

the ESSENGER

American Baptist Churches of Nebraska



May 2003

ABC/NE Date Data

ABC/NE Dept & Exec Comm.
May 17, 2003
Camping in Nebraska
May 26, 2003
ABW Ministries Conference
June 6-8, 2003
AB Men's Conference
August 15-16, 2003
Family Reunion
Sept. 26-28, 2003
Adult Ministries Conference
Oct. 6-9, 2003

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A Heart for Ministry in The Heartland

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Missionary Karen Smith Musicians Kim & Reggie Harris Added to Family Reunion Line-Up

The 2003 ABC/NE Family Reunion (annual convention) will be an extraordinary event. The planning committee has arranged for outstanding speakers and musicians to be featured. The event will be held at the Sandhills Convention Center in North Platte September 26-28.



Roy Medley & Karen Smith to Speak

Speakers include ABC General Secretary A. Roy Medley (see March Messenger) and ABC missionary to Thailand Karen Smith. Smith is director of the New Life Center, which provides shelter, educational, and emergency services to tribal girls at risk, and those who have been trafficked or sold. The New Life Center provides a Christian environment for women to learn the literacy and vocational skills they will need to secure meaningful employment.

Kim & Reggie Harris to be featured

Kim and Reggie Harris are an engaging and talented wife/husband duo whose voices and harmonies prompted one reviewer to describe them as "vocal acoustic joy!!" The duo tours extensively throughout the year performing for audiences of all ages at conferences, churches, theatres, folk clubs, festivals, colleges and schools across the U.S. and Canada. They have performed from the Kennedy Center in Washington DC to the Johnny Carson Theatre in Norfolk. Kim & Reggie composed the NEW LIFE 2010 song for ABC/USA.



The Theme: CONNECTING

"Connecting . . . with God, with each other, with the world" is the theme for the Family Reunion. The theme scripture is Ephesians 4:11-13. The theme will be carried through the program by speakers and by special "equipping sessions." A special "connection" will happen on Sunday morning. The congregation of First Baptist of North Platte will join the family for a grand joint worship service at the convention center.

Cooperative Ministry To Bikers Continues This Year In Sturgis

The Departments of Evangelism of the American Baptist Churches of Nebraska and the ABC of the Dakotas will once again join in a ministry during the annual gathering of over 300,000 people in Sturgis, South Dakota, for Bike Week, August 2-9, 2003. ABC/NE is actively recruiting volunteers to participate in this special ministry opportunity.

The original idea for a Bike Week ministry in 2001 was to stage a barbecue and concert. This plan was scuttled when the venue selected became unavailable at the last minute. Under the direction of Steve Bills, then Minister of Outreach at First Baptist Church in Omaha, and Pat McBride, pastor of First Baptist Church of the Northern Hills in Deadwood, SD, the project was redesigned.

(Continued on page three)

From the Executive Minister..... Susan Gillies

Saying Good-bye to Barnabus

I recently heard Don Gaines preach a sermon about the New Testament figure, Barnabus. It was a good sermon. I've thought about it often since I heard it. Don talked about this man whose name was John but was called Barnabus because the word "Barnabus" means one who encourages. The nickname described the man. I've know about Barnabus for years, but it was interesting to hear it from Don.

Many of us would give Don Gaines the nickname Barnabus. He has encouraged us. He has encouraged us individually and he has encouraged us as American Baptists in Nebraska.

Don has served as Minister of Mission Support for the ABC of Nebraska since 1995. In that role Don has encouraged

all of us to support the mission and ministry of our denomination. He has encouraged us to give so that the mission of Jesus Christ might be carried out in Judea, Samaria and the uttermost parts of the earth.

Don had planned to retire from his work with the region at the end of June. That date moved to the end of April when First Baptist Church of Lincoln called him to serve as Interim Pastor beginning May 1. I encouraged him to accept the call because I know how well he will serve that great church. The loss we feel as a region staff is profound. Don has been our Barnabus. We're not quite sure how life will be without him. We do realize that the original plan would have had him leaving the state at the end of June. Now that he's going to be at Lincoln, First, at least we'll keep him in the state longer! I think the best way to show appreciation for

a Barnabus is to be one ourselves. Are you willing to become an encourager to those around you in your family, church, community and beyond?

A Gift for Don

Some folks came to me and asked if they could collect money from those who might want to give Don a gift or honor him in some way. They will give the money to the Murrow Indian Children's Home in Don's name. Isn't it interesting that they knew so clearly that the most meaningful gift they could give to Don would be a gift to a worthy mission. If you'd like to be a Barnabus to some needy Indian children, here's an opportunity.

Thank you, Don (Barnabus) Gaines.
And Godspeed!



Thank You

On April 30 I leave Region Staff to become Interim Pastor of First Baptist Church in Lincoln. This is with deep gratitude to you and to God for the privilege and responsibility of promoting involvement in missions and the prayer and financial support of missions for the past eight years. The blessings of this ministry have been rich and abundant. My prayer for you is that you will remain faithful to the call of God to be his witnesses in your community, in this State and Nation, and around the world. There are many fine mission organizations in the world, but I remain convinced that none is more effective than that of American Baptist Churches, USA. It is indeed worthy of our faithful support.

--Don Gaines

Trivia

The ABC/NE Family Reunion (annual convention) will be held in North Platte Sept 26-28. To help you get ready, this trivia is all about our host city.

- North Platte is located at the junction of which two rivers?
 - Platte & Dismal
 - North Platte & Republican
 - North Platte & Democrat
 - North Platte & South Platte
- Which of the following is true of North Platte?
 - First lighted runway in the USA
 - Home of famous canteen in WW II
 - At one time had its own arch
 - All of the above
- Who was North Platte's most famous citizen?
 - Buffalo Bill Cody
 - Annie Oakley
 - Jesse James
 - Bob Phares
- Which are true of North Platte?
 - In the same county as Nebraska's only national cemetery.
 - Home of the largest railroad yard in the world.
 - The county seat of Lincoln County
 - All of the above.
- How far is it from Omaha to North Platte?

a. 219 miles	b. 249 miles
c. 279 miles	d. 299 miles



The ABC Emergency Service Center is headquartered at First Baptist Church of the Northern Hills in Deadwood, SD

Bike Week Ministry

The **ABC Emergency Services Center** was created in the basement of the First Baptist Church of the Northern Hills in Deadwood to help those who became stranded due to injury, abandonment, or mechanical breakdown. The local law enforcement and social services agencies were encouraged to contact center workers when they ran across people in need. The distribution of thousands of posters and brochures helped others find the ESC on their own.

Volunteers from both regions spent all or part of the week helping, feeding, transporting, and counseling the dozens of individuals who came to the ESC for assistance. Throughout the week calls came in at all hours of the day and night from churches, police and rescue workers, and individuals, wanting help for men, women and children in need. About an hour away, Rapid City became a frequent destination as transportation to the bus station was provided for those needing rides home.

In addition to the two regions and their churches, the Christian Motorcyclists Association, the Bond Slaves Cycle Club, the Cornerstone Mission in Rapid City and the Artemis House in Spearfish provided invaluable assistance in a genuine spirit of ecumenical cooperation.

Last year the patterns established the first year continued with even more rally participants ministered to at the ESC. This year we are expecting a significant increase in attendance at the rally due to the 100th anniversary celebration of the Harley-Davidson Motor Company.

Volunteers don't need to be motorcyclists, but ought to have a heart for evangelism. We have discovered that it is helpful if we have more women volunteers due to the large percentage of women and children that we end up assisting. If you can come for all or part of the week we can find a job for you!

Interested in Sturgis Rally Ministry 2003? Here are more details . . .

- The ABC Emergency Services Center will be open August 2-9.
- Sleeping accommodations are provided. Breakfast is provided each day beginning on Sunday, August 3.
- RVers will be provided with space to set up camp.
- This mission project is designed for adults. High school students will be permitted when accompanied by a parent.
- Routes to Sturgis will be planned for bikers who wish to ride to the event in a group.
- Follow-up on those ministered to will be coordinated by contacts in ABC regions around the country.
- Each participant is asked to contribute \$100 toward the cost of this project. Local churches are encouraged to assist their participating members in raising this amount. Churches and individuals may also make contributions to this project through their regional office.

For more information, contact . . .

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Floretta Ward Named to USF Board

Floretta Ward, Sunset Hills, has been elected as the newest Nebraskan to serve on the Board of Trustees of the University of Sioux Falls. Mrs. Ward will serve on the Student Services Committee of the Board.

Nebraska Baptists actively support (in time, talent and treasure) the institutions that serve our region. Currently ABC/NE is represented on the boards of the American Baptist Homes of the Midwest, Central Baptist Theological Seminary, Ottawa University, Green Lake Conference Center and Roger Williams Fellowship as well as the University of Sioux Falls.

150th Birthday for AB Historical Society

The American Baptist Historical Society is celebrating its 150th birthday on May 5. Many churches will actually celebrate on May 18, Baptist Heritage Sunday. The Historical Society collects, preserves and shares Baptist history materials. They also work to raise consciousness on how learning about Baptist history can encourage a congregation to envision its future.

The Historical Society provides advice and guidelines to congregations on how to preserve their records, write their congregational history, and celebrate church anniversaries and heritage days.

Questions & Answers about Building Bridges



GENERAL

Q: Where did this plan come from all of a sudden?

A: The Department of Camps and Conferences and the ABC/NE Board have known for some time that to keep camp operating and to continue to serve the youth and adults of our churches with soul strengthening camp experiences, we would have to generate more income at the camp. The experience of other camps is that year-round lodging can make the biggest difference in usage and income.

Q: Why so much emphasis on Camp Moses Merrill?

A: CMM is a tremendous asset owned by the ABC/NE for the purpose of developing Christian leaders. We believe we are called to be stewards of this resource. Being good stewards means having a clear ministry vision and a solid business plan.

Q: Is there another ABC region with facilities similar to what we want to build?

A: The Mid-American Baptist Churches (Iowa/Minnesota ABC) recently added conference facilities to one of their camps. Usage jumped immediately and has remained high.

Q: When this project is over, is that it?

A: Creative ideas abound but there are no plans for additional capital fundraising after Building Bridges. Most of the ideas for the years immediately following this campaign are more modest. There is a dream to have a prayer walk, add two cabins, build a replica of the Moses Merrill cabin that once stood in Sarpy County. We would like to add another road to provide additional access to the cabin area by guests and by fire and rescue vehicles. There are always staffing and maintenance needs.

THE LODGE

Q: How do you see the Lodge being used?

A: The Lodge is designed to provide a conference room, bathrooms, deck, office and 12 motel-type rooms. It will be used by churches for leadership retreats and training, by non-profit groups for training, by ABC/NE for clergy seminars, lay leadership training events, by the tri-region (ABC of the Dakotas, Mid-America, Nebraska) for planning meetings, seminars, and retreats. New and innovative types of programs can be offered. The Lodge will be attached to Friendship Chapel. A conference will be able to use the chapel, the meeting room and the sleeping rooms all under one roof. Meals can be served in the same building. This will greatly expand the desirability of the facility for winter use.

Q: How do we know there will be groups who will use it?

A: Personal and group spiritual retreats are very popular. Groups express interest currently but some are "put off" by the lodging. Outside groups currently use the facility for day use and spring and fall weekends. Camp Merrill is located a reasonable distance from the major concentrations of population in Nebraska.

Q: Is there really a demand for adult lodging?

A: Camp Merrill currently is limited in the kinds of year-round events it can host because of inadequate sleeping facilities. Some events currently held at camp can be expected to immediately increase in size according to the number accommodated in The Lodge (ABW Ministries Conference, Clergy Seminars, Adult Ministries Conference, etc.)

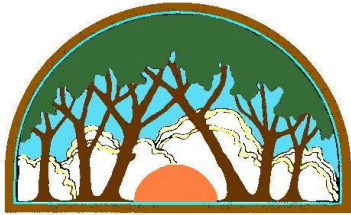
THE ACTIVITY BUILDING

Q: With 500+ acres of nature, why do we need an activity building?

A: Camp Merrill is committed to providing great outdoor experiences but anyone who has been a leader at a mid-high camp when it has rained all week can testify to the value of an activity building. This facility can also provide a place for talent shows, plays, team activities and sports. The facility will also provide adults with an area for exercise in bad weather.

Q: Is the size of this project simply too big for ABC/NE?

A: No. The beauty of the plan is that we will build as we have the money. We have the money for Friendship Chapel so it is being built. When we have the money for the other facilities, we will build them. We believe God has called us to new levels of service at Camp Merrill. Our task is to be faithful.



Camp Moses Merrill News

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Memorial Day Picnic/60th Anniversary Reunion

May 26, 2003

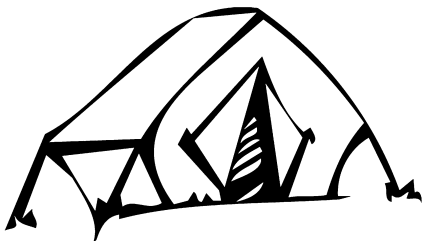
Come join us for a fun-filled day of festivities. The FREE annual Memorial Day picnic will include hamburgers and hotdogs and other culinary delights for lunch (donations will happily be accepted). There will be a Memorial Service along with musical talent from our Nebraska churches. Many activities will be available for all ages; including swimming, trail rides (by donation), and hayrack rides. Come back to reminisce with memories of camping at Moses Merrill, whether it was at Linwood or Fullerton. We want to rejoice in the lives that have been changed through camp programming at both locations over the past sixty years. Come see faces from the past and present. Visit with friends and family from this special part of the lives of the American Baptists of Nebraska. Feel free to bring along photo albums to share in the remembrance of your experiences at camp. Contact your camp friends and tell them "See You at Camp Merrill" on Memorial Weekend.



Family Camp

May 23-26 or Aug 29-Sept 1

Bring an RV or tent, pack up the kids and you're ready to go! This fun-filled weekend starts on Friday evening and wraps up Monday after lunch. There will be a few cabins available for those who aren't interested in "roughing it". The following prices are for the full weekend per family and include swimming for everyone.



Tenting \$45.00

RV \$55.00

Cabin \$125.00

Meals may be provided for an additional fee.

Other Dates to Remember

AB Girls Retreat
May 30-June 1

Project Camp
June 1-6

AB Women's
Conference
June 6-8



REMINDER: Some of the camps are filling up rapidly.

If you haven't sent in your registration for summer camp please do so soon to reserve a spot just for you or your child.

Palestine Leads ABW Ministries Love Gift

In the first three months of 2003, Palestine Baptist Church leads the way in Love Gift offerings. It is followed in the top three by Superior and Arthur. Women (and men!) contribute "over and above" gifts to Love Gift to offer thanks to God for blessings and to support the mission and ministry of American Baptist Churches. When a special blessing comes your way, place a "thank you" gift in an envelope or box and mark it LOVE GIFT. ABW Ministries in your church will be happy to see that it gets to its destination!

America For Christ Contest Spurs Creativity

This year the ABC/NE staff challenged churches to become more creative in their promotion of the America For Christ Offering. In a moment of silliness, the staff offered to prepare a meal for the congregation that combined creativity with success in raising the offering. Not really expecting anyone to take them up on the offer, the staff nearly forgot about it. After all, the offer was only mentioned once.

Never underestimate the churches of Nebraska! Entries are still coming in. All entries will be judged by World Mission Support staff from surrounding regions. Watch *The Messenger* for an announcement of the winner.

The true winners, of course, are the people who will come to know the Lord or be helped by caring ministries because of the work of AFC.

LOCAL CHURCH NEWS

by Darlene Rimpley

June Deadlines

May 2, 2003 - Print Copy

May 9, 2003 - E-Mail

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Subject: Messenger

Pearl Prescott Knight, wife of Dr. Allan R. Knight, former executive minister of ABC/NE, passed away on Feb. 26 at St. Peter, MN, at the age of 90 years. She is survived by her husband and three children.

ARNOLD, FBC: Ildie Blixt was honored on her 90th birthday at an open house at the church. Robin Gault, of Scotland, will be at FBC working with the youth for the month of April. FBC and Tallin Union Church worked together to put on the second annual Easter pageant, "For the Joy Set Before Him", on April 19 at a farm pasture. Community Easter Sunrise Service was held at Tallin Union Church, followed by a breakfast. Plans are being made for a Christian Music Festival, "Plains Praise", on June 28 in Arnold. Five name groups have committed to performing at the concert.

FAIRBURY, FBC: A Sunrise Service, breakfast, and an Easter egg hunt took place on Easter morning, A Prayer and Healing Service was held on April 6. The Capitol Association held a pulpit exchange on April 27. Pastor Robin spoke at Lincoln Belmont Baptist and Rev. Charlene Morris-Quarrels spoke at FBC. The ABW Ministries held the annual Table Treasures on April 28. An offering was taken for the Murrow Indian Children's Home. FBC is making plans for the 2nd annual "Homecoming Sunday" on June 1. FBC youth joined in with the Youth NET Lock-In on April 16 and 27.

ALLIANCE, FBC: The Northwestern Baptist Association meeting was held at FBC on April 19.

BEATRICE, FBC: An Easter Sunrise Service was held, with breakfast at the church following. Pastor Dan spoke at the Fairbury FBC for the Capitol Assoc. Pulpit Exchange, and Rev. Jim Cummings of Lincoln SBC spoke at Beatrice FBC.

BROKEN BOW, FBC: An early Easter service was held. The ABW Ministries collected snack mixes to send to Curtis Park Community Center in Denver.

COLUMBUS, FBC: A Maundy Thursday supper was held, and also an Easter breakfast. Easter care packages were sent to the college students. A church rummage and bake sale was held on April 25 and 26th, with proceeds going to the general fund.

FAIRHAVEN BC: The ABWM Association Rally was held at Fairhaven on April 7.

FREMONT, FBC: An ordination service for Chaplain Joe Brown was held on April at FBC, followed by a reception. An All-Daughters Brunch was held on April 5. Help with the pew cushion fund was received by the attendees bringing an old purse with a gift inside to be part of a silent auction, and a "Women of the Bible Style Show" was held. The youth sponsored an all-church dinner on April 27, with a silent auction held. The church family had a "clean up the highway" day on April 12. The choir presented the cantata, "No Greater Love" on Palm Sunday. A Sunrise Service was held on Easter Sunday, followed by a breakfast in the youth center.

CHAPMAN, FBC: ABW hosted a "Feast and Fudge" potato bar fundraiser March 12. The proceeds will go towards plaster repair and paint in the sanctuary. Dr. Rose Sims led the seminar "New Life for Dying Churches" March 29. Forty-one persons from nine different churches attended. The installation of the new elevator (lift) was completed, offering those with limited mobility much easier access to the sanctuary and basement. A dedication ceremony for the elevator will be held April 27 before the church's quarterly business meeting.

GIBBON, BC: A Sunrise Service was held, followed by breakfast at the church on Easter Sunday. Camping Sunday was held on April 27. AWANA finished their year with a family picnic. The family of Winnie Widdowson presented new silverware for the church kitchen in her memory.

GUIDE ROCK, FBC: The Southern Union Association Meeting was held at FBC on April 27, with the theme, "One Nation Still Under God."

HOLDREGE, FBC: A Sunrise Service at the Church, followed by a breakfast served by the youth was held on Easter Sunday. The church is supporting the "Unseen Backup" program, in which a person commits to praying for a law officer for a year. A tree has been placed in the church foyer, on which a gold star, representing the president, and red, white, and blue stars for M.I.A.s, P.O.W.s, and those killed in action, and service personnel, are placed.

JUNIATA COMMUNITY CHURCH:

Family Night attendees viewed "Jerusalem at the Time of Christ" on April 6. JCC and the Methodist Church united for the Easter sunrise Service at JCC, followed by refreshments. The church may become sponsors of an American Family Radio Station (91.7), which is on air 24/7. The support will be drawn from personal donations and not the general budget.

LINCOLN, FBC: Rev. Don Gaines has accepted the call as interim pastor at FBC, and will begin his service on May 1. Rev. Gaines had made plans to retire from the ABC/NE staff at the end of June. The adult choir presented the musical, "Milestones," on Palm Sunday. A live performance of "The Last Supper" was presented by a group of men at Maundy Thursday services; the youth presented a mini-musical, "Hallelujah! He Did It," at the Sunrise Service, and the youth served a breakfast following early service. A Mother-Daughter Brunch was held on April 5. Pastor Lee Spitzer has begun his new position as Executive Minister of New Jersey.

SCOTTSBLUFF, FBC: A reception was held to honor Carol McIntosh, Elsie Conrad, and Marcia Shipley for their special ministry of music in the church. An Easter Sunrise Service was held at Scottsbluff Monument, followed by breakfast and a children's Easter egg hunt. A Spanish Class has been added to the Sunday School program.

MCCOOK, FBC: Food items were collected for the Food Pantry, and 15 Church World Service Health Kits were assembled by the ABW and church family. Easter Sunrise service was held, followed by breakfast, the choir presented a cantata during Easter Worship service. The youth were in charge of the service on March 23.

NORTH PLATTE, FBC:

Pastor David Heintzleman has resigned to become pastor in Rock Springs, WY. A farewell dinner was held for Dave and Dona March 30.

GRAND ISLAND, FBC: Sunrise Service was held at Pioneer Park, with a breakfast at the church following.

NORFOLK, FBC: AWANA finished their year with an Awards Night/Spaghetti Supper. Crafting ladies meet the first Tuesday of the month, and make items to send to missions, including Norma Cole in Alaska. Heart Sisters were in charge of the meal at the Norfolk Rescue Mission on April 24. The Maundy Thursday service featured a "Passover" or "Seder" service, followed by communion.

OMAHA, PARKSIDE BC: The ABW held a "No Bake Bake Sale", with the proceeds going to Murrow Children's Home. An Easter party for all the neighborhood children was held on April 19.

LINCOLN, SECOND BC: A Camp Night Dinner, sponsored by the Board of Christian Education, was held April 2. Slides of events at Camp Moses Merrill were shown "Springtime and Easter in Japan", was the subject of a program presented for the ABW Ministries by Pastor ODeil following the monthly April ABW luncheon. The Senior Adult Ministry Fellowship traveled to the SAC Museum at Gretna on April 11 to see the Charles A. Lindberg Celebration display. Easter activities included: a Cantata by the Chancel Choir, "Tenebrae (A Service of Darkness)" at the Maundy Thursday service; an Easter Egg Hunt for ages 2 through 2nd grades on Saturday before Easter; members and friends attending the Belmont Baptist Church Easter Sunrise Service then returning to Second Baptist for breakfast, a fundraiser for the Youth Group. Six youth participated in the Mid Hi Retreat at Camp Moses Merrill and four youth and 3 adults participated in the Sr. Hi. Retreat at Camp. Plans are underway for the renovation of classrooms and the sanctuary. Formal action on the bids and financial plan were taken at a special business meeting following the April 13th worship service.

TEKEMAH, FBC:

The men and women of FBC attended respective Lenten coffees at other churches. Easter Sunrise Service was held at Riverside Church. An ABW breakfast was held on April 12, with the program by the FBC "Miniature Ministers Puppet Team." A library of G rated, family oriented Christian films is being established for the church.

OMAHA, BENSON BC: "Come See the Place" was the musical presented by the chancel choir at two services on Palm Sunday. The Easter Offering went to the Open Door Mission. A Sunrise Service was held on Easter Sunday, followed by a breakfast sponsored by the youth, with proceeds going to their summer mission trip. A family night was held on April 13, with Bingo, sloppy Joes, and white elephants being the fun things for the evening. April Madness was held on April 19, with a full court basketball tournament held.

OMAHA, FBC: Oren and Elizabeth Knight celebrated their 69th wedding anniversary on March 26. Bob Potter, Good News Jail and Prison Chaplain, spoke at the April 6 service. Instead of the usual quarterly meeting format, FBC is starting "Church Chat" sessions. One was held on Sat. morning, April 12, and one held on Sun evening, April 13. Our AWANA program has grown to include a Cubbies group, and pending the addition of necessary workers, we hope to add a Junior Varsity edition (7th and 9th grades) in the fall. VBS has been scheduled for July 14-July 18, 6:30 - 8:30 pm. The theme is S.C.U.B.A. (Super Cool Undersea Bible Adventure). Our youth group continues to meet every Tuesday at 7 pm. Several of our group attended the Senior High Retreat at Camp Moses Merrill. An all-church baby shower--for the purpose of refurbishing our nursery with toys, equipment, and paint--brought in over \$1000 and much of the work is now complete.

OMAHA, SUNSET HILLS: "The Big Picture" will be presented by Sunday Night Live youth at 7 p.m., Sunday, April 27. The drama/musical is directed by John Croghan. An offering will be taken, to help fund the youth summer mission trip to the Hopi Indian Reservations in Arizona. The Outreach Board is organizing a prayer vigil from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Saturday, May 17. The vigil will focus on the mission trip. Many of the youth attended the Senior High Retreat at Camp Moses Merrill in April. *Forgiven* will be singing the national anthem before three Omaha Royals games this summer. The men's quintet also reached the final round of auditions before being eliminated to sing the anthem at the College World Series. Of more than 250 applicants, *Forgiven* was among the top 40. Vacation Bible School has been scheduled for the evenings of July 20-25. New baby: Lauren Kendall, daughter of Tom and Trish O'Connor, born March 26.



Local Church News

