

# the ESSENGER

American Baptist Churches of Nebraska



September 2008

FBC Tekamah Celebrates  
150 Years of Ministry  
Sept. 7, 2008

**ABC/NE Region Convention**  
Kearney Convention Center  
September 19-21

Fall Women's Retreat  
Moses Merrill Center  
Oct. 3-5

Adult Ministries Conference  
Moses Merrill Center  
Oct. 6-9

Fall Clergy Seminar  
Moses Merrill Center  
Oct 13-15

#### E-Mail Addresses:

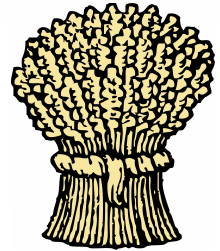
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Incorporated as  
The Nebraska Baptist State Convention

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## ***This Is For You!*** ***Gather With the Family*** ***In Kearney Sept 19-21***



The ABC/NE Convention is a "Family Reunion" and everyone is welcome. Plan now to attend:

**For children:** The children will have a wonderful time with ABC/NE Christian Education Consultant Nola Oberhelman. The VBS-type activities will tie in with the convention theme.

**For youth:** Junior and Senior High Youth will gather at Camp Comeca on Friday and Saturday for their annual convention. Early Sunday they will travel to the Holiday Inn Convention Center in Kearney to join the adults and children in worship. Brad Wiese of First Baptist, Holdrege, is coordinating the event.

**For adults:** The ABC/NE Convention is planned for ALL Nebraska Baptists. Speakers include Dr. Alonzo Patterson, Director of ABC's Alaska Ministries and Ruth Mooney, ABC Missionary. Other speakers are ABC/NE pastors Harry Riggs of First Baptist Lincoln; ABC/NE President Darren Stroh who is pastor of First Baptist Bridgeport, and Stan Murdoch, pastor of First Baptist Kearney. Music & worship leader for the weekend is Kip Mickelson, pastor of First Baptist Omaha.

### **Special Feature—Local Church Recognitions:**

Each church represented at the convention will receive recognition for one of the ways it is unique. Each church is encouraged to have delegates present to accept the award.

**Churches have registration information or call, 877-244-7339 (in Omaha 556-4730)**

## ***We're Not There Yet!*** **Match-the-Match Half-Way to Goal**



Nebraska Baptists are working hard to meet a challenge grant to raise money for a Multi-Ministry Building at Moses Merrill Camp and Conference Center. Donors have pledged to give \$447,583 toward the project if it is matched by others by Sept. 21. About half the amount to meet the challenge has been received. This is a very important opportunity. Please spread the word and PRAY! "We've Come This Far By Faith!"

## **Oldest Continuing ABC/NE Churches Celebrate 150 Years**

Members and friends of First Baptist Church of Tekamah will gather on September 7th to celebrate 150 years of ministry. The Tekamah church pre-dates First Baptist of Omaha by only a few months. Both churches have been celebrating throughout the year.

The Tekamah congregation will have a special service Sunday morning on the 7th and follow that with a dinner and then a celebration service at 1:00pm.

First in Omaha is having a series of events with its big anniversary event on October 10.

All ABC/NE churches are encouraged to offer prayers of thanksgiving for the ministries of these historic congregations.

*From the Executive Minister.....Susan Gillies*

## THE FIRST TWO DAYS

In the first two days I was back in the office from my sabbatical, I was overwhelmed by what God is doing among us.

Questions come up from time to time. Are denominations or other groups of connected churches relevant in today's world. What's the purpose in being linked together, can't we just do our own thing?

During those first two days I had an e-mail from Diane Giova. You've never met her but she has been working on your behalf for years at National Ministries helping connect churches and **refugees**. She wrote to me because there was a person in Omaha needing a church to help him learn the language and get settled. She also had a family on their way to Lincoln. Would someone help? I immediately made suggestions, sent e-mails to people in both cities. I also sent words of encouragement to Diane because during the years I worked at NM there was no one who went beyond the call of duty over and over again with very little recognition more than Diane.

Also during those first two days a couple dropped in to see me. They believe deeply in the ministry of **Moses Merrill Camp and Conference Center**. They've given time, talent and treasure in support of the camp. They wouldn't have to do one more thing. And yet, they had found a way to make a major gift to the Multi-Ministry Building, the last part of the Building Bridges Campaign. Unbelievable!

During those first two days, I talked with chairpersons of two pastoral **search committees**. Each is committed and determined to do a good job and yet each has some anxiousness. I talked with them about the process. What happens in a church perhaps once a decade is something region staff members deal

with all the time. We stand ready to help. We work for you.

During those first two days I got a report from our region President about the results of the **Nominating Committee's** work. It is inspiring and exciting to see people respond to the opportunities God places before them to accept leadership responsibilities.

During those first two days back in the office, I put three pastoral installations on my calendar, looked at plans for three church anniversaries, set up meetings with search committees, and worked on the upcoming Clergy Ethics Conference. (I didn't get my update on the camping season until day three!)

I also looked over all that had been done during the summer to prepare for the **Family Reunion** (annual convention) and all that remains to be done so that the people of our churches can come together in a great celebration of our faith

During those first two days I read updates on our work in **Myanmar and China**. The situation is heart-breaking, the work we are doing there is encouraging.

During those first two days I talked with one of our pastors who serves a church at the bottom of the economic ladder. I thought perhaps he was looking for money. He said, "No, no, I've never asked you for money. I'll find the money. I need help with the strategy." And we worked on it together.

During those first two days I found two cards in my mail that indicated people in North Platte were praying for me. Do they even begin to understand how much that means?

**We are family.** God has called us together because we will do better together than apart. I encourage you to fully experience, support and give thanks for, the rich blessings of this fellowship.



*From the Associate Executive Minister.....Steve Bills*

## For the Love of Christ Compels Us . . .

I recently came across a quote from Martin Luther, which though quite lengthy, very clearly answers the question "why ought we selflessly live our lives for the good of our neighbor?"

*"Although I am an unworthy and condemned person, my God has given me in Christ all the riches of righteousness and salvation without any merit on my part, out of pure, free mercy, so that from now on I need nothing except faith which believes that this is true. Why should I not therefore freely, joyfully with all my heart, and with an eager will do all things which I know are pleasing and acceptable to such a Father who has overwhelmed me with his inestimable riches? I will therefore give myself as a Christ to my neighbor, just as Christ offered himself to me: I will do nothing in this life except what I see is necessary, profitable, and salutary to my neighbor, since through faith I have an abundance of all good things in Christ." (Martin Luther, "The Freedom of a Christian" (1520), LW 31:367)*

- At the ABC Emergency Services Center at Sturgis, the folks we help are grateful that we're there in their moment of need. What they can't understand is why we are willing to spend our time doing what we do. We don't charge anything. Our staff is made up of volunteers using personal vacation time and paying all their own expenses to be there. They even contribute financially to the Emergency Center cause. Why so?
- When ABC's National Ministries puts out the call for people to come to New Orleans to help build homes for those displaced by Hurricane Katrina, Baptists from across the country make the trip to the Louisiana gulf coast at their own expense to

spend hours in the blistering sun building homes for people they will never meet. Why so?

- When Nebraska Baptists have the opportunity to support mission and ministry across the country and around the world through the AFC, WMO, OGHS, and RMMO offerings they do so graciously and generously. Why so?

The story of the Good Samaritan illustrates the answer to the question, "Who is my neighbor?" when Jesus asked his disciples, "Which of these do you think was neighbor to him who fell . . .?" They answered, "He who showed mercy on him." "Correct," Jesus said, "Go and do likewise."

Because we believe in Jesus, we want to do as He taught. We want to live as He lived. "Do unto others as you would like them to do unto you." "Love your neighbor as you love yourself." "When you served [fed, clothed, etc.] any of them, you did it to me."

Jesus demonstrated His love and commitment to the world, in that while we were, as Luther observed, unworthy and condemned, He sacrificed His life so we could have life.

So when we have the opportunity to serve our neighbor as the hands and feet of Jesus, we do so "freely, joyfully with all [our] heart, and with an eager will" because we have "a Father who has overwhelmed [us] with his inestimable riches."

In the words of Paul, "For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again."



## Pawnee City Baptists Keep On!

When the First Baptist Church of Pawnee City closed several years ago, it seemed the end of an era. There would be no more ABC presence in a town where the church had been an important part of community life.

The pastor of two other churches in town, Duane Westing, has an ABC background. He sent a note to the region office recently saying, "I wanted to let you know that the Pawnee City ABC church is still ministering even though they do not have a building. They continue to meet for Bible Study, which I attend, on Wednesday mornings and minister to those in need in our area.

"Scholarships are given to graduating seniors who attended First Baptist Church in the past and they contribute to support the Kodiak Baptist Mission where I worked for seven years.

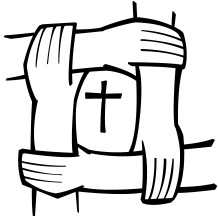
"My niece Kelli Wellensiek Foreman is the director of after-school and summer programming at KBM. My daughters,

Julie and Annie, volunteered at KBM this summer and folks from the ABC church in Pawnee City helped support their mission work there.

"The First Baptist members continue to attend and support the Christian Church (DOC) and United Presbyterian Church (USA), that I pastor, and the United Methodist Churches in Pawnee City and DuBois.

"I think it is wonderful how they have continued to be the church of Jesus Christ in Pawnee City and I thought you might like to know about it."

ABC/NE Executive Minister Susan Gillies responded, "The realities of small town life in Nebraska open doors for very interesting 'mixtures' of traditional denominations and others. The Pawnee City American Baptists continue to be a witness to the love of Jesus Christ — and they do it creatively on their own and in partnership with other Christians. We honor them! This story is an encouragement to others who live in small communities with 'combined' congregations."



Doing mission together

## JUDSON PRESS BOOK WINS PARENTING AWARD

*Connected: Christian Parenting in an Age of IM & MySpace* by Peggy Kendall has been recognized with an iParenting Media Award. The iParenting Media Awards recognize products in twenty categories. To be considered for an iParenting Media Award, products are thoroughly reviewed and evaluated by a variety of sources, including experts and families.

In *Connected*, Kendall offers parents:

- A reader-friendly summary of current research on computer-mediated-communication
- Real-life insight, stories, and advice from tweens, teens, and young adults who use IM and MySpace on a regular basis
- Advice and insight from Christian parents who have dealt with teens who use online communications
- A summary of parenting advice from leading scholars and authors
- Practical parenting tips and discussion starters

iParenting.com, an online community for parents and parents-to-be, is part of Disney Online's network of more than 40 family-focused Web sites.

Founded in 1824, Judson Press—a publishing ministry of National Ministries, American Baptist Churches USA—produces Christ-centered leadership resources for the transformation of persons, congregations, communities and cultures.

To order "Connected: Christian Parenting in an Age of IM & MySpace" or Kendall's "Rewired: Youth Ministry in an Age of IM & MySpace" or to request a complete catalog of Judson resources, visit [www.judsonpress.com](http://www.judsonpress.com) or call 800-458-3766.

## Nola's Take Five . . .

Ideas from Nola Oberhelmen  
ABC/NE Christian Education Consultant

Take five steps during the week in lesson preparation.

1. Sunday evening, review the goals of the unit and the specific session
2. Monday, become familiar with the text/Bible material.
3. Tuesday, seek out background material (even for pre-schoolers--it's for your knowledge!)
4. All week, pray, meditate, ruminate for clarity of purpose and application to your class members.
5. Thursday, organize your presentation and gather materials.

## Great Summer—Great Kids



Moses Merrill Camp & Conference Center summer fun! Music & Drama campers enjoy this cleared spot in the forest with sturdy benches developed as part of an Eagle Scout project.

## REST & RELAXATION FEATURED AT FALL WOMEN'S RETREAT

Women are invited to participate in the Fall Women's Spiritual Retreat at Moses Merrill Camp & Conference Center, October 3-5. The theme is "R&R in Christ."

Speaker for the event is Deidra Riggs. Dee is a popular speaker who brings fun as well as deep insight into the challenges in women's lives today.

The weekend is designed for rest, relaxation, friendship building, learning, and worship.

To register, contact the ABC/NE Office 877-244-7339 (in Omaha 556-4730)



## National Ministers Council Director To Speak at Region Convention Dinner

Joe Kutter will speak at the Clergy Dinner at the Family Reunion Sept. 19 at the Holiday Inn Convention Center in Kearney, NE. Kutter assumes the role of Acting Executive Director for the National ABC-USA Ministers Council on Sept. 1.

Kutter has been an ABC pastor for 39 years, serving five congregations. He was pastor in Topeka, KS, from 1997 until taking this new position. With his leadership, that congregation constructed a new community life center, costing about \$2.3 million. The center has allowed them to create new ministries to impact the community, including the Topeka Shepherd Center for senior adults, an after school program for middle school students, and Upward Basketball for more than 200 elementary school children from the community.

Kutter has also served as President of the national Ministers Council, as trustee of Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School, as chaplain to the ABC General Board and General Board Executive Committee, and in a variety of regional and community leadership roles.

The Ministers Council was founded in 1935 as the professional association of pastoral leaders in the ABC. It seeks to fulfill its mission through a three-part strategy: face-to-face collegial covenant groups that meet monthly; strong constituent Councils with exciting programs; and a pattern of national clergy conferences.

### ABC/NE Trivia

1. Does Moses Merrill Camp & Conference Center own or rent horses?
2. How many people live at Moses Merrill year-round?
3. Which month/s is Moses Merrill shut down?  
a. Dec/Jan., b. Jan., c. Jan/Feb., d. no months
4. Do people have to be American Baptists to rent facilities at Moses Merrill?
5. Which animal has not been seen at Moses Merrill this year?  
a. mountain lion, b. turkey, c. crane, d. turtle, e. deer, f. skunk.

Answers on p. 8



### ABC/NE IS UNIQUE interesting tidbits . . .

The Messenger has identified at least two ways the ABC of Nebraska is unique among ABC regions.

1. ABC/NE has a high percentage of pastors who are musically gifted. Many pastors have basic music competence but the ABC/NE has a higher percentage than most regions of pastors who are uniquely gifted musicians. Praise God!
2. ABC/NE has a woman as region executive minister. Only three other regions have women execs. The ABC/NE exec, Susan Gillies, is the only one who is a layperson. (Susan is also a senior member of the ABC's General Executive Council. No other woman has served as long and only three men exceed her tenure on that council of the denomination's leaders.)

### Book of Timothy



## NEW ABC BLOG ON CHILDREN IN POVERTY

Judson Press has launched the Hope for Children in Poverty blog, an extension of the 2007 release *Hope for Children in Poverty: Profiles and Possibilities*, edited by Ron Sider and Heidi Unruh.

[A blog is a website where people can make entries in journal style.]

With nearly 13 million American children and their families affected by the tragedy of poverty, host Heidi Unruh envisions this blog as a place for sharing information, ideas, and inspiration as American Baptists and others rally together to find solutions to the crisis. The blog will be a vehicle to:

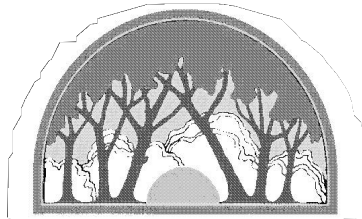
- raise awareness about issues surrounding child poverty in the U.S.
- share ideas for effective responses at the individual, congregational, community and national levels
- tell stories about ministries with children in poverty
- highlight helpful resources and organizations
- provide information about public policies that affect children in poverty and opportunities for advocacy
- offer a theological perspective on children, poverty, and the church's role
- appreciate the present blessings and future potential that children bring to our lives
- encourage and inspire one another to take action on behalf of children in poverty everywhere

The award-winning Hope for Children in Poverty reader brought together the expertise of nearly two dozen academics, activists, pastors, and social service professionals who are also expected to post to the new blog.

Judson Press publisher Laura Alden encourages those who read Hope for Children in Poverty as part of the ABC Reads program to "share their stories, report back from their group discussions, and highlight the ministries and projects they have pursued in response to reading the book." Hope for Children in Poverty will continue as the ABC Reads selection until January 2009, allowing more groups to join in the discussion.

Those interested in receiving email alerts to new Hope for Children in Poverty blog posts can subscribe on the website at <http://hopeforchildreninpoverty.blogspot.com>. The blog site can also be accessed through the Hope for Children in Poverty page on the Judson Press site at [www.judsonpress.com](http://www.judsonpress.com). Ten percent of proceeds from the book's sales will support the Children in Poverty initiative, a denomination-wide effort endorsed by the General Board of American Baptist Churches USA.

To order Hope for Children in Poverty: Profiles and Possibilities, to download the free book study guide, or to request a complete catalog of Judson resources, visit [www.judsonpress.com](http://www.judsonpress.com) or call 800-458-3766.



## Moses Merrill News

2849 Rd. 31 Bldg. 3, Linwood, NE 68036 (402) 666-5639  
E-mail: campmerrill@nntc.net Web site: www.campmerrill.com

### A Great Summer Wraps-Up at Moses Merrill

Dear Friends,

*I am exhausted! This has been a busy summer at Moses Merrill Camp & Conference Center. If you weren't here, you really missed a great time.*

*There has been so much going on, I have actually lost weight! I've tried to persuade Clarence to feed me more—since I'm working harder—but he wants me to supplement my diet with mice. Which is not a bad idea — Merrill Mice are quite a delicacy mainly because they eat morel mushrooms.*

*I go to most of the campfire services during the summer camps. It is awesome as the kids share their testimonies. It makes all the work at camp worth it.*

*I hope each of you has made a pledge to help with the cost of the multi-ministry building. I believe you will be blessed over and over because of your generosity!*

Your friend,  
Camp Cat



From Primary to Senior High Bible Study is an important part of every Moses Merrill summer camp. Here, Erica Temple, Norfolk, reads at Mid-High I camp.

It was a great summer at Moses Merrill! Approximately 330 campers took part in the various camps. Here are some of the summer facts:

- 25 ABC-NE churches sent campers
- Arnold, Arthur, Kearney, Judson, Omaha FBC and Tekamah FBC increased their number of campers
- 60 of the 330 campers were from non-ABC or non-Nebraska ABC churches--about the same number as 2007 (Several of these campers are from families in which parent/s grew up in an ABC church.)
- Outreach efforts (e.g. Lincoln FBC, Gibbon-Awana program and inviting neighbors/friends) brought new campers this year
- Attendance at Primary camps was significantly higher this year—more than **twice** the number of last year.
- 90 volunteer leaders from 17 ABC-NE churches
- 12 First-time decisions for Christ
- 55 recommitment decision for Christ
- 10 indicated sensing a call to full-time ministry



Summer staffers give Primary campers a great horse ride!

**A Huge Fall Schedule Is Underway!** The end of summer doesn't mean an end to programming at Moses Merrill. The fall months are packed with Women's Retreat, Adult Ministries Conference, Fall Pastors' Seminar, the Church Vitality Conference as well as many local church retreats, family reunions, pastor/spouse getaways. Two Hispanic churches in Schuyler have begun to rent facilities at camp. It is great to hear the Lord praised in Spanish as well as in English and Kachin in Friendship Chapel!



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

**The Time Has Come**

**The Seventh Trumpet** <sup>15</sup>The seventh angel sounded his trumpet ...<sup>16</sup>And the twenty-four elders, who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, <sup>17</sup>saying... The time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding your servants the prophets and your saints and those who reverence your name, both small and great— **and for destroying those who destroy the earth.**” Rev 11:15, 16, 18

About every five weeks or so, this passage from Revelation turns up in the daily devotions that I use. And every time I see it, it troubles me. Am I as an individual or are we as contemporary Christians among those who are participating in the destruction of the earth? I struggle with the fact that we in the United States use more than our fair share the world's resources, (for example in 2005 according to the CIA, the United States used about 26% of the oil that the whole world produced).

Whether or not you consider us “destroyers,” at the least there should be some small stewardship things that we as Christians and as Churches could do to work against our world's destruction?

We could drive less and use more energy efficient vehicles. It might even be good for us. My doctor always encourages me to walk more. (There is an interesting web site that rates your ad-

dress for “walk-ability” check it out at <http://www.walkscore.com/> ) We could commit to give the money we save by these changes to our home church. The Region is experimenting with telephone and electronic meetings to save time and money. This year the nominating process was done by telephone.

Another small thing we could do would be to inspect our church buildings (and our homes). Are they well insulated? Are there other ways to reduce energy use? Could we use less energy by incorporating solar electric or solar heating features? (Did you know that we've used solar heating panels at Moses Merrill Camp and Conference Center for years to help heat two buildings in the winter?)

Another incredibly small thing we could do is to begin to recycle more and encourage our communities to increase the opportunities for recycling. I recently saw the animated film “Wall-E.” It depicts an earth in the future where the whole world is covered in garbage and all the people have left because the earth had become too toxic.

All of these actions are small things that we could do to be good stewards of God's beautiful creation. We are called to be the caretakers not the destroyers of the earth. I would be interested to hear about the things your congregation is doing to be good stewards of the earth.



**LOCAL CHURCH NEWS**

by Darlene Rimpley

**October Deadlines**

**September 5, 2008 - Print Copy**  
**September 9, 2008 - E-Mail**

Home Town Editor (Note New Address)

Darlene RIMPLEY  
 912 N. Carroll  
 Arnold, NE 69120

E-Editor

area.minister.ne@charter.net  
 Subject: Messenger

ARNOLD FBC: Vacation Bible School was held Aug. 11-13, with "Creation Adventure" being the theme, Rev. Stan Bryant of Burdette, KS led the sessions for the children, as well as an evening session for adults. A "Back to School Breakfast" for teachers and other personnel at the public school, which is an annual event, was held on Aug. 13. Sunday school promotion was held on Aug. 31, with Bibles presented to the students going into the third grade.

BEATRICE FBC: Sunday school Promotion was held on August 24, and a "Potluck Celebration" was held on August 31. Pastor Boolin has been invited to serve on a state-wide task force to see how churches can be more effective in welcoming and ministering to returning military personnel.

BELLEVUE STRANGERS REST: Plans are underway for the 10th Anniversary celebration for the congregation which will be held Sept. 14 at 4:00pm. Everyone is invited!

CHADRON FBC: Vacation Bible school was held August 11 - 15, with the theme "God's Big Backyard".

COLUMBUS FBC: FBC is so thankful to announce that Pastor Glenn Williamson will be our new Pastor. August 17th was his first Sunday. AB Girls and families had a "Beach Party" at

Karen Jones'. FBC had an Ice Cream Social sponsored by the Board of Christian Education.

FAIRBURY FBC: Bob and Phyllis Stahl celebrated their 56th wedding anniversary on August 5. A "Back to School Bash" was held on August 24, with breakfast, games, and a worship service celebrating the event. Plans are underway for the installation of our new pastor, Jim Cutts, on Sept. 14.

GIBBON FBC: Chuck Warrington celebrated his 90th birthday on August 2, and Orpha Hooge her 90th birthday on August 3. The church family joined with the community at the community picnic and Christian concert held on August 24. AWANA Kick-Off night was held on August 27 for the parents and kids.

HASTINGS FBC: Ten children and five adults enjoyed camp at Camp Merrill this summer, an invigorating experience for them and for the church. Some volunteers raised donations and very nicely reworked the landscaping where repair work had been done on the basement wall. Roof repairs of hail and wind damage were completed in July. We are sending thirty-two Bibles with a personal note in each to US troops around the world.

HOLDREGE FBC: Pastor Gary and Sue Winget resigned as pastors at FBC, effective on August

17. A farewell dinner was held for them on the 17th, and the Wingets have returned to the Dodge City, KS FBC where they pastored from 1984-1991. A half-way celebration was held for the 80th birthdays of Curly and Betty Geer (Curley's birthday was Dec. 12, 2007, and Betty's Dec. 18, 2008. Eleanor Hasselquist, a member of the church for 58 years, passed away on July 24.

JUNIATA CC: "Church in the Park" was held on August 31, and included good food! The JCC Women's Group held a garage sale in August.

LAVISTA, JUDSON Many members of Judson, young and old, attended camp this year and came back with wonderful memories, some new friends, new songs, and tales of wonderful times. As storms ripped through Omaha, it knocked out power at the church for several days. Several people pitched in and cleaned up all the debris and the power company got us back up and running in a week. Two vans full of Judsonites drove to Fremont for the Omahaland ABC Annual Musical Extravaganza. The Judson Book Club is going strong and have just begun another new book. Members from the CMA group at Judson worked at the Sturgis Aid Station. Pastor Glenn Williamson has tendered his resignation as Pastor at Judson. Pastor Glenn accepted the pastorate at FBC. Our best wishes go with him.

LINCOLN FBC: Allen and Allena Lewis celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. A new refrigerator has been placed in the kitchen with funds from an anonymous donor in memory of a loved one.

LINCOLN SECOND: Our Missions Board has been collecting various items over the past several months to send to our troops in Iraq. David Cummings, son of former Pastor Jim Cummings, was honored August 10, at St. Paul UMC during an Eagle Court of Honor. Congratulations, David. Also, on that day we celebrated the 58th wedding anniversary of Rev. Bob and Fayette Molby, Interim Pastor and his wife, with a reception following worship services. The youth went to Platte River State Park for a two day camp out on August 10. The Music and Drama Committee sponsored an all church Talent Night on August 15, with a light supper being served by the S.A.M. group. August 24, we celebrated Rally Day by promoting our children and youth to their next class. It was also Youth Sunday and the youth prepared and led the morning worship service. Bible Presentations were made to the children entering the 3rd grade. Following worship, we held a Back to School Party with a Barbeque/ Potluck dinner. We also invited all the children and their families who attended VBS this summer and the community for food, fun and fellowship. We had volleyball, soccer and even a bounce house for children of ages to enjoy.

MCCOOK FBC: A family patriotic concert was held on August 2, featuring John and Debbie Moody and their children, Bethany and Thomas. "The Feast and Holidays of Israel" was studied at evening services on Aug. 23 and 30th.

NORFOLK FBC: A joyous time was held on the weekend of August 8-10, as the congregation and community celebrated moving into their new church home. A church pot-luck was held on August 8, a flag raising ceremony on the morning of Aug. 9 and concerts that evening, with an Open House held in the afternoon; and dedication service held on Sunday afternoon. On Wednesday, August 13 the Chamber of Commerce held a ribbon cutting ceremony for the church. Ray Stange celebrated his 83rd birthday on August 1, and Bob Thomas his 90th birthday on August 6.

OMAHA BENSON: Josh Klein began his ministry as Assistant Pastor on August 8. He was installed on August 31, following a potluck welcome dinner. Pastor Paul had his BIG 5-0 on Aug. 13. Dick and Carol Poole celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Aug. 9. Celebrating a birthday was Alice Blackford. Ben Westfield and Jessica Komaskinski spent time on a mission trip to the South Pacific.

OMAHA FBC continues to maintain a fairly busy schedule of events and will continue to be busy into the fall months. Several of our men traveled to Moses Merrill for the ABMen's Conference on August 8-9<sup>th</sup>. On August 16<sup>th</sup> the Women's Ministry group held a "baby shower" with all proceeds benefitting the AAA Pregnancy Counseling Center of Omaha. Promotion Sunday was held August 24. Plans continue to develop for the "feeding" program. The meals will be served

every Saturday starting September 13 and will be hosted by our church. Several churches in the immediate area are participating in this feeding program. Also, in September, we will continue our celebration of 150 years as a church with an organ concert presented by Dr. Marilyn Musick. The concert is scheduled September 7 at 2:30 p.m. and will be held in the sanctuary. The public is invited to this concert.

OMAHA KING SOLOMON: Member Baylien Brown has been named Youth Representative to the ABC/NE Board. He represents the youth of the state at region Board meetings. His first Board Meeting was Aug 23 in Grand Island. Baylien has been on the summer staff at Camp Merrill for two years.

OMAHA PARKSIDE: The Kachin and Parkside congregations held their annual picnic in Dodge Park on Aug. 17, with games preceding the picnic supper. A "bounty table" is set up for extra garden produce that people have, with any donations going toward roof repair.

OMAHA, SUNSET HILLS: Five youth and two adult sponsors attended the National Youth Gathering at Estes Park, Colo. The summer has been busy with Sunday morning visitors – most drawn by the church web page and street sign – and four consecutive Sundays with prospective new members coming forward. Plans were made to participate in a Habitat for Humanity project on Aug. 23. Forgiven sang the national anthem at ABC Night at Rosenblatt Stadium, Tuesday, Aug. 26. Also in August, Charles and Florence Lakin observed their 70<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary and Dean Kelley his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday.

SCOTTSBLUFF FBC: The Coffee and Conversation Group meets at the church on Wednesday mornings.

TEKAMAH FBC: FBC delivered Meals on Wheels the week of Aug. 18-22. The church will celebrate its 150th Anniversary with a special day of activities on Sept. 7.



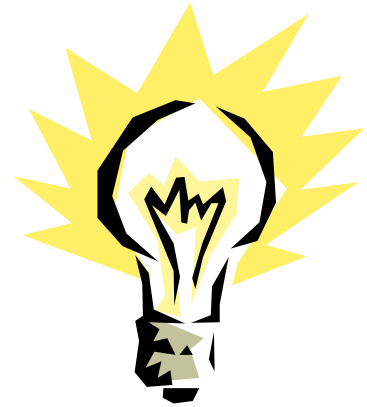
#### NEW MEMBERS:

BEATRICE FBC: Dakota Buss and Dillon Buss (baptism, Emma Adams (statement of faith), Rev. Theodora Boolin and Victor Morris (transfer from FBC, Pierre, SD)

HOLDREGE FBC: Taryn Berlovic and Jeff Smith (baptism)

OMAHA BENSON: Ken Spencer (transfer from Omaha FBC), Diane M. Cheek (reaffirmation of faith)

LAVISTA JUDSON: Katie Stephens, Jacob Haas, Nakiya Whitelaw, Deion Davis, Devante Prusia, Teresa Prusia



## Do You Have An Idea to Share?

What would you like to see happen in ABC/NE or Moses Merrill Camp & Conference Center? Suggestions are welcome!

Some folks remember fondly the Corn Roast, the Moses Merrill Olympics, the County-wide Open House at Fullerton, Christian Education workshops around the state, staff caravans, mission tours and work groups. New ideas include faith festivals in three or four parts of the state, a choir conference, mission conferences, Bible conferences. Ideas from the past or new ideas that haven't been tried before – all are welcome.

#### THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND --

- Most suggestions require some amount of staff time. The ABC of Nebraska is funded entirely by the churches. Moses Merrill has limited additional sources of income. **Current levels of funding are pushing the region toward a reduction of services and the number of staff members.** Ideas that work with fewer staff than we have or ideas to increase support of the region would be great.
- We are a state-wide family. Not every activity or idea has to include everyone but we do want to stay connected from Chadron to Stella and McCook to Norfolk!
- We are ABC. Ideas that increase our relationships with our wider family and ABC mission are welcome.

Send ideas to [Messenger@abcnebrska.com](mailto:Messenger@abcnebrska.com) or mail comments to Messenger, ABC/NE, 6404 Maple St., Omaha, NE 68104. Your ideas will be shared with the staff and the Board of ABC/NE.

# ABMen Name Clarence Reiss Layman of the Year

ABC/NE Director of Camping, Clarence Reiss, was named Layman of the Year at the annual conference of American Baptist Men held at Moses Merrill Camp & Conference Center August 8-9.

Susan Gillies, Executive Minister of ABC-NE, praised Clarence's contributions to Camp Merrill: "Clarence Reiss' ministry at Moses Merrill Camp and Conference Center has been an extraordinary blessing to Nebraska American Baptists. His extraordinary gifts in facility development have made a contribution that will last for years to come."

Currently Clarence and his wife Trudy belong to First Baptist of Columbus. Prior to coming to Moses Merrill, they were members of First Baptist of Holdrege. Their daughter Stacy and her husband Lane Soukup live in Yukon, OK, their daughter Keri and her husband Doug Bedke live in Ravenna, NE. Clarence and Trudy have 8 grandchildren.

Clarence & Trudy have served at camp since 1999. He is a licensed electrical contractor and has experience in farming and sales. He owned Reiss Electric for over 20 years. He currently serves on the Linwood Volunteer Fire Department.



Clarence Reiss is presented with the award by Glenn Dappen.

## ABC of Nebraska Staff

Executive Minister.....	Susan Gillies
Associate Executive Minister.....	Dave Lundholm
Associate Executive Minister.....	Steve Bils
Director of Camping.....	Clarence Reiss
Manager, Moses Merrill Camp & Conference Center.....	MaryBeth Robertson
Camp Staff.....	Joe Huss, Jerry Buss, Trudy Reiss, Barb Fisher Amber Taseka, 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

### Trivia Answers (from page 4)

1. Moses Merrill Camp & Conference Center owns horses this year for the first time.
2. Three people live year-round at Moses Merrill, Manager of the Camp & Conference Center MaryBeth Robertson, and Director of Camping Clarence Reiss and his wife Trudy/
3. d. The facility is year-round.
4. No. People don't have to be ABC/NE folks to take advantage of the facilities at Moses Merrill. (ABC groups do get a discount.)
5. F. skunk Surprisingly, one has not been seen yet this year.



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