

the ESSENGER

American Baptist Churches of Nebraska



October 2008

ABC/NE Date Data

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

Adult Ministries Conference
Moses Merrill
Oct. 6-9

Fall Pastors Seminar
"Pastoral Care for Congregations"
Moses Merrill
Oct. 13-15

Pastoral Care Week
Oct. 20-26

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Pastoral Care Week October 20-26

Every October, American Baptists pause to give honor and thanks to those who serve as ABC chaplains and pastoral counselors. This year Pastoral Care Week is Oct. 20-26. The theme is "Pastoral Care: Listening Presence."

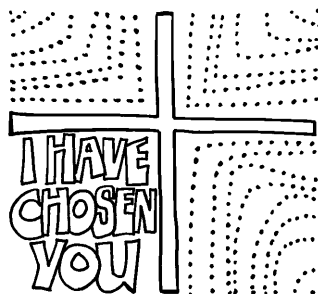
ABC/NE Hospital Chaplain, Tom Webb, who serves in Lincoln, demonstrates a chaplain's "listening presence" everyday. He is present when a patient is in a life threatening crisis, he works with doctors to coordinate a wholistic approach to patient care, he listens to the concerns of the patient and their family and spends time in prayer with them.

ABC/NE Hospital Chaplain Dale Pracht, who serves in Norfolk, describes his setting, "The chaplains have a goal of meeting each in patient and assessing strengths, needs and resources in their spiritual lives and to add whatever additional is welcomed by the patient. We stand by for all emergency needs - day, night, weekend and holiday. We link patients to their own faith group and churches. We offer spiritual support to the cancer, dialysis, behavioral health, and hospice patients also. Chaplains add their insights and support to many committees and programs including employee aid, ethics, diversity and bereavement support. In our setting we offer a daily chapel service and a morning overhead prayer. Most of

(Chaplains, continued on p. 4)



Churches Express Appreciation for Pastors



Many ABC/NE churches focus special attention on pastoral appreciation in the month of October. Time is set aside to express the congregation's gratitude for the pastor's call to ministry and for the way the pastor carries out that ministry.

Pastor Appreciation Month features a multitude of different approaches to "showing appreciation." Pastors have reported receiving gifts ranging from portrait drawings of the pastor done by young children to weekend getaways for the pastor and spouse. Often card showers let pastors know they are being thought of by congregants.

ABC/NE Executive Minister Susan Gillies said, "We have a tremendous group of pastors in the ABC/NE. Having a special month is fine but I hope congregations 'appreciate' their pastors all year long. That appreciation can be seen in a congregation's cooperative spirit and a church-wide habit of encouragement. Great pastors tend to be those with congregations whose members enjoy being about the Lord's business together."

Other ways to show appreciation include giving the pastor a card or e-mail indicating you are in prayer for their ministry — and then really pray! Taking the pastor a coconut cream pie. Giving the pastor a gift certificate for a bookstore, or a hardware store, or a restaurant. Offer to rake leaves at the pastor's house. Offer to wash the pastor's car. Offer babysitting services for the pastor and spouse's date night. Make a promise to yourself to reduce criticism and increase praise when talking with the pastor (or anyone else for that matter!).

MATCH-THE-MATCH Update on Page 5

An Urgent Letter From the ABC/NE President.....Rev. Darren Stroh

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Following our awesome Family Reunion in Kearney, I want to share with everyone some of the concerns I shared there.

The By-Laws of our region's constitution ask the churches that affiliate with the region to work towards a goal of giving 10% of their income to the United Missions offering. Sixty-five per cent of this offering stays right here in Nebraska and supports the ministry of the region. The remaining money supports vital ministries in International Ministries, National Ministries, and the Office of the General Secretary. Now I know that it is tempting to take care of self first and then if any is left over to spread the wealth. I also know in my own personal life, unless I am intentional in my giving, there is rarely any wealth left to spread. God asks us as individuals to give of our first fruits in faith to His work and ministries. He never asks churches to do so, but I see the wisdom of those who penned our By-Laws in encouraging churches to do the same.

I had one pastor ask me not too long ago, "Where does this money go?" The money that stays in the region makes a deep impact in the health of our local churches. When we were done with that discussion, this pastor was very overwhelmed with what all takes place behind the scenes—things that our region staff does quietly, yet so effectively. Consider just a few of these things just in our own region:

- **Pastoral placement assistance:** The more I think about this the more I am amazed at the gift we have with our current staff. Some congregations may be blessed to have a great pastor that will be with them until the rapture. The rest of the congregations are going to have to go through a search process sooner or later. What a deep blessing it is to have someone who is knowledgeable, wise, helpful, and with deep pockets of resources to help churches figure out what God wants for them and help them match that to the person that best fits that. There is a small unaffiliated church that I know that has gone through at least 3 ministers in 6 months and has no where to turn for assistance and hope has waned significantly. My heart breaks for them. Not only is region staff there for the church, but for the minister as well. God has used our staff in very visible ways to connect ministers of high character to our region. God blesses our United Missions giving very visibly in this area. And yes, you may be one of those churches that gets to keep your minister until the Rapture, but remember we are a family and one of the best ways you can help sister congregations in need is to keep the godly, qualified people that we have in God's employ.
- **Crisis intervention:** What an absolute blessing it is to be able to pick up the phone or sit down to write an email for advice or just to vent! As president of the region, I have been privy to a few rather big things where potential church splits, ministerial spiritual breakdowns, and other problems were turned into blessings because of the willingness and the availability of an outside, supportive, knowledgeable group of people. As I write this, I am tearfully reminded of a time in which they were there for me in a powerful way when I hit a low, dry point in my ministry. I didn't plan on needing them, yet when the need arose, they were there. My ministry was deeply and positively impacted by their willingness, availability, and ability in Christ Jesus.
- **Internal Leadership:** We are a people who believe in the priesthood of all believers, so much of what takes place in the region does so by the people and for the people. Yet, in that, there is much wisdom and continuity that surface with our staff's involvement. Whether we are talking about spearheading the Sturgis outreach or helping the Department of Professional Ministries navigate the rough waters of Pastoral misconduct or anything in between, we are deeply blessed with godly people that deserve our support.
- **National Representation:** This is something that rarely gets brought up because of the potential for it to look prideful, but it is something to bring up here. I have been blown away by the influence and input our region staff has on a national scale. I don't think it's a very big stretch to say that our denomination has weathered some deep storms that have torn other denominations apart—and yet remained clear of ungodly human-oriented compromise, continuing to press for God's face rather than a political peace—in large part because of *our* regional staff's representation and bold witness on a national level. When I took office, my prayer request was that God would make Nebraska a lighthouse of hope and of motivation for ABC-USA. I feel compelled to praise God for using our regional staff to bringing that prayer request to fruition.

I could go on, but you get the point. The Bible is clear: "Do not muzzle the ox." This is what I ask of you and your budget process. **Would you prayerfully consider increasing your United Missions giving by 1% in your 2009 budget?** Perhaps your congregation may be led to support the region directly at an increase of 1% if not to the United Missions giving. Whatever you can do, keep this in mind, this past year, we had to budget a significant deficit to make payroll and supply the needed resources for our regional ministries. We have done better than we anticipated, but not well enough. Changes are going to have to be made either in bringing in more income, or cutting personnel expenses. This is what I ask:

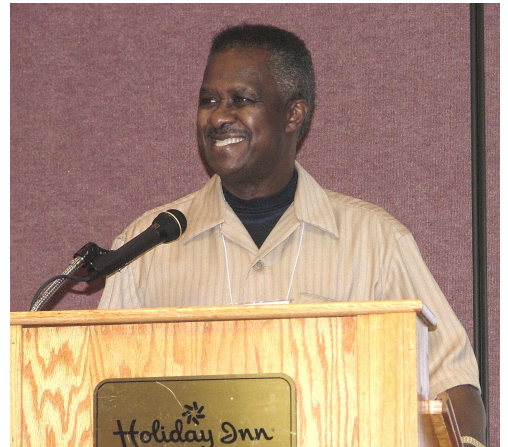
- **Pray:** Don't look at your budget process as a business meeting. God owns the cattle on a thousand hills. It's *His* resources with which you are working. What is the Owner's will in the matters that finance 2009? I'm going to be encouraging a season of prayer—at least an entire week—for the whole congregation for First Baptist of Bridgeport at least a week before the budget meeting. I'd encourage you to do the same.
- **Don't sacrifice your pastor or your ministries:** The MMBB puts out some very valuable resources for figuring out how not to muzzle the ox in your own congregation. It would be a tragic mistake for you cut what God wants of you to give to support your pastor to the regional office and think that you've done your part. I'm not asking you to consider robbing Peter to pay Paul. God was able to support both of their ministries simultaneously. His assets have not changed since then. The staff has stewardship resources to help people in your congregation see the value and blessing in a giving ministry.
- **Seriously consider an increase of at least 1%:** Whether that is to the United Missions offering or to the region directly, your support would be greatly appreciated and used greatly by God on a state, national and international level. It's an opportunity for even small ministries to make big, eternal kingdom-oriented impacts.

I know things are tight and the economy seems iffy. At the same time, God can do and has done amazing things for those who seek his face in such matters. He provided manna. He made a rock gush with water. He kept an oil jar and a flour jar full, even in the midst of a famine. He caused an army of 300 to totally annihilate an army too big to get an accurate count. He did all of this and so much more with those he found faithful. Maybe you can give an additional 1%. Maybe in the prayer process, God leads you to hire another full time minister, an additional administrative staff, and increase your United Missions giving by 30%. Maybe God says, "Don't change a thing." All I ask is that you seek His face in this matter and joyfully follow His lead.

Thank you for your time. You remain in my prayers. May God bless you abundantly with His peace, His provision, and His care.



“For Such A Time As This” The theme at the 2008 ABC/NE Family Reunion



Clockwise from upper left: **President Darren Stroh** gets excited about the upcoming trip to Alaska; President-elect **Ted Hartung** leads in prayer; Keynote speaker **Alonzo Patterson** challenged us to consider the next generation; **Harry Riggs** (FBC Lincoln) preached Saturday morning; **Stan Murdoch** (FBC Kearney) taught Sunday morning Bible Study; **Region Staff** presented *Church Achievement Awards*; **Dave Lundholm** and **Susan Gillies** prepare the Moses Merrill “Match the Match” graphic; **Darren Stroh** and **Sandy Goodwater** serve communion; International Ministries missionary **Ruth Mooney** was our convention Banquet speaker. Center from top: Sunday worshippers receive communion; **The Praise Band** leads worship.

Nola's Take Five . . .

Ideas from Nola Oberhelmen
ABC/NE Christian Education Consultant

Take five suggestions for story-telling:

1. Prime your listeners a bit so they'll be receptive.
2. Construct an opening and stick with two or three main points.
3. Construct a close that refers back to the opening.
4. Practice! Practice! Practice!
5. Pause from time to time so listeners can think about your words.

These suggestions are from storyteller JoAnne Lower.

[Chaplains, continued from page one.]

all we join our co-workers to fulfill the hospital's mission to 'Serve Christ by providing all people with exemplary medical care in an environment of love and care.'"

When asked what churches could do to support his ministry, Chaplain Webb said, "Pray. Chaplains minister to people in crisis. The need for prayer and support from local congregations and pastors is critical. Too often we feel like deserted islands, so any encouragement is appreciated."

Chaplain Pracht writes, "Chaplains often joke that they are treated as though they 'gave up the ministry.' But I have chosen not to think of being in specialized ministry as anything less than the call to service that all ordained persons experience. So I do join Ministers Council, I do attend Family Reunions, I do participate actively in my local congregation. And the ABC support us chaplains by providing the endorsing process, & including us in other services. (By the way - most don't know that within ABC USA we are part of the home mission roster; therefore some of our national offerings help support the specialized support programs)."

Established in the mid-1980s, Pastoral Care Week gives opportunities for organizations and institutions of all kinds and types to recognize the spiritual caregivers in their midst and the ministry which the caregivers provide.



This is the month for your World Mission Offering—for mission outside the USA.

ABC/NE Trivia (answers on p.8)

1. Moses & Eliza Merrill were missionaries in another location before coming to Nebraska in the 1830s. Was it: a. Maine, b. Cuba, c. Mexico, d. Michigan
2. ABC/NE Region Conventions used to be held in churches. Where was the last church convention prior to switching to hotels & convention centers? a. Scottsbluff, b. Kearney, c. Norfolk, d. Ansley
3. Nebraska ordained pastors who are members of MMBB's retirement plan had an increase in compensation between 7/1/07 and 7/1/08. What was the per cent of change? a. 2%, b. 5%, c. 6%, d. 10%
4. What percentage increase did the region staff have in the same period? a. 2%, b. 5%, c. 6%, d. 10%
5. Which region staff member has recently been on the ocean in a sailing ship? a. Dave Lundholm, b. Steve Bils, c. Clarence Reiss, d. MaryBeth Robertson, e. Susan Gillies

Let's Go to Alaska!

Nebraska Baptists have a great opportunity to visit ABC work in Alaska April 18-29, 2009. The trip will depart from Omaha and will cost only \$1500 per person, double occupancy.

The trip will be hosted by Kathy Brown and Steve Bils and will be limited to 26. Brochures are available from the Region Office.



York Dedicates New Dome

The Baptist Congregational Federated Church in York was faced with an old church building, a dwindled number of members and friends of the church, and questions of stewardship, both of resources toward ministry, and toward property maintenance. The decision of how to deal with deteriorating condition of the old stained glass dome over the sanctuary weighed heavily. How would they cope with the considerable task and the cost involved?

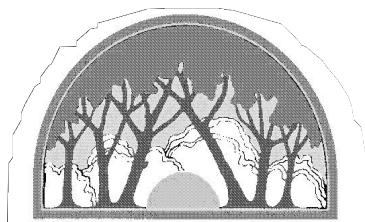
Much prayer and discussion led them, with God's guidance, to make the momentous and faith-led decision to attempt the restoration of the dome. Donations were sought and received, a talented artist was secured, and more prayer continued as they moved forward. In the midst of it all, pastoral leadership evolved, members moved away, others' life situations changed, but the congregation continued to move forward in faith to return the dome to its place of glory and reverence.

On September 7 the church held a celebration of dedication for the newly restored, and already loved, dome. According to pastor, Barb Johnson, "The newly restored stained glass dome immediately draws one's attention upward. Its beauty is inspiring; inviting God's light in, reflecting its inner splendor outward."

What the future will bring to this congregation is yet to be written. But the members and friends of this congregation have made a faith commitment to continue as a testimony of their strong faith in the God who leads them forward. And as they commemorate their faith decision, they have the assurance that this church still has a ministry to fulfill.

Book of Timothy





Moses Merrill News

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From Camp Cat . . .

Fall is my favorite season at Moses Merrill. It is just beautiful. The weather is great for afternoon naps (and morning naps—and noon naps).

I love seeing the families who come out for a day or two of rest and relaxation. They seem to especially like the hiking trails. Sometimes folks just come for the day and sometimes they rent a cabin or lodge room and sometimes they have an RV. (Did you know four of our cabins have range and refrigerator?)

Fall weekends are very busy with all kinds of events. Weekdays are quieter.

Why don't you come see me this fall? Bring snacks!

*Your friend,
Camp Cat*



ABC/NE Youth Are Challenged to Complete the Building Bridges Effort

ABC/NE Executive Minister Susan Gillies and Director of Camping Clarence Reiss met with the youth of the state at their convention at Camp Comeca. Gillies asked the youth to help complete the campaign to raise money for the

Multi-Ministry Building at Moses Merrill. Reiss showed the youth a **scale model** of what the new building might look like.

"We have amazing young people in the ABC of Nebraska," said Gillies. "I know they can tell their own stories of the impact of Camp Merrill in their lives — and they can tell those stories powerfully and persuasively."

Young people will be invited to "tell the story" in their own church and in other churches in the state.



Building Bridges . . . "Fulfill the Vision" Match-the-Match WOW!

The final phase of the Building Bridge capital improvement project at Moses Merrill is called "Fulfill the Vision." This summer a challenge was extended to all Nebraska Baptists begin to raise the money necessary for a multi-ministry facility.

A group of donors pledged \$447,583 if the amount could be match by the close of the Family Reunion (region convention) Sept. 21. **At the close of the reunion, ABC churches & individuals had raised \$322.293, with the match that equals \$644,586.** More money is coming in and the original donors are being asked to allow the period for the match to be extended to the end of the year.

Meantime, the ABC/NE Camp Department was working hard on designs for the new building. They have come up with a very workable plan that could be built for somewhat less than the original plan.

Director of Camping, Clarence Reiss, hopes construction can begin late in 2009. "Many of the gifts are in the form of pledges," Reiss said. "We will have to collect most of that before we can begin construction. But, we have plenty to do to get ready with sewer work and architectural work before we start building."

Camp Manager, MaryBeth Robertson, said, "All of us at Moses Merrill are excited about this final stage of Building Bridges. The Multi-Ministry Building will be a tremendous boon to program activities for us and for the groups the use our facilities.

Pledges and gifts are still needed.

From the Associate Executive Minister Dave Lundholm

Churches Helping Churches: By Providing Leaders

One of the most pressing needs in our smaller churches is new pastoral leadership after a pastor has retired or moved on. This is true in the area of pulpit supply, interim leadership and the follow-on pastorate.

The issue is that full-time, seminary-trained leadership is expensive and our smaller congregations are finding it difficult to afford leadership using this traditional approach. They need help from their sister ABC congregations.

They need help in the form of pulpit supply. Are there lay people or retired clergy in your church that are capable of traveling on a Sunday morning to provide a sermon to a neighboring small church? Please let the Region Office know who they are, how to contact them and how far they would be able to travel.

They need help in the form of interim pastors. Are their people of maturity and wisdom (clergy or laity) who would be able to provide pastoral leadership for a year or so while a congregation looks for a new pastor? Let us know who they are, how far they would be willing to travel and how many days each week they

could commit to being on the field. We would be happy to provide day to day counsel and basic training in the tasks of the interim time.

Likewise these churches need help in the form of people who have enough financial resources to provide much of their own support who would come to live in the community and serve as pastor for a small stipend. Let us know who these people are.

The Region has recently joined with the Education for Lay Ministry (ELM) program to provide education to enable lay people to pastor churches. We have our first two American Baptist students enrolled in the program even now for the 2008-2009 cycle. This program cycles every two years. Pastors, who are the leaders that you need to cultivate now so that they are ready to begin in 2010?

There is a mission field right here in Nebraska where our sister churches are in need. How many will commit to serve Christ in this way in our own "Judea?"



LOCAL CHURCH NEWS

by Darlene Rimpley

February Deadlines

Jan. 4, 2008 - Print Copy

Jan. 9, 2008 - E-Mail

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Subject: Messenger

ARNOLD FBC: The Custer Association of ABW met at FBC on Sept 12. Cole Leach and Ryan Tullis presented the program on the "Creation Adventure". Duane & Norma Erikson celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on Sept 2. Matt Coleman spent a week at the Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota leading a VBS, and plans to return monthly as a follow-up. Ed & Dona Johnson spent a week in Minnesota helping repair houses damaged by floods.

BEATRICE FBC: An Open House with a barbecue lunch at the parsonage on Sept 7 allowed the recent parsonage renovations to be seen. "Kids' Time" and the youth group started their fall sessions on Sept 10. Communion was delivered to the shut-ins on Sept 3.

BRIDGEPORT FBC: The Varsity Youth Ministry went to Pine Ridge and White Clay this summer to assist the *Hands of Faith Ministries* in their outreach. VBS was held in June and used the Power Lab material with great success. We held *Church in the Park* on Aug 28 with breakfast supplied by the elders. Fall ministries kick off in September with Sunday School, Kid's Club, Jr. Varsity Youth, and Varsity Youth. Adult Sunday School begins a study of Blackabee's book *Experiencing God*. The building project continues to make progress; the fire suppression system has been installed, the outdoor sprinklers and grass put in place, and the electrical system installation begun.

BROKEN BOW FBC: Ruth Mooney, missionary to Costa Rica, spoke at a morning "coffee and roll" gathering of the Custer Association of ABW on Sept 23. A baptism service was held

for three teenagers and two adults on Aug 21. All were received into the church as members except for one of the women who lives in Denver. Rev. Al Cole of Lexington, who is a retired missionary to New Guinea, and Roger McDermott of FBC Kearney, have been filling the pulpit. The Pulpit Committee is working on calling a new pastor. The roof of the church was replaced after a windstorm damaged the other one.

CHAPMAN FBC: The Chapman church is still in the business of serving our Lord, and keeping active. We are in the process of calling a new pastor, and the Spring rains left us with all kinds of problems in our church and the parsonage basements. These problems are being handled as best we can. A luncheon was held to honor our local school teachers; this was arranged by our Deacon Board. The ABWM published a cook book honoring Merrick County's sesquicentennial, we are busy filling our White Cross quota, we will be joining the Methodist Women the end of September to serve pie and ice cream at our Chapman Days celebration. We held a Day Camp for children of the community; this was held weekly for 6 weeks, organized by Nola Oberhelman, and several grandmas as helpers. We were visited by our sister church, Palestine Baptist, this summer, and we appreciate their interest, and their prayers. God is good--

CHADRON FBC: September was begun with the last eight hours of the prayer vigil, and the month will be spent "Praying 4 America". A college age supper and Bible study are held every Monday night.

COLUMBUS FBC: Sept 2: ABW hosted a Salad Supper and Kitchen Shower for our Church. Sept 7: Our Sunday School started up again after a summer break. Sept 14: Our Church Worship Service will be taken out to Camp Merrill followed by a picnic lunch. Dave & Marie Hansen did beautiful landscaping around our church sign and will also do some around our stained glass windows. Perfect Attendance Sunday School pins were awarded to: Karen Effa - 5 years; Dien Effa - 11 years; Bill Evans Jr. - 26 years; Bill Evans III - 28 years

FAIRBURY FBC: Pastor Jim Cutts was formally installed on Sept 14 with Steve Bils preaching the sermon and Susan Gillies administering the words of installation. A Men and Boys Retreat was held at Camp Jefferson Sept 20-21, with R.J. Robinson as the Sunday morning speaker. The women observed ABW Sunday on Sept 21 with Julie Elder Robinson as the speaker. The Adopt-A-Young Adult program will continue in the church by the ABW.

FREMONT FBC: Paul Foreman is the Interim Youth Director. VBS was held in August, and Youth Sunday and promotion was held Aug 24. Diane Christensen Hillis shared about her trip to China at the Sept 4 meeting of ABW. Kids Klub began on Sept 3. FBC Fremont served as the host church at this year's region convention in Kearney. Missionary Ruth Mooney spoke at the church on Sept 18. The Robert Rogers film, "Mighty in the Land", was shown on Sept 7. Patsy Prusia, Jean Foreman, Vincent Hammond, and Amber Hammond received prizes for "summer reading".

GIBBON BC: The youth participated in the "See You at the Pole" on Sept 24. DVDs of the 120th anniversary celebration of the church are available. The GPS Evacuation drill was held at FBC on Sept 19.

GRAND ISLAND FBC: "Women's Sunday" was held on Sept 21. The Ruth Circle wrapped shoes boxes for the Samaritan Ministry at their September meeting. Ruth Mooney, missionary to Costa Rica, spoke at the church on Sept 23 to the Spanish Bible study and on Sept 24 to the church family. The Wednesday evening suppers resumed on Sept 3.

HOLDREGE FBC: Sunday School promotion was held on Sept 7. Children entering 3rd and 7th grades were presented Bibles. Duane & Ardella Brand celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary recently. The Southern Union Fall Rally was held at FBC on Sept 28.

HASTINGS FBC: Blessings on Gene & Shannon Piel! The congregation joined in celebrating their wedding during the worship service Sunday Sept 7. Our monthly potluck was moved up two weeks to become part of that celebration.

LAVISTA JUDSON: The *Christian Motorcyclists Association* attended services at Judson and shared about their work and have lent their prayer support for Judson as we go through our transition. Promotion Sunday was held and Bibles were awarded. The J.O.Y. Club visited and toured Rotella's Bakery and then went to lunch. The World Mission Offering was taken and "Mission Moments" were given each Sunday. Extra prayers have been going out for the missionaries located in areas affected by hurricanes. The ABW provided lunch one day for the *Habitat for Humanity* workers. The ABW had a program with guest Claire Herzog, who talked about refugee resettlement in the Omaha and Lincoln areas. All Grandparents were recognized on Grandparents' Day. A survey has been given out to members to help the search committee as they look for a new minister to lead our flock. We have been blessed each Sunday with wonderful speakers - both clergy and lay.

JUNIATA CC: "Through His Eyes", a gospel duo from Beatrice, sang on Aug 24.

LINCOLN FBC: The African Children's Choir gave a performance on Sept 26 at FBC. Rally Day was held on Sept 7, with the children going into second or third grades being presented with Bibles. A supper will be held each second Wednesday.

LINCOLN SECOND BAPTIST: On Aug 31, the Diaconate held a Back to School Shower for the Samuel Rik family who are from Sudan. The church is helping them out in trying to provide both financial and prayer support. Sept 3 we began our Fall program with Fellowship Dinners and our Children and Youth Wednesday night programs and Adult Bible Study started in full swing. We welcomed our new accompanist, Kay Byers, as the bell choir and chancel choir got underway for the year. The AB Women held their first meeting for the 2008-2009 year with a luncheon with Tom McBride as their guest

speaker. Tom is Executive Director of *Epworth Village* in York. Saturday, Sept 13, the AB Men got together for their monthly prayer breakfast. Ted Hartung is leading a class this fall using a book written by Reggie McNeal called the "The Present Future-Six Tough Questions for the Church." Ted was elected to serve as the president of ABCNE for 2009 during the Family Reunion held in Kearney. S.A.M. luncheon was held this month with Sue Pudwill providing the program entitled "What and Where is Dubai".

MCCOOK FBC: A 55-year member, Verna Heskett, passed away on Aug 15.

NORFOLK FBC: AWANA resumed on Sept 10. Eleanor Nordyke celebrated her 94th birthday on Sept 4, Eva Seda her 85th on Sept 8, Norman Rix his 86th on the 10th, Darel Heppner was 82 on Sept 14, and Lea Cooper celebrated his 80th birthday on Sept 17. What joy to have so much wisdom in a church family! Darel & Marilyn Heppner observed 62 years of marriage on Sept 11, and Robert & Betty Peterson 65 years on Sept 19. The youth served the meal at the Rescue Mission on Sept 25. FBC had a float in the LaVista Lions' Club Parade on Sept 27.

OMAHA BENSON: The church had a float in the Benson Unity Parade on Sept 20. Children entering the third and fourth grades received a Bible during the worship service on Sept 7. The ABWomen held a "tea party" on Sept 13, when speaker Suzanne Perry, in costume from the 1800s, gave a historical narrative about the Oregon Trail and played her hammered dulcimer. Sunday School teachers and their families were honored at an appreciation/recognition dinner on Sept 28. "Name That Tune" was played for the fun night on Sept 28. The Young Adults cleaned up property that bordered between the church lawn and a neighbor. A shoe drive for Together Inc. produced 21 pair of shoes for school children.

OMAHA PARKSIDE: An 88th birthday party for the church was held on Sept 27, with cake being served to friends from the neighborhood. Marjorie Beckerman celebrated her 85th birthday on Aug 17, and Betty Kizlin her 88th birthday, also on the 17th.

OMAHA SUNSET HILLS: The annual Baked Steak Dinner will be Saturday, Oct 18. Call the church (391-0820) for tickets and reservations. In a first organized effort, more than 100 American Baptists attended ABC Night at Rosenblatt Stadium on Aug 26. Dean and Joanne Kelley observed their 60th wedding anniversary with a reception after worship on Sept 14. Omahaland ABW met at Sunset Hills on Sept 18 with missionary Ruth Mooney as guest speaker.

SCOTTSBLUFF FBC: Soup Suppers resumed on Wednesday nights. The youth from 5th grade up will be taking part in the "Dare to Be a Daniel" study. "Welcome Home Sunday" was observed on Sept 7, with Sunday School promotion held during that hour, an evening picnic on the church lawn, followed by the Monument Quartet concert.

TEKAMAH FBC: The church family celebrated the 150th anniversary of the founding of the

church on Sept 7, with events from early morning until in the afternoon, with many old friends and members who returned for the day. Missionary Ruth Mooney spoke at the church on Sept 28. A Junior Church was begun on Sept 14. Cliff Morrow "retired" as Choir Director after 30 plus years of service in the role. Good News Club begun on Sept 18 with a "Western Party".

UNION FBC: The church is grateful for the willingness of Rev. Jim Cummings to serve as our Interim Pastor. Pastor Jim recently completed his training to be a hospital chaplain and is serving in that capacity in Lincoln.



NEW MEMBERS:

BRIDGEPORT: Brian and Carrie Lane, Travis and Tina Sparks, Elisabeth Stroh

BROKEN BOW FBC: Janet Breiner, Elisha Breiner, Vickie, Maria, and Lou Valdez

LINCOLN FBC: Curtis and Nikki Banks

OMAHA BENSON: Jill Wragge and Sam Cheek

FREMONT FBC: Jason Indra, Kelsey Smith, Kally Casper, Savannah Buck

HOLDREGE FBC: Brandon, Joel, and Carlie Burkholder, Kalei Chase, Abigail Kinnaman, Antonia Clayton, Hannah Kinnaman, and Chris, Angie, Ausin, and Amanda Ennick

SUNSET HILLS: Bob, Vicki, Robert and Ally Ragland.

BAPTISMS:

BRIDGEPORT: Troy Hedin, Carrie Lane, Elisabeth Stroh, Tina Sparks

ABMen Names Robin Stoops Pastor of the Year

Robin Stoops, pastor of First Baptist Church of Norfolk, has been named Pastor of the Year by American Baptist Men of Nebraska.

The announcement was made at the Men's Lunch at the ABC/NE Region Convention. Stoops was recognized for his leadership in the region both in his previous pastorate in Fairbury and now in Norfolk.

Annually ABMen recognizes both a Layman of the Year (awarded at their conference at Moses Merrill Camp & Conference Center) and Pastor of the Year (awarded at convention).

Gulf Coast Disaster Response



Hurricane Ike added to the challenges caused by earlier hurricanes on the Gulf Coast. ABC/NE hopes to send a re-building team to Texas during the winter. The first team might travel at or just after New Years. A second team could go later.

Emergency Services Consultant Jason Workman is working with ABMen and ABC/USA Disaster Response. He would like to have names of persons interested in participating in one or more teams to go to Texas.

Churches may send entire teams or individuals to serve on combined teams. Contact the region office. 1-877-244-7339 (in Omaha 556-4730).

ABC/NE Trivia Answers

- d. The Merrills served as missionaries in northern Michigan before coming to Nebraska.
- a. Scottsbluff hosted the last church located region convention.
- d. Congratulations to ABC/NE churches! Pastors salaries actually went up 10.9% between 7/1/07 and 7/1/08. [Make sure your pastor's salary goes up too!]
- a. The region staff received a 2% increase.
- c. Clarence Reiss Ask him about it, it's quite a story!

Please read the important letter from the ABC/NE President On Page Two — Before Your Church Budget Meeting.

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 Paseka, 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

**TODAY
AND
EVERYDAY
FIND TIME
FOR ...**



Prayer

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