

# the ESSENGER

American Baptist Churches of Nebraska



April 2005

## ABC/NE Date Data

ABC/NE Family Reunion  
Annual Convention  
Kearney, Sept. 9-11, 2005

Final TOMORROW'S HARVEST  
weekend, CMM, April 1-2

ABC of Nebraska  
Pastor Recognition Banquet,  
Doubletree, Omaha, April 23,

Clergy Seminar, CMM, May 2-4.

ABC Emergency Services Center,  
Sturgis, SD, August 6-13. See  
[www.SturgisAid.com](http://www.SturgisAid.com) for details

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## Western Men & Boys Retreat "As Iron Sharpens Iron"

American Baptist Men and Boys from across Nebraska will gather in Arnold, NE, April 8-9, for their western retreat. Using the theme, "As Iron Sharpens Iron," based on Proverbs 27:17, the men will share stories of ministries going on through local AB men's groups. Host pastor Irv Jennings said, "I am praying that we will sharpen one another and that the sparks that fly will ignite our hearts with a vision to make a difference as men and boys together do ministry."

The new ABC/NE disaster relief trailer will be unveiled. Ministries will be shared. There will be golf, fishing, a movie, table games and great conversation.

The event begins with supper on Friday and concludes following a 4pm awards ceremony on Saturday. The cost is \$40 per person. Call in reservations by April 2 to 308-848-2822 and leave a message.

The annual meeting of AB Men will take place later in the summer at the annual Men's Conference at Camp Merrill August 12-13.

## Omaha Area Churches Honor Pastors

Churches in the Omahaland Association and beyond will gather to honor their pastors at a special "Celebrating Leadership" banquet. The event will be held at the Doubletree Hotel in downtown Omaha on April 23.

The speaker for the evening will be Dr. Aidsand Wright-Riggins, Executive Director of ABC's National Ministries. He cast the ABC vision for NEW LIFE 2010 and has led National Ministries to a new emphasis on local church leadership. A noted speaker and leader, Dr. Wright-Riggins has headed homeland mission work for the ABC since 1991. Prior to that he pastored churches in California.

The banquet is open to everyone. Churches are encouraged to bring their pastor and spouse to this recognition event. Tickets are \$20 and may be purchased by contacting the region office prior to April 11. 1-877-244-7339



## Family Reunion Comes Early This Year Mark the Date!

The ABC/NE Annual Convention, known as The Family Reunion, is the first weekend following Labor Day this year. Mark the dates now, **September 9-11.**

*"Out of the Boat"*

The theme for the reunion is "Out of the Boat," indicating God's call to us to put our trust in Him and move beyond our comfort zones.

*Special Speakers*

Two very special speakers have agreed to address the reunion. Michael Cox, author and church vitalization expert, and Jeff Johnson, ABC's national director of evangelism, are both members of the ABC NET TEAM (new churches, evangelism and transformation).

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

## IT'S SPRING

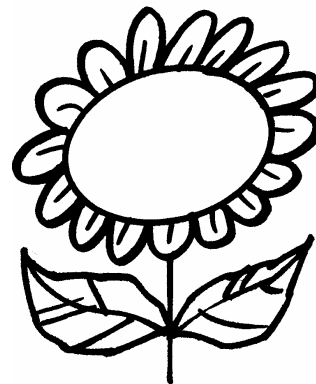
It's spring and spring brings with it amazing examples of new life. The courageous snowdrop plants in my front yard always bloom at the end of February, long before other plants would risk sticking their noses above ground. But slowly, everything emerges – ready for a new year.

The Omaha office staff has decided to help Camp Merrill this year by starting some bedding plants from seed. We can't afford to buy as many petunias and marigolds as we would like. So, we will start the seeds in egg cartons in the front window of the region office and, at the opportune time, transfer them to peat pots. Eventually we'll be able to set them out around camp and hope the rain will come at the right intervals to keep them healthy. Last summer volunteer Delores Prather tended the plants. She won't be with us at Camp this year, so we'll see what we can accomplish on our own.

Spring is a wonderful metaphor for new life experiences in Jesus Christ. As Christians we look for signs of new life in the lives of those around us. We rejoice when folks make the decision to accept Jesus as their Savior. We celebrate decisions to enter full-time Christian vocations. We are deeply moved by signs of renewal in individuals and in congregations. We enjoy (and learn from) our pastors who return from continuing education and sabbatical experiences with fresh insights and perspectives.

Where are you seeing signs of new life? Are there signs in your own life? In the life of your family and friends? In your congregation? It's pretty obvious that there's no chance of anything growing if no seeds are planted. Perhaps it's time for you to carefully plant some seeds by sharing the joy of your faith with another. Perhaps it's time for you to follow a seed planter and offer encouragement. Gently surrounding seekers and new Christians with love will help them grow.

The NEW LIFE CARAVAN will visit your church sometime in the next year. The region core staff (Gillies, Lundholm, Reiss, Bils) will be traveling to all churches looking for signs of new life. We are looking forward to see what's blooming in your congregation!



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

## Mission Advocates in Partnership: Communicating Missions with Clarity

The ABC Nebraska Department of Mission is reactivating the Region's Mission Advocates in Partnership (MAP) program. Originally established in Nebraska by Rev. Don Gaines, the MAP program is designed to strengthen the understanding and funding of American Baptist mission by creating and sustaining a network of committed, enthusiastic, informed, local mission spokespersons who work in partnership with local church pastors and regional staff.

Mission Advocates have a special role to play in a culture that does not value mission. One reason that they are chosen to serve as Mission Advocates is that they have already shown an active interest in mission. They are motivated in part for the joy and excitement they experience as they enlist others in active support of mission. Mission education helps churches understand the importance of supporting mission. In their role as mission spokespersons, Mission Advocates encourage support for missionaries at home, across the region, throughout the nation, and around the world.

Mission Advocates in Partnership model, encourage, communicate, and ask for support of American Baptist mission, as they serve Christ through this important ministry. They represent different areas and functions of mission. For example, they represent their local congregation's mission in the wider mission of American Baptists. They represent the region and its many ministries. They represent the ministries of our national and general boards. They help bring Acts 1:8 to life in their communities, Nebraska, our country, and around the world.

Under Rev. Gaines' leadership, Mission Advocates were identified in many of our congregations around the region. The Department of Mission will be contacting our churches for help in identifying lay leaders to serve in this capacity. Those previously appointed will be given the opportunity to continue in service. If you would like to know more about serving in this capacity for your congregation, please let your pastor know of your interest.

Special training programs, conferences and retreats are planned to help equip the Mission Advocates to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to serve effectively. From the national MAP handbook, the ministry of the Mission Advocates will include --



- **Encourage and resource the local churches in hands-on mission involvement.** Mission unites American Baptists.
- **Understand the missiology of American Baptist churches.** Mission Advocates model an understanding that mission is who we are, as well as something we do.
- **Know the basic history of American Baptist mission.** God brought together various streams of cultures to create a mighty, contemporary mission movement. American Baptists have a noble mission heritage that is ours to carry into a changing world.
- **Receive, read, and share information about American Baptist mission.** Mission Advocates receive timely information and resources from the Minister of Mission Support so that they will be "in the loop."
- **Tell American Baptist mission stories.** Some of the greatest successes in American Baptist mission go unreported. Mission Advocates can help report them by giving stories of their churches and community mission to region staff so they can teach mission and share examples in the American Baptist family.
- **Interpret United Mission.** The Mission Advocate's knowledge of regional, national, and international ministries helps them tell their congregations how United Mission dollars are spent locally. They often are able to say, "This ministry is made possible by our congregation's support of United Mission."

## Plan An ABC/NE Vacation !

Why not plan a unique vacation this year? What may seem a bit weird to some, could be great fun for others. What does an **ABC/NE Vacation** look like? The full version would include travel from north to south and east to west in Nebraska. Here are some elements you could put together to make an interesting trip:

- ? Visit the site of the **Moses Merrill cabin** south of Bellevue. The fireplace and chimney still stand and can be visited. Directions are available at the region office.
- ? Visit the **Sarpy County Museum**. They have pictures of the Moses Merrill cabin and information about the earliest mission in Nebraska Territory.
- ? Make a project of finding the ABC/NE **church windows** that your family votes the best. Some candidates are FBC-Omaha, Second-Lincoln, FBC-Alliance, FBC-Broken Bow, FBC-Albion. Visit at least four and then cast your vote for the best by calling the region office.
- ? You could also compare church architecture or sanctuary design. [McCook may be the most unusual outside and FBC-Lincoln may be the most interesting sanctuary. You decide.]
- ? Visit **Camp Moses Merrill** near Linwood. [Be sure to experience the Prayer Walk.]
- ? Visit the site of the old Camp Merrill near Fullerton.
- ? Visit the burial place of **Ola Hanson**, Baptist missionary to the Kachins of Burma, in the cemetery in Oakland, NE.
- ? Worship in a church that's very different from your own.

**Open country churches:** Riverside-Decatur, Prairie Union-Stella, Palestine-St. Edwards, Fairhaven-Lexington. Call the church or the region office to get directions.

**Other suggestions for you to consider:** King Solomon Missionary Baptist-Omaha, FBC-Arthur, Strangers Rest Missionary Baptist-Bellevue, Guide Rock Baptist, or First Kachin-Omaha.

- ? Visit the ABC/NE Region Office in Omaha. [Perhaps not the most exciting part of the trip but we'd love to see you!]
- ? Get a copy of the region directory and plot out a trip to the churches that are furthest north, south, east and west in NE.
- ? Report your experiences to the region office. *The Messenger* will report the outcomes.
- ? If you have other suggestions for ABC/NE tourists, send a note to *The Messenger*.

## SOMEONE YOU SHOULD KNOW . . . . . BRAD WIESE

Brad Wiese has been Youth Pastor at First Baptist Church of Holdrege for almost 3 years. He is a great example of the goals of ABC/NE's Churches Helping Churches Initiative in the way he gives to the wider ABC/NE family through state-wide youth ministry. Brad has coordinated or assisted with youth retreats, camps and convention. ABC/NE Youth Adjunct Jason Workman said, "Brad is terrific. He is one of the best sources for innovative ideas for youth ministry. He is a huge support to what we are trying to do in Nebraska." Brad Wiese is someone you should know. He's making a difference in ABC youth ministry in Nebraska!

## ABC/NE Caravan Rolls Again

The ABC/NE staff is once again traveling together for special visits to churches around the state. The theme of the caravan is "**NEW LIFE.**" The travelers are seeking signs of new life in the ministries of American Baptist churches across Nebraska.

Part of the work of the caravan will tie in with the Churches Helping Churches Initiative — matching local church needs with other churches that can help.

The New Life Caravan will make a number of trips over two years time to reach each church. The first trip took place in March as the staff visited Juniata, Hastings, York, Gibbon, Guide Rock, Superior and Fairbury. The next journey will be in May.

The first ABC/NE caravan traveled in 2002 using the theme "From These Roots." Each church shared stories of the church's founding.

## ABC/NE Trivia (See page 8 for answers)

1. Which of the following has **not** ridden a motorcycle at the ABC/NE ministry in Sturgis, SD?
  - a. Joan Stewart, pastor at Parkside, b. Steve Bils, region staff, c. Glen Williamson, pastor at Judson, d. Paul Kondy, pastor to pastors
2. Which ABC/NE church just refurbished its sanctuary?
  - a. FBC-Omaha, b. North Platte, c. Scottsbluff, d. FBC-Wayne
3. Which of the following ABC/NE retired clergy is known for his skill at bead work?
  - a. Henry Duerkson, b. Dick Peterson, c. Norm Williston, d. John Dennert
4. Which ABC/NE pastor has served his current church the longest?
  - a. Al Wagstaff, King Solomon, b. Stan Murdoch. Kearney, c. Lee Foreman, Fremont, d. Jim Rowe, Alliance.
5. Which ABC/NE pastor has logged the most airline miles in the last year?
  - a. Gam Lahpai — First Kachin, b. Charlie Gregory — Grand Island, c. Peter Doluony — First Sudanese, d. Irv Jennings — Arnold.



## Pastor Seminar Focuses on Worship

ABC/NE pastors will gather May 2-4 at Camp Moses Merrill to study breakthrough ideas for transforming worship. The "Reinventing Sunday Seminar" is the spring ABC/NE Pastoral Leadership Seminar.

The seminar leader will be Rev. Brad Berglund. He has recently written a book on worship renewal called *Reinventing Sunday*. He works with church musicians, pastors and worship committees around the country focusing on transformative worship and congregational spiritual formation. Berglund is the worship designer for the Baptist World Alliance congress to be held in Birmingham, England in July. He has been a pastor, church musician and weekly worship leader for over 20 years.

ABC/NE Pastoral Leadership Seminars are funded by The Carpenter Fund. The Fund was established by a couple from Calvary Baptist in Omaha to provide support for pastoral education. Three seminars are held at Camp Moses Merrill in each two year period. Fees for ABC/NE pastors are paid by the fund.

## Volunteer Sunday is April 17

No church could function without the work of all kinds of volunteers. The special day to say "Thanks!" is Sunday, April 17.

Volunteer Sunday Packets are available from National Ministries' Volunteers In Mission office. Or you can create your own special way of demonstrating appreciation. Offer recognition to those who volunteer to teach, maintain buildings and grounds, those involved in visitation, or any of the other ways volunteers serve your congregation. Find a creative way to give back to these willing workers a small measure of what they so freely share.

## ABC/NE Volunteers

As we recognize Volunteer Sunday, we say "THANKS" to all the great ABC/NE volunteers. The long list includes: Pastor A.J. Wagstaff of King Solomon in Omaha for his ongoing wise counsel, Pastors to Pastors Dick Peterson and Paul Kondy for their pastoral ministry with Nebraska pastors, Pastor Jason Workman of Benson Omaha for his work with region youth ministry, Nola Oberhelman of Chapman for her consulting work in Christian Education, Nina Jean Meth and Judie Heller for their help in the Omaha office, and the ABC/NE officers, Board members, and department members for all their time and efforts on behalf of our mutual ministry.

**THANK YOU !**

## IN WEST VIRGINIA, AN ABC CHURCH-BASED FOOD PROGRAM HELPS MEET COMMUNITY NEED

A West Virginia ABC family was leaving a baseball game in Pittsburgh a year ago when a homeless person outside the stadium asked Valerie Kiser for the half empty bag of popcorn she was carrying. At first her 6-year old daughter Sophie was upset that her mom gave away the popcorn: She kept asking, "What does it mean to be homeless?" Valerie told her daughter that without the popcorn the man might have no food for dinner and could end up eating out of a garbage can. "What can we do?" Sophie asked. And--relentlessly--kept asking.

Then Valerie saw a magazine article about a school for homeless children that provided food boxes for students to take for dinner at night, and she adapted the idea as an answer to Sophie's question. Now, through Summersville Baptist Church's Project Multitude, Valerie puts together boxes of food for distribution to local Head Start families the third week of every month--when their food stamps have run out and the welfare checks are getting thin.

These food boxes provide breakfast, lunch, dinner and a snack--plus recipes, suggested menus and nutritional information--for the entire family for three days. Valerie also includes spiritual information such as Bible coloring sheets, Bible book-marks and church program schedules. Members of Summersville Baptist Church support Project Multitude by donating food,

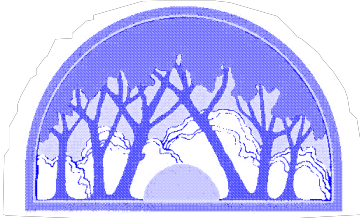
and dollars to buy food, for the boxes. Valerie fills the boxes and bags, and Sophie helps by shopping and delivering food to families.

Valerie says when Sophie heard her talk about how she felt too busy to make time to listen to God, her daughter told her, in a child's simplicity: "Do you know what I do when I'm disobedient to the Lord? I pretend I'm Jonah, I've run from him, and I'm in that whale. I hunker down and listen."

For weeks after that Pittsburgh trip, Valerie says, Sophie talked about "doing something" to help the homeless, but "I kept putting her off. ...I truly believe that it was Sophie's innocence, her willingness to listen to the Lord, that led our family on this path." Finally, "I hunkered down and listened!" Mom says. "Praise God for reaching my family."

"I think God speaks to many of us, every day," says Valerie, "but we aren't 'hunkered down.' ...It's just a matter of looking around your community and finding need." And--perhaps--listening for God's voice in the most unusual places.

***Summersville Baptist Church is an example of the many American Baptist congregations across the country helping to vitalize a multitude of caring ministries--one of the goals of NEW LIFE 2010, a vision of American Baptist Churches USA supported by National Ministries.***



## Camp Moses Merrill News

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### The CMM PRAYER WALK

The new Prayer Walk at Camp is a very special place. Make plans to explore it this year. The entrance to the Prayer Walk is located near the beginning of Gillies Climb. Pull off the road and begin your walk. The first thing you will find is a post with a box that contains brochures. The brochure gives suggestions for prayer. As you walk the wide path into the woods, you will come to one bench and then another. There are a total of nine benches. These give you places to pause for reflection and prayer. You may just want to sit for a time and listen to the sounds of the forest.

The Prayer Walk runs for about a quarter of a mile and is fairly level. Go as far as you wish.

Volunteers and Junior M.A.D. Campers helped build the benches for the walk. Dave Black made the box for the brochures.

Give yourself the gift of time on The Prayer Walk.

### A Gift of History . . .

Mattie Rumery of First Baptist North Platte, has a long history of leadership in the ABC/NE. In March Mattie, who recently celebrated her 99th birthday, gave the region a collection of pictures given to her by Ruth Nash during the early development phase of Camp Merrill—Linwood. The pictures are a treasure! They include photos that are not part of the current collection of camp history. There are pictures of the original homestead, construction of camp roads and buildings. A gift of history.. Thanks, Mattie!

**Register Early . . .  
And I'll  
See You at Camp!**



## Do You Have What It Takes to Be a Camp Merrill Volunteer?

### ONE DAY VOLUNTEERS

Arrange a time with Camp staff when you can come and use your skills to: cut down cedars, mow, plant flowers, powerwash and/or stain buildings, turn downed-trees into chips, do minor carpentry, clean, paint, help in the office.

### SEVERAL DAY VOLUNTEERS

There are times during the season when Camp could use folks who are willing to stay over several days to work on projects. The projects may vary from building and grounds work to office work. You may want to serve as weekend hosts for the RV Loop. Spring and summer week-day and weekend volunteers are needed, too.

### SUMMER VOLUNTEERS

How about spending the summer at camp? Young adults serve in various capacities on the camp service team. An older couple is needed each year to assist in office and grounds work. There are small stipends for these positions.

### PROJECT CAMP

This is a special week for work, fellowship, Bible study. Sign up now!

### REQUIREMENTS FOR VOLUNTEERS

- A heart for service
- A willingness to take direction
- A respect for the ministry

*The Dedication of the addition to Friendship Chapel will take place on Memorial Day.*

*Come for the Annual Picnic  
and the Dedication*

Details will be in the May MESSENGER

## 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

Over the next several editions of the Messenger, I want to look at the Covenant and Code of Ethics. This is an agreement among American Baptist clergy that guides us as we do ministry. This is an important document for congregations to understand.

It begins: *"Having accepted God's call to leadership in Christ's Church, I covenant with God to serve Christ and the Church with God's help, to deepen my obedience to the Two Great Commandments: to love the Lord our God with all my heart, soul, mind and strength, and to love my neighbor as myself."*

There are several important affirmations here:

- ? Pastoral leadership is in response to the call of God. In the process of searching for a new pastor, churches are seeking to discern God's will for leadership for the congregation. It is not just a matter of looking for a pastor with all the right skills, who will work for the budgeted amount of money, but

rather, of figuring out who God is calling to serve.

- ? The Church belongs to Christ: It is important for us to remember that the church doesn't belong to us. Christ is the head.
- ? The agreement to serve a church is a covenant between God and the pastor. It's much like a marriage covenant. The pastor is accountable to God to be faithful in his or her ministry to the church, just as a couple is called to be faithful to their marriage vows.
- ? The call is not static. It is not the case that the church is calling someone who "has it all together." Instead the pastor is called to grow in love for God and for God's people.

So the covenant and code of ethics is designed to help pastors who have been called by God to serve Christ's church. These pastors are accountable to God for their service, and are primarily called to deepen their love for God and for the people God has entrusted to them.

## LOCAL CHURCH NEWS

by Darlene Rimpley

### May Deadlines

April 11, 2005 - Print Copy

April 15, 2005 - E-Mail

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### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### Capital Association Annual Meeting - April 24

Beatrice FBC is hosting the Capital Association Annual Meeting on April 24 beginning at 1:00 pm. The main program will be Sandy Denton speaking on "The Four Spiritual Laws", there will be youth sessions with Bryan Marine from Campus Life, and Daniel Robbins and the Praise Band will perform.

#### Custer Association Spring Rally - April 17

The Custer Association Spring rally will be held April 17 beginning at 3:00 pm at Arnold FBC. The ABW and the AB Men will both have short meetings. The main program will be a report from a mission team just returned from Ghana, West Africa, and the youth will hold a bowling party, and there will be an evening meal.

#### Pastor Charles Gregory installation service at Grand Island FBC - April 17.

**ARNOLD FBC:** "The Passion of the Christ" Easter Pageant was held on March 26 in a pasture west of town, with over 100 cast members, with many of the cast and the directors being FBC members. The Ruth Circle special project for March was the filling of boxes to send to seven service personnel. Pastor Irv Jennings, Alasha Jennings, and Matt Coleman spent from March 7 to March 24 in Ghana, West Africa on a mission trip. Aaron Coleman, an FBC member who has just returned from a year in Central Asia with Campus Crusade, spoke and showed slides of his work on March 6. FBC joined in the community Easter Sunrise Service at the Church of the Nazarene. The churches senior citizens were

honored at a supper on March 20, with the youth serving and providing the program.

**BEATRICE FBC:** The Mission Committee sponsored a very successful "Shampoo Sunday" (they didn't explain what that was, but it sounds fun!) on February 27 for the local food pantry and emergency services. FBC will host the annual Capital Association Meeting on April 24. A Maundy Thursday service was held. Pastor Dan Osborn attended the Clergy Covenant Group at Lincoln Second Baptist on March 31.

**CHADRON FBC:** Palm Sunday was celebrated with the children bringing in the palm leaves, a Maundy Thursday service was held at FBC, and Easter Sunrise Service was held at the high school auditorium.

**COLUMBUS FBC:** The AB Girls held a sleep-over on March 12. FBC participated in the community Lenten Services, a Maundy Thursday Passover Supper was held, a Good Friday service was held, and an Easter Breakfast was enjoyed before the worship service.

**FAIRBURY FBC:** ABC Seminary Sunday was observed on March 13. The Lenten cantata, "Colors of Grace", was presented on March 22, a noon Good Friday service was held, and an Easter Sunrise Service, followed by a pancake breakfast and an Easter egg hunt was held, with the Easter worship service. The Care and Share Program filled plastic Easter eggs, which in turn filled Easter baskets, which were then given to the youth. A benefit soup and salad supper was held for Melissa Lee on March 22.

The Family Adventure Nights included Karaoke, Sheep Collection, Birdhouses, and a Pet Show. The youth held REACH March 6, and took part in the YouthNET yearly lock-in at the high school. Youth leader Jes-Ka attended the Next Generation Conference in Chicago March 2-5.

**FREMONT FBC:** Youth leader Eric and Lisa Purcell attended the youth leader training seminar in Chicago March 1-5. The cantata, "The Crimson Bridge" was presented at the Palm Sunday morning worship, and the Jews For Jesus gave a Passover demonstration that evening. A Maundy Thursday service was held, and an Easter Sunrise Service, with a breakfast served by the youth following.

**GIBBON BC:** Wayne and Millie Giger celebrated their 53 wedding anniversary on Feb. 14. FBC took part in the community Lenten Breakfasts, hosting one on March 19, held a Maundy Thursday service, took part in the Community Good Friday service, and held an Easter sunrise service. The ABW served the Safe Center in Kearney supper on March 8. The G.A.B.Y. Group held a lock-in/retreat for youth grades 8-12 on March 11 & 12.

**GRAND ISLAND FBC:** The ABWM furnished cookies for the Red Cross, Raised \$338 on Blanket Sunday, and hosted a going away party for Rev. Clyde and Mrs. Masten, who have been the interim pastors at FBC.

**HOLDREGE FBC:** The church families provided housing for the University of Sioux Falls Concert Band that performed at The Tassel on March 13.



The family of Marie Fowler donated memorial money to the new "folding machine" fund. The Pal Program - one adult and one child sharing and caring - is looking for new recruits. The area youth pastors (called The Rebel Alliance) hosted a "Jerusalem Squares" night on March 19 for the area teens. A Maundy Thursday service, Community Good Friday service, and an FBC Youth Good Friday service, an Easter Sunrise service, and a breakfast and worship were held. Opal Ranz recently celebrated her 90th birthday.

**Holdrege FBC celebrates its 100-year anniversary in 2005.** Events and dates include April 24: Chicken & Noodles on biscuits and a mission fair; July 17: Potluck, games, activities, at North Park; Sept. 24: Display of church history; Sept. 25: Coffee time and display at Nebraska History Museum; Dec. 24: Special Christmas Eve Service.

**JUNIATA COMMUNITY CHURCH:** The children have established a puppet team, and are thankful for a theater built by Pete Graham. Spring clean-up at the church took place on March 19. The ABC visitors from Omaha were guests at a pot luck supper at JCC on March 17. A Maundy Thursday communion service, an Easter Sunrise service, and a cantata during the morning worship hour were held.

**LAVISTA, JUDSON:** In Feb. we had a "Recognition of the Deacons." Our youth participated in a Bible Quiz competition at another Church and six youth came away with awards for the great job they did. During Feb the youth collected food for the La Vista Food Pantry. Holy Week was filled with days of prayer and reflection. On Maundy Thursday the men of Judson held a live portrayal of the Da Vinci painting "The Last Supper." There was an Easter egg hunt for the youngsters on Holy Saturday. We had a very special Easter Sunday children's program and Bell Choir performance. And now a little teaser for next month - The Judson women are busy planning for Judson's Spring Fling - it promises to be a very fun time with lots of "clowning" around.

**LINCOLN FBC:** The children held a palm leaf procession on Palm Sunday; a candlelight communion service was held on Maundy Thursday, an Easter Sunrise service (held at 6:00 am outdoors so they could see the sunrise at 6:18), and Easter egg hunt for the children, a breakfast for the church family, and worship were Easter observances. A tour was held of area churches on March 12 so the building committee might observe other churches in anticipation of updating their own building. The O.A.S.I. S. group had lunch at Madonna Rehab Center, followed by a program, "Germans From Russia" by Norma Somerheiser, on March 8. Family Game Night was held on March 5. A group of the youth attended the Steven Curtis Chapman and others concert in Omaha on March 10.

**LINCOLN SECOND BC:** February 12th at the Valentine Sweet-

heart Banquet Harlan and Glenys Tabor were honored as Sweetheart Couple for 2005; February 18th a SBC group served lunch at Matt Talbot (a monthly Mission Outreach project); Youth attended the DARE2SHARE conference. Friday evening after the conference the Fairbury Baptist Church youth stayed the night at Second Baptist. The Youth held a Fund Raiser Spaghetti Feed and Servant Auction. On Palm Sunday the Chancel Choir and Drama Group presented the Cantata, "To Calvary and Beyond"; under the direction of Evelyn Durham and Music Director, Michael Kitt. Maundy Thursday Communion Service was held; March 26th there was a morning Easter Egg Hunt; Easter morning began with a Sunrise Service at Belmont Baptist Church followed by an Easter Breakfast at Second Baptist Church provided by the ABYouth prior to the morning worship service.

**MCCOOK FBC:** The ABW Ministries gave a \$200 gift to OGHs for tsunami relief and made "Gift of the Heart" health kits. The women of the church have united in an outreach program where they can minister to those who have a need. A Maundy Thursday communion service, a Community Good Friday service, an Easter Sunrise service, breakfast and worship were Easter celebrations at FBC.

**NORFOLK FBC:** Volunteers from FBC worked at the Community Food Pantry during March. The ABW made bookmarks to send to shut-ins. A Maundy Thursday service was held. FBC hosted the AWANA Bible quiz for area churches. The Heart Sisters served at the Rescue Mission on March 31.

**OMAHA BENSON BC:** The Jews For Jesus presented "Christ in the Passover" at the Palm Sunday morning worship hour, a potluck supper and communion was shared at the Maundy Thursday service, the youth Sunday School class sponsored a the movie "The Gospel of John" at Good Friday service, a youth-led Easter worship was held at 7:00 am, followed by an Easter breakfast, and the choir presentation of the Passion story at both morning services. A Capitol Funds Campaign to raise funds to remodel/expand the sanctuary is underway.

**OMAHA FBC:** Pat Clark celebrated her 90th birthday on March 5 at an open house. A Task Force is being formed to explore possible ministries in the new development of downtown Omaha. Twenty-three parents, grandparents, and children went to the preview of the new Veggie Tales movie. A new member class is being held. A Maundy Thursday service was held to celebrate the season.

**OMAHA PARKSIDE BC:** On March 8, 15, and 22 a soup and bread supper, followed by a study of The Gospel of Matthew and Jesus' last days, was held. A "Linger Longer" time was held following worship on Palm Sunday. The Care and Share circle "spruced up" the nursery at their March meeting.

**OMAHA, MIRACLE HILLS:** We finished our "Come Thirsty"

experience on Easter - complete with a well in the sanctuary! We also gave out a bottle of water every time someone attended a bible study or worship with the church label on it. We celebrated our second year of presenting the live portrayal of the DaVinci's Last Supper painting. The children enjoyed their annual resurrection egg hunt on Easter morning. In April we're excited to begin our 40 Days of Community experience.

**OMAHA SUNSET HILLS BC:** A baby dedication was held for Joshua Kline. Christina Larsen and Creath Karlen were baptized on Palm Sunday. The Maundy Thursday service included a drama, followed by an exhibit of the Stations of the Cross by the Sunday Night Live youth. Longtime member Joe Peterson died March 2. Sunday school for all ages now begins with a short music and celebration session. The adult and youth Sunday school classes combined in March for a special series conducted by Carey Smith. A Procession of the Palms was held on Palm Sunday, a Maundy Thursday service was held, and an Easter egg hunt for the children through fourth grade was held following Easter worship service. The ABW quarterly meeting was held on March 5 featuring the program, "South Africa - A Nation Endangered, A Church Empowered".

**SCOTTSBLUFF FBC:** A Palm Sunday Procession by the children, a Maundy Thursday service was held, with an Easter sunrise service held at the Monument, followed by breakfast at the church, and an Easter egg hunt for the children for the children during the Sunday School hour were special events. On March 13 the children gathered following the morning service, had lunch, and then baked and delivered cookies to the shut-ins. The Mary-Martha Circle is collecting used greeting cards to send to a missionary in Japan for his mission work.

**TEKAMAH FBC:** Men's Community Lenten Breakfasts, a Parade of Palms, a Maundy Thursday communion service and a Good Friday service, and an Easter sunrise service followed by breakfast, were held in observance of the season. FBC delivered Meals on Wheels March 28-April 1.

**TECUMSEH FBC:** The Palm Sunday service included a baptism service, Maundy Thursday communion service, a community Good Friday service, and an Easter sunrise service followed by a potluck breakfast was held, and FBC took part in the community Lenten luncheons. New carpeting has been installed in the activity center entryway, offices and stairways, and the gym floor has been refinished.

#### NEW MEMBERS:

**CHADRON FBC:** Arnie and Connie Frandson  
**FREMONT FBC:** Tammy Ritthaler, Rosa Snow, Kaity Bonow, Miklala and Miranda Howard

**OMAHA BENSON:** Aiko Welch

**OMAHA SUNSET HILLS :** Creath Karlen (baptism).

**JUDSON, LAVISTA:** Brandt Cox, Brad, Stacie and Jessie Kava, Noah Nohr, Candi Sibbitt, Sharon Neiderheiser, Kathi Williams, Karen Nelson, Bob Lang, Bill and Joy Waite, Bob Lage

