

# the ESSENGER

American Baptist Churches of Nebraska



February 2006

**ABC/NE Date Data**

- Feb 4 AB Men's Board  
8:30am Mahoney
- Feb 7 Annual Meeting Planning  
Comm. 10:00am Lincoln
- Feb 23 ABC/NE Foundation  
1:30pm Omaha
- Mar 11 Camp Department  
Camp Moses Merrill
- Mar 17 Mission Dept. 4pm  
Evangelism Dept. 6pm  
Grand Island
- Mar 18 Region Board Retreat  
Gibbon

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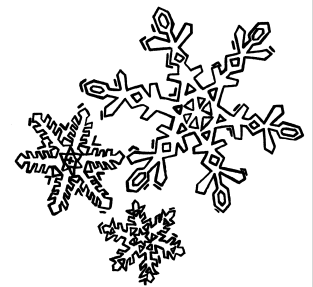
Incorporated as  
The Nebraska Baptist State Convention

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## ABC/NE Winter Wonders

The wonders of God are in evidence in the Baptist churches in Nebraska! Even in the season of short days and cold temperatures, there is warmth and welcome in our hearts – and plans are underway for some “**blossoming events**” coming later in the year. Here are some examples:

- FBC—Broken Bow installed new pastor Betty Johnson January 8.
- Encouraging reports are coming in of the number of baptisms already in 2006.
- The Board of ABC/NE will meet in a day long “futuring” retreat in March
- ABC/NE President Hornberger and Past President Phares met with staff in January to continue development of the **Churches Helping Churches Initiative**.
- Plans are underway for a Young Adult Retreat at Camp Moses Merrill
- The Annual Meeting Planning Committee is at work on the Family Reunion, Sept in Lincoln. It's going to be a great convention! Sept 15-17.
- Planning is underway for a Pastors' Seminar in October on financial management.
- A GRANT has been received for a seminar on Healthy Family Relationships — possibly in August.



## Should Your Pastor Be There?



American Baptist Clergy from across the country will gather in Orlando April 17-20 for **WAIT ON THE LORD**, a spiritual formation conference presented by ABC-USA. Christian spiritual formation is the life long process of being conformed to the image of Christ by scriptures, for the transformation of the individual and the world.

One of the conference speakers is John W. Kinney, a dynamic speaker and a distinguished theologian, academician and administrator. He is Dean of the School of Theology at Virginia Union Seminary, Richmond, VA, and pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church, Beavertown, VA. Bible study will be led by Jaime Clark-Soles, Assistant Professor of New Testament at Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist Univ. Dr. Clark-Soles is in much demand as an engaging presenter and teacher, specializing in the book of John.

Brad Berglund, who led a 2005 ABC/NE pastors' seminar on worship, will be the worship leader for the conference.

The ABC/NE Carpenter Fund will provide financial assistance for pastors attending the conference. Anyone interested should contact the region office 877-244-7339 or 402-556-4730.

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

### We are “running this race” together

As many of you know, I serve as the President of the ABC-USA Regional Executive Ministers Council. Because of that role, early in January I received a request from a study group in West Virginia asking me to answer some questions about denominational relationships. The group is not being negative. They are just gathering perspectives as they seek to inform the board of their region. They seemed to be asking “what difference does it make if we are connected?”

Before I could even answer the questions, the Sago Mine Disaster was on the news. The event was so very sad and I prayed. Then I learned that Sago Baptist Church, where the miners’ families waited, was an ABC church. It became an event happening to my family. Just as tragic, just as sad – but connected. I prayed again and again for not only the miners and their families but also for Sago Pastor Wease Day and other pastors, lay leaders and region staff. I remembered the times I visited churches in West Virginia and the times I have laughed and cried and prayed with friends there that I came to know through the ABC.

Then 12 miners were found dead. On the ABC website I read the story of miner Martin (Junior) Toler and learned that he was a deacon at Stump Chapel in Sutton, WV, and very active in West Virginia Baptist Convention life. His note to his family said he would meet them “on the other side.” Praise God for his life, his witness and for the faith that carries us right across the divide into eternity.

ABC General Secretary Roy Medley immediately extended the care and concern of the ABC family. I suggested to our pastors that they might want to send condolences, letting the folks know that they have brothers and sisters in Christ in Nebraska praying for them. With regard to material support, National Ministries’ executive director, Rev. Dr. Aidsand F. Wright-Riggins III, said assistance is available as needs are identified, with funds contributed by American Baptists through One Great Hour of Sharing. “At times such as these, our actions are the embodiment of God’s love reaching out to those in despair. We pray and care for our brothers and sisters in Christ to prove that God, indeed, does not forsake us, even in the darkest night.”

I finally crafted my responses to the questions from the folks in West Virginia. It was hard to put the fullness of my heart onto the page. I realized we are connected to each other in the ABC family by a common commitment to mission nearly 200 years old. We have entered into sacred covenants with each other as churches and regions and national mission organizations. We are “running this race” together. We are family.

Note: Condolences to the families and communities affected by the Sago Mine tragedy may be sent to Rev. John Simmons, associate executive minister of Missions and Administration, West Virginia Baptist Convention: P.O. Box 1019, Parkersburg, WV 26102-1019, or via e-mail to [jsimmons@wvbc.org](mailto:jsimmons@wvbc.org). He will forward these through the appropriate channels.



*From the Minister of Mission Support..... Steve Bils*

### Let’s not forget our “Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria” on the way to “the uttermost parts of the earth”

American Baptists have long recognized the importance of “home” missions. Many of the oldest churches in our region were established by home missionaries who followed Moses and Eliza Merrill to the Nebraska Territory, sent by the American Baptist Home Mission Society and the Woman’s American Baptist Home Mission Society.

AMERICA FOR CHRIST OFFERING

**FACT**

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

**SHARE CHRIST WITH AMERICA**

The American Baptist Home Mission Society began in 1832 to address the spiritual needs of people in the frontier. The purpose of the Home Mission Society was "to preach the Gospel, establish churches and give support and ministry to the unchurched and destitute." In 1877, the Woman's American Baptist Home Mission Society organized to "proclaim the Christian faith and to minister to people of special need." In 1955, the American Baptist Home Mission Society and the Woman's American Baptist Home Mission Society merged. In 1972, the combined Home Mission Societies became known as National Ministries.

Every spring American Baptist congregations unite in receiving the America For Christ offering to help continue this mission and ministry throughout the United States and Puerto Rico. While to some, foreign missions might seem more glamorous or worthy, the reality is that the United States has become the third largest mission field in the world. The work that our home missionaries do is exactly the same work that many of our foreign missionaries do. Neighborhood centers, church planting, evangelism training, disaster relief, group mission experiences — the work is the same, only the location of those ministered to changes.

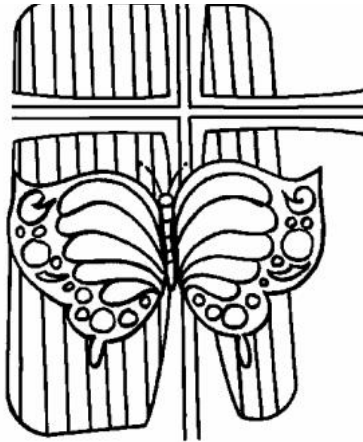
Congregations that are serious about outreach and missions recognize the opportunity that the America For Christ offering provides to become more deeply involved, partnering with other churches, to reach our closest neighbors for Christ . This spring ask your church’s leaders to establish a goal for this year’s America For Christ offering that accurately reflects your commitment to "preach the Gospel, establish churches and give support and ministry to the unchurched and destitute" and to "proclaim the Christian faith and to minister to people of special need" in your own back yard.

***If we don’t share Christ with America, who will?***



# FEBRUARY PRAYER:

a part of the ABC/NE 2006 Prayer Emphasis



Join Baptists across Nebraska in prayer in February for:

- **FBC, Beatrice**, Pastor Don Osborne
- **New Life Baptist**, Bellevue, Interim Pastor Dave Bender
- **Strangers Rest Baptist**, Bellevue, Pastor T.S. Gilliam

• **FBC, Blair**, Pastor Floyd Richardson

**Pray that these churches will be:**

- Surprised by new energy for ministry
- Filled with love
- Focused on telling the story

**Pray that these churches will discover:**

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

## TAKE FIVE . . .

*Suggestions for helping Sunday School teachers — show you appreciate them!*

1. Greet them with coffee and a smile when they arrive.
2. Volunteer to prepare and supervise a learning activity.
3. Volunteer to take an entire session!
4. Give them gift cards for the local book or art/crafts store.
5. Give the Sunday School a shower of supplies, books, and Bibles.

Watch for "TAKE FIVE" in future issues of *THE MESSENGER*. ABC/NE Christian Education Consultant Nola Oberhelman will offer suggestions to energize and enrich your Sunday School!

## Children in Poverty Initiative . . . . . National Ministries, American Baptist Churches USA

ABC's National Ministries is committing staff and resources to address the needs of children who live in poverty. Larry Adams, chair of ABC/NE's Mission Department said, "It's important that National Ministries is emphasizing ministry to children in poverty. Every church can get engaged locally and nationally in this home mission initiative."

National Ministries is highlighting the many ABC churches that already have ministries for such children. They would very much like the help of all churches in gathering information and stories!

If you or your church is engaged in ministry with children in poverty, such as a meal program, after-school tutoring or advocacy, please share the story with National Ministries. The quick way is via the web [www.nationalministries.org](http://www.nationalministries.org) and click on Children in Poverty. Or, you can send the information to: Rev. Curtis Ramsey-Lucas, Children in Poverty Initiative, ABC Office of Governmental Relations, 200 Maryland Ave., NE, Washington, DC 20002. Gifts to the America For Christ Offering will assist with this mission initiative.

## Dear Disciple,

In 2004, thousands of American Baptists responded to questions about the values and practices, hopes and dreams for our denomination as a part of a project entitled, "**Seek It: Finding God's Way for a New Day.**" That interview data resulted in a new mission statement for all American Baptists. One of the priorities identified in that mission statement is to become "radical disciples for Jesus Christ."

You are now invited to become a radical disciple by reflecting upon a daily devotional written by another American Baptist focusing on discipleship. The devotionals will be made available on the ABC website each week. [www.abc-usa.org](http://www.abc-usa.org) Each week will focus on a different theme that surfaced during one of the Seek It interviews.

Staff from American Baptist regions (incl. ABC/NE), national boards, agencies, and institutions have agreed to develop the weekly themes by writing daily devotionals to coincide with the weekly themes. Thus, this is a project written by American Baptists for American Baptists focusing on themes deemed to be important to American Baptists.

We invite your participation by logging onto this website each week and downloading the devotionals for that week. Devotionals from previous weeks will also be archived and may be accessed at the bottom of the web page as they become available. We hope that you enjoy and take advantage of this opportunity to become a radical disciple for Jesus Christ.

## Study ABC Black History in February



## Black History

February is Black History Month. For African-American churches this is easy but sometimes so easy that opportunities are missed. For ABC/NE European American churches and the Kachin church, sometimes Black History gets sidelined. American Baptists are the most diverse Protestant group in America. We are a "non-majority" denomination. No one racial/ethnic group has over 50% of the members of the denomination. This rich mix of cultures and experiences provides us with the opportunity to be a model for other denominations and the country as a whole. To be an effective model, we need to understand each other better. Perhaps this is the year to lift up African American ABC History in your church. Here's an idea:

This year, ask a Sunday School class of any age to become investigative reporters. Find out and report back to the church on the identity of William J. Simmons, and Lulu Fleming. Learn how many historically Black colleges were founded by the American Baptists. Investigative reporters may get tips from the region office [SGillies@abcnebraska.com](mailto:SGillies@abcnebraska.com) or toll-free 1-877-244-7339.

## V.O.W. Wrap-Up

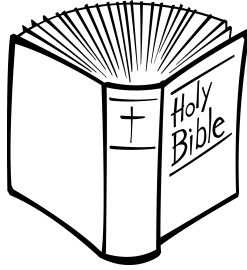
During 2005, quiet a few Nebraska Baptists got involved with VOW the V.O.W. It was a commitment to learn a *Verse of the Week* throughout the year. Most of us didn't quite make EVERY week. But many folks did well.

Congratulations to those of you who memorized verses at any time during the year.

The two persons who impressed us the most with their work on Vow the V.O.W. were **Georgean Kamrath Cordes** from Kearney and Central Region Executive Minister Fred Ansell.

**Mrs. Cordes turned 90 in 2005 and was the most faithful of all Nebraska Baptists at memorizing the verses, "Good exercise all week for my mind. I must keep 'young,'" she wrote.**

Dr. Ansell impressed us by memorizing the verses in Spanish as he seeks to become more proficient in the language.



## National ABMen's Day of Prayer

For 22 years, American Baptist Men's Ministries has sponsored an annual day of prayer for men and boys in American Baptist churches. The annual ABMen's Prayer Breakfast has become a national gathering. This year the date designated is Saturday, February 28, but many men's groups hold it at other times of the year.

The materials for the event state, "We have all experienced communion with God privately and know the power of prayer. When we pray together in groups, we taste God's presence in concert with each other."

The national theme of American Baptist Men's Ministries programming for 2006-07 is "**Back To Basics**," based on 2 Chronicles 7:14 (KJV).

In Nebraska, men in ABC churches host the breakfasts at different times. In Omaha, Sunset Hills men open their event to all Omahaland churches and invite women as well as men. This year the event will be Feb. 28. For more information, contact Sunset Hills, 402-391-0820.



### Old Timers Trivia (find the answers on page 8)

- Name of original dining hall at Camp Merrill – Fullerton?  
a. Sharp, b. Kraft, c. Pillsbury d. Judson
- Name of chapel at Camp Merrill – Fullerton  
a. Sharp, b. Kraft, c. Pillsbury d. Judson
- First lodging for campers at Linwood  
a. cabins, b. trailers, c. canvas topped wood frames, d. A-frames
- The Nebraska Baptist State Convention had a staff person who did what kind of work (included in his title)?  
a. Town & Country, b. Suburban & Rural, c. Church Construction Consulting, d. Grief Counselor.
- [A bonus for REAL old-timers] Which of these was the locale for state-wide youth gatherings before Nebraska had a camp?  
a. Chadron State College, b. the NE Methodist camp, c. Hastings College, d. FBC Kearney.

## Computer Help

ABC-USA has created a site designed to provide American Baptist churches and individuals with information about computers and related issues (PC and Mac). This site contains resources on helpful tips, free and discounted software, virus and security information, computer/hardware recycling, and discounted computer purchases for ABC churches. Please visit <http://pchelp.abc-usa.org/>

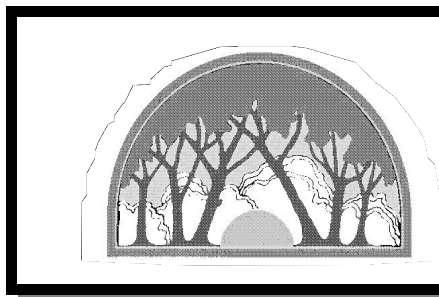
## MISSION UPDATE FROM THE CONGO ..... from Lynn and Virgil Nelson

The invasions of the DRC from the "east" were "officially ended" several years ago, but it is taking years to end the fighting. The UN presence is invaluable, and hopefully in the coming year, more of the population will be allowed to begin to consider re-establishing those aspects of their "former lives" that they can salvage.

"Entering" a new school, a new program, a new work-place, a new family, a new church, or a new culture: one feels both the anticipation of "new beginnings and possibilities" and unknowns, perhaps coupled with fears of failure, or of not belonging. When one "enters" into any activity: one participates and invests oneself.

Here in Kikongo, we celebrate:

- The "entrance" of over 400 patients a month into the hospital seeking healing.
- The "entrance" of 38 pastoral students and their wives into the classrooms daily: most eager to learn and grow.
- The "entrance" of 7000 germinated palm seeds into nurseries bringing nutritional and economic hope for farmer families, villages and churches.
- The "entrance" of over 200 teen and adult readers a month into the 5 small libraries, in search of wisdom, and a vision for their lives and country.
- The "entrance" of over 100 elementary school students into their nearly completed three new classrooms.
- The "entrance" of the UN supported multi-tribal team who "enrolled" over 3,000 of our area residents to vote in the upcoming local and national elections.



## Camp Moses Merrill News

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

Clarence Reiss, Director (402) 666-5639

E-mail: [campmerrill@nntc.net](mailto:campmerrill@nntc.net)

Website: [www.campmerrill.com](http://www.campmerrill.com)

## New Year—New Life

One of the great things about life at Camp Moses Merrill is that something is always happening! As 2006 dawned with crisp brightness, we knew that all kinds of things would be new this year.

The trees that are bare of leaves are sinking roots even deeper into the earth preparing for another summer season. They remind us that we all need to prepare for new things.

At camp everyone is busy preparing for the camping season. At one time the season meant June—July—August. NOW it means, March/April/May/June/July/August/September/October/November/December. As a matter of fact, if you'd like to come to camp in February, we'd love to have you! [Call first!]

So what's NEW?? This year we'll have a cargo net to climb and the frisbee golf course will be ready. For the adults, Calvary Lodge will be ready for use. There will be new opportunities for you, too. Just come to camp and you'll find them.

**WILL YOU HELP PREPARE?** You can help us from right where you are. Will you put Camp on your prayer list? Pray everyday or every week that God will use camp this year to change lives and grow disciples. THANKS!

—Your camp reporter

## Honor Roll of Volunteers for January 2006

Most folks don't think of working at camp in January. We honor these great folks who did: Paul Badje, Dennis Flannigan, Ron Hornberger, John Larrington, Alice Larrington, Rachel Pearson, Donna Pearson, Darlene Shrader, Floretta Ward.

## THANKS FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!

Everyone at camp and on region staff wants to extend deepest thanks to everyone who remembered the camping program, Building Bridges Campaign, and ABC/NE with financial gifts at year's end.

Without prayers, love, volunteer service and gifts of money this ministry couldn't happen!

**YOU ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE AND WE THANK YOU !!**

## JOBS OPEN AT CAMP . . . *now is the time to apply*

Camp Moses Merrill is now taking applications for paid summer positions and volunteer positions. Volunteers are also needed to help with program camps for children and youth.

**Paid staff positions** open include: wrangler, life guard, office assistant, cook's assistant/dining room host/hostess, and grounds assistant. Meals and housing are provided. Applicants must be at least 16 years of age. Summer staffers learn good work ethics and have the experience of living in a dorm style atmosphere.

**Summer program camp needs** include: cabin leaders, camp nurse, craft leaders. These assignments are for one week—Sunday to Friday. Volunteering to help is a great way to make a contribution to this ministry — and have a great experience at the same time!

We also need adult volunteers willing to help on one-day **Cabin Prep Crews**. These folks will clean cabins between camps on Saturdays in June and July.

For more information, call camp 402-666-5639.

## WOW! Look at this . . .



By early January, the roof was on! Calvary Lodge continues to take shape, thanks to the best construction workers around! Pray for their safety. Reservations are being accepted now to stay at the lodge beginning in mid-June.

*From the Area Minister ..... Dave Lundholm*

## An Opportunity for Laity to Take a Look at the Covenant and Code of Ethics for Ministerial Leaders of American Baptist Churches (part 8)

Affirmation 9 reads as follows:

*"I will, upon my resignation or retirement, sever my ministerial leadership relations with my former constituents, and will not make professional contacts in the field of another ministerial leader without his/her request and/or consent. "*

This affirmation tends to be very difficult for lay people to understand and for clergy to practice.

When a pastor resigns from a church, effective the date of the resignation, that person is no longer the pastor. The normal pastoral functions: hospital visitation, counseling, preaching, officiating at weddings and funerals are expected to cease. The reason for this is to give the church time to prepare for new leadership.

One of the binds in which pastors find themselves is when a former parishioner calls and requests that the former pastor officiate at a wedding or a funeral. An automatic answer of "no" feels uncaring and insensitive. An answer of "I'll do it if it's ok with the present pastor" places the serving pastor in a bind. The serving pastor really has to say yes whether they want to or not.

Well, what's the big deal? Why does it really matter who performs weddings and funerals? The significant events in the life of the church (weddings, funerals, baptisms etc.) provide an opportunity for the pastor and congregation to bond. When the pastor resigns, the bond between pastor and congregation should begin to weaken to make room for bonding with the new pastor. When a former pastor repeatedly returns, his bond to the congregation is strengthened and the congregation's bond to the new pastor never has an opportunity to form.

The best way to prevent this bind is for it to be understood that weddings and funerals are to be performed by the serving pastor. In the rare case when there are compelling reasons why a former pastor should serve in this way, the person desiring this should discuss the reasons with the serving pastor and then, if the serving pastor concurs, the serving pastor should be the one to invite the former pastor to officiate.

Another difficulty occurs when a pastor retires in the community where they have served but doesn't really retire from the church. The retired pastor continues to make the same style of hospital calls that they did when they were serving and provides the same level of spiritual counsel to those who they used to serve. A further difficulty can occur if the spouse of the retired pastor is unwilling to relinquish the role of "first lady" of the church. Either of these situations prevents the congregation from bonding with the new pastor and their family and in a very real way inhibits ministry. This is the reason for the general recommendation (not required by the covenant and code of ethics) that pastors retire to communities where they have not served.

Fortunately, in Nebraska, the majority of retired pastors are extremely sensitive to these issues and have successfully discovered and enjoy their new role as retired clergy.



## LOCAL CHURCH NEWS

by Darlene Rimpley

### March Deadlines

**February 3, 2006 - Print Copy**

**February 7, 2006 - E-Mail**

### Home Town Editor

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### E-Editor

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Subject: Messenger

**ALLIANCE FBC:** The ABY presented the annual Hanging of the Greens worship. Alyshia Benda, Brandon and Macenzie Heckman were baptized Dec 11. Christmas food boxes were delivered to 11 needy families. 13 braved the bitter cold to go caroling to 11 homes. Fruit baskets were given to each home. The Christmas Eve candlelight worship was attended by more than one hundred. The New Year's communion service was held in the chapel.

**ARNOLD FBC:** Christmas events: "Hanging the Greens", Sunday School program - "Not a Creature Was Stirring", Christmas Eve communion, Advent observance, Christmas

morning Sunday School and worship. Dedication and commissioning of church leaders was held on Jan 8, followed by a fellowship dinner. Ruth Circle held a "paper shower" for the church during January.

**BEATRICE FBC:** Christmas events: Advent Celebration, a caroling party, Christmas program - "'Twas the Night Before", Christmas Eve candlelight communion, and ringing bells for the Salvation Army. Seven persons were baptized on November 20, and these seven, along with four others baptized in 2005 and two baptized on Jan 8, were honored at a luncheon of soup and sandwiches, hosted by the Diaconate, on Jan 8.

**BRIDGEPORT FBC:** Christmas events included: Christmas Eve Candlelight Service with several musical specials. Christmas Day, our service was an hour early so that those traveling had a better start. The Boy and Girl Scouts are doing a "God and Country" program. We have started hauling in fill-dirt at our new location. The Men's Breakfast was held in Angora. We will be showing the movie "Gates of Splendor" as a movie and popcorn night. The Monument Singers from Scottsbluff will be coming for a concert. As it is time to re-do the Tables of Eight program, we will be trying an "adoptee" version. Those that can't host a meal, for whatever reason, will be "adopted" by a couple that will be participating in a group. That way

they will be able to become acquainted with new people and yet won't feel obligated in any way except to attend.

**BROKEN BOW FBC:** We are rejoicing —over 25 people have committed to read through the Bible this year using the One Year Bible outline! Highlights from the readings are being discussed each week at the Wednesday night Bible Study. The new Young Adult Bible Class has doubled in size in a month. The Crusaders Gospel Band started off the New Year's Eve celebration with a concert of southern gospel music. The concert was followed by a family night with games, refreshments and praying in the New Year. Jennifer Lowenstein and Shane Schukei were married Jan 1, 2006. Jennifer was received into membership Jan 8, 2006 along with Pastor Betty and Ron Johnson. The ABW hosted the Custer Association of Baptist Women on Jan 27, with installation of officers held.

**CHADRON FBC:** Christmas events: Observance of Advent, Christmas caroling followed by refreshments, ringing bells for the Salvation Army, and a Christmas Eve service.

**CHAPMAN FBC** Reverend Pat Moore resigned effective Dec 31. He has been with FBC for 4 1/2 years and has been an inspiration to many through his preaching and community service. He and his wife Julie will be greatly missed. Dec 5<sup>th</sup> a fireman's appreciation dinner was held to honor them and their wives. The choir took part in a Christmas program at the Merrick Co. Historical Museum. A few ventured out in the cold for Golden Rod Clubs afternoon of games and snacks. The Sunday School Christmas program was held and a farewell dinner was held to honor Rev Pat and Julie Moore.

**COLUMBUS FBC:** Christmas events: an ABW Christmas luncheon, the children's Christmas program, "Santa's Favorite Story", an undergarment Christmas tree, with items going to the Rescue Mission, Teen Moms, and Hospice, and Christmas Eve service. Camp Sunday was held on Jan 29.

**DECATUR RIVERSIDE:** The children and youth of Riverside Baptist Church had a lock-in on New Year's Eve, during which they planned the next day's worship service. Two of their fathers cooked a wonderful breakfast for the group on New Year's Day.

**FAIRBURY FBC:** Christmas events: A cookie sale, the annual Christmas program which was a "live" Nativity, Pennies for Jesus offering which went to a mission in South Dakota, a gingerbread house workshop and decorated cookie class for adults and children, Family Fun nights which included caroling and candy making, Christmas Eve service, a ham dinner following worship on Christmas Day. Frank and Helen Henderson celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on Dec 15. Frances Aasen was honored on her birthday by the Saturday Night Small Group paying her phone bill for a month because of her faithfulness in calling church members on their special days.

**FREMONT FBC:** Christmas events: a Christmas movie, "Christmas Child", White Gift Sunday

when they brought children's gifts to give to the Salvation Army, an ABW gathering, Day Care Christmas program, Children's Christmas program, Christmas cantata, "Heaven and Earth Rejoice", and a Christmas Eve service. Elaine Marten celebrated her 80th birthday on Dec 3, and Harlan and Nelda Waugh observed their 50th wedding anniversary on Jan 14, both at open houses. The video seminars, "Parenting and Discipline", by Dobson, began on Jan 11, and will continue for 12 weeks.

**GIBBON BC:** Christmas events: Hanging of the Greens, ABW put together goodie plates for the shut-ins, AWANA caroling party, "The Journey Through Christmas 2205 (in the church parking lot), and Christmas Eve service. Clyde and Marilyn Smith celebrated their 55th wedding anniversary on Dec 23. A new American flag was donated to the church. The ABW had a "Ladies Night Out" in Kearney on Jan 10.

**GUIDE ROCK FBC:** Wanda Langer was honored for her faithful playing of the church organ since 1954. A surprise supper was given for Wanda, and she was presented with a plaque. Special guests were her children from Superior and St. Stephens.

**GRAND ISLAND FBC:** Christmas events: Christmas cantata, Christmas Eve service. Gil and Virginia Emery celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary; Merle Crouch celebrated his 80th birthday.

**HOLDREGE FBC:** Christmas events: an ABW luncheon, goodie plates for the shut ins prepared and delivered, care packages prepared for the college students, gathered food items for the Food Pantry baskets, Sunday School "Old Fashioned Christmas" program, "Christmas at Red Rock Ridge" was presented by the SonShine Puppeteers of Arapahoe, Christmas Eve service at Thorell's barn, and a New Year's Eve prayer service. Thirty-two people from FBC and North Park Assembly attended the "Renovatus" retreat on Jan 1 & 2 at Aurora. Allen and Betty Johnson Celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Jan 14.

**JUNIATA COMMUNITY CHURCH:** Christmas events: a dinner for senior ladies and their guests with "Winter Candy Land" as the theme, Christmas caroling and distribution of cheer boxes, followed by a soup supper, Christmas Eve in the Barn service, New Year's celebration.

**LINCOLN FBC:** Christmas events: Mid/High Youth dinner and movie, "The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe", a cookie exchange, cantata "Agnus Dei - Lamb of God, Born to Us", Family Christmas Festival, children's Christmas program, Christmas Eve candlelight service, Unhanging of the Greens. Installation services were held for Rev. Harry Riggs on Dec 4, with Rev. Lee Spitzer, a former pastor, bringing the message.

**LAVISTA JUDSON:** Christmas events; a Christmas Fellowship Meal, decorating the church inside and out for the season, Christmas crafts. The AB Women visited shut-ins and elderly sharing tea and cookies and a reading of the book "A Cup of Christmas Tea." The children put on a Christmas Program entitled

"Wee Three Kings." Kids and adults went caroling. Participation in the Angel Tree Program again this year supplying gifts to children. The Bell Choir performed. A candlelight Christmas Eve Service was held.

**MCCOOK FBC:** Christmas events: ABW party and cookie exchange, a scavenger hunt for the Couples Group and others who wished to participate. The holidays were celebrated with a cantata, Christmas Eve service, and New Year's Eve party.

**NORFOLK FBC:** Christmas events: ABW prepared Christmas plates, which included a cross with the message of salvation on it made by the ABW, AWANA held a birthday party for Jesus, a Family Christmas Program, and a New Year's Eve Progressive Supper.

**OMAHA BENSON:** Christmas events: Advent observance, a musical, "A World of Christmas" by the chancel choir, Young Adults Christmas party, Senior Caring Ministry went to "Christmas In Our Hearts" at Grace University, the youth had a "Christmas Tree Farm hunt", Christmas Eve candlelight service. Florence Capps, 103 years of age and a church member since 1941, passed away on Dec 11.

**OMAHA, FBC:** Had two Christmas Eve services. Following Christmas Day service, members distributed baskets of cookies and fruit to the neighborhood. On Jan 9, we received 4 new members by baptism and 2 by letter. All area AB men are invited to attend the Men's Prayer Breakfast at 8:30 a.m. on the first Saturday of the month. The next meeting will be February 4.

**OMAHA MIRACLE HILLS:** 2005 ended with great praise as we welcomed 3 new members on Christmas Day. We are praying for an increase in ministry opportunities in 2006 - All for God's Glory.

**OMAHA PARKSIDE:** Parkside is praying for the churches that begin with "A", and their pastors, for "The ABC emphasis on Prayer."

**OMAHA SUNSET HILLS:** Christmas events: The ABW luncheons, with the Circles giving mittens, scarves, gloves, and caps for needy school children, and to Lydia House. The Sunday Night Live group had a Christmas party, and went to Kansas City, a Christmas Eve candlelight service, and Christmas morning fellowship before the worship service.

**OXFORD FBC:** Christmas activities: an all-church soup supper with decorating the church for the Christmas season; participation in the Christmas "Shoe Box" project. Fifty-five to sixty boxes were sent to Arlene Rice's Orphanage and to the "Good Samaritan's Purse". We hosted a community Christmas caroling and pork supper; participated in the community Christmas Cantata; held our church Christmas program, worship on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day were both well attended. On February 4, 2006, the ladies of the church are sponsoring a Ladies Day open to the surrounding communities. Author Stephanie Grace Whitson will be the guest speaker and will use quilts to share in two sessions, God's

redemption – past, present, and future; and God's pattern book - the importance of consulting the Bible. Join us for this special day!

**SCOTTSBLUFF FBC:** Christmas events: Christmas caroling, a Living Nativity celebration, a display of nativity sets at the church which was included on the community Christmas Home tour, collection of clothes for the Mission, gathered canned goods for the Jeremiah House, the cantata, "Jesus Our Emanuel", All-church Christmas Party following worship which included a sing-along and dinner, Christmas Eve service, New Year's Eve service. A "Week of Prayer" was held Jan 15-21. Pastor Jim attended a class at the North American Baptist Seminary Jan 17-20. The children have started the "Adopt a Grandparent" program, and will be visiting the local rest homes.

**TECUMSEH FBC:** Christmas events: a parsonage open house, Sunday School

Christmas program, caroling followed by snacks, AWANA collected paper goods for the Action center pantry, Sparks sang at Belle Terrace, Christmas Eve service, New Year's Eve party. Paper items to supply the church needs are being collected.

**NEW MEMBERS:**

**ALLIANCE FBC:** Brandon Heckman, Macenzie Heckman  
**BELLEVUE, STRANGER'S REST:** Anthony Hampton, Eric Long  
**BROKEN BOW FBC:** Jennifer Lowenstein, Ron and Betty Johnson  
**FREMONT FBC:** Mary Ann Schuetze, Bonnie Longe, Kathy Tickly, Marie Placzek.  
**OMAHA BENSON:** Linda Stark  
**OMAHA FBC:** Steven Dickey, Catherine Hall, Hal Johnson, Cynthia Marshall, Barb Skala, Jeremy Stober  
**PARKSIDE BC:** Jim and Pat Galloway

**ABC of Nebraska Staff**

Executive Minister ..... Susan Gillies  
Area Minister ..... Dave Lundholm  
Minister of Mission Support ..... Steve Bils  
Director of Camps & Conferences ..... Clarence Reiss  
Camp Staff..... Jerry Buss, Elizabeth Dietrich, Lou Grotelueschen, Joe Huss, Beverly Pacas, Trudy Reiss, Adam Robley, Linda Wilmot  
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

**OLD-TIMERS' TRIVIA ANSWERS**

(see page 4 for the Trivia Quiz)

- 1. d. Judson Hall
- 2. a. Sharp Chapel
- 3. c. Canvas topped wood frames
- 4. a. Director of Town & Country
- 5. c. Hastings College

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