

# the ESSENGER

American Baptist Churches of Nebraska



March 2007

**ABC/NE Date Data**

Nebraska Foundation  
March 16, Region Office

Men's Retreat, March 23-25  
Camp Rock

EASTER, April 8

Work Days at Camp Merrill  
April 9-14 & May 6-12

Tri-Region Pastors Event  
April 23-25  
FBC, Sioux Falls, SD

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The Nebraska Baptist State Convention

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## HOME MISSION AHEAD

*America for Christ Offering Makes a Difference in Nebraska*



American Baptist congregations are invited to "Come along for the ride!" and set their faith into motion as they learn about transformative mission in the United States and Puerto Rico through "Home Mission Ahead," this year's America for Christ Offering.

This year's "Home Mission Ahead" theme is inspired by 2 Corinthians 5:14-15, "For the love of Christ urges us on..." The offering is received all year but is traditionally given a special focus during February and March.

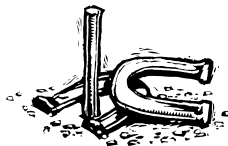
Promotional materials, which are available from Steve Bils, 877-244-7339, feature compelling mission stories and ministry information conveying some of the urgency and excitement in American Baptist home mission. Materials also include ideas for helping to increase local churches' commitment to home mission. They describe some of the ministries and missionar-

ies supported by America for Christ gifts—disaster response, new church planting, children in poverty, **Camp Moses Merrill**, intercultural ministries, discipleship, **the work of ABC/NE** and much more. Bulletin inserts found in the offering packet may also be downloaded at [www.abc-afc.org](http://www.abc-afc.org), which has links to additional resources.

"Movement is a central theme in this year's offering," said National Ministries' Executive Director, Dr. Aidsand F. Wright-Riggins, III. "God reaches out in love toward every human being, and this is a central aspect of National Ministries' work of transforming leadership and lives, in partnership with American Baptist regions throughout the United States and Puerto Rico. Join us for great home mission ahead!"

### Western Men's Retreat March 23-25

The Western AB-Men's retreat will be held March 23-25 at Camp ROCK. The theme is: "Being Real and Christ-like in a Worldly World." Tentative speaker is Dave Sleeve, former sheriff of Scottsbluff County. Registration forms can be obtained by emailing Darren Stroh at [dstroh1021@yahoo.com](mailto:dstroh1021@yahoo.com). Father/son registrants get a \$25 discount (youth must be older than 12 for some of the activities). Cost



is \$75 for single registration, and \$125 for father/son registration. *All registrations are going to have to be in by March 15th. No late registrations will be accepted.*

### ABC/NE Board Sets Goals

The ABC/NE Board established goals for 2007 at its meeting Saturday, Feb. 17. President Darren Stroh led the group in a visioning/goal-setting process.

The Board determined that it will work on Fellowship and Outreach priorities in the year to come. Board members also are committed to finding ways to support congregations that are serving multiple racial/ethnic groups. Board members challenged each other to practice a discipline from *Celebration of Disciplines* by Richard Foster. The final goal is to purposefully strengthen relationships.

The new special emphasis department of ABC/NE is the Dept. of Church Vitality. This group had its first meeting Feb. 16 and is beginning work.

From the Executive Minister . . . . . Susan Gillies

## Ordinary to Extraordinary

You are a beloved child of the living God. You have gifts, skills, knowledge. I challenge you to become all God created you to be.

In our society we are buffeted on every side by messages that tell us we are not "OK." We are not attractive enough, young enough, old enough, thin enough, muscular enough, smart enough. We don't own enough of the right things. Our homes aren't OK and the assumption is, therefore, our lives aren't OK.

I love to watch Home & Garden Television but I am stunned by people who feel that if a kitchen doesn't have stainless steel appliances and granite countertops, it is out-of-date and must be changed. What happened to the idea that you don't get a new something (stove, refrigerator, chair, wallet,) until the old one wears out?? OK, so now I've revealed that I may be out-of-date!

All of this distracts us from the reason we are here. Our ABC-USA General Secretary says we are people of prayer, purpose and passion. I think he sees what we could be rather than what we are.

Now, becoming all God created you to be does not mean you are supposed to be a pastor. Some folks think that if you really, really love God, you are supposed to be a pastor. Not so. If you really, really love God, you are supposed to be who he created you to be. And that may be an exceptional mom or dad; it may be an exceptional secretary, or dentist, or clerk, or watchmaker, or pastor. Living your faith in your daily life may have more impact on those around you than a church has ever had

on them.

Think about these ministries as possible ways you can make a difference. And your life of faith can move from ordinary to extraordinary:

1. Ministry of Competence – this means you do whatever you do to the very best of your ability and you seek to learn and improve as you go.
2. Ministry of Presence – this means you are a caring person who knows how to listen. It means you can weep with those who weep and rejoice with those who rejoice.
3. Ministry of Ethics – this means you do the right thing . . . always. [This also means you don't break copyright laws at church!]
4. Ministry of Change – this means you don't let unjust systems continue without doing what you can do. It means not just feeding hungry people but actively seeking ways to correct a system that causes people to be hungry.
5. Ministry of Values – this means practicing what you preach. If you say God is first in your life, you need to live that way, including tithing your gross income.
6. Ministry of Sharing – this means being able to tell others what Jesus has done for you. If you lead your life according to steps 1-5, people will ask you why you do the things you do and taking step 6 will be easy.

[If you'd like to know more about the 6 steps, let me know.]



From the Associate Executive Minister . . . . . Steve Bils

## America: The World's Third Largest Mission Field

The *America For Christ* offering is received in the spring of each year to give American Baptists an opportunity to expand their mission presence in the United States and Puerto Rico.

Your AFC gifts support home mission, as carried out by National Ministries staff & home missionaries in partnership with regions and local churches. These ministries transform leadership and lives, and provide opportunities for the whole denominational family to get involved in home mission.

National Ministries is **transforming leadership** through ...

- J. Alfred Smith Sr. Prophetic Justice Institute
- American Baptist College and Seminary Scholarships
- American Baptist Personnel Services
- Intercultural Ministries
- National Evangelism Team
- Church Planting
- Office of Governmental Relations

National Ministries is **transforming lives** through ...

- American Baptist Homes and Caring Ministries
- Disaster Response and Refugee Resettlement
- Chaplains and Pastoral Counselors
- Volunteer Ministries
- Neighborhood Action Program, Christian Centers
- Ministry to Children and Youth
- Ministries of Financial Aid and Continuing Education

National Ministries supports **denomination-wide initiatives** ...

- Children in Poverty Initiative
- ABC Reads
- NEW LIFE 2010

## Mission Advocates: Helping Churches Understand Missions

The *ABC Mission Advocates in Partnership* program is designed to identify and train individuals within our local congregations who have a heart for the missionary work of our larger ABC family. The Mission Department of ABC Nebraska began the roll out of this program last fall with an informational workshop at the region convention in Lincoln.

Mission advocacy is not a new mission support strategy. A recent study researching common characteristics of strong mission-oriented churches found only one: churches that demonstrated strong commitment to the cooperative mission efforts of the denomination had members who would speak up for it at church planning and budget meetings.

With this reality in mind, the following mission statement for the MAP program was adopted: *The Mission Advocates in Partnership program will strengthen the understanding and funding of American Baptist mission by creating and sustaining a network of committed, enthusiastic, informed, local mission spokespersons who work in partnership with local church pastors and regional staff.*

Later this spring and early summer a series of Saturday workshops will be held across Nebraska with two primary tracks. Track A will be a training module for individuals interested in serving their congregation as Mission Advocates. Track B will deal with Church Vitality and will focus on the things learned from the Tomorrow's Harvest and Good Soil initiatives.

We will be contacting your pastor soon to identify the Mission Advocates throughout our state. Let your pastor know if you think you might like to serve your church in this capacity.



## TWO LONG-TENURE SENIOR PASTORS SET THE BAR HIGH

### Rev. A. J. Wagstaff King Solomon, Omaha

Rev. A. J. Wagstaff has served as Senior Pastor of King Solomon Missionary Baptist Church in Omaha for 26 years. He is the founding pastor of the church.

The church began in a storefront, later moving to a church building for 17 years. In 2004, they began construction of a completely new facility. The shell of the building is done and one portion of it has been fully completed and serves now as the sanctuary. The congregation is currently raising funds for the completion of the building.

Pastor Wagstaff is motivated by a deep desire to help people. He wants to see people changed. At King Solomon, there is an atmosphere of love. Wagstaff said, "We're a family but no member is a big-shot. We're all on equal turf."

Rev. Wagstaff has a particular concern about young men and women in North Omaha. He recently became convinced that King Solomon could do something to reach these people and introduce them to Christ. Wagstaff said, "There are young people in our community who are hurting and I want to introduce them to a better way of life." He and his staff are working on a special retreat in June at Camp Merrill for about 130 persons. The retreat will provide a special time and place for young people to be exposed to good role models and to learn together.

King Solomon just began a Saturday evening "come as you are" church service for children and youth. The pastor told his people, "Don't worry about their clothes, let's worry about their hearts."

A believer in life-long learning, Pastor Wagstaff is currently auditing the Central Seminary course in Old Testament being offered at Benson Baptist Church.

Pastor Wagstaff and his wife, Lucy, were married in 1962. They have 3 children, 7 grand-children, and 1 great-grandchild.



### Rev. Stan Murdoch First Baptist, Kearney

Rev. Stan Murdoch is Senior Pastor of First Baptist Church of Kearney. He will be honored on the 20th anniversary of his coming to Kearney April 1, 2007 at an Open House at the church.

Rev. Murdoch believes in long pastorates. He describes his calling to share life and faith over the generations with his congregation. He says he has done weddings for folks who were 3-years old when he arrived at the church. He has also done their grandparents' funerals.

He says that his one over-arching prayer is that the people he serves will know their Bible better. "I can care for them with the regular duties of the church: baptisms, weddings, funerals; but my prayer is that they know their Bible better. That's what will sustain and guide them through the years of their life." He describes the value of Bible knowledge to persons in their daily walk with God but also when they are in Iraq or in a care facility. They'll know their Bible.

To celebrate Pastor Stan's role as a minister to the community, First Baptist is inviting the entire community to come to a series of teachings beginning March 7 for four Wednesdays. Pastor Stan will teach the general techniques that helped him really know the Bible. He says he finds that people want to learn. There is a hunger to know the Bible. This hunger is found in students, professional people, and people in every walk of life. The special Wednesday night gatherings will be open to folks from all churches as well as people who don't attend church.

In 2001, on a sabbatical leave, Rev. Murdoch studied the effects of long term ministry. He interviewed pastors who had been in ministry 25 years and more.

Prior to serving in Kearney, he served as a youth minister in Michigan and Illinois and served as Pastor of First Baptist Church, Pontiac, Illinois.

Pastor Murdoch and his wife, Pam, both grew up on farms near Oxford, NE. Both attended Northern Baptist Seminary. They were married in 1975 and have two children.



## TURN-AROUND TIME

Is God calling you to "turn around" in your life? What do you need to "turn-around" about?

The churches that are engaged in THE GOOD SOIL PROJECT are reading *Celebration of Discipline* by Richard Foster. In the book, they are finding guidance on how to develop their faithfulness through the spiritual disciplines. As part of the process they are challenging each other to pay attention to the disciplines they would most like to ignore.

THE GOOD SOIL project encourages participants to be gentle with themselves and each other. They are to approach the disciplines with joy and even a spirit of play as they try them out.

How about you? As preparation for Easter, you or your Sunday School class or your small group might want to join in a study of the spiritual disciplines.

Becoming a more effective disciple is a blessing to you, your church, your family and your community.

### Nola's Take Five . . .

Ideas from Nola Oberhelman  
ABC/NE Christian Ed Consultant



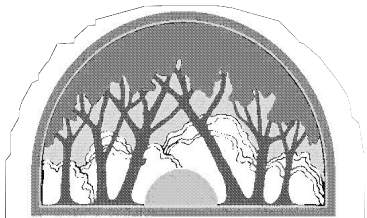
Take Five--games that teach Bible stories.

1. Pin the tail on Balaam's donkey
2. Fish for men with magnets
3. Answer Ark animal trivia questions
4. Toss "taxes" and lift Zacchaeus into the tree
5. Dunk Naaman into the Jordan

There are 24 more Bible story games in Alice Pracht's book, *Christian Carnivals, a Teaching and Witness Tool for Your Church*. Alice, who has a degree in music education, is a member of First Baptist in Norfolk. Use her e-mail [ampracht@conpoint.com](mailto:ampracht@conpoint.com) to obtain her book or information about it. Directions for implementing the games are quite thorough. You won't be disappointed.







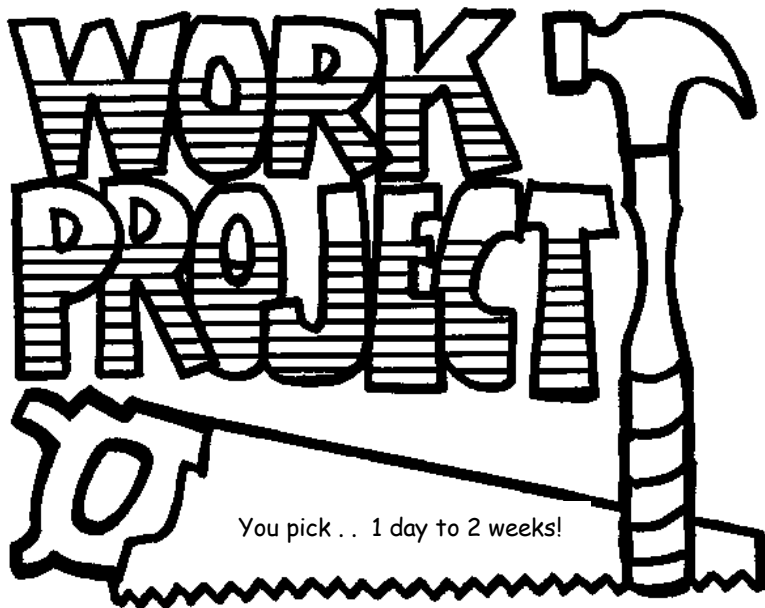
## Camp Moses Merrill News

2849 Co. Rd. 31 Box 170A Linwood, NE 68036

Clarence Reiss, Director (402) 666-5639

E-mail: [campmerrill@nntc.net](mailto:campmerrill@nntc.net)

Website: [www.campmerrill.com](http://www.campmerrill.com)



You pick . . . 1 day to 2 weeks!

### Help Get Camp Ready for Summer and Have a Great Time!

Individuals and teams of workers are invited to Camp April 9-14 and May 6-12 to help get camp ready for the summer season. Volunteers can come for one day or stay for several days. Morning devotions start out each day at breakfast. In the evenings, workers may participate in general camp activities or teams may plan their own activities.

This is an opportunity for folks to share their talents and get involved. Camp Director Clarence Reiss says, "Volunteers put their faith to work through their hands. We couldn't do this ministry without them!"

Pre-registered Work Project Volunteers may stay in cabins for no charge or in Calvary Lodge (as space is available) for \$45/night. Suggested donation for meals is \$10/day. **Because of safety requirements, Work Project time at camp is limited to those age 18 and older. Persons 16 & 17 may attend if accompanied and supervised by an adult, one on one.**

#### What Kind of Work Is Needed?

Roofing, demolition of out houses, grounds work, planting, painting, chipping, building enclosure fences for outside air units, general projects of various kinds.

#### IS THERE A CHURCH OUT THERE READY FOR . . .

### AN EXTREME CHALLENGE?



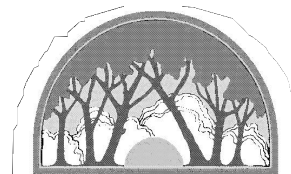
The challenge: Find funding and workers to do an Extreme Make-over of an unused bathhouse, transforming it into staff housing. The bathhouse is in the unused camping loop, in the woods behind the pool.



We are in need of additional staff housing. Here is the opportunity & the challenge! How about it?

#### WHO STARTED CAMP MERRILL?

We are doing research to identify the "Fullerton Site Pioneers" and the "Linwood Site Pioneers" of Camp Merrill. Who were the people who were instrumental in beginning the ministry in each location? If you have information, pictures, stories, clippings, please consider sharing them with us. Thank you!



### Camp Merrill Local Church Award

#### Will Your Church Receive One??

In 2007, every church that sends 10% more campers to camp in June, July, August than their average for the last three years, will receive the Camp Merrill Local Church Award. The count will include friends that church kids recruit to come with them, whether they are funded by the church or by their family. [Men's & Women's Conferences included.]

From the Associate Executive Minister ..... Dave Lundholm

# The Church Secretary – Multiplying Pastoral Ministry

There is doubtless no one who can have more positive impact on the effectiveness of a pastor's ministry than an excellent church secretary. I spent some time talking to church secretaries this week and here are the kinds of things that they do:

- They handle volumes of detail work and bunches of routine decisions that otherwise would distract and defocus the pastor from the vital work of equipping the saints for the work of ministry. They make things happen.
- They produce the necessary paperwork that the church needs in order to function: the bulletins, reports, directories, minutes and other such stuff. They also know where to find these documents when they are needed.
- They serve as a communications nexus fielding phone calls and e-mails. And since they are experts in the church structure they know how to forward questions and the best times to contact key leaders. They also know (better than anyone else) where to find the pastor when there is an emergency.
- Often they have a key role in scheduling the use of facilities.
- Most church secretaries have worked in their position for years and have a sense of the history and flow of ministry of the congregation. I've always found them to be an excellent resource in figuring out the best ways

to get things done.

- These days they are often also involved in building security and screening access.
- Some church secretaries also take on the ministry of being an encouragement to the pastor. "It's important to give the pastor a few words of encouragement, but not too many," one told me.
- They also encourage pastors to do things that are very un-pastorlike like meeting deadlines. Often this is accomplished by the use of humor. When a deadline was missed, one secretary printed a special copy of the church newsletter with the text "Pastor's column not available for this newsletter," and placed it prominently on the pastor's desk. Shortly after the pastor returned to his office, he in a panic burst into the church office. "Did you really print it this way?" The secretary said "no" and the missing column was to the secretary instantly.

It is important that we honor the dedicated people who serve in this vital role. If you have a church secretary, praise them, pray for them, (pay them what they are worth) and do what you can to make their job easier. If you don't have one then that probably means that your pastor is less effective than he/she could be because he/she is distracted by all the things above.

Thank God for church secretaries because in their role (as one said) "There is never a dull moment."



## LOCAL CHURCH NEWS

by Darlene Rimpley

### April Deadlines

March 7, 2007 - Print Copy

March 12, 2007 - E-Mail

### Home Town Editor

Darlene RIMPLEY

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### E-Editor

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Subject: Messenger

**ALLIANCE FBC:** The women met for their regular meeting on Jan 17. Caleb Quick brought an excellent program on his recent trip to Israel. Iris Rohrbouck and Eva Roebuck served as hostesses. The morning worship hour on Jan 21 was given to a special Joyce Rowe Appreciation Sunday. Pastor Rowe conducted the Sunday afternoon worship vesper services at the Highland Park Health Care Center during January. The ABY are planning a ski trip to the Black Hills in February.

**ARNOLD FBC:** Ruth Circle lead a project to deliver 50 Valentine bags to 65 people in the community. Several projects the church is involved in are sending Bibles (extras that people have that are still in good shape) and religious books to third world countries, and sending funds to purchase pocket Bibles for service personnel (\$3.25 per Bible).

**ARTHUR BC:** Pastors Ben and Elaine Keene made a trip back to New York state in early February for the funeral of Ben's father. Pastor Keene is facing surgery on his back soon and prayers are appreciated. Pastor Keene attended the "Good Soil" meeting at Grand Island. Preschool is being held at the church on

Tuesdays and Thursdays. Adventure club for the lower grades is starting at the church at the end of February.

**BEATRICE FBC:** the AB Men treated the women of the church to a Valentine's banquet on Feb 17. An Ash Wednesday service was held on Feb 21.

**BELLEVUE STRANGERS REST BC:** Don't let the restaurant and western union sign mislead you. This is the new home of Strangers Rest. The picture doesn't do justice to the nice facility, located at 806 Fort Crook Rd. South, in Bellevue. Inside are pews donated by New Life,



Bellevue, and pulpit items from FBC, Norfolk. Pastor T.S. Gilliam says, "Everyone is welcome

for worship!" The church began meeting in the new facility in January.

**CHADRON FBC:** A Valentine's Day party was held on Feb 14, with a pot luck supper and lots of activities following. The AB Men and Boys held their annual Breakfast on Feb 24 at the church.

**CHAPMAN FBC:** January was a slow month due to the weather and ice storm. We held our first quarterly business meeting for 2007 on 21 January with a potluck lunch before the meeting. The FBC joined with the community in a fundraiser for a Chapman family that had a house fire. We started the men's breakfast again in January and hope to continue the tradition.

**COLUMBUS FBC:** Pastor Larry Adams resigned the pastorate at FBC, with Jan 14 being his last day in the pulpit. The church had an reception to express gratitude to Larry and his family.

**FAIRBURY FBC:** Rev. Robin Stoops and Kathy have resigned their pastorate at FBC, effective Mar 15. Regan Stoops, son of Pastor Robin and Kathy Stoops, was ordained at First Baptist

Church in Mt. Pleasant, Iowa on Feb 18. Tyler Weishahn is preparing to leave for Thailand for a mission project.

FREMONT FBC: Invite A Friend Sunday was Feb 11. ABW held a luncheon on Feb 1. A "Film Night" was enjoyed on Feb 11, when they viewed the movie "End of the Sphere", with popcorn included.

GIBBON BC: Valentine boxes for 12 college students and three overseas military personnel were packed on Feb 4. The ABW enjoyed a luncheon in Kearney on Feb 1. Pastor Gordon Paulson's father, David, passed away on Dec. 21. Clyde and Marilyn Smith celebrated their 56th anniversary on Dec. 23, Dewayne and LaBerta Olson their 55th anniversary on Dec. 30, and Wayne and Millie Giger their 55th wedding anniversary on Feb 14. FBC is the site for the Gibbon-Shelton Emergency Shelter and served in that capacity following the ice storms.. A seminar on parenting, led by Dr. Paul Welter, was held Feb 21.

GRAND ISLAND FBC: The Ruth Circle went on a trip to the 10 most prized artifacts of Nebraska Museums from Omaha to Harrison in January. Blanket Sunday was held with blankets collected to go to countries around the world.

HOLDREGE FBC: The youth took a ski trip to Colorado Feb 15 - 17., and are planning a summer mission trip to Pass Christian, Mississippi.

JUNIATA CC: A Valentine's banquet with an Italian theme was held on Feb 18, with good food, skits, games, prizes, and music making a full evening. Naomi Circle held a Valentine's supper on Valentine's Day.

KEARNEY: Pastor Paul Marine from Omaha Benson shared with our congregation about the ministry in Sudan. Members in our church collected furniture and household items and sent a semi-load to FBC in Waveland, Miss. the end of January 2007.

LAVISTA, JUDSON: Members of the Christian Motorcycle Association attended services. Pastor Glenn attended the Domestic Violence Workshop at Camp Merrill. The ABC/NE Region Caravan paid a visit, and gave us a chance to get better acquainted with the Region Staff and what's going at camp and throughout the state. The ABW Meeting speaker was Steve Bils who told about the White Cross trip to Lodge Grass, Montana. Financial Peace University classes were held for those needing help with their finances. Church Vocations Sunday was held to encourage our young people to become active in church work. A very nice local church Ordination Service was held for Pastor Glenn. The J.O.Y. Club was entertained by holding a Team Trivia Contest. The walls and most of the roof are up on our new building. The Judson small holy/ Bible study groups are going strong.

LINCOLN FBC: Thirty of the youth group attended the Dare 2 Share Feb 23-24 in Lincoln. On Saturday afternoon the youth attending canvassed the city to gather food for the Peoples City Mission. Congregants attended the

one-year anniversary of the Koinonia House of Worship in Bellevue on Feb 25, with the adult choir singing during the service.

LINCOLN, SBC: The AB Women's Ministries attained their goal of sending their White Cross project where it was assigned; at the All Church Annual Meeting the congregation adopted the 2007 Church Budget after taking the Boards' "recommendations and acting with their minds a bit more on ministry"; Senior Adult Ministry group members enjoyed a special piano/organ concert presented by Dorothy Christensen & Bob Wissinger, who then led a "Sing-a-Long"; Feb 11, was "FOOD PANTRY" special collection Sunday; Feb 17, the ABMen sponsored an All Church Valentine Party.

MCCOOK FBC: A Sweetheart Banquet was held on Feb 10, with the men preparing and serving the meal. A men's breakfast was held at Country Kitchen on Feb 17.

NORFOLK FBC: Rev. Bob and Fayette Molby are serving as very short-term interims, as the church has called Rev. Robin Stoops and his wife, Kathy, as pastors. The Stoops will arrive on Mar 15. The First Christian Church graciously opened their doors for an FBC baptismal service. The ABW is making health kits for disaster relief. The deacons served at the Rescue Mission on Feb 22. The board members and officers held a catered dinner, and then heard a report from the Building Committee on Feb 13, and a pot luck soup and salad supper was held on Feb 18, with the Building Committee giving a report to the congregation following. The Heart Sisters held a Valentine party for all of the churchwomen on Feb 15.

NORTH PLATTE: First Baptist Church welcomed Dr. Doug States and family into membership on Christmas Eve 2006. Dr. States and wife Kayla were accepted by experience and their 4 children Jessica, Josh, Janessa and Jenae by believer's baptism. Other new members are Shawn and Nicole Krueger and son Bishop by transfer of membership from FBC of Kearney. Steve and Donna Pucket were baptized on Feb 4. A joyful welcome to all! Three "SOUPER BOWLS OF CARING" were filled with loose change that will be sent to the City Gate Ministry in Washington, D.C.

OMAHA BENSON BC: Blanket Sunday was held on Feb 18. A Super Bowl party was held on Feb 4 for the Young Adults/College and Career group. The same group served at the Open Door Mission on Feb 24. The children's Sunday school teachers held a learning/refreshing retreat at Camp Merrill on Feb 16-17. The Ministry Fair was held on Feb 25. Pastor Paul and Anne Marine held a dessert time for their son, Bryan, who ministers in the Youth for Christ in the Lincoln area, on Feb 25.

OMAHA, FIRST BAPTIST: The Annual Meeting/Potluck Dinner was held Jan 21, despite horrible weather conditions. New members to the Cabinet were voted on and have already begun their work for the upcoming year. The men of First Baptist prepared and served a Valentine Breakfast to the FBC women on Feb 3. "Surrendered Hearts", a vocal/

instrumental group of young musicians from New Life Baptist, provided an outstanding program for this event. Lenten Prayer services will be held at the church, starting Feb 27 every Tuesday evening. Pastor Kip will be leading us in a time of prayer and reflection to prepare our hearts for the Lent/Easter Season.

OMAHA, KING SOLOMON: The church's 26th anniversary was celebrated with a Soul Food Dinner on Feb 25. Ruthgayle Gilliland Morris, 89, wrote a poem for the Messenger:

"GOD"

God is!

God is Good!

God is Great!

So: Let us Praise God & Celebrate!

OMAHA PARKSIDE: A February Birthday Lunch was held on Feb 10. The congregation voted to send a letter to the Nebraska Liquor Commission requesting a reversal on a decision to classify sweet liquor as beer, which makes it more accessible to young people.

OMAHA, SUNSET HILLS: The congregation approved an organizational change from a board system to Ministry Councils, effective in March. Two ministry fairs will be held to give the congregation an opportunity to see which ministries they are called to serve. The E.D.G.E. youth raised \$110 in the Souper Bowl of Sharing offering on Feb 4 and participated in the Dare 2 Share event Feb 23-24 in Lincoln. The string of highly accomplished pianists continued with the hiring of Momoro Ono. Member and author Brad Stephan was the guest speaker at the annual Omahaland Men's Prayer Breakfast on Feb 24 at Sunset Hills. Brad also began a daytime Bible study. A Love Boat Dinner Cruise was enjoyed on Feb 17. The youth sponsored this a fundraiser. The ABC of Nebraska staff Caravan visited at Sunset Hills on Feb 3

OXFORD FBC: Items were donated for us to send 50 Christmas Boxes to "Good Samaritan's Purse" in November. Our annual all church soup supper was served on Nov 29, followed by decorating our church for Jesus' birthday. December was a busy time, with the "Joy Day Preschool" program. There was a time for Christmas caroling, followed with a lunch that was served at the church. The Community Christmas Cantata had many of our church family participate in it. The church Christmas program was on Dec 17 and a candle light Christmas Eve service was well attended.

SCOTTSBLUFF FBC: The Family Festival was held on the four Sunday evenings in February, giving choices such as quilting, Bible Study, woodworking, crafting, and art for all of the family members. An "I Love You, Jesus" Valentine's dinner and movie was held on Feb 3 for couples, sponsored by the BYF groups.

TECUMSEH FBC: A Super Bowl party was held on Feb 4, with potluck snacks shared. The Lenten Luncheons have begun, with the first one at St. John's Lutheran Church.

TEKAMAH FBC: The church will pay 3/4 of a camper's registration fee if they are attending Camp Moses Merrill. The movie, "Prince of Egypt" was shown at a matinee at the church on

Feb 11. A "Game and Pizza" afternoon was held on Feb 25. The Community Men's Lenten Breakfasts began on Feb 28 at the Presbyterian Church.

**NEW MEMBERS:**

FAIRBURY FBC: Dr. Ted and Sara Tucker  
FREMONT FBC: Shelly Holzerland, Cindi Dodd  
HOLDREGE FBC: Sydney Nelson  
OMAHA BENSON: Carol and Richard Poole  
SUNSET HILLS: Benita Maun  
NORTH PLATTE: The States Family (Dr. Doug, Kayla, Jessica, Josh, Janessa and Jenae); Shawn, Nicole and Bishop Kreuger, Steve and Donna Pucket.

**TRIVIA ANSWERS:**

1. b. Lee Foreman, FBC Fremont
2. a. North Platte. Plan to be there!
3. c. Five
4. d. These are the three ways ABC/NE is funded.
5. d. Camp Merrill is open year round.

# Ice Storm Recovery Continues In Central Nebraska

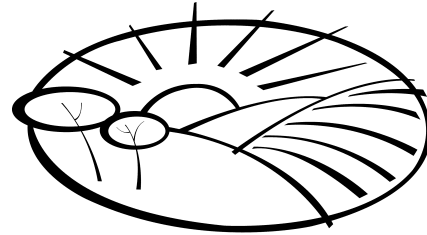
The breaking news is past but the recovery continues for central Nebraskans affected by the New Year's Eve Ice Storm. Many people were out of work for a week or more. Temporary electrical sources caused damage to many home appliances. Businesses suffered.

Nebraska Baptists responded generously in giving directly to ABC/NE for relief efforts and through One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS). Other Baptists around the country also shared through OGHS. These funds were distributed by the ABC-NE office particularly through First Baptist of Kearney and First Baptist of Holdrege.

Even as relief continues to be provided to people in need, thank you letters are coming into the Omaha office from people who have received assistance.

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