

## **November/ December 2011 Newsletter**

**Dear Faith-filled Followers of Christ,**

**As we approach Thanksgiving, we remember back to a time when immigrants to this land seeking religious freedom faced a cold hard winter with extremely limited resources. They received hospitality from those who already called this land their home and ate together from the bounty that comes when hearts are opened to one another. Our temptation today is to make this communal feast an individual one where only those we know and look like us are welcome at the table. How rich we become when we are able to open ourselves to our neighbors and those who once were strangers become friends. Let us continue to remember how God has richly blessed us and seek ways to share with those in need.**

**Our liturgical season moves from a celebration of Christ, the King Sunday on November 20<sup>th</sup> to the beginning of the season of Advent on November 27<sup>th</sup>. How could an all powerful God choose to come to earth in the form of a tiny babe born in the squalor of a stable? It is a mystery we all encounter each time we move from the celebration of God's sovereignty and power as our king to the exploration that this same God came to us as a vulnerable child. The wonder of Christ 's birth is made new each year through story, song and ritual as we ponder with Mary the miracle of the incarnation. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us full of grace and truth.**

**During the season of Advent, I invite you to join to come and participate in an Advent study "From Longing to Receiving" by Patricia Tull. We will be meeting each Thursday at noon beginning on December 8th at Salem Presbyterian Church. Bring a sack lunch and enjoy a time of fellowship and growth. Each week we will be tracing important Advent themes of longing for God's help, anticipating God's presence among us, recognizing God's work among us, and receiving God's new gifts to us. If you are unable to make this meeting, the devotional material will still be available to you.**

**I am looking forward to preparing ourselves for the coming of Christ in new ways in our hearts and lives both as individuals and as a congregation.**

**Grace and peace,**

**Pastor Janet**

To start the Prayer Chain for someone in need of prayers call Mary Cordes at 618-465-1760 or 462-0677 ext. 2835 or Marj Bryant at 618-466-5421 or 466-6005.

**Next Elm Leaf Deadline**  
**Friday, January 13, 2012**

**ESPC Web Site**  
**<http://espcalton.tripod.com>**  
**<http://espc.weebly.com>**

### **LITURGISTS**

**November 20 – Kathy Steinmann**  
**27 – Jenny Wyatt**  
**December 4 –**  
**11 –**  
**18 – Richard Sisk**  
**25 –**

Liturgists are needed to fill in the open dates. Sign-up sheets are in the sanctuary.

### **USHERS**

**Please volunteer to usher.**  
**Sign-up sheet is in the sanctuary.**

### **COMMUNION SERVERS**

**November 20 – Intinction**  
Kathy Steinmann, Chair, Mary Cordes,  
Tom Wyatt, Terri Darr  
Ann McLaughlin (set-up & serve)

**December 4 – Intinction**  
Richard Sisk Chr., Marj Bryant,  
Chance Shewmake, Mary Cordes  
(set-up & serve)

**December 25 – Intinction**  
Richard Sisk, Chr., Kathy Steinmann,  
Marj Bryant, Tanya Sisk  
John Kennedy (set-up & serve)

### **ATTENDANCE**

9/4-30, 9/18-25, 9/25-30, 10/2-26, 10/9-25,  
10/16-16, 10/23-38, 10/30-35, 11/6-30, 11/13-25

### **CONGRATULATIONS**

On the birth of  
***Owen Michael Williams***  
Born October 3, 2011  
Weighing 9lb 8oz and 21 ½ inches long  
The proud parents are  
Chris and Sarah (Paddock) Williams  
Big sisters are Josie and Grace.  
Grandparents are: Jeff and Karen Auston and  
Mike and Maggie Paddock

On the birth of  
***Sophia Lucille Farrar***  
Born October 17, 2011  
Parents are: Marisa McCreary & Stephen Farrar  
Grandparents are: Richard & Tanya Sisk  
Big sisters are Ashlyn, Kahli and Terri Jo

### **THANK YOU**

I thank all who came to my early 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party, those who gave gifts and those who helped to make it such a happy day. Also thanks to JoAnn Phelps for the lovely write up of my life and the certificate. I am blessed to have such a wonderful Church Family. God bless you all.

***Mildred Maguire***

A special thank you to my friends for your words and cards on Sonia's passing.

***Richard Hetge***

Dear Beloved Community of Elm Street Presbyterian, What a surprise to have Richard Sisk come forward at the end of our celebration of communion during worship on November 6<sup>th</sup> and present me with a home communion set in honor of pastor appreciation month. It will give me joy to be able to use the communion set as we go out in teams to visit the shut-ins. I was very touched by your gift and by your many other expressions of love and encouragement. Truly,

you all are a gift to me in my walk of faith! I hope you know I love you, too!

*In God's peace, Pastor Janet*

“We must always give thanks to God for you, brothers and sisters, because your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing.”

I Thessalonians 1:3

**BIRTHDAYS**

**November**

- 3.....Amanda Phelps
- 5.....Brent Phelps
- 6.....Greg Lister
- 7.....Esther Bott
- 11.....Norma Waggoner
- 12.....Debbie Wallace
- 23.....Virginia Thatcher  
Shaun Wallace
- 26.....Nancy Bailey
- 30.....Louise Norman

**December**

- 8.....Willa Humenick
- 13.....Marilyn Stephens
- 14.....Tanya Sisk
- 15.....Tess Phelps
- 16.....Jamie McLaughlin
- 18.....Joshua Shewmake
- 20.....Mildred Maguire
- 21.....Patricia Gross  
Emily Schultz  
Dale Bailey
- 24.....Michael Gunning
- 28.....Lauren McLaughlin
- 29.....Garrett Oxford

**January**

- 2.....Emily Paddock
- 12.....Caitlin McLaughlin
- 15.....Marjory Bryant
- 17.....Kathy Steinmann
- 18.....Richard Hetge  
Clarabel Park
- 25.....Dorothy Waggoner
- 29.....Bryan Lichtsinn
- 31.....Jenny Huber

If I have missed your birthday, I'm truly sorry. I hope it was a good one. Please, let me know when it was.  
Marj Bryant

**CRISIS FOOD CENTER REPORT**

ESPC sent over 171 items to the Crisis Food Center since reported in our last newsletter. They have been unable to finance an extra holiday gift for Thanksgiving. The number of clients have increased over 20% from last year 52% of the clients are under the age of 6 or over the age of 55. So don't forget the Crisis Food Center at this time of year. If you use the internet for your holiday shopping please consider using [www.gooddearch.com](http://www.gooddearch.com) as your search engine. Each search earns CFC a penny. (3.5% of an online Target purchase is donated to the CFC through the Goodsearch site).

**DEACONS REPORT**

The Deacons are asking you to continue using your green Deacon Fund envelopes as well as the Love Fund envelopes (found in with your pledge envelopes) as often as you can. There are more people than ever asking for help with electric and water bills and even medication. **And don't forget they are still collecting empty ink-jet cartridges with printer heads,**

**OUTREACH COMMITTEE**

The Outreach Committee would like for you to continue using your eScrip cards for Schnuck's. That is one of the ways they make money for their work and their receipts have been down lately. If you need a card see Marj Bryant. Also, don't forget to put your outdated or unused clothing in the little yellow house.

**WORSHIP COMMITTEE**

The Advent Themes for 2011 are:  
 First Sunday, November 27 – Light of Hope  
 Second Sunday, December 4 - Light of Peace  
 Third Sunday, December 11 - Light of Joy  
 Fourth Sunday, December 18 – Light of Love  
 Christmas December 25 – Light of the World  
 There are copies of daily devotionals with the themes for anyone that would like to use them during Advent. You can pick them up in the office or during worship.

**CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

See about the Advent Bible Study under Up Coming Events

**SESSION INFORMATION**

The Session has met several times since the last Elm Leaf. The Session approved the following:

1. The minutes of the September meeting.
2. The treasurer's report.
3. Reviewed the membership and discussed who to put on the inactive rolls.
4. The use of CE building for the Christmas party of Behavioral Alternatives.
5. Paying the secretary for five days of vacation, she will not be using.
6. New Bible Study beginning on Wednesdays.
7. Annual Congregational Meeting for Sunday, December 11, 2011.
8. Special services and communion dates.

**UPCOMING EVENTS.**

Rev. Riley will be on vacation From November 26 through December 2, 2011.

It is time to order Christmas Poinsettias. They will be \$9.00 each, wrapped with a bow. The color is called Jingle Bell (red & cream). Last day to order is Wednesday, November 30<sup>th</sup> before noon.

Deacon's Mitten Sundays  
November 27<sup>th</sup> and December 4<sup>th</sup>.  
Mitten, gloves, hats, scarves, ear muffs  
all are accepted.

Advent Study – To prepare our hearts for Christ's birth, we will be utilizing the Advent study, "From Longing to Receiving." Writer Patricia Tull leads participants through the Old Testament and the Gospel lectionary texts for four weeks, tracing important Advent themes of longing for God's help, anticipating God's presence among us, recognizing God's work among us, and receiving God's new gifts to us. Each week students will receive a handout filled with important information about the texts written for personal devotion as well as group discussion. The study will begin on Friday, December 2<sup>nd</sup> at noon at Salem Presbyterian Church and then meet on Thursdays at noon the following weeks, Dec. 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>.

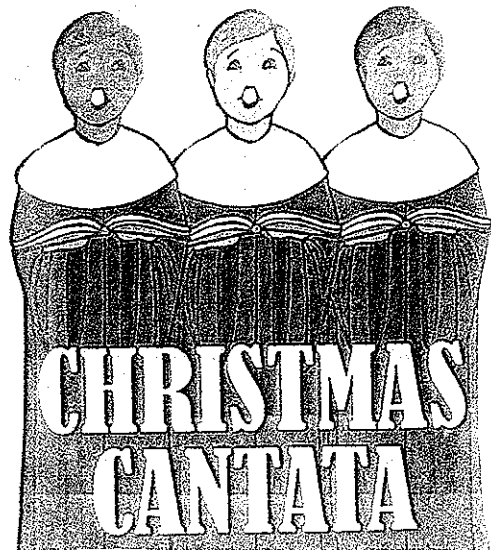
Outreach Committee has their Angel Tree again this year. All the tags are taken. Thanks for making someone's Christmas better.. Time is short, they need the gifts in early December so they can get them distributed in time for Christmas.

ESPC will be ringing bells for the Salvation Army on Saturday, December 10, 2011 at the Alton Schmuck's Store from 10am to 3pm Don't forget to sign up for your favorite time.

Sunday, December 11, 2011  
Immediately following Worship  
Annual Congregational Meeting

All Committee and Church Groups  
Your year-end reports are due in the office no later than December 7, 2011.

December 18, 2011  
Christmas Cantata  
"The Love of God at Christmas"



December 18, 2011  
Christmas Brunch  
Tickets will be available November 27, 2011.  
Adults \$5.00, Children 6-12 \$3.00  
Under 6 free

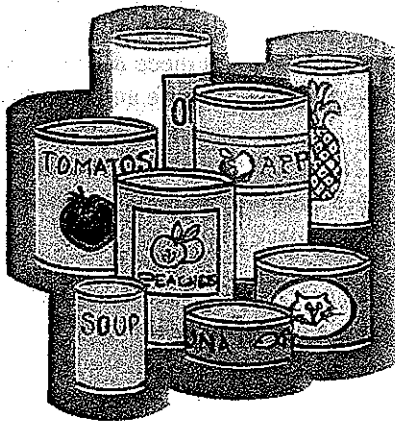
Christmas Eve December 24, 2011 7:00 pm  
 We will be worshipping at  
 Twelfth Street Presbyterian Church  
 .....

Tuesday, December 27, 2011 The Annual  
 Deacons and Elders meeting at 7:00 pm  
 .....

Sunday, January 1, 2012 - 9:30am  
 Special Epiphany Service  
 .....

PER CAPITA for each church member  
 will be \$27.25 for 2012  
 .....

The Outreach, Fellowship and Evangelism  
 Committee has decided to have a Special Food  
 Drive for the Crisis Food Center. Since the CFC  
 could not do anything special for their clients for  
 Thanksgiving, The committee is making a  
 financial donation and would like to focus on  
 food items for a Christmas meal. Suggestions:  
 sweet potatoes, green beans, brown sugar, cake  
 or cookie mixes, ingredients for a pie. The drive  
 starts now and will end December 12, 2011.  
 .....



## Canned Goods Collection

Over 55 Ministry - A Special Holiday Treat!  
 On Thursday, December 8<sup>th</sup> we will be going  
 to Springfield for a guided tour of the  
 Executive Mansion, home to Illinois  
 governors since 1855. Afterwards we will go  
 to Edwards Place, the oldest house in  
 Springfield, where we will have a guided tour  
 of the house and a visit to the art gallery  
 there, where there will be Christmas items for  
 sale. We will be served tea, finger  
 sandwiches and other goodies. The bus  
 leaves CAPC at 8:30 am Cost \$35.00 all  
 inclusive. Please make reservations as  
 ASAP. Reservations are going fast. Send  
 your reservation and money to Marj Bryant  
 at Elm Street Presbyterian Church 101 West  
 Elm Street, Alton, IL 62002. Marj will be  
 taking all the reservation and payments from  
 now on.  
 .....

### Six Gifts That Don't Cost A Cent To Give

The Gift...

**Of Listening...** But you must REALLY listen.  
 No interrupting, no daydreaming, no planning  
 your response. Just listening.

**Of Affection...** Be generous with appropriate  
 hugs, kisses, pats on the back and handholds. Let  
 these small actions demonstrate the love you  
 have for family and friends.

**Of Laughter...** Funny pictures. Share articles,  
 funny stories and funny greetings. Your gift will  
 say, "I love to laugh with you."

**Of a Written Note...** It can be a simple "Thanks  
 for the help" note or a full sonnet. A brief,  
 handwritten note may be remembered for a  
 lifetime, and it may even change a life.

**Of a Compliment...** A simple and sincere, "you  
 look great in red," "You did a super job" or "that  
 was a wonderful meal" can make someone's day.

**Of a Favor...** Every day, go out of your way to  
 do something kind.

*Elm Leaf Prayer Concerns - winter- 2011 & 2012*

**"Members"**

Esther & Bill Bott  
Nellie Smithee  
Lois Mitchell  
Brent Phelps  
Lois Mitchell  
Elizabeth Brey

**"In The Nursing Home"**

Pat Gross.....Willow Rose  
Ciarabel Park.....Royal Oak Care Ctr.  
Willanette Ball.....Eunice Smith Nsg. Home  
Dan Earnhardt... ..Eldercare Nsg. Home

**Relatives and Friends of ESPC**

Carol Jo & Don Domescik.....Carole Springgate  
The Reynolds family.....Cherilyn Trusty's Family  
Kathy Shewmake.....Zada and Chance's daughter  
Kim Stiebel.....daughter-in-law of Joyce Schrupf Goethe  
Mary Calendar, Megan Vatole, Heather & expected baby.....Jarman's  
Tim Murphy.....friends of John Kennedy  
Nancy Teague.....Chance & Zada Shewmake  
Grady Watkins.....Dean Williamson  
Mary Brown.....Barbara Wedding  
Andy Torrez.....Bill and Amy Ball  
Bill Oertle.....Pricilla "Perky" Christman  
Dixie Darr.....William Weed  
Trish Stolze, Terry Heigert & Ron Bauser.....The Stolzes  
Sid & Joanne Ellerston, .....JoAnn Phelps  
John Slusser.....friend of Erin Oxford  
Gary Neese.....Mike Paddock  
Becky and Emma Swarsky (31/2).....Jane Hellrung's niece & daughter  
Lynna Humbert & Shanna Schulz.....Rev. Humbert's wife and daughter  
Pam Healy.....Pam Stolze  
Debbie Hetge.....Richard Hetge  
Martha Fleming & Janet Bland.....Jane Hellrung's mother and sister  
The family of Gary Buck & John Chontofalsky

**Healing of ESPC**

Courage to move forward, Strength, to do so and Wisdom to know how

In Service: -Brandon Medlock

**If you know of anyone that can be taken off of the prayer list,  
please call the church office and let us know.**

## Articles for the Newsletter

November/ December 2011

### Article One- November

**M**y sister attends Eden United Church of Christ in Edwardsville. She shared this with me. Even though she belongs to Eden United Church of Christ. I believe it can apply to Presbyterians as well. It's pretty lengthy, so I will include parts of it in the next few newsletters, and I'm going to paraphrase some of the items. It is taken from [MainLineCall.org](http://MainLineCall.org) – May the Lord bless this resource to your ministry and the congregation you serve...

#### **Keys to Renewing the Historic Church....Praying your Church to Life**

If you love your church, but feel frustrated because...

- √ It is stagnating or declining
- √ Growing older and losing its young people
- √ Struggling financially
- √ Seems uncertain about what it believes and why
- √ Doesn't seem to be able to find or keep a good pastor
- √ Recycles its leaders who are themselves struggling with depression
- √ Comes back to the same old divisions and quarrels on periodic cycle
- √ You are the pastor and think about quitting at least once a week.

Then it is time to pray your church to life. Your Lord, Jesus Christ loves your church more than you do. He died for it. It is His bride. He promised that if you would ask, He would act. Most of us, however, feel small and powerless before such a task. How do we begin? What do we ask God to do? What difference will it make? Here are 10 simple strategies that have brought churches back to life across the United States. Some of these churches had come down to fewer than a dozen people in worship. Some were deeply divided. One entertained a motion to close at their annual meeting and the motion died for lack of a second. Today, they are thriving, spiritually dynamic congregations reaching their communities with the saving reality of Jesus Christ. Today, they have 150-1200 in worship. The sanctuaries are filled with children and young families. Your church can be prayed to life.

1. Pray with a group every week. The key in almost every congregation that has experienced

transformational renewal has been a group of 5-7 people praying for that church every week. Ask God for partners and you will find them. Then pray.

2. Start with yourselves. Thank God for all He has done in the church since its founding. Acknowledge His purpose, role and position in all of its history. Confess your own sins. Allow the Holy Spirit to conduct a thorough examination of your heart in order that your intercession can be effective.
3. Pray strategically. Pray for the pastor and leaders by name. Pray through all the things that take place in the body life of the church.
  - Pray for the gospel to be preached.
  
  - Pray for people to come to know Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord.
  
  - Pray for the Holy Spirit to come upon the members of the church,
  
  - Pray for evil to be bound and for false teaching and practice to be exposed and removed.
4. Pray in concert with the call and mission of your church. Go back and read the history. Why was your church called into existence? What scriptures are on the pulpit, or windows or narthex or door posts. What was its original mission? What is its founding statement of faith? Renewal always involves restoration and completion of what God began (Philippians 1:6). Then pray for these realities to once again define your life together. In New England many churches were founded to be the "Light set upon the hill" that would take the gospel to the whole world. Almost every renewal church in New England from Wethersfield, to Byfield, to York is a living rebirth of that vision.
5. Prayer when you walk. Walk the church grounds, the neighborhood around the building, and then strategic areas in the town. While you walk, let the Holy Spirit prompt you to pray for things that come to mind. Don't hesitate. When it comes to mind, say it!
6. Pray for the men. Many churches lack effective male leadership. Many men in our society feel confused about their role in spiritual leadership. Fatherlessness is THE presenting social problem of our age. Make a list of men that God lays on your heart. Twelve is a good number. Pray for them as often as possible. At a later date, review your list. You will be amazed by what God has done in the lives of those men. You will be thrilled to see how some of them are impacting the life of the church. Some of them may have made decisions to go in the other direction. Prayer is a catalyst both for commitment and rejection. When you review the list with the Lord, He will often give you new names to add and subtract.

More to follow next month.....



## Article Two- December

**W**e're continuing on the

### Keys to Renewing the Historic Church....Praying your Church to Life

Last month we talked about steps 1-6:

7. Pray with a group every week.
8. Start with yourselves. Thank God for all He has done in the church since its founding. Acknowledge His purpose, role and position in all of its history. Confess your own sins. Allow the Holy Spirit to conduct a thorough examination of your heart in order that your intercession can be effective.
9. Pray strategically.
10. Pray in concert with the call and mission of your church.
11. Prayer when you walk.
12. Pray for the men.

And now for steps 7-10

13. Pray for the church that isn't there. Every historic church lives with ghosts. They are the ghosts of old pastors and confirmation classes and building committees and women's groups. Occasionally they are the ghosts of old moral failures and bitter disputes. Often these ghosts seem to speak more loudly than the living in shaping the current life of the church. In one congregation each historic family had their section in the pews. When an influx of newcomers responding to an outreach gravitated toward one section, the pastor was told they shouldn't sit in the "Hutchinson pews," even though the last remaining Hutchinson was in a nursing home and was unlikely to procreate. The old days aren't coming back. As Coach Rick Patino once famously said when he coached the Boston Celtics, "Larry Bird isn't walking back through that door." Prayer can exorcise these ghosts. But there is even a more dynamic prayer for the invisible church that should be pursued with passion. This is your prayer for church of the NOT YET. Pray for the children to be born. Pray for the newcomers whom God is going to bring through the door to find Christ. Pray for the missionaries God is going to send from your church. Pray for the seminarian who will one day be your pastor.
14. Pray during worship. If you are now a group split up, but an intercessory prayer person in different key places around the sanctuary (where you can see everything), the choir, the back-pews. Pray for every key person in the sanctuary, especially the pastor. Pray for the message. Pray for the not yet there. See what a difference it makes in what happens.
15. Keep a journal. Real prayer will produce real change. Write down what you ask for. Write down the insights you receive while praying. Write down the answers God gives and the changes prayer produces. God is honored by the testimony to his action in response to our request. Besides, this is the real history of the church.
16. Persevere. If you watch the trends of political change in the United States, you will see that power is achieved by those who persevere. The movement that mobilizes support for one vote on one issue and then loses interest, gives way to those who, undaunted by single defeats, continue to mobilize to produce change over the course of a generation. Authentic church renewal requires deep commitment. Prayer is a tough ministry. Pursuing God in prayer on a regular basis over an extended period of time requires far more stamina than serving on all those committees and subcommittees for back to back terms. Yet all the organizing in the world

is of small consequence to the exercise of the power of God.  
As I've heard Rev. Hoekstra say on more than one occasion....God does answer prayers -- he answers them by Yes, No or Wait! As Rev. Humbert said a few weeks ago ---In God's Time.

### **Biblical Principles of Prayer:**

#### ***Establish a relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ***

"Who is it that over comes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God." 1  
John 5:5

"Seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."  
Matthew 6:33

"I am the vine and you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing...If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you." John 15: 1,7

#### ***Acknowledge God in praise***

"Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! ..Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." Philippians 4:6

"Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. Know that the Lord is God...Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him, praise his name!" Psalm 100

#### ***Confess your sins***

"Therefore, confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective." James 5:16

"If my people who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I read from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land." 2 Chron. 7:14

"For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil." 1 Peter 3:12

***Pray for the things that will glorify God***

This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to His will, he hears us – whatever we ask – we know that we have what we asked of him.” 1 John 5:14-15

***Pray with the authority in the name of Jesus***

“I will give you the keys to the kingdom and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” Matt. 16:19

***Pray like you believe it will happen.***

“Whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it and it will be yours.” Mark 11:24

“He answered their prayers, because they trusted in Him.” 1 Chronicles 5:20

***Allow the Holy Spirit to prompt specific requests.***

“In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we out to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.” Romans 8:26

***Keep praying***

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his might power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes, stand firm then..and pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. Be alert and always keep on praying.” Eph 6:10-18

***Thank God for the answers and give Him credit***

“Not to us, O Lord, not to us but to your name be the glory, because of your love and faithfulness.” Psalm 115:1

“I will praise you O Lord with my heart; I will tell of all your wonders. I will be glad and rejoice in you; I will sing praise to your name, O Most High.” Psalm 9:1-2

“I will praise you forever for what you have done; in your name will I hope, for your name is good. I will praise you in the presence of your saints.” Psalm 52:9