



the ESSENGER

American Baptist Churches of Nebraska



February 2005

ABC/NE Date Data

February 4-5
Central Seminary course
at Benson Baptist

February 12 10:00 am
Evangelism, Finance and Mission
Departments

February 12 1:00 pm
ABC/NE Board Meeting

February 19 9:30 am-3:30 pm
ABC/NE Youth Leader Training
At Belmont Baptist Church, Lincoln
Call Region Office for information

February 26 8:00 am
ABMen Day of Prayer Breakfast
at Sunset Hills Baptist Church

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Churches Plant Seeds For Future Ministry in Nebraska

Calvary Baptist Church, Omaha, and Octavia Community Church, Octavia, both recently ended their active ministry. In the process, the members of both churches made a commitment to the future through gifts to Camp Merrill, thereby "planting seeds" for future Christian growth. In mid-January, ABC/NE received \$243,000 from Calvary for the Camp Moses Merrill Building Bridges Campaign. The Octavia Community Church is also making a gift to Camp Merrill when its final settlement is complete.

Executive Minister Susan Gillies said, "We all grieve the loss of Calvary and Octavia as congregations of the ABC/NE family. We rejoice that so many of their members are finding new church homes among other ABC churches. We gratefully receive the gifts they are making to the ministry of our region as expressed in Camp Moses Merrill. Their gifts plant seeds that will be harvested in the transformed lives of men and women, boys and girls for years to come."

After 118 years of ministry in Omaha, Calvary held its final worship service at the end of November. The congregation sold its building to a Presbyterian group. They made gifts of money and equipment to a variety of places. But at the very end, all remaining funds were given as a gift to the Building Bridges Campaign. After 114 years of ministry, Octavia Community Church held its final service the first Sunday of January. The building was sold to a Hispanic congregation.



**SHARE CHRIST
WITH AMERICA**

**GIVE TO THE
AMERICA FOR CHRIST
OFFERING 2005**

ABC-USA Relief Efforts Continue for Tsunami Victims

American Baptists continue to respond to the aftermath of the tsunami tragedy in Asia. Monetary contributions may be made through your local church's normal channels using the Monthly Report of Mission Giving. All contributions should be marked "OGHS—Asian Tsunami Relief."

In addition to money, American Baptists have been called upon to assist Church World Service in replenishing its supply of "Gift of the Heart" School Kits and "Gift of the Heart" Health Kits. There are specific instructions for putting the kits together. If your church is interested, contact the region office or check www.abc-usa.org.

The school kits are needed for rehabilitation efforts and will be used first in temporary schools that are likely to be housed in tents and later in permanent structures. The health kits will be used by individuals and families in all parts of the devastated areas.

From the Executive Minister Susan Gillies

Love In Action

February is the month of great elementary school bulletin boards. You've seen them – hearts, silhouettes of Washington and Lincoln, lots of red and white (always good in Nebraska!). February is also Black History Month – a time of reflection on the strength we have gained as a nation from the contribution of African-Americans.

All of this has a lot to do with love. Valentine's Day, of course, is the great holiday celebrating romantic love. President's Day and the birthdays of Washington and Lincoln remind us of love of country and the example of giving oneself to a greater cause.

Black History is filled with stories of a love that triumphs over hatred and injustice.

We know that God is love . . . powerful, transforming love. We understand we are called to demonstrate that kind of love. The song goes, " They'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love. Yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love." But many in our society know Christians as the folks who fight bitterly with each other.

As Christians, love is the greatest gift we receive and give. In a recent e-mail from Dr. Jeff Woods, Assoc. General Secretary of ABC-USA, he wrote:

" There is an important distinction between choosing to love and choosing how to love. As Christians, we have no choice but to love. We are called to love one another. I see many times when Jesus connected love and behavior. ' No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends.' John 15:13. Also, ' If you love me, keep my commandments,' and he gives us the commandments to love God and our neighbors. Jesus also said, 'By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.' John 13:35. It is tough to get the word out about our love when all the newspapers want to print are our thoughts on controversial issues, but I still believe that the ABC is called by God to do something that no other group can do because of our diversity – maybe the first step of that ' something' is to show the world how we love one another – not with our emotions, but with our actions toward one another."

Above all else, in word and action, be LOVE.

AMERICA FOR CHRIST OFFERING
FACT

American Baptists have resettled over 90,000 refugees since the end of World War II.

From the Minister of Mission Support..... Steve Bilis

Share Christ with America through the America For Christ Offering

America for Christ gifts support mission in this country – one of the most challenging mission fields in the world. 75 Million people in America are unchurched! America for Christ gifts extend the witness of American Baptist congregations for Jesus Christ in the United States and Puerto Rico.

Over 1,300 chaplains, pastoral counselors, new church planters, Neighborhood Action workers, and National Ministries leadership team and staff serve as American Baptist home missionaries. These dedicated servants are committed to using their skills to Share Christ with America through the myriad of programs and resources that minister to people searching for a spiritual connection.

When you give to the America for Christ Offering, you can be sure that your gift will be used for American Baptist mission in this country and in Nebraska – perhaps in your own neighborhood. Thank you for giving this vitally important home mission offering! Your gift will Share Christ with America.

The America for Christ Offering is received in most American Baptist churches during the month of March. Resources are shipped to participating churches in late December. If your church does not currently receive a standing order of resources and would like to, contact me at the Region Office Sbilis@abcnebraska.com or Matthew.Brown@abc-usa.org.

Among the work made possible by the America for Christ Offering are evangelism training, regional youth conferences, refugee resettlement, new church planting, Judson Press books, cluster meetings for pastors, *The Secret Place* devotional guide, Spanish resources, group mission experiences, *Journeys* adult curriculum, racial reconciliation, Vacation Bible School materials, discipleship models for congregations, Alaska ministries, conflict transformation resources, *Volunteers in Mission*, web resources, ministry within underserved ethnic communities, ministries in 35 American Baptist regions, and 20 Neighborhood Action Christian Centers.

Much of what we are able to accomplish here in Nebraska can be traced directly or indirectly to the America for Christ Offering. Several of our folks have had the opportunity to travel and serve under the *Volunteers in Mission* program and several *VIM* volunteers have served our region.

The United States is the third largest mission field in the world! Help us Share Christ with America!

AMERICA FOR CHRIST OFFERING
FACT

75 Million people in America are unchurched.

SHARE CHRIST WITH AMERICA

VBS--Time to Plan! Nola Oberhelman

Early planning for Bible School events at your church has value, and now is the time to begin. Early planning means your church Bible School team can co-ordinate dates with other churches in your area and can share information about children in the community who will benefit from VBS. The committee can evaluate available programs for the best fit with your expected attendees and can make necessary adaptations to the chosen material.

Here's an easy way to check on curriculum. Go online to www.judsonpress.com Click on "curriculum." Then scroll down to "Vacation Bible School." You'll find information on several choices.

I know one church that took its program from the Internet last year. VBS as your search word will bring you lots of information. This can be a time-consuming job, particularly down-loading and evaluating. Plan to share this job on your

committee if you go this way. A Bible School staff can effectively employ a book or booklet from the local Christian bookstore if time is spent in adapting for grade level and in searching out activities. Early planning! There may be material in your church from previous years that could be used or adapted for use. Local libraries have supplemental materials, and now is the time that those things are available for check-out.

Planning now allows time to advertise for volunteers who will staff the Bible School and to match jobs to them. Most of all, early planning gives director and teachers, aides and helpers, the time to study, plan, prepare, and pray for the individual sessions and the students who will attend. Plans will be complete, materials will be gathered, leaders will be calm because they will know what to do, and VBS will be success.

EARLY PLANNING CHECK LIST FOR VBS:

- Pray
- Get your Bible School team together for planning
- Share information/schedules with area churches
- Select material well suited to your situation
- Recruit teachers, aides, helpers
- Plan individual sessions
- Pray

FACT

The United States is the third largest mission field in the world.

SHARE CHRIST WITH AMERICA

NEW MEMBERS

COLUMBUS FBC: Wade Bloxton, Cassandra and Kevin Sleeper, Stev and Cindi Dodd, Steve and Deb Doty, Kathy Keller

ALLIANCE FBC: Colton Williamson, Nicole Williamson

FAIRBURY FBC: Bladen Ahl, Brianna Hirsch, Brandon Hirsch, Ron and Carolyn Smith, Loren and Deb Hirsch, Kristin Kujath, Lowell and Lois Thrasher

GIBBON FBC: Kylie Wallace, D.J. Brandt, Kathy Skrdlant

HOLDREGE FBC: Kris, Jennifer, and Jason Nitz

MCCOOK FBC: Bob Allen

OMAHA FBC: Gary Gladwell, Erica Gladwell, Rick Kottich, Margaret Lilly, Donald Lilly, Danielle and Patty Wasson, Kelly Thomas, Joe and NKechi Ogba, Angela Peterson, Pauline Riley, Kelley Thomas,

SCOTTSBLUFF FBC: Rob and Doni Aberu and Anthony, Howard Dowling, Dottie Graham, Conrad and Darlene Brill

LINCOLN SECOND: Yukiko Yamanishi

LAVISTA JUDSON: Darlene Welsh, Barbara and Alvaro Escamilla, Blanche Reynolds, Ken and Alice Krieger

ABC/NE Trivia (see page 8 for the answers)

1. Which of the following has NOT been added to Camp Merrill in the last 2 yrs? a. chapel, b. fishing pond, c. prayer walk, d. amphitheatre
2. The forest at Camp Merrill is dominated by which kind of tree? a. birch, b. blue spruce, c. Norwegian maple, d. burr oak
3. What is the purpose for the building at Camp Merrill named after the Palmyra church? a. meeting rooms, b. staff housing, c. dining room, d. nurse's cabin
4. Which area has become the favorite haven for the many equestrian groups that come to camp? a. Fremont Hill, b. Mount Eliza, c. the main camping loop, d. Gillies Climb
5. What special gift has the Adult Ministries Conference given to camp each year? a. Bibles & hymnbooks, b. plants & trees, c. kitchen equipment, d. money

Vow the VOW! February 2005

Feb 6	2 Corinthians 5:20[†]	
		So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.
Feb 13	2 Corinthians 5:21[†]	
		For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.
Feb 20	John 3:17[§]	
		For God did not send his Son into the world to be its judge, but to be its savior.
Feb 27	Romans 5:8[§]	
		But God has shown us how much he loves us—it was while we were still sinners that Christ died for us!

Vow the VOW! is our *Verse of the Week* memory challenge, in which individual American Baptists are encouraged to find an accountability partner and covenant together to memorize one verse a week in 2005.

Selected for a variety of reasons and drawn from a number of different English translations, the fifty-two verses will be published and distributed in *The Messenger*.

[†]New Revised Standard Version [§]Today's English Version

From the Area Minister Dave Lundholm

One Definition of Insanity...

Betty was a baker. Her specialty was pies. She made a great apple pie. She would lovingly cut the lard into the flour and salt, adding just the right amount of water to make the perfect crust. She would roll it out just so. She would mix together some perfectly sliced apples of just the right variety (her secret) with the sugar and spices, add them to the pie shell and perfectly attach and score the top crust. Then she would put it into the oven and bake it at just the right temperature for the perfect amount of time. And there it was, the perfect apple pie.

One day she decided she wanted to make a peach pie. She prepared the perfect crust. Sliced the apples just so, added the spices and sugar, formed the pie, baked it off. But she was disappointed. It wasn't a peach pie.

And so she tried again. This time she worked much harder. She worked with the crust until it was beyond perfect. She really worked at slicing the apples just right. They were perfect. When they were folded into the sugar and spices they were the best she had ever seen. She worked for almost an hour getting the top crust attached and the scoring marks just right. And she baked it, hovering over the oven to make sure nothing went wrong this time. But when it came out it still wasn't a peach pie.

Many of us as we think about church are hungry for something different, but we keep getting what we always have. We are much like Betty hoping for new results but doing the same things.

This coming September the theme for our family reunion will be "Out of the Boat." We are preparing even now to share some new recipes on how to make our church experience tastier.

Remember, if you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always got.

Central Seminary – ABC/NE – Benson Baptist Partnership

Central Baptist Theological Seminary, ABC of Nebraska and Benson Baptist Church in Omaha have joined together to provide American Baptist seminary education in Nebraska. Having an extension site in Omaha is part of an effort to make theological education more accessible to pastors as well as lay leaders.

The seminary is consciously developing ways of being innovative and creative as it engages the contemporary world. Those called to teach and preach need accessible education and Central is doing its best to deliver.

The first course being offered is "Missional Church Outreach." Students will deal with the theology, practice and motivation for a church's outreach to non-Christians. Dates for the course are Feb 4-5 and April 15-16 at Benson Baptist Church. The class will meet all morning and afternoon each day and utilize online communication between these dates. Teaching the course is Dr. Ron Carlson, Associate Professor of Evangelism and Church Growth. The course can be taken as part of Master's degree programs or it can be taken simply for furthering ministerial knowledge and skills.

The Seminary hopes to offer a week-long course at Camp Moses Merrill later in the year.

Ideas for Christian Families

FUN NIGHTS

Art Night -- Set aside one night a month for art. Gather the family at the table and paint, draw, finger paint, or construct mosaic pictures by glueing small pieces of paper on poster board. Each person can create his/her own or it can be a group project. This family activity may be of the greatest value for the parents. This tremendously calming, fun activity can reduce the effects of stress and overwork.



Family Potluck – This is a potluck dinner for one family in their own home. Each member of the family plans one part of the dinner. One person picks salad, another vegetable, another main course, dessert, etc. Families can decide whether or not the courses will be secret until dinner.

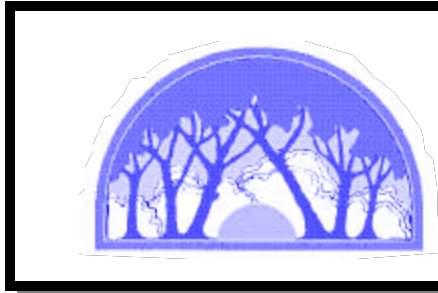


WHAT AMERICA FOR CHRIST DOLLARS CAN PROVIDE

- \$250** Regional youth gathering scholarship
- \$200** Volunteer In Mission month's stipend
- \$150** Week-long summer camp for a child
- \$100** "The Pebble" newsletter for children
- \$75** Asian American Baptist Conference scholarship
- \$50** Alpha resource for an American Baptist church
- \$25** Two-days' food for family of four at a Christian center

**AMERICA FOR CHRIST
OFFERING 2005**

*Hold the Date: Saturday, April 23, 2005
First ABC/NE Pastoral Recognition Banquet
Will be held in Omaha, open to all!*



Camp Moses Merrill News

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Clarence Reiss, Director (402) 666-5639

E-mail: campmerrill@nntc.net

Website: www.campmerrill.com

A SPECIAL EXPERIENCE by Gail Southwick

Several months ago my wife LaDonna and I volunteered to stay at Camp Moses Merrill, so that Trudy and Clarence, our camp directors, could have some time away from camp. Clarence called and asked if we could come the first week in January. Being senior citizens, we gave it some prayerful thought, and with some apprehension, agreed to go, not knowing we would receive fourteen inches of snow.

We arrived Monday and began to receive our necessary instructions. The guest house we stayed in was immaculately clean and comfortable. Tuesday noon Clarence and Trudy left for Greenlake to attend the National Camp Directors Conference. With contractors working on the new conference center, there were roads to be opened, sidewalks and parking lots to be cleared. Each building needed to be checked to be sure the bathrooms were warm enough to keep pipes from freezing. The cat and fish needed to be fed, the mail picked up, the e-mail checked, the phone answered and the answering machine checked. We even found time to refinish some indoor cabin doors.

We found Camp Merrill is a beautiful place, provided by God and his people. A place where people can come and enjoy the beauty of deer, wild turkeys, surroundings similar to the Rocky Mountains, and superb facilities. A place to worship and communicate with our Lord. We met Andrew, Lou, and Joe, camp employees, their dedication and respect for the camp and the work that Trudy and Clarence do is a joy to behold. Our time was well spent and we were blessed for being at Camp.

If you ever have the opportunity to help at camp we know you will be blessed, as LaDonna and I were. God still has things for us senior citizens to do.

Gail and LaDonna Southwick, 1st Baptist, Fairbury

2005 CAMPING SCHEDULE

Plans are being finalized for the 2005 Camp Schedule. The goal is to have the list mailed to Region Churches and Campers by February 1st. If you do not get a list, please give us here at Camp, or the Omaha Office, a call. Some new and exciting camps are being planned, you will not want to miss them.

Reminder to Parents: Limited camp scholarships are available. Do not let financial hardship keep your child from camp.

Grandparents and church members: Please consider giving a donation to the scholarship fund.

HELP WANTED!!

CMM is taking applications for paid summer positions and also names for volunteer workers to help with the program camps. The paid staff positions that need to be filled are: Wrangler, Life Guard, Office Assistant, Cook's Assistant and Dining Room Hostess. Meals and housing are provided. Applicants must be at least 16 years of age. This is wonderful experience for high school and college age young adults, you learn good work ethics and experience living in a dorm style atmosphere. For more information concerning job descriptions please call the Camp at 402-666-5639.

If you would like to volunteer to help with the summer program camps, some needs are Cabin Leaders, Camp Nurse and Craft Leaders. You can call and designate the time you can work or to put your name on the list to be called when needed. Pray about it, this is great way to help shape a young person's life.

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER GIFTS

Our heartfelt thanks go to:

Rev. Don Gaines-Money for a new camera **Virginia Lenar**-monetary gift in memory of Doris Gerdas

Calvary Baptist, Omaha-donation of filing cabinets, hymnals, Bibles, folding chairs, TV, VCR and cart

John & Arlene Cochran-monetary gifts in memory of Margaret Dutton and in honor of Chuck and Kay Dutton

Richard & Dolores Prather-homemade wood shelf, upholstered rocker, various kitchen utensils for guest house.

Christenson Lumber, Fremont-monetary gift

"Hands for Christ" Group, 1st Baptist, Fremont-monetary gift.

The Anonymous Donor-a large monetary gift.

And we especially want to say **THANK YOU** to everyone who remembered us with end of year monetary gifts.

It is only because of everyone's generosity that we are able to continue to operate. **GOD BLESS YOU ALL!**

LOCAL CHURCH NEWS

by Darlene Rimpley

March Deadlines

February 7, 2005 - Print Copy

February 11, 2005 - E-Mail

Home Town Editor

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Subject: Messenger

ALLIANCE FBC: Christmas activities included hanging of the greens, caroling, fruit basket delivery to 14 homes, a Christmas open house at the pastor's, Christmas food boxes delivered to needy families, and a Christmas Eve candlelight service. Pastor and Joyce Rowe entertained the Association pastors and their wives for a fellowship dinner in November. Praise books, large print NIV Bibles, a computer desk complex, and four floral arrangements, given in memory of Stella Wait by her son and family, were dedicated during a special time in the worship service on Nov 14. The New Year's service of communion was held.

ARNOLD FBC: Christmas activities included the Ruth Circle annual salad luncheon, church decorating, a float in the "Christmas Around Town" parade, the Sunday School program, a living nativity at the home of Lloyd and Marge German and a Christmas Eve communion service. A New Year's Eve party began 2005, with a large crowd attending. A "Back to School" breakfast was held with the teachers and school personnel as guests on Jan 3. A paper products shower is being held for the church kitchen during January. Last year's shower brought in enough paper products that none had to be purchased during the year.

BROKEN BOW FBC: Christmas activities included the ABW Christmas tea at the parsonage and a Christmas Eve service. A church Thanksgiving dinner was held at which time the White Cross offering was dedicated, and the children sang several songs of thanks. A meeting was held on Jan 23 to explore the "expectations" for the church for the coming year and the future.

BEATRICE FBC: Christmas activities included a caroling party, bell ringing for the Salvation Army, the children's Christmas program, "Night Alive," and candlelight communion on Christmas Eve. In energy saving action the church thermostats will be set lower and people are asked to dress accordingly.

CHADRON FBC: Christmas activities included a Christmas program, delivery of cookies and poinsettias to some of the elderly and homebound in the church; Christmas Eve worship at Kenwood Chapel. Pastor Rick gave a presentation on the mission trip he and his wife, Linda, took to Ghana last spring. Under the leadership of the Diaconate fellowship meals, "Supper or Lunch for 6 or 8", were held Jan 21 and 22, and Jan 28 and 29. Families signed up to be hosts and to take part in the potluck meals.

COLUMBUS FBC: Christmas activities included the ABW annual Christmas dinner with entertainment by "The Good Ole Gospel Singers," AB Girls sending 14 Samaritan Purse shoeboxes, a Nativity sets display of over 150 nativity sets, including ones from Bethlehem, Nicaragua, and some Native American ones, a chil-

dren's sponsored food drive to benefit the Food Pantry, the youth Christmas program and A Christmas Eve service. A monetary donation was given to the Columbus Rescue Mission to help with their Thanksgiving dinner. Lucy Jenkins celebrated her 90th birthday on Jan 1. FBC delivered Meals on Wheels. The FBC children collected underwear, socks, hats, and gloves, for the Center For Survivors.

FREMONT FBC: Christmas activities included White Gift Sunday with new toys being donated through the churches for the Salvation Army "Joy Shoppe," the ABW program a "Celebration of Christmas," the Day Care program, a "Round the Table Carol Sing," a progressive dinner, the cantata "King of Kings," the children's Christmas program and a Christmas eve candlelight service. The newest Billy Graham movie, "Last Flight Out", was shown on Jan 2. A church soup supper was held on Jan 9, with the offering going to the AB Girls work.

FAIRBURY FBC: Christmas activities included the ABW cookie sale, the Sunday School program, followed by a "Birthday Party for Jesus," a caring and sharing for young adults when the church members filled the individuals stockings with cards and monetary gifts, a gingerbread houses building event; a Sunday Night FAN candy making and treats, caroling and treats, and a soup supper; youth hand delivery of Christmas cards, and a Christmas Eve communion. A New Year's Eve party was held. Lowell and Lois Thrasher (Jan 14) and Loren and Mary Ellen Duis (Jan 17) celebrated their 56th anniversary, and Frank and Helen Henderson their 59th wedding anniversary on Dec 15. The BYG attended a lock-in at Fremont on Jan 29 and 30.

GIBBON BC: Christmas activities included the elementary SS students' mini-program during worship, an open house at the parsonage, the ABW cookie plate delivery to shut-ins, the "A Journey Through the Christmas Story" in the church parking lot. (ed. Note: This was a drive-through event. Cars were given a CD which explained the Christmas Story. Hundreds of people viewed the journey) A choir caroling party and a Christmas Eve service. The youth served a soup lunch to the church on Dec 5. Cliff and Francey Gangwish celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Nov 28. A special offering to go to tsunami relief through the OGHs was received on Jan 23.

GRAND ISLAND FBC: Christmas activities included The Faith, Hope & Charity Circle giving Christmas gifts to the honorary members, college students, and military members; the Rebecca Circle sending a monetary gift to the special interest missionary, fruit baskets and visits to the shut-ins, a gift to Christmas Cheer, a telephone card to a soldier in Iraq, bell ringing for the Salvation Army; a Christmas brunch and a

Christmas Eve candlelight service. A craft/bake sale was held with the \$440 proceeds going to White Cross. The Boy Scout Troop sponsored by the church, and the leader, were special guests at the AB Men's breakfast.

HASTINGS FBC: Christmas activities included a Christmas Tea with a program of puppetry; "Away From the Manger" presented by the Children's Ministries and a Christmas Eve candlelight service. Evangelist Jerry Beltz presented a program for the adult SS class, the morning worship service, and at the Solid Rock Cafe. Scholarships in the amount of \$300 each were awarded to Kristina Lee, Scott Spielman, Laci Ginn, Adam Streck, and Vaness Freese, all active Youth Group members. [Pastor and Mrs. Cowles established the scholarship fund in memory of their son.] Twenty-two FBCers and friends took a trip to Branson. While in Branson it was learned that their bus driver, George, needed to fly to the east coast to be with his mother, so the FBC people took up an offering and gave him \$300 towards his plane fare. When the church heard about this they voted to match the gift with church funds. Truly "love in action." An 9:30am Alternative Worship Service began on Jan 2. This very informal service features movie clips, modern music, drama, etc. to reach out to those who prefer this type of service.

HOLDREGE FBC: Christmas activities included the Mary Jayne Circle salad luncheon, the Jennie Adams circle evening Christmas party; ABWM cookie plate delivery to shut-ins, the Sunday School Christmas program followed by a Christmas dinner for the church; the Youth pizza and bowling party, and a Christmas Eve candlelight service. Helen Johnson, who had been a member at FBC for 66 years, passed away Dec 12. Pastor Gary and Sue Winget gave a gift to the church in the form of completing the basement in the church parsonage over the past three years. FBC families helped house twelve exchange students from Costa Rica during the month of January. Computer lab classes are being offered at FBC. The New Year was welcomed in with a time of fellowship, showing of the "Passion", and Prayer and Praise time, as well as a Prayer Vigil going on at the same time.

JUNIATA COMMUNITY CHURCH: Christmas events included a Family Fun Night with pie and ice cream, a Christmas dinner and program for the senior ladies of the church and community, including guests from Hastings FBC; preparation and delivery of Christmas boxes, caroling followed by a soup supper, "Christmas Eve in the Barn." A New Year's Eve service included a supper, games, and fellowship. Gene and Shirley Timm celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Dec 26.

LINCOLN FBC: Christmas events included an all-church "Family Christmas Celebration," a

performance of The Praise and Celebration Ringers at the Air Force Sergeant's Assoc. Christmas party, the Faith in Action Circle Christmas luncheon, the adult choir presentation of the musical, "Night of Alleluias," the O.A.S.I. S group carol sing, the Mid/High Youth group party, church caroling for homebound members and a Christmas eve service. In Jan. the youth had a skating party at Mahoney State Park, the Wed. adult studies saw a video about the underground church in China and Pastor Don followed through on his promise to do a "rock" performance at a dinner. This fulfilled a challenge regarding the OGHS offering. A study began on Jan 19 to explore and communicate the fallacies of the book The DaVinci Code .

MCCOOK FBC: Christmas events included the ABW soup and dessert supper, with a gift exchange with the secret sisters, followed by a program; a men's breakfast; fruit plate delivery by the women; the Christmas program and a Christmas Eve service. Rev. Stan and Monica Hendershot answered the call to the Pratt, KS church, and began there Jan 2. The Hendershots were presented a going away gift in appreciation of their service to FBC the past nine years.

NORFOLK FBC: Christmas events: The ABW prepared and delivered Christmas plates to shut-ins; 115 shoe boxes were prepared for Operation Christmas Child; the Heart Sisters had a party with the women bringing hats, scarves, mittens, or gloves to give to women at the Norfolk Rescue Mission; the choir presented the musical "Christmas Journey;" the SSI program was presented; and a Christmas eve service was held. "Forty Days of Community" was begun as a study on Jan 2. Leola Crane, who has been active at FBC since 1942, celebrated her 97th birthday on Jan 5, and Martin Craig his 84th on Jan 9.

NORTH PLATTE FBC: Christmas events: The 11th annual presentation of the Living Christmas Tree, "Christmas Vignettes;" the S.A.M. Ladies Night Out supper and entertainment; the Judsons catered dinner party; the children's Sunday School classes and Hosanna Choir presented a program and the Deacons had a Christmas tree for the people to put gifts and food items on to give to the Salvation Army and some families in the church; and a Christmas Eve service was held. The ABY held a New Year's Eve party.

OMAHA BENSON BC: Christmas events included the ABW program, "The Sights and Sounds of Christmas; A Happy Birthday Jesus party for elementary children; the Senior Caring Ministry Christmas Light Tour; the choir presentation of "One Incredible Moment" and a Christmas Eve service. A new group, "The Fellowship", for young marrieds and singles has begun. BBC was a gathering point for Operation Christmas Child, and 10,519 shoeboxes were processed. The youth planned a scavenger hunt at a Christmas Tree Farm. The youth attended a lock-in at the Fremont FBC on Jan 28.

OMAHA FBC: Christmas events: An Instruments of Praise worship, a Children's Musical Presentation; the Choir Cantata; filling shoeboxes for Samaritan's Purse; and a Candlelight service on Christmas Eve. Angie Peterson and

children donated a DVD player and children's movies to be used in children's work. Electric Wednesdays, which offers dinner, two adult studies, children's activities, and Chancel and Bell Choir, is growing rapidly.

OMAHA PARKSIDE BC: Christmas events: A Family supper and celebration presented by the ABW Ministries; Christmas caroling; bell-ringing for the Salvation Army; a gathering of gifts for 75 children from the Nebraska Children's Home; a Christmas Eve service. The First Kachin Baptist Church joined with PBC for the worship service on Dec 5, the rest of the time they meet in the Parkside sanctuary at 12:30 pm on Sundays.

OMAHA SUNSET HILLS BC: Christmas events: A Christmas party, hosted by the Sonshine Troupe, the Lightbearer's Circle dinner and gift exchange; and a Christmas Eve candle lighting celebration. The SNL Senior High/college youth took a trip to the Old Market on Dec 19, had a movie night on Jan 9, had "Pizza with parents" on Jan 23, and a sledding/Hawaiian Night on Jan 30.

SCOTTSBLUFF FBC: Christmas events included an all-church caroling party, a Living Nativity, the Women's Celebration "Tasting Tea", with a special speaker, an all church Christmas party and a Christmas Eve service. FBC was the gathering point for area Samaritan's Purse shoeboxes, and they processed 1,363 boxes. Shirley Johns recently celebrated her 80th birthday. An anonymous donor gave a computer to the pastor's office. "Invite a Friend" Sunday was held on Jan 23.

TECUMSEH FBC: Christmas events: Pastor Hugh and Beth held open house at the parsonage; the Christmas program was held the morning of Dec 19 and caroling was held that evening, followed by snacks; and a Christmas eve service was held. A New Year's Eve Party was held. A paper goods, kitchen and cleaning supplies shower was held for the church.

TEKAMAH FBC: Christmas events: The ABWM held a Coffee and Style Show; Rachel Circle had a spaghetti supper and Christmas party, with an exchange of white elephant gifts; the Good News Club collected new toys for the Open Door Mission; The Children's Christmas program was held; the church family along with the ABWM sent \$175 to Angel tree to purchase Christmas gifts for children of prisoners; and a Christmas Eve Service was held. The Board of Christian Education served soup, salads, and sweets following worship on Jan 2, and then had everyone help put the decorations away.

WILSONVILLE BAPTIST/CHRISTIAN: The combined congregations honored their pastor, Keith Theobald with a special service and dinner. Rev. Kenneth Moore of Lincoln, and Susan Gillies of Omaha, state ministers for both congregations, surprised the church by joining them for worship. An enthusiastic praise time is held before the worship service the first Sunday of each month. The BCW women packed goodie boxes for their college students and military personnel, as well as fruit and cookie plates for some of the lonely.

LINCOLN SECOND BC: Christmas activities

included a Christmas Brunch; the SAM (Senior Adult Ministry) group trip to Omaha to attend a Christmas Pageant performance; a Christmas luncheon; a Christmas Craft Night and Soup Supper; the Jr/Sr Hi Christmas Party; a Progressive Dinner Party, a Children's Christmas Program, "We Three Kings," the pre-school Christmas Pageant; a Chili Supper and Christmas Caroling to our "Shut-ins" and a Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service. Dec 31 there was an evening of celebration for "what had been" and "what will be" at an Intergenerational New Year's Eve party sponsored by Family Ministries.

OXFORD FBC: Pastor appreciation was held in early Nov. A Family Fun Night was also held in Nov. Our annual Bible Conference was Nov 19 and 20. Shoeboxes were filled for "Operation Christmas Child". Christmas events included the annual "all church" soup supper with Christmas decorating of the church, our church hosting the community wide "Christmas House Tour." [We were the host church and had a large number of Nativity Sets displayed.] Other activities included Christmas caroling and community lunch, the Christmas program and our Christmas Eve service.

LA VISTA, JUDSON BC: In November the M & M Offering was emphasized each Sunday. We received the generous gift from Calvary Baptist of over 1,000 books from their library. Christmas activities included a youth bake sale to buy 200 New Testaments for Project Christmas Gift for children around the world, the Awana food drive for La Vista Food Bank, a Deck the Halls Soup luncheon, caroling, bell choir performances, the Children's Christmas Program "Live From Bethlehem," our Christmas Fellowship luncheon welcoming our new members and a Christmas Eve Candlelight Service. Our Christmas offering will go to help the Judson Youth Group.

CHAPMAN FBC: Art evangelist Jerry Beltz presented his devotional painting program each night from Nov 10-14. The choir sang at the Merrick County Museum Christmas Tea. The children performed their Christmas program, and the Choir performed their Christmas Cantata. Several members enjoyed an evening of Christmas caroling. The annual New Year's Eve party, with games and food, was held at the Chapman Public School gym. The church body has been challenged to read through the entire Bible in 2005.

RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH: Riverside members participated in the annual Community Thanksgiving Service which was held this year at First Presbyterian Church in Tekamah. On the 28th members celebrated collecting their White Cross quota and are still collecting funds for a clinic in Managua, Nicaragua. They celebrated the beginning of advent by decorating the church and sharing a soup supper. On Dec 12th Anna DeMuth of Benson Baptist spoke about her visit to Nicaragua. Then the children performed their Christmas program at the nursing home in Tekamah. Later everyone gathered to go caroling. The annual Christmas Program was held on the 19th.

AMERICA:
Third largest mission field in the world

AMERICANS:
75 million unchurched

AMERICA FOR CHRIST OFFERING:
Supports mission in the U.S. and Puerto Rico
\$3,000,000 Goal

AMERICAN BAPTISTS:
Generously giving during March

SHARE CHRIST WITH AMERICA

GIVE TO THE AMERICA FOR CHRIST OFFERING 2005

“GOD’ S CALLING” CABIN LEADERS NEEDED

If you and your church are committed to quality Christian camping for our children and youth, please help us recruit cabin leaders for our summer camping season. Giving a week of your summer can make a life-long difference in someone’s life.

The curriculum for this summer is “God’s Calling.” Perhaps God is calling you to the unique blessing of camp leadership. Contact Camp Merrill or ABC/NE if you’d like to volunteer. 402-666-5639, 877-244-7339

Trivia Answers (see questions on page 3)

1. b. There is no fishing pond at Camp Merrill (yet!)
2. d. The forest at camp is mostly burr oak and cedar.
3. a. The Palmyra Building is a program building with meeting rooms.
4. a. Fremont Hill is a favorite spot for the equestrian groups to camp
5. b. Adult Ministries attendees have planted iris, a smoke bush and a service berry tree.

ABC of Nebraska Staff

Executive Minister.....	Susan Gillies
Area Minister.....	Dave Lundholm
Minister of Mission Support.....	Steve Bills
Director of Camps & Conferences.....	Clarence Reiss
Camp Staff.....	Trudy Reiss, Lou Grotelueschen, Joe Huss, Andrew Kern
Office Manager.....	Sue Gammel
Office Assistant.....	Pat Galloway
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

FROM OCTAVIA CHURCH ITEMS FOR SALE:

- 4x6 American flag and standard
- 4x6 Christian flag and standard
- Aluminum communion service
- 22 youth choir robes
- 8 adult choir robes
- Make an offer --
- Contact: Lou Grotelueschen
402-539-2775



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