

the MESSENGER

American Baptist Churches of Nebraska



February 2008

ABC/NE Date Data

Professional Ministry Dept.
Feb 4, Grand Island

Legislative Briefing Day
Feb. 9

ABC/NE Board of Directors,
Mission Dept, Finance Dept
Feb. 16

FBC Grand Island

ABC/NE Foundation
Feb. 28
Omaha

FAMILY REUNION
Sept. 19-21, Kearney

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Churches Pray for Other Churches In Annual ABC/NE Prayer Emphasis

Each ABC/NE church has been invited to pray for another church during the first quarter of 2008. The invitation encouraged churches to send a delegation to the location of the other church and offer prayer "on-site."



Irv Jennings, pastor of First Baptist in Arnold, responded to the invitation, "Thank you for organizing this prayer ministry. . . . This is the stuff that makes for fertile soil from which springs Spirit empowered revival." Representatives of the Arnold congregation traveled to Arthur the last weekend in January to pray for the Arthur church, its pastor and congregation.

In previous years, the region staff has begun the year with prayer retreats, spending time in prayer for each church in the region. In other years there have been prayer requests in each issue of *The Messenger*. During the course of the year prayer requests were made for each church.

"This year the Prayer Emphasis fits well with the whole idea of Churches Helping Churches," said Executive Minister Susan Gillies. "Each church is part of a ministry beyond its walls."

Building Bridges . . . It's Time to Fulfill the Vision!

Nebraska Baptists are making a difference in the lives of men and women, boys and girls through the ministry of Moses Merrill Camp & Conference Center.

In 2002 the Building Bridges Campaign began. The goal was to increase year-round ministry at Moses Merrill, making it truly "a center for Christian growth." The first project was the construction of Friendship Chapel, followed closely by the Smith Amphitheatre. The next year, Ward Conference Center was added to the Chapel. In 2006 Calvary Lodge was added. In 2007, Weaver Hall was air conditioned.

All during the campaign Nebraska Baptists continued to support the on-going operating costs of the facility and to encourage children, youth and adults to use the facility.

The Building Bridges Campaign will culminate with the construction of a multi-purpose building. Plans are underway and funding is being sought. Director of Camping, Clarence Reiss, is focusing his attention for the next two years on this project and related infrastructure needs. On Jan. 1, Program Director MaryBeth Robertson became Manager of Moses Merrill Camp & Conference Center. She will manage day-to-day operations so that Clarence can devote his time to the project.

It's time to fulfill the vision of Building Bridges. You can help by contributing to Building Bridges, by participating in the life and ministry of the Conference Center, and by helping to tell the story to others. If you'd like to be a BB Volunteer to help tell the story, contact the ABC/NE office.



From the Executive Minister Susan Gillies

Associations aren't the only way to Associate

What we do together as churches should strengthen and encourage us. Our association with each other should make all of us better Christians, more effective in outreach and mission, more effective in worship, nurture, and education. The fellowship should be rich and satisfying.

The ABC/NE Mission Statement indicates that we work together to "encourage, challenge, and empower one another to be transforming Christian communities in the world."

At one time, getting together as a group of churches for an all day meeting actually did the things listed above.

But, over the years, things changed. Generally speaking, people today are not interested in having any more bureaucratic layers of structure than absolutely necessary . . . and some would even do away with some that are necessary!

In the ABC of Nebraska we have nine Associations. One of them has only two churches. Another has three. The largest one, Omahaland, is not officially functioning. It ceased to function about eight years ago. Not too many people missed the business meetings but they did miss the fellowship. Over time they began to have annual music programs in the summer and

Thanksgiving Eve services together. The pastors meet together. The women's and men's groups meet together. But the formal structure of the Omahaland Association is no more.

Some region leaders have begun to raise questions about whether or not there might be other ways for us to enjoy the benefits of associating as groups of churches without the formal structure of Associations. Two former ABC/NE Board Presidents and the current President have been thinking about this. The Board will begin to think about this at their February meeting.

No one should be upset. If your Association is a wonderful, vibrant, vital, fellowship, blessings on you! But, on the other hand, if Association meetings have lost something, maybe this is the time to think about other possibilities.

We are American Baptists. We believe in the Associational Principle. We will be blessed by "encouraging, challenging and empowering one another."

Please pray that God's abundant creativity and wisdom will fill the Board meeting. Live with expectancy that God will do a new thing!



From the Associate Executive Minister..... Steve Bilis

Recognizing a Commitment to Missions

During the next few months, churches throughout Nebraska will be receiving notification that they are being recognized for their commitment to home missions based on several criteria.

America For Christ gifts support Christ-centered ministries that are transforming lives across the United States and Puerto Rico—from building new homes on the Gulf Coast and resettling refugees violently driven from their homelands to providing training in evangelism and developing resources that help Children in Poverty. The **America For Christ** offering is traditionally received in the spring of the year. ABC of Nebraska receives a portion of this offering for our work in the state.

The America For Christ Awards

Nebraska Red Ribbon Certificates will be presented to all churches that increased their AFC giving in 2007 by at least 5% over their previous five-year average.

The Nebraska Blue Ribbon Certificate will be awarded to the church with the largest percentage increase in their 2007 AFC giving over their previous five-year average.

The Nebraska Silver Plaque, a traveling plaque honoring the church with the highest per-capita AFC giving for the year will be awarded to the church with that distinction for 2007. Each year the plaque will move to the honored church.

The Nebraska Gold Cup, a traveling trophy honoring the church with the highest AFC giving for the year. Like the Silver Plaque, it will move to the honored church each year.

I will be sending each church a printout of their AFC giving history to help you establish realistic yet challenging goals for the 2008 AFC offering. This year's theme, "**Home Mission on Our Doorstep**", is wonderfully illustrated and explained in the AFC offering packet of materials that should have already arrived at each church. If you have not yet received your materials please call my office as soon as possible.



ABC/NE still finding GOOD SOIL



The Good Soil Project continues with churches finding new ideas and strategies for vitality.

2008 is the final year for the current group of churches engaged in the project. The next meeting of the Good Soil churches will be Feb. 2 in Grand Island.

ABC/NE has applied for another Clark Grant from ABC's National Ministries with the hope that more Nebraska churches might be funded to engage in another Good Soil Project.

Assoc. Exec. Dave Lundholm's design for the project, based on earlier work in "Tomorrow's Harvest" and the small-church team, is now the model being used nationally for Clark Grants. Good work, Dave!

Nola's Take Five . . .

Ideas from Nola Oberhelman
ABC/NE Christian Education Consultant

Take five multi-age Sunday School projects for **WINTER**:

1. Write and print out devotions for food pantry workers to include with sacks of food.
 2. Install and maintain bird feeders for shut-ins and care-home residents.
 3. Conduct after-school read-alouds and lap-sits in your church fellowship hall.
 4. Arrange for and participate in a "share your story" activity at a nursing home or VA facility.
 5. Collect inspirational quotes and make scrapbooks or individual booklets for a crisis center.
- These are "work together" activities, and you would want to make proper arrangements with the facilities involved.

Check This Out . . .

CAN YOU FIND YOUR CHURCH HERE?

CHURCH A "The budget is a problem. Giving is not keeping pace with expenses. We usually squeak by at the end of the year with some special gifts. With the cost of the pastor's health insurance, I don't see how we can continue this way."

Question 1: How high is the percentage of tithers in your church? Answer: We never ask.

Question 2: Do you have an annual every member canvas to ask for pledges? Answer: No, no, no!

Question 3: Well, then, how about a stewardship emphasis and pledge cards? Answer: No.

Question 4: Do you encourage your pastor to preach Biblical stewardship? Answer: No, we limit him to one sermon per year on stewardship.

CHURCH B "We have difficulty these days having our income match our expenditure needs. But we feel good because we have an endowment fund."

Question 1: What is the endowment fund for? Answer: In our church it's a rainy day fund.

Question 2: What is the definition of "a rainy day." Answer: We've never been clear on that.

Question 3: What is the church's honest vision for itself? Answer: To be like we were in 1955.

Question 4: How much money would it take to make that happen? Answer: More than we'll ever have . . . well, I guess it's not even possible.



CHURCH C "We are doing OK, I guess. We always have a balanced budget even though it has meant a lot of cost cutting."

Question 1: Does your pastor's salary meet the average for churches your size? Answer: We never checked.

Question 2: When was the last time your pastor got a raise that exceeded a cost of living increase?

Answer: It's been years.

Question 3: To balance your budget, do you put more emphasis on cutting costs rather than increasing income? Answer: Yes.

Question 4: Do you provide any kind of financial counseling for members who are in debt? Answer: No.

CHURCH D "We don't have a budget. We don't plan. We don't have enough money."

Question 1: How can anything happen? Answer: We leave it to God.

Question 2: When the pipes break do you leave it to God? Answer: No.

Question 3: When there's a funeral do you leave it to God to provide a meal? Answer: No

Question 4: Do you think God might have provided the money for your church but it's your job to get it out of wallets and into offering plates? Answer: That's a thought.

Is it time for your church to explore the rewards of financial planning? Can your church look beyond — Survival? Hoarding? Making Ends Meet? Could you think in terms of — Growth? Expanding Ministry? Joyful Expression of Who We Are As Christians?

God gave us minds to use and hearts to feel. We are called to put these God given gifts to work. It's hard to find a church that objects to planning strategies to proclaim the gospel and reach the lost. But, somehow, we don't realize that financial planning can help make our outreach more effective.

The Board and staff of ABC/NE would like to assist you in becoming the church God has called you to be. Contact us!

Extravaganza in Estes Park Will Impact Youth for Life!

"MORE THAN A WEEK"



MtW is going to be a youth extravaganza like no other. It will be filled with wonderful worship, dynamic dramas, energetic speakers and thousands of youth and young adult leaders who are on fire for Christ.

American Baptists across the country are praying that MtW will impact the lives of our

youth and denomination for life.

Conference leaders say, "Meet us on the mountain for a conference that will challenge you to find ways that we can transform our world. More than a Week...Equipped 4 Life."

Nebraska youth are raising money and making plans to attend. For more information on the event, go to:

<http://www.nationalministries.org/mtw/> or www.morethanaweek.org
For more information on Nebraska youth, contact the ABC/NE Office.

American Baptist Churches of Nebraska 2008 Board of Directors

President:	Rev. Darren Stroh, Bridgeport
Vice-President:	Ted Hartung, Lincoln Second
Secretary:	Roberta Williston, Judson
Treasurer:	Bob Fairchild, Lincoln First

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North Platte	Woody Falkena, North Platte
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Southern Union	Linda Black, Holdrege
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Professional Ministry: Rev. Tom Wiles	
Mission: Johnny Nelson	
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Executive Minister	Susan Gillies

Happy Anniversary!

Several of our Nebraska Baptist churches are celebrating milestone anniversaries in 2008, including our two oldest. First Baptist Church in Tekamah and First Baptist Church in Omaha will both celebrate 150 years of ministry in the coming year.

Churches celebrating significant anniversaries this year include:

150 years	FBC Tekamah
	FBC Omaha
140 years	FBC Fremont
135 years	FBC Beatrice
	FBC Guide Rock
	FBC Hastings
130 years	FBC Albion
120 years	FBC Holbrook
50 years	Sunset Hills BC Omaha

As these anniversary celebrations take shape we would appreciate the opportunity to join in the festivities. Be sure to keep the Region office apprised of the dates and times of your events.

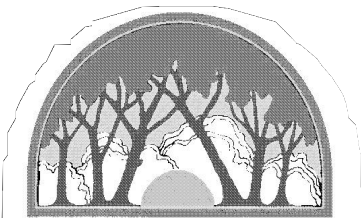
If we have overlooked your congregation's milestone anniversary please let us know so we can include it in next month's Messenger.

ABC Trivia for Black History Month

- Who was the first African-American Home Missionary? A. John Mason Peck, B. William J. Simmons, C. Luther Rice, D. Thomas Ward Merrill.
- Who was the first African-American woman Foreign Missionary? A. Lulu Fleming, B. Joanna P. Moore, C. Elizabeth Johnson, D. Emily Judson
- The Am. Bapt. Home Mission Society helped found which schools? A. Shaw Univ., B. Richmond Institute, C. Benedict College, D. Florida Memorial Univ. E. All of the above.
- Who was the first African-American Director of New Church Development for ABC? A. Michael Cox, B. Al Brinson, C. James Stallings, D. Roy Thompson
- Who was the first African-American member of the ABC's National Executive Council? A. William T. McKee, B. Aidsand Wright-Riggins, C. Paul Nichols, D. Dennis Norris.

Book of Timothy





Moses Merrill News

2849 Rd. 31 Bldg. 3, Linwood, NE 68036 (402) 666-5639

E-mail: campmerrill@nntc.net Web site: www.campmerrill.com

Summer Work & Volunteer Ministry Opportunities

Interested in ministering through a summer staff position or as a volunteer? Applications are available for summer positions starting May 23 and ending on August 9.

Wrangler-- Cares for horses, leads trail rides
Lifeguard—Supervises swim times; cares for pool

Snack Shack/Photographer—Operates the Snack Shack; serves as photographer for week of camp

Activities Assistant—Resource person for recreation equipment; assists with recreation activities as requested

Crafts Assistant—Assists with planning and supervising craft activities during the camp week

Groundskeeper—Assists with mowing, maintenance of facilities, campfires

Dining Room Host/Kitchen Assistant—Works with food supervisor to prepare and serve meals; prepares dining room for meals

Grandparents— Volunteer grandparents attend children's camps and provide a loving presence for kids who are often away from home for the first time.

Cabin Leaders— Vital Volunteers! Two adults in each cabin during each camp provide leadership and make a difference in the lives of children and youth.

We like to have paid workers commit to working May 23 to Aug 9. Volunteers may serve only a portion of the summer as their schedules permit. Room and board are provided for staff and volunteers. Join us in ministry this summer!

Please contact us at the e-mail address or phone number at top of page.

Dear Friends,

Wintertime at Moses Merrill is just great! I will admit I don't like walking in the snow all that much unless mouse-chasing. Clarence and the guys keep the roads in good shape so I usually enjoy strolling on the camp roads looking at the scenery.

We have sledders out every time it snows. Camp is a really terrific place for sledding.

We even had a January wedding at camp! I wasn't invited but I watched the people come and go.

Let us know if you'd like to come out for either sledding or getting married!

Well, it's back to my favorite winter activity — taking a nap.

—Camp Cat



2008 is a year to make a difference!

Children, youth and adults will be making a difference this year. "Make A Difference" is the 2008 Program Theme for Camp. At camp this year, we'll learn how God's loving care for us makes a difference in our lives. We'll learn how the choices we make and the ways we use the skills and talents God gives us can make a difference in ways we can't even imagine. Plan on having a Moses Merrill experience this year!

Plan now for Jr High/Sr High



Retreat

March 28-30, 2008

Camp Merrill

"awesome connections . . ."

From the Associate Executive Minister Dave Lundholm

Church Smoke Detector

All of us have been convinced of the importance of having functioning smoke detectors in our homes and the importance of testing them often.

Wouldn't it be nice if there was a "smoke detector" to alert us when issues in the congregation are heating up and we are heading for conflict? You can't prevent all conflict any more than you can prevent all fires, but a careful, positive response can often minimize the damage.

Rev. John Simpson, a Baptist leader in Australia, offers the following signs of impending church conflict:

- o Church meetings increase in time well beyond what has been the usual.
- o Tensions begin to emerge between the pastor and some deacons without there being adequate resolution. Much of this tension is really underground with an absence of effective and honest communication. There may be a denial of any real difficulties on everybody's part. ...
- o The pastor and leadership become less sure of the overall vision and direction of the church. The focus begins to shift from matters of outwardly directed mission and ministry to internal concerns and anxieties.
- o The weekly offerings begin to reduce for no apparent reason...
- o There are increasing levels of disenchantment in the church and the gossip moves into high gear... (Dave's note: Trust between members of the congregation begins to erode)

When churches are in conflict, they often turn to the Region for assistance. And usually, by the time the Region is contacted, the conflict has moved to the place where there is very little anyone can do resolve the conflict. Region staff will take responsibility for the times we've missed the early warning signals. We have learned some lessons.

What if churches periodically "tested their smoke detector" determining if they see any of the signs of warming conflict? And what if, sensing smoke, they sought to be gentle "firefighters" putting cooling water or soothing foam on tension? What if churches committed to being healing rather than hurting communities of faith? Or what if they sought assistance from the Region before the church was fully involved in flame?

Check your smoke detector.

LOCAL CHURCH NEWS

by Darlene Rimpley

February Deadlines

Jan. 4, 2008 - Print Copy

Jan. 9, 2008 - E-Mail

Home Town Editor (Note New Address)

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Subject: Messenger

NOTE TO CHURCHES: The news column is short this month as I was short on newsletters. The postmaster does not deliver mail unless it is addressed to 912 N Carroll. Please make the change in your mailings as we miss your news.

ALLIANCE FBC: Sunday, Nov 18 was Thanksgiving Rally Day. Letters of invitation were sent to all members and friends of the fellowship. A special worship was held with all invited to make this a new beginning Sunday. The annual Thanksgiving dinner was held following with a good attendance. On Nov 11, the ABY met and packaged and delivered 24 Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes. The ABY conducted the Hanging of the Greens worship on Sunday Dec 2. The Board of Education provided a reception following. The caroling party on Dec 16 went to 12 different homes. The Board of deacons packed and delivered 11 Christmas food boxes on Dec 22. Treat sacks were passed out following worship on Dec 23. The Christmas Eve candle light service was well attended. New Year's Eve communion was celebrated in the Chapel. Life long member of the church, Ella Shaw passed way on Dec 21.

ARNOLD FBC: A New Year's Eve watch party was held with a good crowd in attendance. A

"paper shower" was held for the church kitchen during January.

ARTHUR BAPTIST CHURCH: The Arthur Baptist church had a Baptismal service with Corey Larsen professing his faith in Christ. ABY is being held every other Wednesday night with supper right after sports practice. Attendance has been good. The month of December closed out the annual RMMO offering topping last years by almost \$1000. The Annual business meeting of the church was January 20, 2008.

BROKEN BOW FBC: Pastor Betty Johnson accepted a call to Mapleton, MN. Keep the church in prayer as they seek a new pastor.

CHADRON FBC: A farewell dinner was held on Dec 23 for Pastor Rick and Linda, which was the final day for their ministry with the church. As a thank you gift the church family reached and passed the goal of \$5,000 to go for a new church van for the church in Ghana that Pastor Rick supports. Richard and Cora Sutterlin celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on Dec 29.

COLUMBUS FBC: Ruth Woodrick who had been a member of our church since 1941, passed away on Nov 27. We held our Sunday

School Christmas Program on Dec 16. Our church hosted the Dec 23 Advent Service at Camp Merrill. We had a Christmas Eve Service. Interim pastors Jesse & Kathy Brown have agreed to serve for three more months.

GIBBON BC: AWANA held a "Bring a Friend" night, a "Beach Night", and a "Crazy Hair Night" in January. The women of the church enjoyed a luncheon in Kearney on January 8, at which time they drew for prayer sisters. DeWayne and LaBerta Olson celebrated their 5th wedding anniversary on Dec 30.

GRAND ISLAND FBC: The ABW reported that the church filled 44 shoeboxes for the Operation Christmas Child.

HASTINGS FBC: We produced 32 Christmas Child shoeboxes and served as the collection point for 410 from other churches around, which we then delivered to a pick-up point in Kearney where 6047 boxes were collected. The men from our alternative worship team supplied the worship leadership for a two-day "Men of Purity" conference sponsored by Hastings Men of Promise at the fairgrounds. A "no particular reason" potluck on Dec 2 attracted lots of food and good fellowship. A number of First Baptist folk traveled in cold and ice to see the "Singing Christmas Tree" at Grand Island E Free.

FREMONT FBC: A Teacher Appreciation Dinner was held on Jan 20. Pastor Walt Hickman was honored on the occasion of his 80th birthday on Dec 30. The Shepherds Ministry has a total of 46 shepherds at this time, and is seeking more.

JUNIATA FBC: A New Year's Eve party was held.

LAVISTA, JUDSON: A special Thanksgiving offering was given to the Tri-City Food Pantry. The Christmas offering is going to help buy additional tables for fellowship meals. The children sold 2008 calendars to raise money for the youth program. The Judson children performed a play called "Christmas Carol." Christmas baskets were assembled and delivered to all the shut-ins. During the holidays mission donations were taken and given to the Uta Halee Store. We asked for nine items and received over 100! Judson also purchased gifts for seven children in the Angel Tree program. Members and friends of Judson decorated the church for Christmas in a "Deck the Halls" ceremony and had a chili/soup luncheon as their reward. Pastor Glenn, with the help of an interpreter, preached for Pastor Alex as the Spanish church celebrated their Pastor Appreciation Sunday. The annual members and visitors held Candlelight Christmas Eve Service with lots of special music. Our thanks to an anonymous donor of a much needed lawn tractor. The J.O.Y. Club traveled to west Omaha to attend one of the big Christmas performances with live animals and flying angels! 2007 saw some members of Judson go home to be with the Lord, but we also celebrated the healing of many of our members who suffered from cancer, broken bones, and other assorted illnesses.

LINCOLN FBC: Unity Sunday was held on Jan 20, with FBC and their ethnic sister churches uniting for a joint worship service and dinner. The mission team that is planning for a trip to Jamaica is selling SCRIP from several businesses, where the purchaser receives full value for their purchase, but the mission team receives 10% of the amount from the business.

LINCOLN SECOND BAPTIST: ABW Ministries sponsored a Christmas Brunch on Dec 1, they also collected mittens, gloves and other items for the children of McPhee Elementary School during December. Family Ministries sponsored their annual Progressive Dinner and White Elephant Gift Exchange on Dec 7. Dec 14, the Senior Adult Ministry, sponsored an all church soup supper and StarTran City Bus Holiday Lights tour. Sunday, Dec 16 the Chancel Choir performed their annual Christmas Cantata entitled "All is Calm, All is Bright" during the morning worship service. The same evening was the annual Christmas Program and reception featuring a visit from Santa. This year's program was called "All I want for Christmas ... Is Jesus" and it was presented by children, youth and adults. Christmas Eve candlelight services were held featuring our interim pastor and his wife, Pastor Bob and Fayette Molby, reading "The First Night Before Christmas". The youth held a lock-in at the church on New Year's Eve. Jan 12, ABMen sponsored a

Family Breakfast. Sunday School Teachers were honored with a luncheon on Jan 27, sponsored by the Board of Christian Education.

MCCOOK FBC: Flora Dutcher celebrated her 100th birthday on Jan 27 with a reception at the church. Pastor Jackson held "tell-a-prayer" sessions Jan 22-25 via phone for the hour of 6:00 - 7:00 am.

NORTH PLATTE FBC: "Trunk or Treat" an alternative to "Trick or Treat" was held in the church parking lot on Halloween evening with over 300 people in attendance. Church members parked their decorated cars and opened their trunks for treats. Games and food were provided for a good, safe evening of fun. "The Living Christmas Tree" was presented to good crowds for 3 of the 4 scheduled performances. Saturday night performance was cancelled due to a winter storm. World Missions boutiques provided an opportunity for some Christmas shopping during the fellowship time following each performance.

OMAHA FBC: On Dec 11, we hosted, along with Nebraska Medical Center and King of Kings Church, a free medical screening and coat/clothes give away. Our young children presented a Christmas program written and directed by Christina Atkins, on Dec 16. The ABW Rebecca-Ruth Circle enjoyed a Christmas lunch at Piccolo Pete's here in Omaha. The adult choir presented an inspirational concert of Christmas music during the morning worship on Dec 23. Two services were held on Christmas Eve at 5:30 p.m. and at 11:30 p.m. Our annual meeting and potluck dinner was Jan 20 following the morning service. Our young adults met on Dec 2 for a fun evening of bowling and playing Trivia Pursuit, afterwards, at Kate and Jeremy Stober's home. Plans are being finalized for our 150th Anniversary Celebration this year.

OMAHA, MAPLECREST CARE CENTER: We celebrated Chaplain Diane Jorgensen's nearly eight years of ministry at Maple Crest and wished her well in her new position at Creighton University. We have begun a search for a new chaplain. Interested persons should contact: Floyd Adams at: (402) 551-2110 for more information.

OMAHA, MIRACLE HILLS: We are hosting the Covenant Players on Friday, February 15 at 7:00 p.m. This is a dinner theatre presentation with a contemporary gospel message. Reservations can be acquired through February 4 by calling the church office: 492-8374.

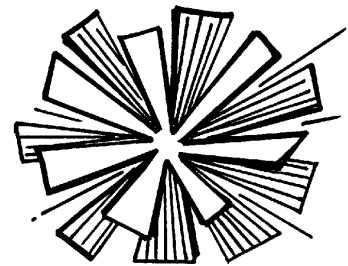
OMAHA, PARKSIDE: Rev. Dr. Onnie Drain has been called to be acting pastor of the congregation.

OMAHA, SUNSET HILLS: Members furnished an apartment and then greeted the family that they are sponsoring from Burma (Myanmar). The family - parents and five children ranging in age from 17 to infant - fled Burma in 1986 and had been living in a refugee camp in Thailand. The Christmas Eve candlelight service and drama was well attended. The senior high youth and Forgiven sang Christmas music at

Maple Crest in December. Pastor Ron and Forgiven provided the vesper service Dec 16 at The Arboretum retirement community. Bob Slechta has assumed the president's role for American Baptist Men of Nebraska. Longtime member Joyce North died. A yearlong series of events began Jan 5, 50 years to the day of the congregation's vote to formally organize as a church, then known as West Omaha Baptist Chapel.

OXFORD FBC: An all-church soup supper was served on Nov 28, followed with Christmas decorating both inside and outside the church. Dec 2 was a special time of Christmas caroling in the community, a supper followed at the church. Items were brought to donate to the "food pantry" as a love gift for the supper. Several members of our church family are participating in the annual Community Christmas Cantata on Dec 9 at the Southern Valley High School auditorium. The Christmas Sunday School Program was held on Sunday, Dec 16, during the morning service. Many from our congregation participated with skits, children's bell choir, and vocal and instrumental music. The highlight was when Alicia Lambert played her harp for us. Christmas Eve service was a special evening and very well attended.

RIVERSIDE BC: On Sunday, Nov 18, members of Riverside Baptist Church, Tekamah, celebrated Thanksgiving with other area churches. Their Pastor, Rev. Beverly Melchor-Young, was the guest preacher, and pastors of other churches read scripture, led the prayers, litany and offering. Choirs from 2 area churches provided wonderful music! The service was followed by the delicious annual soup and pie supper.



Welcome new members

NEW MEMBERS:

ARNOLD FBC: Brett and Olivia James

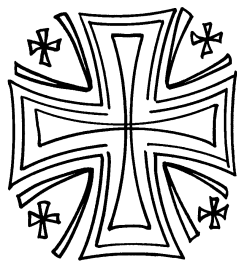
ARTHUR BC: Corey Larsen

GIBBON BC: Tom and Babara Christy

NORFOLK FBC: Angela Anderson, Nikita Rector, Sora Wolff, Lottie Klein, Casey Boyer

OMAHA SUNSET HILLS: Jason, Steven and Kayla Workman; Wakonda Hazel-Cannon, Davonte and Lachelle Hazel, Antonea and Heaven Cannon; Clinton and Angel Dale.

OXFORD FBC: Carl Proctor, Ardis Proctor and Zeni Trenchard.



Your word is a light to my path.
Ps 119:105

Interim Ministry Conference Slated for Moses Merrill

A Conference on Interim Ministry will be held at Moses Merrill Camp & Conference Center March 10-12. ABC's National Interim Ministries Director Jamie Munro will lead the event.

The meeting is designed for people interested in becoming interim pastors or for those who are already engaged in interim ministry. Contact the region office for further information.

ABC of Nebraska Staff

Executive Minister	Susan Gillies
Associate Executive Minister	Dave Lundholm
Associate Executive Minister	Steve Bils
Director of Camping	Clarence Reiss
Manager of Moses Merrill Camp & Conference Center	MaryBeth Robertson
Camp Staff....	Joe Huss, Jerry Buss, Trudy Reiss, Barb Fisher, Christina Miller, Bob Schuelke, Denise Harris, Beverly Pacas
Office Manager	Sue Gammel
Office Assistant	Margaret Brown-Moore
Accounting Services.....	Jerry Buss
Christian Education Consultant	Nola Oberhelman
Church Life Consultant	A. J. Wagstaff
Pastor to Pastors (W).....	Paul Kondy
Pastor to Pastors (E).....	Dick Peterson
Emergency Services Consultant	Jason Workman

American Baptist Black History Month Trivia Answers

(continued from page 4)

1. B. William J. Simmons was the first African-American home missionary. He was appointed district secretary to the Southern states in 1887.
2. A. Lucille "Lulu" Fleming was the first African-American woman foreign missionary. She began serving in 1887.
3. E. The Am. Bapt. Home Mission Society (National Ministries) established 27 institutions of higher education for freed people.
4. D. Roy Thompson was the first African-American to serve as ABC's National Director of New Church Planting.
5. A. William T. McKee was the first African-American to serve on the ABC's National Executive Council.. He was elected in 1972.



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