

the ESSENGER

American Baptist Churches of Nebraska



Dec. 2006 —
Jan. 2007

ABC/NE Date Data

COUNTRY CHRISTMAS
VESPER SERVICES
Friendship Chapel
Camp Moses Merrill
4:00 pm
Dec. 3, 10, 17, 24

Encouraging Healthy Families
Conference — Camp Merrill
Jan 22-24

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CHRISTMAS COMES



Out of Ashes . . . Hope
Out of Chaos . . . Peace
Out of Sorrow . . . Joy
Through it all . . . LOVE
Christmas Joy to You All . . From the staff of ABC/NE & CMM

FIRE DAMAGES BUILDING BUT NOT SPIRIT of NORFOLK FIRST BAPTIST!

Comments like "We had been talking about wanting to remodel the kitchen anyway!" are indicative of the genuine positive attitude surrounding the tragic fire that rendered the building of FBC Norfolk unusable on Thursday, November 9

Three short days later the church had moved into their new temporary facilities down the street at the former campus of Nebraska Christian College. A television reporter on the scene interviewing church

members commented to interim pastor Frank Gillett, "I came here expecting a wake and what I found was a celebration."

Even before the fire was under control, church leaders were making arrangements to move ministry operations to alternate sites. Volunteers worked tirelessly all weekend to

clean and move equipment and materials to the college campus for Sunday School and Worship as usual on Sunday.

Pastors Jason Workman and Kevin

Walden represented the region on Thursday as church leaders met to strategize. Benson Baptist Church took all the Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes back to Omaha and cleaned them up for shipment. Former pastor Dave Bender joined Dave Lundholm and Steve Bils at worship on Sunday and read

a letter from General Secretary A. Roy Medley extending national and regional condolences and financial aid to the congregation.

Because of extensive water and smoke damage the best estimate is that the building will not be usable for at least 12 months.



From the Executive Minister Susan Gillies

RESILIENCY

November 9, I was on the road heading for Kansas City and a meeting of the board of Central Seminary when I got a call from Dave Lundholm telling me FBC Norfolk's building was on fire. It was hard to believe. In the ABC/NE most of our church buildings would seem more vulnerable to fire than Norfolk's. The congregation moved into their lovely new building in 1990. By church standards, that makes it one of the newer ones. The even more devastating word from Dave was that it was uncertain if any of the building could be saved.

As I drove, and prayed, I thought about the vital ministry carried on through this church. I feel strongly that this congregation possesses one of the great characteristics of vital Christians . . . resiliency. It doesn't mean the loss isn't felt deeply. It doesn't mean there isn't a time of weeping. It does mean a healthy group of God's people can endure horrific blows and adjust, adapt, and come forth refreshed in ministry and mission.

We are a family in the ABC/NE. Sometimes we don't realize it until a crisis hits. By that afternoon we had deployed Jason Workman (Assistant Pastor at Benson, trained in emergency response and called by the youth in his church "Disaster Pastor") and Kevin Walden (Pastor at Miracle Hills). Both Jason and Kevin were part of our first-response team to Louisiana following Katrina. On the following Sunday, Dave & Linda Lundholm and Steve Bils worshiped with the congregation. Former pastor Dave Bender read a letter to the congregation from ABC-USA General Secretary Roy Medley.

This is clearly a time of challenge and opportunity for the folks of the Norfolk church. They are in an interim time between pastors. It would be easy for folks to drift away. But I don't think that's going to happen. They quickly found another building in which they could worship. They arranged for their children and youth programming to continue. Christmas programs and services will be held. [They have insurance. We'll let you know if there is a need for work teams or money.]

Steve got a call less than a week after the fire from someone in the church who was concerned because their Retired Ministers & Missionaries Offering (RMMO) materials had been destroyed. The person wanted to know if they could get another set of materials. Steve took care of it. I sent a note to Sumner Grant, Executive Director of the Ministers & Missionaries Benefit Board (MMBB) to tell him this story. He wrote back that it is so encouraging to hear of people who keep their focus on their mission even when crisis hits.

It's a story of resiliency. And **we can help**. We hope there will be folks from the ABC family in worship each Sunday with the Norfolk family. I urge you to send notes and letters of encouragement

Let us together celebrate new life!

The light comes in the darkness. A child is born. Hope fills the air.



From the Associate Executive Minister for Mission Development Steve Bils

Missionaries in our Midst

These last few weeks have been filled with great opportunities for churches in Nebraska to learn firsthand from our missionaries about the wonderful work being accomplished around the world. Faced with a last-minute cancellation, we received a call from the missions folks in Valley Forge asking us if we could use Michael Mann for a few days in Nebraska. We sense a natural connection with Michael because of his global ministry in the areas of rural and agricultural mission. Even on short notice we were able to arrange for him to be with our congregation in Decatur (Riverside Baptist) where he stayed with a farming family and was able to help harvest the corn crop and even drove the combine for a bit. Then he had the chance to spend some time in and around Grand Island where he had a chance to visit with Stan Jensen and a colleague of his who happened to be an authority on growing corn in the part of the world where Michael lives and ministers. If you will remember the story in last month's Messenger, Michael made a comment about the need to accurately determine the moisture content of the coffee they grow. He was directed to a local agricultural supplier and was surprised that he could buy a testing unit in Nebraska calibrated to check the moisture in Arabica coffee! FBC Grand Island raised the money needed for the unit and sent Michael back to Thailand with it.

Pastor Kip Mickelson of FBC Omaha requested that we secure Jim or Debbie Kelsey, ABC missionaries on home assignment who have completed a term in Belgium and who are preparing for a second term, this time as the first ABC missionaries in Italy since the late 1870s. When contacted, Jim was excited about coming to Nebraska and asked if it could be

arranged for him to get to Fairbury and McCook while in the state since members of these congregations had communicated with them during their time in Belgium. The schedule was made and visits to Superior and Arthur were also included. Jim will be working with the Baptist Union in Italy, developing a training program for the lay pastors working in immigrant churches, primarily from eastern Europe (Romania) and northern Africa (Nigeria). Debbie will be working with Italian Baptist leaders on the problem of women and children who are trafficked in the prostitution trade.

Madeline Flores-Lopez, a Puerto Rican leader serving as an ABC missionary to the Dominican Republic, was requested by Lon Sorenson on behalf of FBC Lincoln. Although her stay in Nebraska was shorter than Jim's, we were able to squeeze visits into her itinerary with Columbus and Fremont.

Madeline and Jim were also both able to spend some time with the participants at the Small Church Conference at Camp Merrill.

If your church, ABM, ABWM, or association gathering would like a visit from one of our ABC home or foreign missionaries, let me know as far in advance as possible and we will see if we can secure a visit for you. We want to be good stewards so we will try to find multiple venues for any missionary visit we arrange, and will look to the churches and associations receiving the visits to assist in lodging and transportation details.

For more information about our home and foreign missionaries visit www.nationalministries.org and www.internationalministries.org.



Nola's Take Five . . .

Ideas from Nola Oberhelman
ABC/NE Christian Ed Consultant

Ideas for gifts that teach:

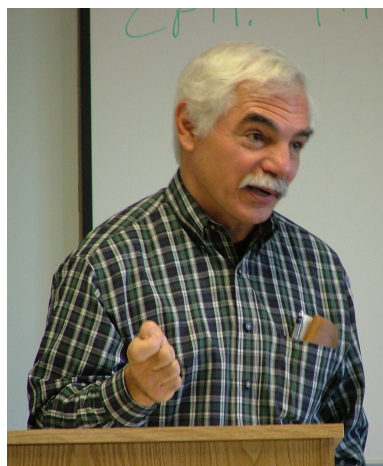
1. *NIV Kids Club* tapes for Sing Along Memory Songs
2. *Good Book Cookbook* (Carson Del-erosa)
3. *Times Seven*--Bible Verse Card Games (Standard)
4. HisStory or Nativity bracelets
5. *Want More Joy?* Interactive devotions for teens (Tyndale)

Martin Luther King Day

Honor Martin Luther King, Jr. on January 15. Dr. King was an American Baptist pastor. If your community doesn't have special services for the holiday, check your local library for a copy of a speech by Dr. King that you and your family can read and discuss.



ABC's Small Church Conference Held at Camp Moses Merrill



Fifty persons gathered at Camp Moses Merrill in early November for The Small Church Conference. This was the first time the event had been held at camp and response was positive.

Speaker for the event was Tony Pappas, well known author and speaker. Pappas, currently Executive Minister of the ABC of Massachusetts, encouraged participants to understand the spiritual dynamics that undergird the fruitful small church.

Workshops related to Pappas' plenary session topics.

A special feature of this year's conference was an evening concert by Kip Mickelson, pastor of FBC, Omaha.

Dr. Tony Pappas (L) spoke of the imperative of the spiritual disciplines to church health and vitality at the Small Church Conference.

Central Region Area Minister John Williams (R) led worship throughout the conference. The bridge into the Friendship Chapel provided the backdrop for one morning's gathering.



White Cross Convoy to Montana — A Great Success

The American Baptist Women's Ministries of Nebraska's White Cross quota for the First Crow Indian Baptist Church of Lodge Grass, Montana, was enough to completely fill the backs of a 15 passenger van and a minivan. So, instead of having each of our churches mail their boxes to Lodge Grass, ABC Nebraska decided to sponsor a convoy to allow anyone who wanted to participate the opportunity to hand-deliver the quota and see where and how it would be used.

Leaving Omaha early on Thursday morning, October 26, the convoy made stops at FBC Union, FBC Lincoln, York, FBC Hastings, FBC Grand Island, Broken Bow, FBC Arnold, FBC North Platte, FBC Bridgeport and FBC Scottsbluff, picking up the generous gifts of toys, clothing, diapers, quilts, etc., as well as seven American Baptists from six of our churches.

Special thanks to Benson Baptist and to Pastor Larry Adams (Columbus) for providing the vans for the convoy.

By the time the convoy arrived in Arnold the two vehicles were completely jammed full with three stops yet planned for the next morning. While Melody Jennings prepared a wonderful meal for the travelers, Pastor Irv took us to the local hardware store where we were allowed to pull the vans in out of the weather and consolidate the boxes to make room for more.

Pastors Newton and Amelia Old Crow met the convoy at the church on Saturday morning and

shared the history of the ministry and explained how the White Cross gifts made outreach ministry into the community possible. After joining the congregation in worship on Sunday the convoy made its way back to Nebraska with a greater appreciation for the mission and ministry made possible through the generosity of the White Cross participants.

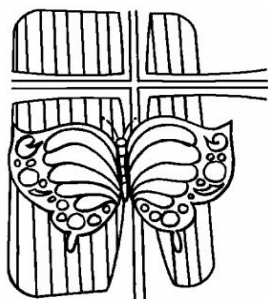
Convoy participants, Larry Adams, Steve Bils, Marge Dougherty, Eileen Hanson, Nina Jean Meth, and Stan & Nola Oberhelman are available to speak to groups about their impressions of the ministry at Lodge Grass and about the efficacy of the White Cross Offering throughout the world.



Eileen Hanson (L) from FBC Holdrege marvels at the room full of boxes unloaded from the two vans on the Convoy. Pastor Newton Old Crow and Stan Oberhelman from FBC Chapman review a photo album from a trip Stan took to Lodge Grass years ago with the youth from Benson.

December PRAYER:

a part of the ABC/NE 2006 Prayer Emphasis



Join Baptists across Nebraska in prayer in December for:

- First Baptist, Union, Pastor David Hall.
- United Faith Community, Valley, Pastor Carl Ratcliff.
- First Baptist, Wayne, Pastor Doug Shelton
- Koinonia House of Worship, Bellevue, Pastor Tony Sanders

Pray that these churches will be:

- Surprised by joy.
- Filled with energy.
- Focused on mission.

Pray that these churches will discover:

- New gifts for teaching.
- New ideas for outreach.
- Renewed commitments to nurture and care for each other.

Church Leaders Learn How to Respond to Domestic Violence

ABC/NE will sponsor an educational conference for key local church leaders aimed at assisting churches in identifying and dealing with domestic violence. The conference is: "Encouraging Healthy Families: Recognizing and Responding to Domestic Violence." It will be held Jan 22-24, 2007 at Camp Moses Merrill. (Snow dates Jan. 29-31)

The conference is funded by a grant from Inter-church Ministries of Nebraska. The grant will cover conference costs, room and meals for all who attend.

ABC-NE President-elect Darren Stroh wrote to board members encouraging their participation. He acknowledged the difficulty of the topic but underlined its importance. He also wrote, "I took a sneak peak over the agenda for the workshop, and it looks to be a very involving, gentle, respectful but engaging way of approaching the topic."

Anyone interested in receiving an invitation to attend, should contact the region office as soon as possible. The conference has a limitation on the number of persons who can attend. The conference is open to both laity and clergy.

CHRISTMAS GIFT IDEAS

12 Steps to Congregational Transformation: A Practical Guide for Leaders by Dr. David C. Laubach. This is a very readable and enjoyable book for churches looking for new life. The Good Soil participating churches will be receiving a copy. In the book, Laubach offers a clear and direct roadmap for those embarking on the journey of transformation. The book would be a "good read" for anyone interested in having a healthy church. Order from www.JudsonPress.com

How to Be the Best Christian Study Group Leader Ever in the Whole History of the Universe by Christian educator Israel Galindo. Galindo focuses his expertise on truly effective small group leadership. He provides the educator with the perspective and tools needed to achieve the ultimate goal of Christian education: to bring faith to life. Order from www.JudsonPress.com.

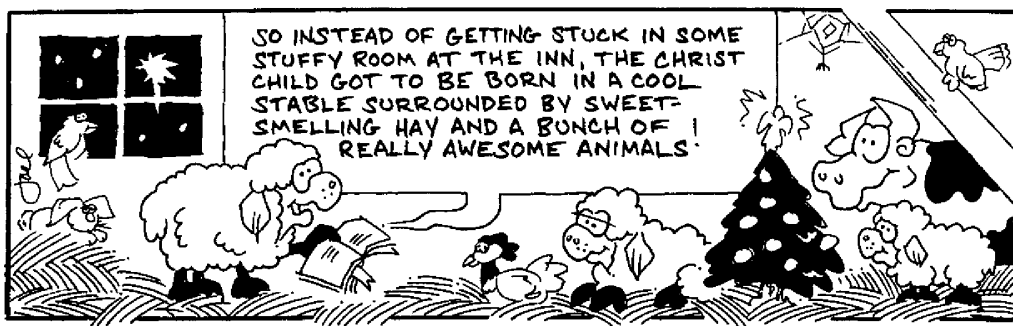
Down by the Riverside is the answer for people who want a basic orientation to the nature of Christian faith as practiced by Baptist believers. Author Everett Goodwin includes an overview of Baptist history in the United States as a guide to understanding Baptist faith and identity. By revealing the essential principles and distinctions of Baptist belief and by providing information on the theological and historical origins of those beliefs, this addition to the catalog of available Baptist resources is the perfect orientation tool for young people and other new Baptists. Order from www.JudsonPress.com.

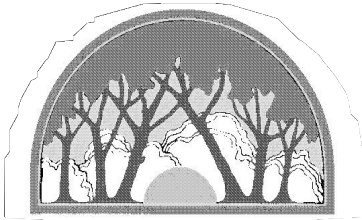
Did You Know?

Frankincense is a sweet smelling gum resin derived from certain Boswellia trees which, at the time of Christ, grew in Arabia, India, and Ethiopia. Tradition says that it was presented to the Christ Child by Balthasar, the black king from Ethiopia or Saba. The frankincense trade was at its height during the days of the Roman Empire. At that time this resin was considered as valuable as gems or precious metals. The Romans burned frankincense on their altars and at cremations.

Myrrh is an aromatic gum resin which oozes from gashes cut in the bark of a small desert tree known as Commifera Myrrha or the dindin tree. The myrrh hardens into tear-dropped shaped chunks and is then powdered or made into ointments or perfumes. This tree is about 5-15 feet tall and 1 foot in diameter. Legend says Caspar brought the gift of myrrh from Europe or Tarsus and placed it before the Christ Child. Myrrh was an extremely valuable commodity during biblical times and was imported from India and Arabia.

Pontius' Puddle





Camp Moses Merrill News

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

Clarence Reiss, Director (402) 666-5639

E-mail: campmerrill@nntc.net

Website: www.campmerrill.com

You are invited . . .



Country Christmas Vespers

Sundays at 4:00 pm

Dec. 3, 10, 17, 24

Friendship Chapel

We're setting up a tree, hanging the greens and inviting the neighbors in for Christmas Vesper Services. Everyone is welcome for the informal service followed by refreshments. Fremont First Baptist will host the first service on Dec. 3.

Special Opportunity . . .

A Collection of **Christmas Nativity Sets** will be on display at Friendship Chapel Dec. 3, 10, 17 & 24.

The Collection belongs to Judie Heller, Omaha, Benson. She has graciously shared the crèches with Camp this year.

Bring family & friends to see them.



Thanks to all who give prayers, time, money and needed items to support Camp Merrill.

Special thanks this month to: Donna Pearson, Kathy & Jesse Brown, Karen & Steve Westerfield, LeRoy Kleine, Joyce O'Brien, Sharon Neiderheiser, Lorraine Stapleton, Pauline Parke, Sharon & Bill Evans, Stan & Margaret Jensen, Roger Fredrikson, Mindy Swanson, Lou Grotelueschen, Tekamah AB Women, FBC Bridgeport, Dell Ward and to several anonymous donors.

CELEBRATE CAMP MERRILL SUNDAY IN JANUARY.

PLAN NOW FOR YOUR TRIP TO CAMP MERRILL IN 2007!

From the Associate Executive Minister for Professional MinistryDave Lundholm

A Heart for Ministry in the Heartland

Early on in my years on staff in Nebraska there was a motto that appeared on all of our letterhead and other publications. It declared "A heart for ministry in the heartland." We've moved on to other and better logos and mottos but I want to use the old motto as the pretext for this article.

In order for a pastor to accomplish effective ministry it is important that he or she have a heart for ministry. The first thing that the phrase suggests is that a pastor must have a solid sense of God's call into ministry, and must have the commitment to ministry to serve effectively and thoroughly. I have no cause for concern in this area because Nebraska pastors are the most committed group of leaders I have known.

There is another thing the phrase "A heart for ministry in the heartland" suggests and that is a matter of concern to me. That concern is in the realm of the physical (or physiological). Over the past 18 months many of our Nebraska pastors have experienced difficulty with their hearts. I am currently praying for 6 ABC Nebraska pastors with heart issues. Folks, that is about a tithe of our pastors. For these the heart health crisis has been dealt with and they are either maintaining or recovering their health.

There may be other pastors out there that have heart problems but haven't discovered it yet. As you think about goals and opportunities for the upcoming year, please consider things like achieving and maintaining a healthy weight, gently getting into an appropriate exercise program (under medical supervision of course), and learning how to effectively manage the stresses of ministry. There are many simple lifestyle choices that can greatly reduce the risk of heart disease.

Churches can help their pastors by affirming them and encouraging them to take the time to care for themselves. Be careful as you do this. Don't "pick" at your pastor for not eating appropriately or not exercising or you may make matters worse. Love your pastors and allow them the freedom to make their own decisions.

A heart for ministry in the heartland consists of a spiritual component: The call of God. It consists of a mental component: A willingness to serve. And it consists of a physical component: Taking care of ourselves. We are two thirds there. Lets take it the rest of the way.



LOCAL CHURCH NEWS

by Darlene Rimpley

February Deadlines

January 15, 2007 - Print Copy

January 18, 2007 - E-Mail

Home Town Editor

Darlene RIMPLEY

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E-Editor

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Subject: Messenger

ARNOLD FBC: The annual Harvest Supper was held on Nov 5, with church family entertainment following. Items were collected for the local food pantry. FBC participated in the community soup supper and Thanksgiving service held on Nov 19, with the Church of the Nazarene hosting. The college students and high school seniors were honored at a taco supper on Nov 25, followed by a bowling party with the high school youth. The "White Cross Convoy", taking the White Cross offering to Lodge Grass, MT, ate supper at the church on Oct 26, where they joined the birthday supper being given for an exchange student from France.

ARTHUR BC: We held our Annual Fall Festival supper on Nov 12. At this time the Samaritan's Purse shoeboxes were turned in. On Nov 15, Missionary Jim Kelsey spoke at our regular midweek service. This service was the annual Baptist Women's Day of Prayer observance. Refreshments were served. Pastor Ben and Elaine Keene attended the Good Soil seminar at Grand Island and are presenting the material to us at the mid week

services starting on Nov 22.

BEATRICE FBC: A new youth class has begun on Wednesday nights, with the youth having a Bible study one week, and the next week a fun or mission project night. A special offering for the Food Pantry was taken on Nov 18.

BELLEVUE KOINONIA HOW: A full schedule of Christmas services are scheduled for Dec. Everyone is invited to our Watchnight Service on Dec. 31 at 10:30pm. Services are held at Bellevue University.

BELLEVUE NEW LIFE BC: Family Movie night on Nov 24 featured The Polar Express. At New Life, we are using secular movies to drive home Christian values. Admission, snacks and drinks are always free.

BROKEN BOW FBC: The ordination service for pastor Betty Johnson was held on Nov. 12. Dave Lundholm led the service and Susan Gillies gave the message.

CHADRON FBC: Six youth and three sponsors

attended "Acquire the Fire" in Rapid City Nov 10-11. A spaghetti dinner was held on Nov 3 as a money-raiser for the expenses.

CHAPMAN FBC: We are pleased to announce the calling of **Rev. Richard Henderson as pastor. Richard and his wife Ruby will be coming from Hastings, NE. Installation services for the Hendersons will be Dec. 10 at 1:30pm. All are welcome to join us.**

Stan and Nola Oberhelman accompanied the FBC white cross vans to Lodgegrass, Montana. Sunday school youths filled shoeboxes for the Christmas Child project. On Oct 30th, Chapman hosted the Grand Island Association (ABW) meeting with representatives from Kearney, Gibbon, Wood River and Grand Island. Dorothy Glasser from Clarks gave a program on hats. Also, there was a report from a representative from Camp Moses Merrill on the facilities.

COLUMBUS FBC: The ABW hosted the York Assoc. business meeting on Nov 11. Madeline

Flores-Lopez, who is the Coordinator of Mission Volunteers and Groups throughout the Caribbean, spoke to the church following a potluck supper on Nov 6. "The Hanging of the greens was done on Nov 26. A Harvest Home Potluck Dinner was held on Nov 19. FBC delivered Meals on Wheels Nov 6-10. A Nativity display was held Nov 18.

FAIRBURY FBC: The annual Thanksgiving dinner was held on Nov 18, hosted by the ABW. Sam and Doris Hackbarth celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on Nov 9. The BYG held a Thanksgiving scavenger, where the youth went door to door with the task of finding food for Thanksgiving meals, which were then given to families in town.

FREMONT FBC: Forty teachers and education workers were honored at a recent Sunday morning worship service. Veterans and active military wore their uniforms to worship on Nov 12. FBC united with three other churches for a combined Thanksgiving service on Nov 22. The church Thanksgiving supper was held on Nov 12.

GIBBON BC: The Community Thanksgiving Meal was held at Faith United Church on Nov 19, with FBC furnishing one cooked turkey and one cooked ham. Pastor Gordon gave the Thanksgiving message following supper. The Board of Education served supper to all of the AWANA families.

GRAND ISLAND FBC: A flea market/bake sale was held on Nov 18, with the proceeds going to the new heating system.

HOLDREGE FBC: A "Blessing Bonanza" dinner was held on Nov 12, with items for the Food Pantry collected. The ABW held a Thanksgiving luncheon on Nov 2, where the Thank-offering was dedicated.

JUNIATA COMMUNITY CHURCH: The Community Thanksgiving service was held at JCC, with Dr. Lee Wiggert from the Methodist Church giving the message. The drama/choir group is raising funds for a new electronic keyboard.

LAVISTA JUDSON. Parking is at a premium; mud and dirt are everywhere; and yet the people still attend. God is working mightily during our expansion project to keep His followers faithful. The J.O.Y. Club members made corn cob persons as decorations for the Fellowship luncheon. The quarterly business meeting approved our Ministry Leadership Nominations and our proposed 2007 Faith budget. Several Judson women attended the Baptist Women's World Day of Prayer at Sunset Hills. We remembered all our service men and women, past and present, on Veteran's Day. Churches in the La Vista area held a Community Thanksgiving Eve Service at Faith Presbyterian Church with many from Judson attending. The young people are busy rehearsing each Sunday for a Christmas Pageant. Always remember - God's blessings never cease - they merely increase.

LINCOLN FBC: A Thanksgiving feast was held

on Nov 19, where we celebrated six weeks of successful small group meetings and heard Jessica Erickson share stories on the trip to South Africa. A Chinese Thanksgiving celebration was held on Nov 24. A nursery/toddler shower was held to replenish toys and items for the church nursery. World Mission Sunday was held on Nov 5, when Madeline Flores-Lopez shared of her mission work in the Caribbean. A "Welcome Back to Choir" party was held on Nov 29 as the choir organized for Advent and 2007

LINCOLN SECOND BAPTIST: Oct 30th there was a Fall All Church Family Festival evening filled with Fun, Games, Food and a Halloween Costume contest; Nov 2, our Church Youth spent a fun night LOCK-IN at the Church. They spent the night with games, movies, snacks and Devotional Time - little "sleep"; Nov 12, was Veterans Recognition Day with special recognition during the morning worship; The evening of Nov 19 all Church Families came together in THANKFULNESS for our traditional Thanksgiving Dinner; Nov 26, in anticipation of the celebration of ADVENT at Second Baptist a group came together to do the Hanging of the Greens; Dec 2, the Youth will man a food Booth (fundraiser) at the "Star City Christmas Parade". Following the Parade our Church women and daughters will attend an "International Christmas" Holiday Brunch at the Church.

MCCOOK FBC: We are pleased to announce the calling of our new pastor, Rev. Allan Jackson and his wife Patty. They have been serving in Michigan. They'll arrive in McCook in early December. The ABW held a program on the Baptist Women's Day of Prayer on Nov 6. The annual Thanksgiving dinner was held on Nov 12, with the "4 Hymns" giving a musical program following.

NORFOLK FBC: Kay and Lea Cooper celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. Steve Swanholt was licensed to preach in a ceremony at FBC on Oct 29. Many plans had to be adjusted following the fire on Nov 9. We are now worshipping at a facility that was used by Nebraska Christian College. Thanks to everyone for their prayers and expressions of caring!

NORTH PLATTE: The congregation celebrated at a big stewardship dinner on Nov. 12, with a women's gospel trio providing the program. Susan Gillies shared mission stories.

OMAHA BENSON BC: Colene Morena recently celebrated her 90th birthday. Cookbooks which were printed in observance of the 100th anniversary of BBC are now available. Benson has opened its church doors to several groups: The Omaha Homeschool Learning Center meets there every Wednesday, and an English class from Metro Community College meets there on Mondays and Fridays.

OMAHA FBC: Nov 1 Rev. Paul Marine reported on his trip to Sudan in July. On Nov 12 we served a Thanksgiving Dinner to over 50 people from our surrounding neighborhood. The Rebecca-Ruth Circle organized and

assembled "Operation Christmas Child" shoeboxes. Rev. Jim Kelsey, ABC Missionary in Belgium, spoke to our congregation on Nov 19. He and his wife, Debbie, work extensively with the "human trafficking" problem. A combined service of worship and thanksgiving that included churches in the Omahaland area was held on Nov 22, here at FBC, with a tremendous turnout. The Chancel Choir has been diligently rehearsing the music for the Christmas Cantata, "Forever Christmas" which will be presented for the community on Dec 23 at 7pm and at 11am on Dec 24.

OMAHA PARKSIDE BC: The S.O.S. (Saints for Salvation) Ministry is meeting at Parkside on Fridays. Church family participated in the community Thanksgiving Service at FBC on Nov 22.

OMAHA SUNSET HILLS BC: The annual new members' dinner and Thanksgiving program was held Nov 19. Sunset Hills joined other Omahaland churches at the Thanksgiving Eve service at First Baptist of Omaha. The November men's breakfast featured Rev. Paul Marine and Benson Baptist's mission trip to Sudan. Toni Finch is the pastor's new secretary. Sunset Hills will have a candlelight Christmas Eve service. A reception was held Nov 5 for member Mary Engleman for her 80th birthday. During the worship service on Oct 29, her actual birth date, she was surprised by the arrival of her son, who had secretly flown to Omaha.

SCOTTSBLUFF FBC: A church Thanksgiving service was held on Nov 19. "Ladies Night Out" met at the fellowship hall on Nov 14, where they enjoyed a sack lunch exchange. FBC had a Nativity Float in the City Christmas parade, followed by a chili feed at the church. The "Adopted Youth" project was held on Nov 5, (the adopter took the adoptee home for dinner, and were repaid with two hours of work) All proceeds went to the World Mission Offering.

TECUMSEH FBC: The church Thanksgiving dinner was held on Nov 19, sponsored by the deacon Board. Following the dinner the "Hanging of the Greens" was done. FBC participated in the community Thanksgiving service.

TEKAMAH FBC: Campers, past, present, and future, held a bake sale on Nov 4 to raise funds for the 2007 camp fund. The Community Thanksgiving service was held at the Presbyterian Church, followed by a soup and pie supper. The "Hanging of the Greens" was held on Nov 26.

WILSONVILLE UNITED BAPTIST/CHRISTIAN CHURCH: The last Sunday in October we dedicated our "Tree of Sharing" items. The choir loft was full of items for the Hospitality House in Norton, the Domestic Abuse Center in McCook, Arlene Rice Ministries, our White Cross Quota, Child Savings Institute and our local schools. We had our business meeting and are setting up our programs for next year. We hosted



our Fall Festival dinner on the 19th with a full turkey dinner and all the trimmings. Local pastor Kirk Kasson gave a wonderful talk on their mission trip to Mexico. The small group met on the 26th and decorated the church for Christmas and began plans for the Christmas Eve service. Always exciting to get ready for a birthday and what a Glorious One we have to celebrate. Oh, Come let us (all) Adore Him!

WELCOME New Members:

FREMONT FBC: Lois Elliot

SCOTTSBLUFF FBC: Eva Maul

CHADRON FBC: Rodney & Theres Mehler

OMAHA FBC: Roger & Carole Bosch, Pam Bosch and sons Noah and Jonah, Larry & Holly Graves (Noah & Jonah Bosch and Larry & Holly Graves by baptism).

OMAHA PARKSIDE: Art Steiner

NORFOLK FBC: Julissa Garcia, Heather Borer, Dalton Montgomery, Matthey Montgomery, Lana Daniels

LA VISTA JUDSON: Rev. Steve Bils, Trudi Bils and Bethany Bils

OMAHA SUNSET HILLS: Chandra McCormick, Carol Jones.

KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR . . .

—Central Seminary may be teaching an Old Testament class in February in Omaha. It will be open to auditors as well as students.
—The Tri-Region Continuing Education Event for Pastors will be April 23-25 in Sioux Falls.
—Camp Merrill Sunday material will be available in January.



ABC of Nebraska Staff

Executive Minister	Susan Gillies
Associate Executive Minister	Dave Lundholm
Associate Executive Minister	Steve Bils
Director of Camps & Conferences	Clarence Reiss
Camp Program Director	MaryBeth Robertson
Camp Staff.....	Jerry Buss, Trudy Reiss, Lou Grotelueschen
Elizabeth Dietrich, Denise Harris, Joe Huss, Beverly Pacas	
Office Manager.....	Sue Gammel
Office Assistant.....	Margaret Brown-Moore
Accounting Services.....	Jerry Buss
Volunteer Mission Secretary.....	Judie Heller
Christian Education Consultant	Nola Oberhelman
Church Life Consultant	A. J. Wagstaff
Pastor to Pastors (W).....	Paul Kondy
Pastor to Pastors (E).....	Dick Peterson
Youth Ministry Adjunct	Jason Workman

In France, Christmas is called Noel. This is derived from the French phrase "les bonnes nouvelles," which means literally "the good news" and refers to the gospel.

In Syria, Christmas gifts are distributed by one of the Wise Men's camels. The gift-giving camel is said to have been the smallest one in the Wise Men's caravan.

The poinsettia, traditionally an American Christmas flower, originally grew in Mexico; where it was known as the "Flower of the Holy Night". It was first brought to America by Joel Poinsett in 1829.

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