

# the MESSENGER

American Baptist Churches of Nebraska



APRIL 2002  
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**NEW E-Mail Addresses:**

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## A Heart for Ministry in the Heartland

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## Congratulations To North Platte

First Baptist Church of North Platte is being recognized as one of the top 50 mission giving churches in American Baptist Churches, USA. There are approximately 5800 churches in the denomination.



In reporting the news to the church Minister of Mission Support Don Gaines wrote, "We in Nebraska have long been aware and appreciative of your commitment to missions and your leadership in mission giving in our region. It is significant to note that you are also setting a standard that challenges all of the churches in our denomination to increase their mission support."

Expressing gratefulness for a congregation with a heart for mission, Senior Pastor David Heintzleman said, "It's a joy to partner with these people who share a vision for the Kingdom and also have a great history, '131 Years of Serving God in North Platte, in Nebraska, and in the world.' I'm grateful to God for each member's part in mission support. May our prayers be the advance work for the effectiveness of all the mission that is enabled." The church had a project in 2001 to replace the roof. The decision was made to give a tithe of the roof project costs to United Mission.

Executive Minister Susan Gillies stated, "This kind of commitment to mission makes a difference in Nebraska and around the world. We will be able to reach more people with the transforming, redeeming love of Jesus Christ. Praise God!"

## The Caravan Begins To Roll

The From These Roots Caravan has begun its trip around Nebraska. Region staff members will travel to every American Baptist church in the state to honor our history, not to dwell in the past, but to build on the very best of the inspiration, dedication and commitment of those who went before us.



In March, the Caravan traveled to New Hope and First Baptist in Columbus, Albion, Palestine, Grand Island, Mason City, Ansley, Broken Bow, Arnold, Arthur, Alliance, Chadron, Scottsbluff and Bridgeport.

The Caravan was greeted by coffee parties, lunches, suppers. The get-togethers were small and large. But at each stop, the story was told of how that particular congregation was founded.

The Caravan is scheduled to roll in April, May, twice in July, in Aug and early Sept. By the time of the Family Reunion/Annual Convention, it will have reached every ABC church.

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

## An Amazingly Wonderful Family

I grew up in an amazingly wonderful family. I know what a privilege that was. But even in a great family, there were times we had to contend with weird cousins, arrogant uncles, strange conflicts, misunderstandings, varied perspectives and differences of opinions, heartaches and illnesses. Knowing all that, I still say it was an amazingly wonderful family. Why? Because it was also a family with faith, love, hope, joy, energy, and mutual respect. Beyond minor irritations and frustrations, at the deepest level, we valued being together.

It's a matter of deciding to honor this scripture passage, "Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there

is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things." Phil. 4:8

I am now a part of another amazingly wonderful family. It is the ABC of Nebraska. We are a varied lot but we are united by our commitment to our Lord.

My experience has taught me that being positive, looking for the good, expecting greatness leads to more effective ministry than being negative. Our witness is to a living Christ, a redeeming God, an empowering Spirit. The way we relate to one another in our family can be an engaging, inviting witness to the world.

Someone told me the other day they had read an article about a church in California that dropped "Baptist" from its name and grew quickly. Of course there was more to it than that. Quick fix formulas rarely work well over the long

haul. Whether you have "Baptist" in the name of your church or not, if you seek growth, invite people to church and when those people visit, make sure they have a good experience. Let them see the love you have for each other.

Churches full of folks who respect each other, who reflect the love of God, who exude the irrepressible joy of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and who seek to be faithful become an irresistible family. This side of heaven we will not experience perfection. But, we can model for the world what the family of God is like by being congregations that see Jesus in the eyes of each member and each visitor. And together, we can be an amazingly wonderful family of churches making a difference for Jesus Christ in our state and in the world.

## MISSION OPPORTUNITIES.....Don Gaines

Four mission encounter opportunities for Nebraska Baptists are now in the planning stages. While details are not yet available, we feel that it is important for you to know about these now. The trips and approximate dates are:

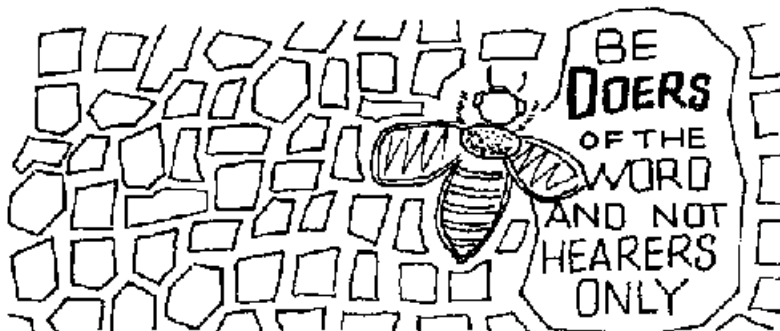
**August 5-12 Sturgis Motorcycle Rally**  
There is a need for men *and* women to provide ministry at this event. Sponsored by the Department of Evangelism and New Church Development.  
Contact: Rev. Steve Bills, 402-345-5009

**October 7-14 Missions in Arizona**  
Visit Valley Christian Centers in Phoenix, Rainbow Acres, and Native American Indian mission churches and school on the Hopi Reservation. See the Grand Canyon. Sponsored by the Department

of World Mission Support.  
Contact: Mrs. Mary Davison, 402-897-3885, or Rev. Don Gaines, 402-435-7890.

**January or February 2003 Costa Rica**  
Sponsored by First Baptist Church of Omaha.  
Contact: Rev. Steve Bills, 402-345-5009

**January or February 2003 Thailand**  
Sponsored by the Department of World Mission Support  
Contact: Mrs. Roberta Williston, 402-391-8939, or Rev. Dr. Charles Gregory, 308-872-2263



## ABW MINISTRIES ANNUAL CONFERENCE "BUILDING A STRONG HEART FOR MINISTRY"

Women from across Nebraska will gather at Camp Moses Merrill May 31, 2002, for a three day conference. The theme is "Building A Strong Heart for Ministry."

The guest speaker will be Laura Miraz, ABC National Ministries' Director of Missionary, Staff and Board Services. Laura was born in Uruguay and grew up in New York City. She now works with home missionaries and national staff, helping them fulfill their ministry goals. She is known as a lively, entertaining speaker.

Hastings police officer Chris Murray will speak to the conferees on Saturday evening about self-protection.

Workshops at this year's conference address a variety of concerns and interests including missions, prayer journaling, healthy relationships, heart nutrition, keeping your brain alive, working in church and community, craft time, healthy heart hike, and hospice.

The conference will feature a bookstore and craft items from Guatemala.

For more information on registration, check with your local church or ABW Ministries group or call the region office 402/556-4730.

### Plans for Family Reunion In Full Swing

Planning for the Sept. 20-22 Family Reunion/Annual Convention are moving along at a rapid pace. The reunion will be held at the Kearney Holiday Inn Convention Center. In addition to the speakers, Harry Riggs and Chuck and Ramona Shawver (see March Messenger), there are other special features of this year's event.

Just prior to the opening plenary session on Friday night, there will be two dinners. Pastors and spouses will gather for one dinner. Laity will gather for the other. The traditional banquet will be on Saturday night.

Another innovation of this year's reunion is that the Women's and Men's meetings will be luncheons on Saturday rather than early morning meetings on Sunday. Sunday morning will feature a very casual Fellowship Breakfast.

The reunion is being held later in September than in the past. The planning committee worked with evaluations from previous meetings and multiple schedules to determine the dates.

### Pastor's Day at Central

Pastor's Day will be held at Central Seminary on Friday, April 26, 2002. Workshops will cover such topics as, redeeming laughter, leadership that works in the midst of conflict, preaching & prayer, the spiritual life of the pastor, the pen & the preacher, and the uncomfortable promise of Biblical storytelling.

The speaker for the day will be Dr. Cleophus J. LaRue, Professor of Homiletics at Princeton Theological Seminary. He is the author of *The Heart of Black Preaching*.

To register or obtain more information, contact the Faculty Secretary at 913-371-5313 x111.

Can  
You  
See  
It?  
ISAIAH  
43:19

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#### ABC-NE Trivia

- Which of the following is NOT an American Baptist Seminary?
  - Central Baptist Theological Seminary
  - Western Baptist Theological Seminary
  - Northern Baptist Theological Seminary
  - Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary
- Who is the new General Secretary of American Baptist Churches USA?
  - Roy Medley
  - John Sundquist
  - Aidsand Wright-Riggins
  - Bob Roberts
- Who was the Nebraskan who was a missionary martyr in the Philippines in World War II?
  - Alice Findlay
  - Ray Beaver
  - Loren Noren
  - Jennie Adams
- Who puts the America For Christ offering to use?
  - Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board
  - National Ministries, Educational Ministries, ABC-NE
  - National Ministries and the Office of the General Secretary
  - All participants in United Mission
- What is the purpose of a pastor's sabbatical leave?
  - Rest and relaxation
  - An opportunity to search for other employment
  - Intensive study
  - An opportunity to develop hobbies

Answers on Page 6

## RVing at Camp Merrill

Camp Moses Merrill staff members are monitoring the renewed interest in recreational vehicles (RVs) in the United States. Some news reports suggest the surge in sales may be due to interest by baby boomers. Others have indicated that Americans, having less interest in flying, are looking for recreation closer to home. Manufacturers of RVs are hiring more employees as demand increases.

Camp Merrill is a great place for couples and families to have a relaxing get-away. "We are rarely full to capacity," says Director of Camping Clarence Reiss. "The camp was built with two RV camping loops. One has been shut down for a number of years. We'd love to have enough demand to open it."

The ABC-NE has applied to ABC National Ministries' Volunteer in Mission Program for a volunteer couple to live at Camp Merrill in their own RV this summer. Their job would be to coordinate use of the RV loop, checking in campers and serving as hosts.

People interested in bringing an RV (or tent) to Camp for a weekend or longer are encouraged to call Camp Merrill for further information. Couples interested in applying for the Volunteers In Mission positions should contact the region office 402/556-4730.



## Hispanic Ministry

Mission with the Hispanic community has been an integral part of the ministry of The American Baptist Home Mission Societies (now known as National Ministries) since the first missionary work in Puerto Rico in 1899 and the planting of the first mission church in Santa Barbara, California, in 1901.

Today Hispanic American Baptist churches are engaged in holistic ministry, doing their part to win the lost to Jesus Christ. Many Hispanics call the United States their home but speak mostly Spanish. This reality necessitates ministries that respond to bilingual, bicultural needs.

As churches play a key role in ministry, they must deal with the social and economic realities faced by Hispanics in this country. Unemployment and underemployment, a bleak educational status, youth violence and gangs, children in poverty, and single-parent households are represented by those who worship with American Baptist congregations.

If you would like to become involved in Hispanic Ministry in Nebraska, contact the Region Office 402/556-4730.



### Region Office Spruces Up!

The offices of the ABC-NE are looking a little brighter these days. The main office area is being re-arranged to provide more volunteer work stations and to create better workspace for assembling *The Messenger*. The conference room has new wallpaper thanks to the volunteer services of Clarence and Trudy Reiss. We should be ready for company after April 2.

### How the American Baptist Foundation Serves ABC-NE

- Wills Seminars encouraging bequests for your church, including free workbooks.
- Practical counsel and step-by-step guide to establish a church's endowment fund.
- Brochures, bulletin inserts and brief paragraph reminders for newsletters or bulletins encouraging planned gifts.
- Individual consultation on charitable estate planning. All contacts are confidential and without obligation.
- All Foundation services and materials are FREE to ABC of Nebraska churches.

For more information, contact our American Baptist Foundation Representative, Paul Weers. [WeersABF@aol.com](mailto:WeersABF@aol.com) or Paul Weers, 6422 N. Smith Rd., Edwards, IL 61528, 309/676-9024.



# 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 Fax: (402) 666-5411

## Sorrow for Joy

"I'm trading my sorrows.  
I'm trading my shame.  
I'm laying them down for the joy of the Lord.  
I'm trading my sickness.  
I'm trading my pain.  
I'm laying them down for the joy of the Lord.  
Yes, Lord, yes, Lord, yes, yes, Lord.  
Yes, Lord, yes, Lord, yes, yes, Lord.  
Yes, Lord, yes, Lord, yes, yes, Lord. Amen."

"I am pressed but not crushed,  
persecuted not abandoned,  
struck down but not destroyed.  
I am blessed beyond the curse,  
for His promise will endure,  
that His joy's gonna be my strength.  
Though the sorrow may last for the night,  
His joy comes with the morning."

CCLI # 834608

This is one of my favorite worship songs to watch high schoolers sing. It has a good beat and catchy tune and I can tell they love it. As easy as it is to sing a song with good music, it can be harder to actually do what it says. Are you trading your sorrows? Is His joy really your strength?

When people come to camp, they often have experiences where they are able to trade their sorrows for the joy of the Lord. For some it is the highlight of every year. For others it takes a few years of planting seeds before they are able to hand over their sorrows at all. Time spent here is where many realize that they are not crushed, not abandoned, not destroyed, and that His joy comes with the morning.

We are looking forward to a great summer with good music and changed lives. If you would like to be a part of this and cannot come, donations to our scholarship fund would be appreciated, especially by the campers who are able to come because of them.

*From Laurie Janzen:*

Most of you know that I have been writing these articles for nearly two years. This had been one of the favorite parts of my job at the camp.

As much as I like to write, I enjoy working directly with children more, something I don't get to do at camp even in the summer, because I'm always in the office. So I have taken a job at the First Baptist Child Enrichment Center in Fremont where I am working with elementary-age children after school.

I will miss reaching out to you every month, but I will still be around. Thank you for all of your support in so many ways.

### OOPS!

**Mid Hi II is July 14- 20,**  
the brochure is incorrect.  
**Senior High Spring Retreat**  
**is April 5- 7,** not April 6-8  
as the registration form states.

## Redecorating for the Season of Easter

by Dave Lundholm

Well the pounding has finished. But Linda and I found that we had to repaint the living room because of the dry wall work surrounding the new living room window. When we took all of the furniture out we discovered a host of other details that needed attention. The outlets needed to be replaced. The old drapes had to go... You get the picture. Essentially we have a "new" living room.

We couldn't see all of the stuff that needed to be done until we took all of the furniture out of the room. Maybe that's what we need to do in a spiritual sense in these days following Easter. Our lives these days are as cluttered with busy-

ness as a Victorian parlor is with things. I'd suggest leaving home and going on a retreat. On this retreat consider what things fill your life (job, activities, ministry, family) and once you've named and listed them mentally move them out of the room. Keep doing this until the room of your life is empty and then look around.

Without all of these things what is your life about? Does your room need to be washed with God's love or God's forgiveness? Are there scrapes on the walls that need God's healing touch? What needs to happen in order for you to be satisfied with yourself? God will work with you to prepare for an abundant life.

Now think about what you want to let back into your life. Look at everything you took out and ask with God as decorator what things would go back into your life? Only put back the things that please God and complement what your "room" is all about.

How about doing some internal re-decorating this spring?

(If being guided through a retreat like this sounds attractive give me a call at 308-389-4818 or drop me an e-mail at [area.minister.ne@charter.net](mailto:area.minister.ne@charter.net). If enough are interested we'll schedule a retreat at Moses Merrill)

## AMERICAN BAPTIST RELIEF FUNDS AID RECOVERY IN AFGHAN CAPITAL

American Baptist International Ministries, supporting the work of ecumenical partners through One Great Hour of Sharing, has contributed \$50,000 for funding the delivery of emergency supplies to the Afghan capital city of Kabul.

The American Baptist endeavor has been undertaken in conjunction with Hungarian Baptist Aid, which has been working with the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and which had an on-site presence in Kabul as supplies began to be distributed.

David Gal of Hungarian Baptist Aid recently shared a first-hand account of conditions in Kabul as those supplies were received:

"Kabul is a city in rubble. After 28 years of war, entire districts, once beautiful castles and mansions lay shattered in the dust. Mines and used ammunitions lay on the ground... Burnt cars [are] turned upside down along the streets, monuments of brutal and insensible destruction.

"The Americans did not leave this behind [and] common people greet them as liberators.... It takes a long time to find the few houses that were destroyed by the American Air Force. The attacks were precise and well planned; only armored vehicles, military bases and strongholds of the Taliban were demolished...."

"The need is so great and the hungry people are so desperate that distributing food must be conducted in the most careful way. We need to inform the local municipality and the police chief; we need to decide who and how should be receive the food support. Where the needs are so tremendous, aid and relief becomes a distinct profession...."

Contributions for continuing relief may be sent through One Great Hour of Sharing. American Baptists may send through customary mission channels marked as One Great Hour of Sharing (line

7 on Monthly Report of Mission Support) designated for "HB Aid/Afghanistan."

### Trivia Answers

1. b. Western is not at ABC Seminary.
2. a. Roy Medley is the new General Secretary. John Sundquist is the head of ABC International Ministries. Aidsand Wright-Riggins is the head of ABC National Ministries. Bob Roberts served as the Interim General Secretary before Roy Medley was elected.
3. d. Jennie Adams. The other names were all Nebraska ABC missionaries as well. Alice Findlay served in India, Ray Beaver served in Burma, and Loren Noren served in Hong Kong.
4. b. The America For Christ Offering is put to use by ABC's National Ministries, Educational Ministries and the ABC of Nebraska.
5. c. A sabbatical leave provides a pastor the opportunity to engage in intensive study. The leave is usually about six months long although some are shorter and some are longer. The leave is usually granted after a pastor has served a church for 5 to 7 years.

# LOCAL CHURCH NEWS

by Darlene Rimpley

## APRIL Deadlines

**APRIL 5, 2002 - Print Copy**  
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 Rt. 1 Box 74 A

**APRIL 12, 2002 - E-Mail**  
E-Editor  
 area.minister.ne@charter.net  
 Subject: Messenger

**BROKEN BOW, FBC:** There are cookbooks for sale, with the proceeds to go into the building fund. FBC will host the Custer Association meeting on April 7, which will have Dr. Lawrence Lindley, director of the Edna Martin Christian Center in Indianapolis, as speaker.

**HOLDREGE, FBC:** The ministry "Ten For Him" has begun at FBC. Each person is asked to make a list of ten people to pray for, bring the list to church so all can pray over all lists, and New Testaments will be provided by the church for each person to give to one person on their list. The youth were in charge of the complete worship service on March 17. Ten to 15 people plan on going on the mission trip to Haiti this summer.

**LINCOLN, FBC:** A teacher training session was held on Feb. 16. The youth attended a lock-in at a farm near Minden, and following a night of little sleep, toured the Archway Museum at Kearney. A new group involving K-4 age children has begun, and one of the kickoff events was spending the night at Henry Doorly Zoo on March 15. Since the Christmas caroling was so much fun for both the carolers and the carolees, FBC went Easter caroling on March 30, followed by lunch at the church.

**NORFOLK, FBC:** The youth group took part in the "30 Hour Famine", joining with another youth group. FBC volunteers staffed the Norfolk Community Food Pantry during March.



Local Church News

**BEATRICE, FBC:** The ABW Ministries General meeting was held on March 19, with the theme on "I've Got the Beat." Jill Diis of O'Dell, an RN, spoke on strokes.

**OMAHA, PARKSIDE:** The ABW Ministries held their regular meeting on March 1, and then attended the World Day of Prayer. A list of the local fire and police personnel was available for persons to choose a name, covenanting to pray for them daily.

**SCOTTSBLUFF, FBC:** An Easter Season Dinner was held on March 24, sponsored by the deaconesses. The kids held a "Cookie March" for shut-in friends on March 17. Following the worship service and lunch, the children mixed and prepared the cookies, and then delivered them to shut-ins.

**NORTH PLATTE, FBC:** The University of Sioux Falls presented a Singing Camerata on March 27 at FBC.

**MCCOOK, FBC:** Lenten services were held at the UM Church, with all pastors sharing. The FBC women also provided the luncheon following services on March 22. The teacher's workshop was held on March 9. The youth held a fund-raiser on March 17: a St. Pat's Corned beef and Cabbage feed. The youth also did a fund-raiser for the America For Christ Offering - they held a bowl-a-thon on March 24. Breakfast was served following the Sunrise Service.

**CHADRON, FBC:** "Parenting by Heart," a six-week series began on Feb. 27, and will run through April 10 at FBC.

**GRAND ISLAND, FBC:** The Circles have contributed seven layettes and 12 health kits for Church World Service. The Youth Search Committee has received profiles for consideration.

**OMAHA, BENSON:** The youth are raising money for a mission trip to Denver by selling trash bags. "Hope Totes" are filled with toiletries that went to the Open Door Mission to distribute at Easter time. "Once Upon a Tree" was the Easter musical presented on Palm Sunday. A Woman's Retreat was held on March 16. A Ministry Faire was held on March 10 to inform the people what ministries and missions Benson participates in.

**TECUMSEH, FBC:** Sunday School teachers, Awana leaders, parents, and other concerned people were given the opportunity to learn more about teaching and leading when a teacher workshop was offered on March 17. The congregation is developing another spiritual discipline by journaling.

**JUNIATA COMMUNITY CHURCH:** A video series, "Secrets of the Bible" is being viewed on Sunday nights.

**LAVISTA, JUDSON BAPTIST:** Judson is now the true owner of the church building that was given to them. A project being prayerfully considered is the purchase and placement of a baptistry. Several persons are waiting to be baptized in the new church home. The church held two Easter services, and the church was decorated with the traditional Easter Garden, which started over 50 years ago.

**OMAHA, FBC:** The Ottawa University Ringers, a five-octave bell choir, performed in concert at FBC on March 20. A workshop on Medicare/Medicaid was held at FBC on March 20.

**ARNOLD, FBC:** FBC and Tallin Union Church combined to present a living pageant, "Behold He Comes" on March 30. The event was held in a pasture west of Arnold. The ladies are holding sewing bees several days a month, making clothing to be sent to missions.

**GIBBON, BC:** Lenten Breakfasts for the men were held during March.

**FAIRBURY, FBC:** The Chancel Choir presented the cantata, "Colors of Grace", on Maundy Thursday.

**SECOND BAPTIST, LINCOLN:** Elgin & Bettie Steinbach were chosen as the 2002 Sweetheart Couple at the Sweetheart Banquet on February 16. The youth held a 30-Hour Famine, during which they raised money to sponsor a child in Africa for one year. Jana Stoner, a member of SBC and a Mental Health Practitioner, was the guest speaker at the ABW Ministries luncheon and general meeting on March 6. The first annual Health Fair was held in Fellowship Hall following the services on March 10, with blood pressure screening and other related activities, plus information on a variety of health topics were available and healthy snacks were served. SBC joined many other Lincoln churches during March for a Prayer Journey during Lent, Monday through Friday from 12:15 - 12:45 P.M. to pray for the city and the nation.

**ALLIANCE, FBC.** The ABY held its annual Valentine party on February 10

and also sponsored an all Church Music, Fun, and Talent night on February 24. The Church Valentine banquet was held on February 14 at the Brownstone Cafe with an excellent attendance. Pastor Rowe was guest speaker at the MOPS February 13 meeting speaking on the subject "What Gifts Can You Give To Your Marriage" and also was guest at the annual Cub Scouts Blue and Gold Banquet on February 18 and gave the Invocation and Benediction. A dedication moment was part of the February 24 worship service to give thanks for new "Sing to the Lord" hymnals purchased for the church.

**[Note: In last month's Messenger activities at Second Baptist were credited to First Baptist Lincoln. Our apologies.]**

**NEW MEMBERS:**

**HOLDREGE, FBC:** Pam Rademaker, Blake Rademaker  
**CHADRON, FBC:** Tara Kelso  
**MCCOOK, FBC:** Cliff, Rose, and Allison Rouiter

**OMAHA, BENSON:** John and Tracy Bieranowski, Mike Gamblin, Gary Heller, Sarah Helm, Sean Watts, Stephanie Blair

The Messenger is made possible by gifts to United Missions, America For Christ and direct gifts to the Region

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- Area Minister .....Dave Lundholm
- Minister of Mission Support .....Don Gaines
- Director of Camps & Conferences .....
- .....Clarence Reiss
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