SDB Church, for their donations and for taking on the project. Thanks also to Kevin Butler, Ben Cruzan, Leanne Lippincott, and SDB Committee Chairs Dave and Doreen Davis for their valuable input toward the "Journey." We appreciate the TresT Council's vision to offer this publication at no charge to our churches.

Five years ago—December 1996

Reprints from a Denver, Colo., church newsletter serve as features for this "Christmas Memories" issue. Writers include Victor Burdock, Bob Spreadborough, Doris Rood, Jim Galanaugh, Edward Hansen, and Gladys Randolph. "Pears" page notes the 325th anniversary of the first SDB church in America.

Pastor "Jus Start," on the Christian Education page, further explains the "Great Commission vs. The Great Commandment" concept espoused at General Conference.

Focus page lists SDB medical work performed around the world.

Associate Pastor Eric Davis ordained at Riverside, Calif.

10 years ago—December 1991

Authors share about mixed-race or foreign adoptions. Writers include Glen and Nancy Warner, Eddie Henry, Shelley Warner, and Jane Mackintosh.


President Mynor Soper reflects on his first major church visitation trip of the Conference year.

Another SDB health camp held in Andhra Pradesh, India.

Central Maryland SDB Church celebrates a "Religious Liberty" Sabbath.

25 years ago—December 1976

Fair booth ministries are hosted by the Battle Creek, Mich., Little Rock, Ark., and North Jersey churches.


Ohio SDB Fellowship becomes the First SDB Church of Columbus.

U.S. Supreme Court rules that "employers may not fire or refuse to hire persons whose religious beliefs require them to refrain from working on Saturdays." The case stemmed from the firing of a sabbatarian in Kentucky.

"10 in 10" announces ten churches that reached their annual Our World Mission giving goal in ten months.

50 years ago—December 1951

Salem (W.Va.) College receives private library of 1,800 volumes from the estate of Dr. Joseph Rosier, former U.S. Senator and former president of Fairmont (W.Va.) State College.

North Central Association met in Milton, Wis., in October with Leland Shaw presiding. Rev. Paul Mason announces that the Schenectady, N.Y., mission has organized a Friday night prayer meeting and bible study.

General Conference's Commission and Planning Committee to meet in Plainfield, N.J., at the end of the month. Salem College President K. Duane Hurley is injured in a car accident in Charleston, W.Va. "Friends throughout the denomination will want to shower him with greetings and messages."

...where are we headed?

Pray for—

* the positive impact of SDB literature
* your pastor and family
* preparations for Conference's bicentennial
* religious liberty worldwide
* the support of our boards and agencies
* a strong Sabbath School program
* a blessed celebration of Jesus' incarnation
2001 Sabbath School Teacher of the Year

We can see the pain in the faces of adults and children, "I don't want to sit through another boring Sabbath School class!" If you happen to be at the right place, you can probably hear those words screamed at the top of a child's lungs or experience the projected turmoil of a teenager frustrated with the world.

For better or worse, Sabbath School can be a boring, unsatisfying time.

Yet, Sabbath School can also be a time that encourages Christians, providing a deeper understanding of Scripture and a better relationship with classmates. The time can promote Bible study and discipleship. It can celebrate what God has done and help people to look for God's activity in the here and now.

Sabbath School should be an important part of the life of the church.

The local church has a lot to do with the success or failure of the Sabbath School program. The church can indicate that the Sabbath School is important, or the church can show that Sabbath School is just something to promote boredom and suffering. It can view the purchasing of materials as a class part as the cost of "babysitting" kids and adults, or it can provide materials needed to help teach and train.

A congregation can indicate the relative lack of importance of teachers by taking the first volunteer available—or always waiting until the last minute before looking for new teachers—or it can try to continually recruit and train teachers and make sure that good transitions take place.

The Board of Christian Education considers the Sabbath School an important part of the life of the local congregation. We want to encourage you to consider the role of the Sabbath School in your church's overall ministry—which means that you look at curricula, teachers, training, students, and the time given to the Sabbath School program.

One way that we promote the importance of Sabbath School is with our Crystal Apple Award. This award recognizes an individual that we choose as the Sabbath School Teacher of the Year. This person exhibits the qualities of faith and teaching demonstrated by our Lord.

The Sabbath School Teacher of the Year for 2001 is Judy Parrish. Her students report that she demonstrates an understanding of the Bible as the final authority for matters of faith and practice; she works to bring out God-given abilities in others; and helps the students recognize Christ and His teachings.

Judy's example extends beyond the Sabbath School class. Serving Christ through the Battle Creek, Mich., Seventh Day Baptist Church, she has functioned as moderator, mentor, pianist, children's division superintendent, and church librarian.

Information from the nomination we received makes it clear that Judy's students enjoy attending Sabbath School. They view it as part of their walk with God and an opportunity to learn more about His will for their lives.

We have no proof that any of her students have ever said, "I can't wait to get to Sabbath School." However, it is easy to imagine that many in her Helping Hand class look forward to the weekly lessons.

Has your church made Sabbath School a priority? Have you? If you think that Sabbath School can shape the life of the church in a positive way and think that your program is not doing that, reconsider your approach. Consider what God is asking you and be ready to make changes.

If your church has a great Sabbath School program or a spectacular teacher, consider nominating someone for the Crystal Apple award. We want to hear the cry and see the face that says, "I'm glad I'm headed for Sabbath School! I'll leave knowing more about God and His people. I'll leave more able to show His light in the world around me."
Jesus is the greatest of all the gifts and blessings that God has ever given us—or will ever give us. And it's a gift that never ends. It doesn't just appear right after Thanksgiving and go away after New Year's. No, it's a permanent gift. So maybe we should all be a little more giving of ourselves, not only during the holiday season but throughout the entire year as well. "Gifts of all the strength and wisdom that God has ever given us—or will ever give us. And it's a gift that never ends. It doesn't just appear right after Thanksgiving and go away after New Year's. No, it's a permanent gift. So maybe we should all be a little more giving of ourselves, not only during the holiday season but throughout the entire year as well."

The Bible talks a lot about giving. Jesus gave the ultimate gift, His life, so we could live abundantly, both here on earth and for all eternity. As children of God, we also are to give—regularly, liberally, cheerfully and, whenever possible, secretly. And we shouldn't give only material things. Sometimes our best gift is the gift of ourselves. We should strive to spend more time with our children, and use our varied talents to promote worthy causes.

When I was growing up, I knew little about true giving. But even as a child, I was aware that somewhere in the Bible it said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Now that I'm old enough to know what a concordance is, I know that verse is in the book of Acts, chapter 20, verse 35.)

For all of us, children and adults, it's one thing to know about giving, but it's an entirely different matter to actually do it.

My memories of Christmas past include reciting memory verses at Christmas eve church services. The anticipation of those "solo performances" elicited both a churning stomach and a giddy excitement. At the conclusion of the service, each child was handed a sack filled with candy, nuts, and oranges. So I was on the receiving end of giving at an early age, and I quickly learned to love it. I was surprised when St. Nick brought me exactly what I wanted each year. My "Christmas loot" included a large doll with hair I could braid, a Gene Autry plastic guitar, a bicycle, a microscope, a multi-layered petticot, a chemistry set, and a cowgirl dress. (Obviously, Mom had requested the petticot.)

Ever so slowly, I learned to give back. In material ways, at least. At school, we made Christmas presents for our parents—things like holiday candles and Christmas corsages. I made gifts at home, too. One year I embroidered my Dad's initials on some large white handkerchiefs. And since he worked as a meat cutter, I once built a miniature chopping block, complete with a tiny meat cleaver and rolls of sausage made out of painted wooden dowels.

As I grew older, my gifts came from stores. I had become a "woman of means," earning 50 cents an hour babysitting and moving leaves. In the summer I sold blackberries, and in the winter I hawked painted, sparkle-encrusted pine-cones. I was a teenage tycoon, stuffing dollar bills into my pink plastic piggy bank and charging my brother interest when he ran short of cash.

One Christmas, my brother and sister and I pooled our funds and bought Dad a new topcoat. I don't remember the exact year, but I do remember that it was the first time I truly understood Acts 20:35.

We handed Dad the large box and was almost speechless; his face was a mirror; his smile in clothes their children rather than hugging them. For a brief moment that Christmas morning almost 40 years ago, I saw my father in a new light.

I caught a fleeting glimpse of a man who indeed loved his children and was in turn touched by their love. And all of this came about through the simple act of buying a coat, wrapping it in paper, and placing it at his feet. Giving and receiving. Our father's feet; our Father's feet.

... and she (Mary) gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in clothes and placed him in a manger... (Luke 2:7, NIV)."
Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In the old meetinghouse here in Little Genesee, N.Y., near the back and to the right, there was a stained glass window that showed a rock sticking out of the ocean with waves and whitecaps all around. On the rock was a cross. It always brought to my mind the hymn line, “On Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand.”

If it were not for Christ there would be no “Christians.” He is the reason for our hope other ground is sinking sand.

The first stone: Christ

The President’s Page

1) Jesus is the cornerstone (1 Peter 2:6; Eph. 2:20) upon which the church is built. In biblical times, the cornerstone was the first stone set in a foundation. It was set squarely in the reference point from which the rest of the stones would line up. Lining up with Jesus as the reference means that we will do what He approves. Anything else is sin. He is, to change the metaphor, the benchmark and measuring stick, as well as the source of truth.

2) Jesus is also the capstone (1 Peter 2:7). This is the stone that went on top of a wall and completed the structure. We see here the connection to the name given in Revelation 21:6: “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End.” The capstone covers and protects the wall just as His righteousness covers us and just as He, by His Spirit, protects the wall just as His righteousness covers us and just as He, by His Spirit, protects the wall just as His righteousness covers us and just as He, by His Spirit, protects the wall just as His righteousness covers us.

3) Jesus is the stone that makes some stumble (1 Peter 2:8). This last stone is one that I wish we did not have to talk of, but it is true and necessary. It is said that there are those who want to make following Jesus into a system of moral conduct rather than a relationship of faith with the Savior. Does this mean that we should be immoral? Of course not! But the belief and trust in Jesus as the Savior and the obedient following of Him as Lord is more than many will accept as it flies in the face of their reasoning or their sense of total self-determination, which in either case is an unillumined position (2 Cor. 4:1–7).

Many this month will be remembering the Incarnation. A baby can be loved for the adored without demanding much in return. Let’s not forget that He was born for the adored without demanding much in return. Let’s not forget that He was born for the adored without demanding much in return. Let’s not forget that He was born for the adored without demanding much in return. Let’s not forget that He was born for the adored without demanding much in return.

Pastor Gordon Lawton

President Gordon Lawton and his "Stone" at Conference.

A lot of people need help coping with conscious and subconscious feelings, fears, and frustrations because of America’s new war-time status.

Those of us who know the Lord should help our friends cope by telling them that we are praying for them. This brings peace of mind to many people.

Our future is in Jesus. We can live at peace in Him, and He expects us to share that peace. He told His disciples that if they share as much as a “cup of water” with a thirsty person (Mark 9:41), they are doing what is expected of them. We must not keep to ourselves the security of knowing Jesus.

Non-Christians often accuse us of hypocrisy—and sometimes rightly so—when they see that we know and believe in Jesus and yet don’t share that peace with others. This is the time for SDBs to reach out, share, and in plain words, evangelize. We should tell even casual acquaintances and strangers that Christ is in charge.

During these difficult times, some Americans try to cope by fostering a “kill them all” attitude. This mindset simply leads to more frustration.

The Lord is in charge. He can eliminate fear, frustration, and hate in all of us. We need to pray for our enemies as well as for our leaders, our soldiers, and ourselves.

We need to let go and allow the power of God and prayer to lead to a general peace as well as our own personal peace. We should share our prayers, our smiles, our encouraging words, and our belief in Jesus—the One who taught us to offer a “cup of water” to those distressed about the world in which we live today.

As tragic as the events of the past few months have been, good will grow out of them. Now, more than ever, individual SDBs and their churches have an opportunity to reach out to hurting people. We can help by talking with others and asking questions that show genuine concern: “What do you think about America’s terrorist problems?” “Is anyone in your family in immediate danger?” We can serve our fellow citizens by helping them cope with their fears of war and death.

We certainly didn’t cause this conflict, but we are in it. The world is God’s. If He decides not to create a “tomorrow,” then the present War on Terrorism will become a moot subject. However, God may want to see how well we can care for each other, and for each stranger and enemy. May the Holy Spirit guide us to share God’s love and peace in our corner of the world.

Jesus speaks about our Comforter in chapter 40, verses 28–31. Look it up! Give the world and your neighbors a Sabbath rest and God’s peace. And let it start with Seventh Day Baptists.
North Central Association meets in Michigan

The North Central Association of Seventh Day Baptist Churches was held at the Battle Creek, Mich., SDB Church on October 12-13, 2001.

Special guest for the weekend was National Field Minister Ron Elston, who works with new SDB churches and contacts in the United States and Canada. Pastor Ron brought the message Sabbath morning and told of the many new contacts and outreachs that are taking place right now.

There is even a church planting school to begin helping people interested in beginning new Seventh Day Baptist churches. The Stonefort, Ill., church has made available special facilities for the use of this school.

We were surprised at the large number of groups and individuals throughout the middle of the country who are interested in establishing churches. The map seemed to be literally peppered with dots indicating such people and places.

The youth praise band, "Mabel," came from Milton, Wis. (site of next year's meetings). The band is named in honor of Mabel Cruzan, wife of the late Earl Cruzan, one of our former pastors.

One business item was arrang­ing for an Association-wide mission trip. The Milton church has sent its youth to Evansville, Ind., the last two years, and wanted to expand this opportuni­ty for young people across the Association. We requested that plans be developed to make this possible for 2002, and voted funds to assist in this.

Of particular interest is the possibility of expanding to other areas in the future. A couple doing mission work in the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in western South Dakota is desiring to connect themselves and their work with Seventh Day Baptists. Joining with them could be an exciting possibility for short-term missions.

Meetings in 2003 will take place at our newest Association church, Outreach Bible Church in Portage, Wis.

From the Dodge Center (Minn.) church's Joyful Newsletter.

By Dale Rood

SR Reaction

Opinions do not necessarily reflect the views of the SR or all SDBs. Letters may be edited according to space and editorial style.

Dear SR,

I arrived at a friend's house in time to watch two special episodes of "Touched by an Angel." At one point, Delta Reese began to sing: "God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform..."

The first feature told of a rescue worker who died trying to save others.

This was touching because almost all of us witnessed the 9/11 tragedy on television.

The second feature highlighted a family facing turmoil from one parent's mid-life crisis. (I'm 46 now; need I say more?) When we realized the theme of both of us felt I could benefit by watching it.

A week or so passed, and late last night I was sitting home alone. (Bill was working out of town.) I picked up an old Sabbath Recorder from '95 which for some reason was on our bedroom chest. Its feature article, "The blossoming flower along the wooded path," by P.L. Watson read:

"It is said the Lord works in mysterious ways, and I have to believe that this is what is happening to me. I feel an awakening to what is going on around me, and especially a heightened appreciation for my spouse."

These thoughts described my mood precisely at this stage of life with all its struggles.

Then in Kevin's Korner, I read:

"Dear Lord, You know how much I want to honor and acknowledge you in all things—yet your ways are so mysterious! But I still wonder why we have to go through some things." Wow! All of these mysterious "co-incidences."

Kevin then related feelings of rejection when a clean-up of the SR mailing list was done in order to wisely use funds. Folks who would rather not get the magazine were asked to be removed, and did. (I am one who did, but that's another story with a happy ending of one who came to know God's grace.)

He continued, "Lord, thank you for reminding me of your provisions and presence and guidance."

To this I would only add: Amen.

Cindy Burks
Little Rock, AR

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(Feature Index & Kevin's Korner on back cover)

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December 2001
**Current Giving 2001**

- **Carmichael.**—A daughter, Aliya Nicole Carmichael, was born to Robert and Ronda Carmichael of Grand Rapids, MI, on October 31, 2000.

- **Geske.**—A daughter, Tiffany Faith Geske, was born to Kory and Jacqueline Geske of Battle Creek, MI, on December 6, 2000.

- **Osborn.**—A daughter, Rachael Grace Osborn, was born to Pastor Stephen and Angie Osborn of Milton, Wis., on June 7, 2001.

**New Members**

- **Boulden, CO**
  - David Thorngate, pastor
  - Joined after testimony
  - Dan Crowder
  - Sheri Crowder
  - Chris Severance
  - Stacy Severance

- **Doniphan, MO**
  - Ron Elston, pastor
  - Joined after baptism
  - Jack Lewis
  - Vernon (Butch) Lewis
  - Gary Roberts

- **Salem, WV**
  - Dale D. Thorngate, pastor
  - Joined after testimony
  - Lawrence O. Watt
  - Raskell Ann Watt
  - F. Scott Rogers
  - Rebecca L. Rogers

**Current Giving Budget for 2001**

- **Severance.**—A son, Azariah Gabriel Severance, was born to Shane and Jennifer Severance of Brighton, CO, on September 29, 2001.

- **Yoneda.**—A son, Enraku Takashi Kenneth Yoneda, was born to Cheryi Van Horn and Theodore Yoneda of Fairmont, WV, on October 10, 2001.

- **Rood.**—A daughter, Michaela Jo Elizabeth Rood, was born in Boulder, CO, on October 20, 2001.

**Obituaries**


- **Durham.**—Madge Irene (Harris) Durham, 89, of Coldwater, Mich., died on September 15, 2001.

**Marriages**

- **Artis - Deters.**—Craig Artis and Roxanne Deters were united in marriage on September 9, 2000, in Marshall, MI.

- **Humphrey - Badger.**—James Humphrey and Melanie Badger were united in marriage on October 21, 2000, in Battle Creek, MI.

- **Rootes - Wells.**—Sidney Rootes and Liesl A. Wells were united in marriage on November 16, 2000, in Battle Creek, MI.

- **Law - Martin.**—Thomas Lee Law and Melissa Marlene Martin were united in marriage on October 14, 2001, in Williamstown, WV, with Rev. Dale D. Thorngate officiating.

**Seventh Day Baptist Week of Prayer January 6-12, 2002**

This prayer booklet will be sent to each Conference. It is written by Pastor José Direu de Andrade Cruz, General Supervisor of the SDB Church of Brazil.

**World Federation Sabbath January 12, 2002**

We ask that each church take a special offering for the SDB World Federation.
with the Biblical holy days and their purposes. I know that God’s law was given to us not as a burden or to keep

If you try to ignore trouble or take the wrong action (delaying, for instance), your problems will only get worse.

us from having fun, but to save us from trouble, turmoil, and heartache. Best of all, I know that God loves us. You may think all of this sounds rather bookish, but it’s beyond that. It’s tied in with my understanding, and again, with my life experiences.

I’m not perfect, spiritually or otherwise, but I’ve found perfection in God’s Word. If I err in part or completely, I’m sure I’ll know soon enough. Meanwhile, I’m enjoying the benefits.

Life is good, and I’m learning as I go.

Epilogue: We all need to check on where we’re heading from time to time, to make sure we’re on the right path. It’s important to remember where we are so we can keep from getting lost. All of us will have to continually dust ourselves off and get back in the saddle again until we finally reach our destination. May God bless and keep you.

Many within and outside the Church have, in effect, treated Christmas only as a festival without thought of its true significance.

What Thomas B. Brown wrote is true to the extent that many within and outside the Church have, in effect, treated Christmas only as a festival without thought of its true significance. It is a sacrilege when we share gifts with one another without a thought of the greater

gift that God has given to mankind. It is sacrilege when we try to oust our neighbor with bright lights and fail to see the light which shines on the shepherds in Bethlehem and guided the Wise Men. And it is sacrilege when “Jingle Bells” is more popular than “Hark the Herald Angels Sing,” or “Joy to the World.”

Yet how impoverished we would be if we did not step out of the routine of our daily existence once a year and proclaim the wonders of God’s grace and His Incarnation to meet us here on earth.

Thomas Fuller, an English cleric of the 17th century, recognized the

importance of a special celebration when he penned the oft-quoted reminder: “Things said to be ever done will prove to be never done unless sometimes solemnly done.”


Kevin’s Korner

What’s on the inside?

I felt it was only fair that I tell the Tract Council members right at the start of our annual meeting last week: “Janet and I are considering a move out of Janesville.” They stopped breathing for a second.

“To Milton? All of eight miles away.”

“Okay, exhale...

With Janet working at the church every weekday, plus carting the boys to church activities several times a week (sometimes several times a day), plus worship, plus weekend meetings, she’s a bit tired of the commute.

So, we’ve been watching the market for an available and affordable house. A new real estate listing arrived in the mail just the other day. The description of this older Victorian sounded promising, especially the price. But there was no photo attached.

Checking the address in the letter, I decided to drive by the place. To my surprise, it looked beautiful! It had nice siding, some fancy trim under the peak of the upper roof, and a decent fenced-in yard.

Before I could finish my report at home, Janet had an appointment locked in with the realtor.

When we arrived in Milton for the showing, we looked again at the outside and were still excited. The realtor unlocked the door and we stepped inside. Let’s just say that our excitement was not merely dampened (think tidal wave); we almost drowned in our disappointment.

It was one big letdown. We saw a nice exterior, then uncovered a questionable interior. Peeling plaster, uneven floors, and a cracked foundation should have been a red flag. We got back on the saddle again until we finally reach our destination. May God bless and keep you.

We need to have good quality on the inside. Now, it’s okay and beneficial to get a reader’s attention, but we need to earn and keep their trust by what’s behind the cover.

Then I had to go-to-meddling. “What are people’s reactions when they see you as a person, a Christian, a Seventh Day Baptist?”

They may see how you look, and how you behave in public. But what if they scheduled an appointment to look inside your heart, and mind, and thoughts?

What’s going on inside? Jesus was concerned about this, especially when he dealt with the Pharisees.

As part of the “seven woes,” Jesus said, “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men’s bones and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness” (Matt. 23:27-28, NIV).

Do we spout the Law but live (or think) like the enemy? In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus also taught about good trees bearing good fruit, and bad trees bearing bad fruit (Matt. 7:15-20).

The last verse says, “Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.”

Let’s all be “good trees” and bear “good fruit”—on the outside and the inside.
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<td>Doubting God <em>(Sandy Noel)</em></td>
<td>June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gambian school children want to be promoted <em>(Kirk Looper)</em></td>
<td>Jan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Conference 2001—“Try God” <em>(Cherie Peake</em>)</td>
<td>Sept.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grow up (and bring the Jell-O) <em>(Doreen S. Davis)</em></td>
<td>April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He turned the world upside down <em>(Kirk Looper)</em></td>
<td>Dec.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping others help themselves <em>(Kirk Looper)</em></td>
<td>Jan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In search of a college <em>(Heidi Kinnicutt)</em></td>
<td>June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inviting the unseen Christ to church <em>(David Mains)</em></td>
<td>Feb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little Genesee meetinghouse destroyed <em>(L.B. Lee)</em></td>
<td>Sept.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long, lonesome days <em>(Mabel Cruzan)</em></td>
<td>April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New church with young adults? Adjust! <em>(John M. Peil)</em></td>
<td>April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New windows of opportunity open <em>(Ronald J. Elston St.)</em></td>
<td>Jan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Stonefort extends its ministry <em>(Linda Harris)</em></td>
<td>Jan.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prayer that pleases God <em>(Roger D. Haber)</em></td>
<td>Feb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preaching about nothing <em>(John Camenga)</em></td>
<td>July-Aug.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflections from Ground Zero <em>(David Massengill)</em></td>
<td>Nov.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resuscitating the Lake <em>(Aubrey Appel)</em></td>
<td>May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robe of Achievement awarded <em>(L.B. Lee)</em></td>
<td>Nov.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saving a DeRuyter landmark <em>(Aaron Ciford)</em></td>
<td>March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service is a choice <em>(John White)</em></td>
<td>Feb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smearing chocolate <em>(Aubrey Appel)</em></td>
<td>June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some moving experiences <em>(Donna Bond)</em></td>
<td>April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statements from Baptist organizations and a 10-year-old girl <em>(John Garmo)</em></td>
<td>Nov.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The best business is God’s business <em>(L.B. Lee)</em></td>
<td>April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The future <em>(Ginny Burdick)</em></td>
<td>June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The language of love <em>(Jeff Hazen)</em></td>
<td>Jan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The latter years <em>(Selma Mikel)</em></td>
<td>March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Old Tin Box <em>(H. Gene Butler)</em></td>
<td>July-Aug.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teenager experience <em>(Aubrey Appel)</em></td>
<td>June</td>
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<tr>
<td>There’s no place like home <em>(Rodney Henry)</em></td>
<td>April</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thornagates visit Brazil <em>(Janet Thorngate)</em></td>
<td>June, July-Aug., Sept.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Traditions to transitions <em>(Chuck and Lorna Graffius)</em></td>
<td>April</td>
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<tr>
<td>What the Sabbath means to me <em>(Clayton Pinder)</em></td>
<td>May</td>
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<tr>
<td>Whom shall we follow? <em>(A.H. Lewis)</em></td>
<td>May</td>
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<tr>
<td>Why did these doors close? <em>(Ernest Clemens)</em></td>
<td>March</td>
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<tr>
<td>Workshops included “Caring for Parents” <em>(Linda Harris)</em></td>
<td>Oct.</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>(Kevin’s Korner)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Traveling mercies <em>(Kirk Looper)</em></td>
<td>Jan.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I have seen the unseen Christ <em>(Kirk Looper)</em></td>
<td>Feb.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family connections <em>(John M. Peil)</em></td>
<td>March</td>
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<tr>
<td>The power of stories <em>(Wilma Dorsey)</em></td>
<td>April</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vision checkup <em>(John White)</em></td>
<td>May</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pushing aside the pain <em>(L.B. Lee)</em></td>
<td>June</td>
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<tr>
<td>What’s that smell? <em>(Kirk Looper)</em></td>
<td>July-Aug.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More noise on noise <em>(John White)</em></td>
<td>Sept.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The angels’ song <em>(Kirk Looper)</em></td>
<td>Oct.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Air travel since 9/11 <em>(John White)</em></td>
<td>Nov.</td>
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<tr>
<td>What’s on the inside? <em>(John White)</em></td>
<td>Dec.</td>
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