

the MESSENGER

American Baptist Churches of Nebraska



August 2006

ABC/NE Date Data

Aug 3 - Nebraska Baptist Foundation Meeting, Camp Merrill.

Aug 5 - Camp Department, Camp Merrill.

Aug 7-9 Clergy Ethics Conference, Camp Merrill.

Aug 11-12 Men's Conference, Camp Merrill.

Aug. 19 Missions and Evangelism Departments, ABC/NE Board, Grand Island.

Aug 21 - Professional Ministry Department, Grand Island.

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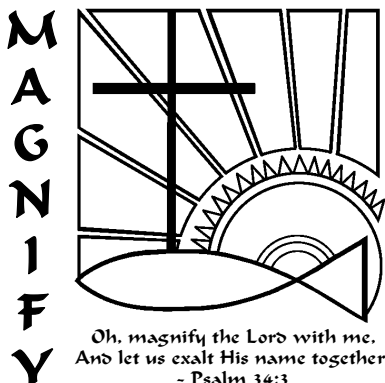
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Join the Celebration! ABC/NE Family Reunion September 15-17, 2006

Baptists from across Nebraska are making plans now to join the annual Family Reunion. This year's convention will be held at the Holiday Inn in downtown Lincoln, Sept 15-17. Access to the Holiday Inn is easy. Information will be available for those unfamiliar with Lincoln.



Oh, magnify the Lord with me.
 And let us exalt His name together.
 - Psalm 34:3

The keynote speaker is Dr. Reid Trulson of ABC's International Ministries. Trulson is Area Director for Europe and the Middle East. He is a native of Minnesota, received his M.Div. and D.Min. degrees from Fuller Seminary in Calif. He pastored in California and Wisconsin. He now serves from an office in Valley Forge and from an extension office in Prague, Czech Republic.

Other special features of the Family Reunion include the convention choir, open to all who wish to participate, ministry partner reports, a great line-up of equipping sessions, a grand worship time on Sunday morning at First Baptist of Lincoln, and some special surprises!

Registration materials are on the way to local churches. Additional information is available in the insert in this issue of The Messenger.

Men's Conference - Don't Miss This One!

Men's Conference at Camp Merrill August 11-12 is for all ABC/NE men and their friends. This year's program is outstanding, featuring Rev. Kip Mickelson, Omaha First, and Rev. Dr. Harry Riggs, Lincoln First. Both men are in demand nationally for their gifted leadership.



In addition to being a wonderful speaker, Kip Mickelson is a gifted musical composer and performer. He has led music and worship at national ABC conferences.

Harry Riggs is the denomination's expert on church vitality. Prior to coming to Nebraska, he worked for National Ministries traveling the country working with regions and local churches. He is a dynamic speaker.



Both men share the joy of life in Christ. "This conference is an extraordinary opportunity for Nebraska men," stated Area Minister Dave Lundholm.

IT'S NOT TOO LATE. Registrations are still being accepted for Men's Conference. For information concerning registration please call the Region Office.

From the Executive Minister *Susan Gillies*

Finding Abundance

It may seem a bit "Pollyanna" to suggest that having abundance in your life depends on the way you look at your life. But it's true.

This is a great time to be in ministry in Nebraska.

It's easy to be thankful for the abundant gifts of God when everything is going well. The day of the Calvary Lodge dedication is an example. The crew at Camp Merrill set up 100 chairs for the dedication service. Later, when I talked with Camp Director Clarence Reiss, I found out he had thought 80 chairs would be enough. I had hoped we might have to set up a few more. I thought that on a hot holiday weekend afternoon, a good turnout would be 120. We were wonderfully wrong! The final count was 259! Amazing!

It is truly awesome that we are all part of something God is doing through us at Camp Merrill. Nebraska Baptists are in the middle of an "abundant gifts" demonstration! Please thank God every chance you get for the blessings and opportunities at Camp Merrill. Now our challenge is to put the facilities to good use.

We also see abundance in the response to The Good Soil Project. This is a process that gives churches the tools to prepare for and receive renewal.

We all can celebrate abundance when we see our children and youth reaching out to the "lost, the lonely, and the locked out." When young people capture a true mission vision, it's healthy for the whole church and for God's work in the world.

But the picture of region ministry could be drawn differently.

I could describe accurately and in detail the fact that Camp Merrill can't make its budget. I could describe that in 2005, ABC/NE ended the year with a deficit for the first time in my tenure. I could describe the ways the staff of ABC/NE and Camp Merrill are exhausted from overwork. I could describe churches that are stuck, caught up in disagreements or frustrations. I could describe a church that uses its baptistry as a storeroom. [I'd like to see them clean it out and fill it with water in expectation.]

Should I panic?

No! Read Psalm 77. The first part of the psalm is full of despair. But at verse 11, the psalmist gets ahold of himself and essentially says, "Wait a minute! What's the matter with me? I need to look at the BIG picture. I need to PRAY." [The verse actually reads: "I will call to mind the deeds of the Lord; I will remember . . . I will meditate on all your work."] The psalm finishes with a tribute to the power and majesty of God. It tells about God being at work even when you can't see his footprints.

This IS a time of abundance!

The Baptists in Nebraska are blessed with abundance. We have great ministry opportunities [local church renewal, Camp Merrill, Sturgis, Churches Helping Churches, etc]. We have great people to work with [just look around and see them with God's eyes]. We believe in celebrating God's gifts of abundance [family reunion, camp dedications, church anniversaries, etc]. We are willing to work and enjoy this ministry . . . and trust God to guide the way.

This is a great time to be in ministry in Nebraska.



From the Minister of Mission Support *Steve Bills*

A Day in the Life of a Sturgis Emergency Services Center Staffer

This will be the sixth year of the ABC Emergency Services Center at the Motorcycle Rally in the Black Hills. Every year many of our volunteers come from ABC churches in Nebraska and every year a number of potential volunteers talk to me about what it would be like for them if they were to come up to help. I can't really say what kind of experiences you would have if you signed on as a staff volunteer, but I thought it would be helpful to those teetering on the brink to know what a typical midweek day might look like. This is a compilation of "A Day in the Life of the ABC-ESC."

We are awakened by the smell of fresh coffee and frying bacon in the kitchen as members of our host church continue their custom of preparing us breakfast each morning. Some of our colleagues have been up much of the night providing transportation to several women whose husbands or boyfriends left them stranded when they were arrested for driving while intoxicated. They sleep through breakfast. While we eat, Pastor Pat McBride and I provide the staff that has gathered with a briefing of the day's special projects. Shortly after finishing the breakfast dishes the first call of the morning comes in. The charge nurse in the Deadwood Hospital ER is looking for someone to provide transportation back to one of the big campgrounds for a couple who went down on their bike last night. They spent the night getting bandaged up and are now

being released.

Two volunteers, a man and a woman (as is our custom), take one of the minivans provided by a local car dealer to pick them up. They also take one of the cell phones (also donated by a local business) and a set of Mapquest maps generated by our dispatcher. When they get to the hospital they are introduced to the couple and learn that they would like to stop by the impound lot to meet the insurance adjustor and to look over their bike. No problem. We do this so often we don't even need to stop back by the church for another map. The couple is not hurt too badly and is genuinely interested in knowing why our two volunteers are willing to take one of their vacation weeks to come to the Rally to do what they do. An interesting conversation focused on spiritual things dominates the ride to meet the insurance man.

Back at the church a group of volunteers who are on the schedule for the afternoon have decided to use some of their free time to drive down to see Mount Rushmore. Another group is heading into Sturgis to see if they can score some tee shirts for their grandchildren. Just before lunch another call comes in, this time from a man looking for help finding an electrical part for his out-of-production Excelsior-Henderson. One of our

(Continued on page 4)

There's a Fall Retreat Just for You

Women's Spiritual Retreat

Camp Moses Merrill
Sept. 29—Oct 1

A spiritual retreat planned for women who would like a time of spiritual nourishment, rest and reflection.

Leaders: Edna Pincham, Susan Gillies and Cheryl Dudley.

Contact: ABC/NE 877-244-7339 (in Omaha 556-4730)

Northwest Women's Retreat

Camp Rock
October 13-15

An annual gathering of Northwest Association women (and others). Featuring a "spa special" and a Friday night "tea party" - bring your favorite tea cup! For more info, contact Shirley at 308-632-7518



Pastors' Seminar

Camp Moses Merrill
Oct. 23-25

Pastors will learn strategies for personal and congregational financial planning.

Leader: Glenn Miller, Paul Weers

Contact: ABC/NE 877-244-7339 (in Omaha 556-4730)

Small Church Conference

Camp Moses Merrill
Nov. 6-8

Pastors & lay leaders are invited to explore ways to enrich the ministry of small churches. This conference has a long history. It originally met each year at Central Seminary. Camp Merrill is the location this year.

Leader: Dr. Tony Pappas

Contact: ABC/NE 877-244-7339 (in Omaha 556-4730)

Adult Ministries Conference

Camp Moses Merrill
Oct. 2-5

A wonderful opportunity for older adults to enjoy fellowship, Bible study, mission stories, hiking, sitting, wagon rides, etc.

Leaders: Victoria Goff, director of Volunteers In Mission

Contact: ABC/NE 877-244-7339 (in Omaha 556-4730)

Personal & Family Retreats

Camp Moses Merrill
Anytime

Fall is a lovely time to spend a day or two in personal or family reflection. Camp Merrill will provide you with a retreat book to guide you in your retreat. Or, design your own time.

Contact: ABC/NE 877-244-7339 (in Omaha 556-4730)

What is "White Cross"?

Many American Baptist churches have "White Cross Sundays" when the congregation dedicates school supplies, recreation materials, clothing, etc. and ships them off to a mission location. But many folks aren't really sure what's behind it all. And some churches aren't involved at all. What is "White Cross"?

For many years, American Baptist "helping hands" have been reaching out to people in need. During World War I, many church women assisted the American Red Cross by providing surgical dressings, bandages, and other medical supplies for U.S. service personnel. In 1919, following the end of the war, two American Baptist women from Cleveland, Ohio organized the "White Cross Service League," channeling the war effort into support for Baptist mission.

White Cross has been embraced by local churches throughout the US. Congregations are eager to fill specific requests from mission workers. Through White Cross gifts, church members provide urgently-needed supplies that cannot be purchased with limited mission budgets.

Through the years, American Baptist women have given leadership in this ministry, which now provides some \$800,000 annually in mission support. And entire congregations often work together to fill White Cross requests. Churches can give money or ask for a list of needed items and purchase them. Some churches have expert "shoppers" who are skilled at seeking out bargains. Filling a White Cross request can give the shoppers a good time for a good cause.

The importance of White Cross is undiminished today, and the need for both funds and practical items is greater than ever. American Baptists are generous and caring people with a true heart for mission. White Cross needs your helping hands! If your church has an AB Women's Ministries group, contact them for information on how you can help. Otherwise, contact Steve Bills at the Region Office

TRIVIA — ISSUES!

CORRECTION: In the last *Messenger*, a trivia answer indicated there were no peacocks at Camp Merrill. Not three weeks later, a peacock turned up at camp. Now, if the donor was a frustrated trivia player, we think your response was a bit extreme!

CHALLENGE: In an earlier Trivia, the *Messenger* claimed that Arthur was the ABC/NE church with the most members who could brand a calf. It is our understanding that North Platte would like to challenge that assumption. We are not sure how to prove this. Perhaps we could have a branding competition but *The Messenger* doesn't like the smell of branding. Perhaps the churches could simply count the number of persons who claim to know how to brand. We can then compare the numbers.

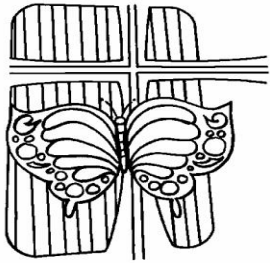
AUGUST TRIVIA (Answers on p.4)

- Of these choices, which ABC/NE church is located nearest the site of the original Moses Merrill mission in Nebraska?
 - Union, b. Judson, c. Greater St. John, d. Strangers Rest
- Which ABC/NE church is divided into two congregations that worship in separate buildings?
 - Benson, b. McCook, c. Albion, d. Chadron
- What new promotional item was given to persons at the Calvary Lodge dedication?
 - picture post card, b. t-shirt, c. color brochure, d. key chain
- Which of the following ABC/NE pastors is not a fisherman?
 - Charlie Gregory, Grand Island; b. Kevin Walden, Miracle Hills; c. Jason Workman, Benson.
- What do local churches pay ABC/NE for staffing a new pastor search?
 - Over \$3,000, b. \$2,000, c. \$500, d. Less than \$100.

August PRAYER:

a part of the ABC/NE 2006 Prayer Emphasis

Join Baptists across Nebraska in prayer in August for:



- FBC, Norfolk, Interim Pastor Frank Gillette
- FBC, North Platte Pastor Tom Wiles
- Benson, Omaha, Pastors Paul Marine and Jason Workman
- FBC, Omaha, Pastor Kip Mickelson

Pray that these churches will be:

- Blessed with joy.
- Renewed in spiritual disciplines.
- Re-committed to mission in their communities.

Pray that these churches will discover:

- A peace that passes understanding.
- Newly energized volunteers.
- Clarity about their mission vision!

TRIVIA ANSWERS (Questions p.3)

1. d. Strangers Rest. The Moses Merrill mission was south of present day Bellevue. Three ABC/NE congregations worship in Bellevue: New Life, Koinonia House of Worship, and Strangers Rest.
2. FBC of Chadron worships in the main church building and a second congregation worships at Kenwood Chapel on the other side of town.
3. a. post card There are four new color post cards of Camp Merrill.
4. C.
5. d. While some regions are passing costs along to local churches, ABC/NE does not. The costs associated with a search are paid for from region-wide income from United Mission and America For Christ giving, as well as direct gifts to ABC/NE.

Pontius' Puddle



Continued from page 2

Bils: A Day in the Life of a Sturgis Emergency Services Center Staffer

volunteers goes online and finds an E-H Owners group and tries one of the telephone numbers listed for the president. He reaches him -- only to learn that he is in Sturgis, at the same campground as our caller, and has just the spare part needed in his trailer. Within 45 minutes of his call for help, the man rides up to the church on his newly-repaired E-H to thank us.

Two more pairs are sent out in response to calls for help. The first is from the South Dakota Highway Patrol looking for a chaplain to come the ER in Rapid City to comfort the family of a young woman who was fatally injured when she lost control of her bike and missed a curve. This is not the kind of call many feel comfortable taking so two of our pastors take this one. They won't be back until late tonight. The second call is from the owner of a campground near Custer. He thinks a man who is camping there has the flu and is too weak to ride his bike safely into town to the walk-in clinic. He wants to know if we can give him a ride. This will take about three hours but the man with the flu attends a Baptist church back home and is intrigued by what we are doing. He wants to come back next year and help us.

Throughout the afternoon several people stop by the church, drawn by the large banners announcing the location of the **ABC Emergency Services Center – Open 24 Hours** or by the address printed on one of the posters or tracts available throughout the area. Some come by to make a free long-distance telephone call or to get a drink and find out more about

who we are and whether we can give them gas money for their trip home (we can't).

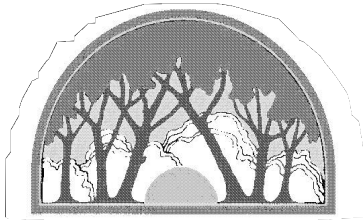
About this time stomachs are growling and a discussion about dinner leads to an executive decision in favor of jambalaya with smoked sausage. A couple of volunteers walk next door to get the necessary ingredients and return to prepare a fine meal that tends to be eaten in shifts as folks filter back to the church. Those who were on duty during the day walk to downtown Deadwood to search for souvenirs, ogle motorcycles, and rummage through the antiques shops. The evening staff waits by the telephone for the next call.

Throughout the evening and night four more calls will result in teams being dispatched to provide comfort and transportation to individuals and couples in need. Additionally, a sheriff's deputy will stop by with a young mother and her infant daughter stranded when her boyfriend is picked up on an out-of-state warrant. Within an hour the young woman has her first warm meal in three days (jambalaya) and is on her way to the woman's shelter in Spearfish. Tomorrow we will go back for her and take her into Rapid City to catch a bus home.

And then comes the smell of fresh coffee and bacon . . .

If you'd like to help this year, visit www.SturgisAid.com for details or call me at (402) 578-9995.





Camp Moses Merrill News

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

Clarence Reiss, Director (402) 666-5639

E-mail: campmerrill@nntc.net

Website: www.campmerrill.com

Ward Conference Center & Calvary Lodge "OPEN FOR BUSINESS"

Amazing new facilities are available at Camp Moses Merrill for:

- Church Retreats
- Leadership Training Events
- Reunions
- Family Retreats
- Personal Retreats
- Training events for businesses
- Meetings of non-profit groups
- Weddings

The **Ward Conference Center** provides a reception/registration area, serving kitchen, a spacious meeting room (The Fullerton Room) with A/V equipment and beautiful Calvary Lodge. The Lodge has 11 motel-type rooms. The Center is connected to Friendship Chapel. Both the chapel and the meeting room are equipped with keyboards and video projection equipment.

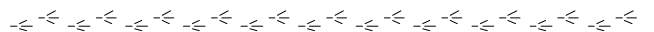
Call Camp Merrill to find out more about how to hold an event. 402-666-5639

Ask Your Campers for Reports

Ask the children and youth in your church who attended camp at Camp Merrill this summer to make reports. They could report to the whole congregation in worship, at a church dinner or gathering, to adult Sunday School classes or to men's or women's groups. Vary the style of the reports from year to year. One approach is to have an adult or youth interview the campers. Let the campers know ahead of time that you will be asking them to describe two things 1. a worship or learning experience (could be a campfire, a service in the chapel, etc.) 2. an outdoor experience (horseback riding, swimming, a new game or activity, etc.)

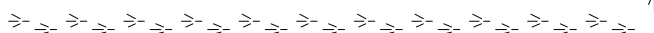
Another approach is to stage a little play. Have two campers tell someone who didn't go to camp what it was like. Have them begin with the fun and silly stuff. The person who didn't attend camp says that it sounds like fun. Then the campers say "it was fun but it was more than that. It

really means something. We can make a difference in the world. At camp we started learning how. The better we know Jesus, the more difference we can make." (And they can add something about worship or learning at camp.)



END OF SUMMER FLING!

Plan on wrapping up the summer at Family Camp on Labor Day Weekend (Sept 1-4). Stay in RVs, tents, Lodge rooms, cabins. Arrange ahead with camp for whichever meals you want. The schedule will be relaxed & enjoyable — wagon rides, campfires, storytelling, disc golf, cargo net. Do as much or as little as you wish. The ABC/NE and Camp Staff will provide leadership.



Thanks . . .

Recently folks have given gifts as memorials, in honor of anniversaries and in response to specific needs. We've received a clothes washer and dryer, and all kinds of other good things. We've also received gifts of money — which help keep the camp operating! Thanks to Darlene Shrader, Heidi Hasselback, Charles & Mary Davison, Lou Grotelueschen, Sunset Hills Baptist Church, the Ray Petersens, the Les Rays, Elvera Walker, James Ray, and FBC, Holdrege.

***** NEEDS:** fall tree trimming crews, flower transplanting crews, building power washing crews, and funds for a freezer for Weaver Hall.

From the Area Minister Dave Lundholm

The Good Soil Project . . . An Invitation to Church Renewal

Over the last few weeks we have had two very successful informational meetings explaining the Good Soil project. On June 17th, people from ten churches gathered in Grand Island to learn about the project. On July 8th, an additional three Panhandle churches came together in Alliance for a similar purpose.

The Good Soil Project builds on the learnings from the Small Church Renewal Project (a national project in which Bridgeport participated about five years ago), and Tomorrow's Harvest (a tri-Region renewal project that involved four ABC/NE churches.)

Representatives from participating churches will gather three times a year for two years. Each gathering will begin and close with worship. Churches will share their experiences and progress. Participants will pray for renewal. And churches will learn about the process of renewal by listening to presentations and studying the renewal literature. Between gatherings, churches will engage in "homework," that will lead to "renewal readiness."

Early in the process, training will focus on personal spiritual practices. Later, the focus will be on the progressive steps leading a church through renewal.

The Good Soil Project is funded jointly by a grant from ABC's National Ministries and by ABC-Nebraska. To qualify, churches must have to have an average Sunday attendance of less than 150; an annual income of less than \$250,000; and be located in a community of less than 50,000.

The first meetings will be in Alliance on October 21st and in Grand Island on October 28th. The deadline for signing on to the project is September 17th (the last day of the Family Reunion).



LOCAL CHURCH NEWS

by Darlene Rimpley

September Deadlines

August 7, 2006 - Print Copy

August 10, 2006 - E-Mail

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Darlene RIMPLEY

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E-Editor

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Subject: Messenger

ALLIANCE FBC: The ABY held its last meeting of the season on May 7 with a bowling party. On Mother's Day all the ladies of the church were presented with a carnation as part of the worship service. Graduates from grade eighth and high school were recognized and presented a card and a gift of money.

ARNOLD FBC: A Community VBS was held June 5-9, with the theme "Fiesta", and the special offering going to the local food pantry. FBC held its annual family campout at a local farm July 13-15, which involved black powder shooting, fishing, and, horseback riding, among other activities. The band, "Elevate" gave a concert at morning worship on July 2. The church had a float in the 4th of July parade. Ruth Strasburg celebrated her 97th birthday on June 28, and Ester Pearson her 100th on July 31. The pre-school through first grade Sunday School students did odd jobs (picking up sticks in yards and painting a gas tank, etc.) to earn money to go towards their classroom in the new church. Sunday School Promotion was held on August 27, and Bibles were presented to students entering the third grade.

BEATRICE FBC: The Caring and Sharing Bible Study Class did some heavy cleaning in the pre-K and nursery rooms. Pastor Dan Osborn and a group of the youth attended the Cornerstone Festival July 3-9.

CHAPMAN FBC: Stanley Oberhelman, Richard Ogden and Sterling Caulkins installed new

church signs along Hwy 30. This was a joint project between the Baptist and Methodist church women. Day camp was held for 6 consecutive Tuesdays for school age children. Many thanks to Nola Oberhelman and all who helped. The kids had a great time and enjoyed a hot dog cook out on the final day. ABW participated in a town-wide garage sale. Interim pastor Richard Henderson is holding Bible study classes, studying the book of Genesis. Patriotic services was held on July 2. Cookies, cake, coffee and refreshments was held in the basement after the services. The Golden Rod club has put the monthly game day on hold for the summer.

CHADRON FBC: Items for the two local food pantries were collected during the month of June. The Chadron churches take turns by the month with the project. A VBS for grown-ups, "Let's Celebrate...", was held July 16-20, beginning with a 6:30 pm meal.

COLUMBUS FBC: VBS was held June 12-16, beginning with a supper and followed by lessons, crafts, etc. The offering went to "The House of Deborah" at Tijuana, Mexico, a home for battered women. The annual church picnic was held June 25. The churchwomen held a "Beach Party Sleepover 'Retreat'" on June 30. FBC hosted the York Association ABW picnic on July 22. A Mother/Daughter Brunch was held on July 15, with the theme "God Bless America." FBC delivered Meals on Wheels July 24-28.

FAIRBURY FBC: A group of 22 youth and sponsors helped with a Habitat for Humanity home on the Rosebud Reservation at Mission, SD July 14 - 17. A new roof was put on the education wing of the building and new shingles on the sanctuary. VBS begins on July 31 and will run through Aug. 4 with the theme "Interstate - 4 One Another", with afternoon sessions. Wayne and Joan Johnson celebrated their 52nd wedding anniversary June 1.

FREMONT FBC: The *Young at Heart* group went to Branson, MO June 20-23. The AB Girls served a dinner to the church to raise funds for their way to Green Lake for AB Girls Camp. An antique car display was held on the church parking lot on Father's Day. Rev. John and Mary Dennert celebrated their 50th anniversary on June 24, and Rev. Dick and Bev Holmen celebrated their 50th anniversary on July 2, both at open houses at the church. The youth painted the baptistry and did yard and bus work. VBS was held July 23-27. Fifteen men attended Promise Keepers in Des Moines July 7-8. A bake sale and hot dog stand was held during John. C. Fremont Days, with the profits going to benefit projects of the church. Eric Purcell, Bryant Frazee, and Lee Holzerland are spending Aug 1 - 22 in Thailand on a mission trip.

GIBBON BC: VBS, with the theme "Fiesta", was held on the summer Sundays during the Sunday School hour. FBC took part in the clothing drive for Campassion Ministries in

Kearney. The church served free ice cream cones and cups of cold water during and after the July 4th parade. Sunday School Promotion was held on June 4. Max and Carla Middleswart donated a new American flag for the memorial flagpole in memory of those who have, are, or will serve our country.



GRAND ISLAND FBC: The FBC women provided the centerpieces for the Salvation Army during the month of June. Sew-Ins continue every Tuesday morning. In July, Pastor Charlie led his annual fishing retreat to Canada.

HASTINGS FBC: Rev. Tim and Chae Semotan resigned as FBC's pastoral family effective July 31. Rev. Semotan will return to school at the University of Arkansas, focusing on his PhD in freedom of religion and constitutionality, and earning his JD degree.

HOLDREGE FBC: Beth Bloom celebrated her 90th birthday on June 11. Pastor Appreciation Sunday was held on June 25, with a potluck dinner, thanking Rev. Gary Winget and family for their five years of service. Camp Joy VBS is being held July 31-Aug 1, with the theme "Trading Places." The Youth Mission Trip to Mexico was June 16-24, and a "Fiesta Family Night" was held on July 16 (authentic Mexican tortillas and a piñata) to inform the church family of their mission trip. A youth group camp-out was held the night of June 28. The Mary Jane Circle hosted the Juniata ABWM for a program and noon luncheon on June 6.

JUNIATA CC: Sunday school was held outside on June 11 as the people marched around the outskirts of Juniata, singing and praying. The JCC ladies went to Holdrege to give the program, and then be luncheon guests, of the ABW on July 6.

LAVISTA JUDSON: Judson participated in the La Vista Day Prayer Walk, and during La Vista Days held an all church picnic/festival/fund raiser with the proceeds going toward church expansion. The picnic also kicked off a three-week program led by Pastor Williamson, entitled "Do you Really Want to Follow Jesus?" Members of the Christian Motorcyclists Association (*Route 66*) provided music for the "kick-off". Over 100 pairs of eyeglasses were collected and given to the Lions Club. Engraved bricks have been sold in memory or honor of loved ones that will be set in one wall in our new church. We had four members of one family baptized one Sunday. Three more individuals have come forward seeking baptism. The older youth (J.O.Y. Club) visited Camp Merrill, viewed the new Calvary Lodge, took a hayrack ride around the camp, and had lunch. They also had an in-church scavenger hunt, and at the following meeting were entertained by the Singing Senior Citizens. The ABW group visited Restored Hope - a place for single mothers and their children. Items were collected to be sent to the Philippines to help the people affected by

the horrendous mudslides. School Supply Kits are being assembled for Church World Services-Gift of the Heart Kids. The Sunday School youth are rehearsing and will put on a musical called "Journey of Praise." VBS will be July 30 through Aug 3 with the theme "Treasure Cove - Discover the Riches of Christ!"

LINCOLN FBC: A B.L.O.C.K. (Building Links of Christian Kindness) Party was held on June 17, where neighborhood children and their families came together for a great time. The Youth helped with "Celebrate Lincoln Festival" on June 9, went to Worlds of Fun on June 24, and took part in the Area VIII Hand Bell Conference of students on June 28-July 2, and will have a Sturgis Mission Trip Aug 4-8. A Commissioning Service, followed by a carry-in dinner, was held for Glen and Rebecca Parks who left on July 6 for a mission in India. They were accompanied by Chris Robinson, who went to help and returned to FBC on July 23 to relate the story of the trip and the Parks' new home. Five Quest Communities have been formed to study areas and projects of the church.

MCCOOK FBC: The ABW held their annual picnic on June 6, and an ice cream social at Hillcrest Nursing Home on June 22. Pastor Stan and Evelyn Upchurch celebrated their 50th anniversary on June 26. The youth did their annual project of cleaning headstones. The choir presented a patriotic cantata on July 2, followed by a church picnic in the yard, with the ABMen fixing the meat.

NORFOLK FBC: Rev. Frank Gillette and his wife, Delores, of Sioux City, Iowa have accepted the call to be our interim pastor, and they were honored at a greeting dinner on July 9. The ABW served at the Norfolk Mission on July 27. Operation Christmas Child has begun.

NORTH PLATTE FBC: The 13 member mission team has returned from Washington D.C. where they provided 5 days of VBS for children ages 5-11, morning programs for middle school and some of the men worked with the older youth who were going to work at the center. Afternoon programs included music, information about Nebraska, going to the zoo and assisting with some one-on-one work in math and reading. It was a rewarding experience for all involved.

OMAHA BENSON BC: The annual church picnic was held on June 4, which was also the 100th anniversary of Benson. Wedding photos of all those who were married at Benson are being sought for a display. The ABW held a salad luncheon on June 17, Tara Rye presented a program, Clay Pots to Garden Spots. The Sudanese women of the church told of their life in Sudan and their joy at being in America. Pastor Paul, Jon Mayo, Daniel Gatkuoth, and Yat Kueth spent July 5 - 22 in Nasir, Sudan, on a mission trip. Several youth spent part of June on a Gulfport mission trip.

OMAHA FBC: We received 7 new members, either by baptism or transfer of church letter, into our fellowship in June. On July 9th, FBC hosted an ABW/ABM Omahaland "Musical Extravaganza". Thirteen area churches provided musical talent to nearly 200 who came to enjoy a night of music. On July 16, a Free

Carnival was held in the church parking lot to help "kick off" our week of VBS. Children from the area were invited to come to this fun event that has become an annual tradition at FBC. Our VBS was held July 17-21 for children in the neighborhood. This year's theme was, "Treasure Island". Six senior high age young people attended camp at Camp Moses Merrill on July 23-29.



OMAHA PARKSIDE: Surplus garden products are being shared on the "Bounty Table."

OMAHA, SUNSET HILLS: The Rev. Ron French began his Sunset Hills ministry June 1. The French family (Ron French, his wife, Donna, and daughters, Kristen and Brittany) is hosting several dinners in its home to get to know the congregation better. Rev. French's adult class during Vacation Bible School was so well received, it was continued as a weekly Bible study. The worship team, praise band and Forgiveness are rotating in leading congregational music on Sunday mornings. The youth are meeting on Wednesday evenings during the summer. Music and Drama campers stayed overnight at Sunset Hills and presented their program July 1 to a crowd of about 175. Lea Howe and Ryan Heller were married July 8. Creath Karlen and Forgiveness were among the performers at A Musical Extravaganza, an Omahaland ABW event July 9 at FBC - Omaha. Forgiveness will provide music at the men's conference Aug. 11-12 at Camp Moses Merrill.

SCOTTSBLUFF FBC: The annual church talent show was held on June 4. During the Children's Church time on June 11 (Children's Day) the kids did their "Make Your Own Sundae" thing. Melvin and Betty Kanzler celebrated their 50th anniversary on June 3 at an open house at the church. FBC is a stopping point for those traveling to the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally. SONrise Ministries, a gospel duet, presented a concert on July 13. VBS is being held July 31-Aug 4. Operation Christmas Child has begun.

TEKAMAH FBC: Food Pantry Sunday was July 23. Cook Out in the Park was held on July 1

TECUMSEH FBC: A church picnic was held on June 4, followed by a swimming party. VBS was held July 16 - July 20. The "Homestead Harmonizers" presented a concert on Sunday Morning, July 23, which was followed by a potluck dinner.


NEW MEMBERS:
FREMONT FBC: Ruby Mittura
LINCOLN FBC: David Johnson, Val and Connie Sauer
OMAHA Benson: Betty Walsh, Nanci Walsh, Kathy Harris
OMAHA Sunset Hills: Tasha Helms.
OMAHA FBC: Eleanor Anderson, Jim & Vida Crosby, Charlene Howard, Phyllis Porter, Saturday and Cedah Sargbah


“ABC READS” INVITES CHURCHES TO UNITE AROUND SHARED HISTORY, IDENTITY, BELIEFS

Judson Press has announced “ABC Reads,” an emphasis designed to bring together American Baptists—literally and figuratively—through the power of a book.

To kick off the first year-long “ABC Reads” campaign, Judson Press will take readers **Down by the Riverside** with Everett C. Goodwin’s 2002 title by that name. Subtitled *A Brief History of Baptist Faith*, Goodwin’s slight volume is 134 pages, including its bibliography and index. American Baptists across the country are encouraged to obtain a copy of the book and set aside a time, with another person or persons such as an established church group (Sunday school class, youth group, cell group, women’s or men’s group or Bible study) to read the book—or to establish a group for this purpose. (See details on a limited time offer discount below.)

“Down by the Riverside takes us back to the very foundations of our faith,” said Dr. Aidsand F. Wright-Riggins III, National Ministries’ executive director. “We get to start on page one again, and consider the development of Baptist principles, the issues Baptists faced, the theology Baptists embraced.” Judson Press has released a companion study guide, new this year, for Goodwin’s book to enable individuals and small group participants to build on the book’s content in reflecting on questions such as, “What does it mean to be a Baptist?” and “How does my Baptist orientation influence my perspectives on other beliefs?” The eight-session study guide provides the opportunity to explore and discuss both the surprising and potentially challenging aspects of a Baptist perspective on Christian faith.

The two book set is available at the special price of only \$10.00 (regularly an \$18.00 value) during the year-long ABC Reads emphasis (July 1, 2006 – July 1, 2007). To order or obtain a complete catalog of Judson resources, call 800-458-3766 or visit Judson’s newly redesigned website at www.judsonpress.com. Please notify the ABC/NE office when you sign on to “ABC Reads.”

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