



Support the youth from Nebraska who have the opportunity to join other youth from across the nation for a week-long gathering that is: SPIRITUAL . . . MISSIONAL . . . REFLECTIVE . . . CONNECTIVE . . . EXPERIENTIAL . . . AND FUN

Immerse will feature hands-on mission opportunities, daily small groups, creative and powerful worship experiences, exciting recreation time, and the opportunity to meet youth from across the country.

COMING JULY 24-28, 2012, TO WASHINGTON, D. C.!
Are there young people in your church whom you should encourage and enable to attend?

Spring Pastors Seminar — April 14-16

Moses Merrill Camp & Conference Center

Speaker: Timothy Geoffrion, author of:

The Spirit-led Leader:
Nine Leadership Priorities and Soul Principles.

ABC of Nebraska Staff

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American Baptist Churches of Nebraska



Jan—Feb 2012

ABC/NE Date Data

Pastors Seminar
April 14-16
Moses Merrill

Spring Mission Festival
April 27-28
Moses Merrill

Mediation Skills Training
July 9-13
Omaha

ABC/NE Convention
September 21-23
North Platte

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20 ABC/NE Churches Bring Renewed Missional Focus to Ministry



Rev. Glynis LeBarre, ABC Home Mission Societies, coordinates MCLE nationally.

Across the country the Missional Church Learning Experience (MCLE) is making a difference. MCLE is composed of clusters of churches in ABC regions. Each cluster forms a Learning Community to explore what God is saying to the Church today. Twenty ABC/NE churches are participating in two clusters.

Churches ask themselves "How can we best fit in with God's mission in our rapidly changing culture?" Churches involved in the Learning Community form a mission team that receives training in basic missional church principles. They then practice those principles by designing and implementing a small community project. The Learning Community meets four times during the process to share what they are learning and receive further training.

Ron French, pastor of Sunset Hills and NE Coordinator for MCLE, writes, "Jesus made it very clear that a great life is one of service and that we can never become the great people He knows we can be until we learn what it means to serve."

Exec. Min. Robin Stoops says, "God is going to do some great things as a result of this experience."

ENGAGING DISCIPLESHIP

Open My Eyes, My Heart, My Hands MARK 10:46-52

America for Christ Offering 2012

Nebraska Baptists are preparing for the 2012 America for Christ Offering. The Offering makes a difference in mission in Nebraska and across the country, including:

- Mission to Children in Poverty
- ABC Christian Centers
- Military and Hospital Chaplaincy
- Missional Church Learning Experience
- Evangelism Training
- Workshops for Church Life and Leadership
- Multi-ethnic workshops, tools and other resources for immigrant communities
- Refugee Resettlement
- Youth Ministry
- New Church Planting
- American Baptist Homes & Hospitals

Reaching Americans for Christ and touching lives with the love of Christ in 2012 will be accomplished on the doorsteps of our churches. This Offering helps ABC nationally and regionally to provide resources for churches to realize this mission.

The America for Christ Offering raises support for ministry and mission in the United States and Puerto Rico. Funds raised in Nebraska are used by ABC/NE and by the American Baptist Home Mission Societies.

From the Executive Minister Robin Stoops

“We made due...”

I had the great experience of leading one of the Advent services this year at Moses Merrill Camp and Conference Center. It was a beautiful December afternoon and the drive to camp from Omaha was nice. MaryBeth had warned me we were not going to see big crowds for these services but as with many things in the Christian life, numbers aren't everything.

We took a moment to reflect on past Christmas memories and one of our guests, a neighbor, shared about growing up in the Depression and how as a child often the only gift they received was an orange. He said, "All my parents could afford was an orange for each one of us children. But we were thrilled to get the orange. We made due and were happy to have what we had." It sounds pretty good, peaceful almost, to be content with what we have in our hands without the stress of desiring more.

Paul addresses this in the scripture. He writes to the church in Philippi: "...for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every

circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me." Philipians 4:11b-13.

The truth is both ends can be a struggle. It can be difficult to go without and it also can take us way off track when we have too much. What strikes me about Paul's words is that his focus doesn't change in feast or famine. His center is Christ no matter what he is faced with. Our call and purpose do not get altered because of our means.

May this New Year find us faithful to Christ and His church no matter our situation or station. May His strength provide for us all we need to be faithful to His call. May our hands and our hearts be free for His work and may we be united to accomplish and become His hands and feet.

Thank you for your faithfulness,

Robin



From the Associate Executive Minister Greg Mamula

Christ Revealed as God's Son



We Christians mark time differently from the world around us. We begin our year with four weeks of messianic anticipation as we observe Advent, move toward the twelve days of Christmas from December 25-January 6, and march right into the season of Epiphany which begins on January 6th.

Epiphany is a Greek word meaning "manifestation, showing forth, revelation." The season of Epiphany proclaims our faith in the Messiah Jesus who we waited on in anticipate during Advent and celebrated his arrival during Christmas, has come not just for a chosen few but to all people, in all places, throughout all of time.

As Christians we believe that the person Jesus was also God the Father. Epiphany is about remembering again the stories and occasions that Jesus is revealed as God's Son. We read about the magi's visit to the holy family. We hear God's voice proclaim, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased." at Jesus' baptism in the river Jordan by John. We sit perplexed alongside the wedding party as Jesus

turns simple water into the best wine available. And we stand in awe with James, John, and Peter as Jesus is transfigured before our very eyes and we hear again the voice of God proclaim, "This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!"

So as you move through the months of January and February and you thoughtfully put away the trappings and trimmings of Christmas, may you also look for the ways in which Jesus is being revealed as God's Son and may you listen to him and incorporate his message into your daily life. Amen.

Greg

P.S. I would like to thank the congregation of First Baptist Church in North Platte who helped shape me in ministry over the past four and half years. I would also like to thank the pastors and ABC/NE churches that have shared words of encouragement and affirmation as I pursue this new ministry role. Finally, thank you to the ABC/NE Region staff who have helped make this transition as easy as it is exciting. I look forward to the next years of ministry with each you.

Does Your Church Have a Web Presence?

- Increasingly the web is the first contact people have with your church. Many people use the web rather than yellow pages or other resources when looking for a church.
 - The web is a great way to share with members and the community.
 - ABC/NE is pleased to announce that **Dee Riggs of FBC, Lincoln, is a new Volunteer In Mission. She will serve as ABC/NE's Social Media Consultant.**
- ABC/NE is exploring ways for local churches to become more engaged and more up-to-date on the web.



Great Winter Reading From www.judsonpress.com

- For Pastors; *Preaching in Plenty and Want* By Matthew Tennant
Addresses the challenges of Preaching in these economic times.
 - For Homeschoolers; *School is Where Home Is* By Anita Mellott
Devotions for homeschool Parents
 - For Women: *Simply Salsa: Dancing Without Fear at God's Fiesta*
 - For Woodworkers; *The Master Carpenter*
Devotions for Woodworkers
 - For Teachers: *Morning Meetings with Jesus*
Devotions for Teachers
 - For Sports Fans: *Baseball Devotional Set*
Steal Away, and Intentional Walk
- And other great choices. Check out www.judsonpress.com

Special Training Opportunity

ABC/NE is sponsoring a "Mediation Skills Training Institute for Church Leaders," July 9-13, 2012. The Institute will be held at Judson Baptist Church in LaVista. It will be led by the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, nationally recognized for excellence in conflict mediation training. Brochures available from ABC/NE.

Very Special Annual Events . . .

WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

June 1-3 — Moses Merrill
This conference renews spirit, body and mind. Women from ABC/NE churches and their friends gather for an enriching & fun weekend.

MEN'S CONFERENCE

August 10-11 — Moses Merrill
This is a special time of inspiration and fellowship for men of ABC/NE churches.

ABC/NE Region Convention Sept 21-23 North Platte

The annual gathering of Nebraska Baptists is a not-to-miss experience. Great music, speakers, fellowship.



Moses Merrill News

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Winter . . . A whole new Moses Merrill Experience!

If you haven't experienced Moses Merrill in the winter, you haven't enjoyed all that MMCCC has to offer.

There's still time to make plans for a winter retreat, family get-away, sledding party, winter hiking or simply R & R.

Come by yourself, with friends or family. Stay in beautiful Calvary Lodge or in one of the cabins. Walk the forest trails. Build a winter campfire.

Experience the peace and beauty of this special place. Be sure to call ahead for reservations.



Enjoy MMCCC without mosquitos!
Make reservations for a wonderful winter experience.

Forecast for Summer — PERFECT!

SUMMER CAMPS

Planning is underway for a great line-up of summer camps. We may not know what the weather will bring, but we know that the forecast is favorable for high quality, inspirational, and fun summer camps.

2012 THEME

The theme for the summer is:
SECRETS OF THE KINGDOM: The Parables of Jesus.

ROOM FOR YOU ON THE LEADERSHIP TEAM!

Is God calling you to give a week of your time to serve as a volunteer leader for a summer camp? Or to work all summer on staff? You can make a difference in the life of a child or young person. For more information, contact MaryBeth Robertson, 402-666-5639 or mrobertson@campmerrill.com.

"Summer camps extend the ministry of each local church. Together we can help children and youth find and develop their faith in Christ." — Mary Beth Robertson

From Camp Cat . . .

Happy New Year! There was a great crowd here for the Christmas Eve Service at Friendship Chapel. How cool is that!

Things are looking great for 2012 at Camp Merrill! I know, I know, some of you just can't think "camp" in the winter. But this is the very time you should be thinking about camp. How about encouraging people in your church to make Camp a part of their lives this year? There are soooooo many things to do here and soooooo many events for children, youth and adults. Yes, I will admit that the better things go for the camp, the more I am assured of regular meals. But the things I'm telling you about camp are really true! MaryBeth, Eric and the rest of the crew are busy getting things ready — come see us.

Your friend, Camp Cat





