

# the ESSENGER

American Baptist Churches of Nebraska



Feb.- March  
2009

### ABC/NE Date Data

Feb. 19  
ABC/NE Foundation  
1:00 pm Omaha Office

Feb. 2  
Dept. of Professional Ministry  
Grand Island

Feb. 21  
10am Mission & Finance Depts.  
Noon Exec Committee  
1:00pm The ABC/NE Board  
FBC, Grand Island

March 20-22  
YOUTH RETREAT  
Moses Merrill

March 27-29  
Mission Weekend  
FBC, North Platte

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## ABC/NE Western Mission Event Features ABC-USA General Secretary

Dates: March 27-29 Location: FBC, North Platte

Everyone is invited to attend part or all of the ABC/NE Western Mission Event, March 27-29 at First Baptist, North Platte.

ABC-USA General Secretary Dr. A. Roy Medley will be the keynote speaker. There will also be a special speaker from ABC's National Ministries.

Discover what you and your church can do to be more "Mission Active." There will be opportunities to learn more about ABC regional, national and international mission.

The format for the event will be lively. Expect to have fun while learning. Each participant will receive a "passport" when they arrive and it will get them into a number of exhibits.

Participants will learn more about Alaska Ministries, Murrow Indian Children's Home, and other Nebraska, National and International missions.

More information available soon in local churches and at [www.abcnebraska.com](http://www.abcnebraska.com).



## "Lord, When did we see you hungry and not take care of you?"

Jesus said that "inasmuch as you did it (or did it not) for one of the least of these, you did it (or did it not) for me." ABC/NE churches provide for their own members in need but also reach out in partnership with other organizations to provide food to the hungry. Here are just some of the many, many examples:

### First Baptist, Omaha

Each Saturday at 11:30 about 120 people come for a warm meal. First is serving as host for Neighbors United, a new outreach. Seventeen mid-town churches and para-church groups are providing the meals and the volunteer workers.

### Benson Baptist Church, Omaha

The third Saturday of each month, the church hosts a food pantry. Members, friends, other churches, the Omaha Food Bank, Walmart and other businesses provide the food and volunteer helpers to fill boxes for over **200 families each month**.

### FBC, Norfolk

The church staffs the local food pantry one month each year and contributes year-round. Different groups from the church go to the Norfolk Rescue Mission once each month to prepare and serve a meal.

### FBC, North Platte

The church actively works with two local food banks. They also provide and serve meals on a rotation basis with other churches at the Salvation Army feeding station and the local homeless shelter.

A group of **Karen** people have been worshipping at FBC-Omaha since last fall. The Karens presented the church with \$500 to be used for the feeding program. The gift was received with profound gratitude.

*Continued on p. 3*

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

## WEAVE US TOGETHER

A number of years ago, there was a folk song popular with American Baptist Women's Ministries groups "Weave, weave, weave us together, Weave us together, together in love." It turns out it was written by Rosemary Crow for the Girl Scouts but many church groups found it to be a haunting call to each other and a prayer to God.

As Christians and as American Baptists, we in the ABC of Nebraska find ourselves linked together as a family in a special ministry in this state. Fifty four churches linked together to "encourage, challenge, and empower each other to be transforming Christian communities in the world." (ABC/NE Mission Statement)

God has called us to this place and time. Some of our churches are strong, some are weak. Some are growing, some are declining. But there is not a single church in the region that is without something to offer to the family. When we each give and encourage, we all get better.

The purpose of our weaving is to proclaim and demonstrate the love of God through Jesus Christ. Our weaving is a beautiful thing. There are so many wonderful strands that make up the whole. There are strands that belong to the oldest congregations and the youngest, strands for predominantly European-American, African-American, and Kachin congregations. And within some of those strands we find threads of Hispanic, Sudanese and Karen groups. There are churches in open country, small towns, and in cities. All are about the business of sharing God's love.

A weaving seems to be a wonderful image of our life together. We are unique and individual but when linked together, we are stronger.

ABC/NE churches have been praying for each other. This experience is leading us to truly care about each other at a deeper level than ever before. If Sunday school classes, women's and men's groups, youth groups, and other small groups and individuals in our churches would pick up on the general request for church-to-church prayer and really make it a prayer priority, we would see amazing results. The woven tapestry of ABC/NE can, in the power of the Spirit, be used by God to transform lives and social systems.



*From the Associate Executive Minister . . . . . Steve Bills*

## Life is But a Series of Transitions

Today is January 20, 2009 and we have just inaugurated the 44th president of the United States. A new chief executive is assuming responsibility for the administration of our government. Three weeks ago we bid farewell to 2008 and welcomed 2009. In 2008 my mother passed away and we welcomed my new niece into the world. Transitions are what life is made of.

When I think about transitions I am reminded of the story of Abram and Sarai responding to the call of God in Genesis 12, *Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."* So Abram went, as the LORD had told him . . . and Abram journeyed on by stages . . . (vv.1-4,9).

The Hebrew verb here means "to journey". More specifically it means to "pull up the tent and move to another place." The construction here stresses the activity of traveling. It also stresses that the traveling was continually going on. Thus "Abram continually journeyed by stages."

Each of us is on a journey that we are taking by stages. We are picking up the tent stakes and moving on to new stages in our lives.

As I move from stage to stage in my journey through life I am encouraged by the stories of God's faithfulness to the saints of old, like Abram and Sarai, who pulled up their tent stakes and moved on, often not knowing where they were going or what their new stage would look like. I am also encouraged by passages like Isaiah 43:18-19 where God says,

"Do not remember the former things,

Nor consider the things of old.

Behold, I will do a new thing,

Now it shall spring forth;

Shall you not know it?

I will even make a road in the wilderness

And rivers in the desert."

If I focus on "the former things" I risk becoming paralyzed by my past failures or stuck trying to relive my past successes. If I am dwelling on "the things of old", I may well miss the "new thing" that God is doing!

Being open to the new things that God is doing often marks the difference between embarking on an exciting new adventure and being mired in the past, pining for "the good old days."

Sometimes the most difficult part of being alert to God's new thing is our fear of pulling up the tent staked near the stream or well and leaving the known and proven source of God's supply and provision, even as it might be drying up.

Sometimes the new thing seems unlikely because it appears to require us to forge a new path through thickets, briars, and brambles that are too dense to even see through.

Sometimes the new thing is scary because the path God is calling us down seems clear before the resources for that stage of the journey appear.

But the God who has a plan, the God who asks us to be alert to a new thing, the God who asks us to pick up our tent stakes and journey on by stages is the same God who promises, "I will even make a road in the wilderness. I will make rivers in the desert."

At the same time we are to be alert to the new thing, we are to anticipate the provision for that stage of the journey. Our path and our provision are promised by Him who has "plans to prosper, not harm, and to give us a hope and a future."

Don't be afraid of transitions. As bikers like to say, "It's about the journey, not the destination!"

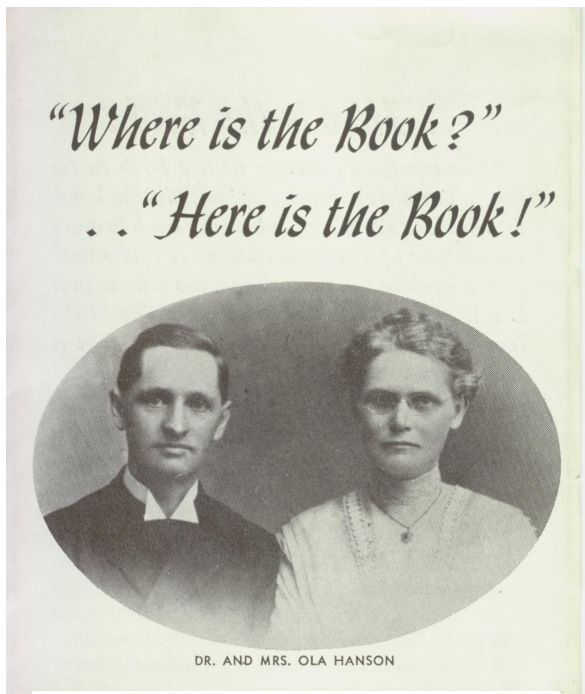


## Mission Treasures . . .

### Kachin—Nebraska Connection

In the archives of the ABC/NE, a brochure was found. It tells the story of missionaries translating the Bible for the people they served.

Nebraskan Ola Hanson completed his translation of a Kachin Bible in 1926. Adoniram Judson finished translating the Burmese Bible in 1835. ABC missionaries translated the Bible into three Karen dialects in 1843, 1862, and 1884. Those translations are now in use in worship in Nebraska at First Kachin in Omaha in Karen worship at First Omaha and First Lincoln.



Mrs. Ola Hanson: "Before we reached Burma three young Karen men from Bassein, farther south in Burma, appeared among the Kachins, their cousins, to tell them of Christ but they could not give them the Book. Our missionary predecessor said that the young couple coming to take his place would give them the Book. My husband and I were used of God to accomplish this great task in response to the first thing the Kachins asked us as new missionaries in 1892, "Where is the Book?" In March 1927, the year of the Kachin Jubilee, Dr. and Mrs. Hanson said to the Kachins, "Here Is the Book." In the meantime Dr. Hanson had reduced the language to writing (1892), written a grammar, a dictionary of 11,000 words, and he and Mrs. Hanson proofread the whole Bible, reading it forward six times, and a last time reading it backward. Their bodies ached with exhaustion. They were the only ones who could read the manuscript, and the linotype was set by an Indian who could not read a word of it! Dr. Hanson wore out five assistants.

## Bob & Margene Phares To Receive National ABC-USA Award

Bob and Margene Phares of First Baptist, North Platte, will be awarded the Cora and John Sparrowk President's Award at the 2009 ABC-USA Biennial Convention.

The award, considered by many to be the top ABC award, is given at each Biennial to a person(s) who: a) is an American Baptist; b) has over a period of years made an exceptional and outstanding contribution to the life of Christ's Church; and c) in life and service manifests richly the fruits and gifts of the Spirit.



Bob and Margene Phares have both served as president of ABC/NE. Their resumes of service to church and wider denomination are lengthy. Beyond the public resumes, they have also quietly carried out expressions of their faith and witness.

Their names were placed in nomination for the award by Dr. Charles Gregory, pastor of FBC, Grand Island, and ABC/NE's representative to the ABC-USA General Board, and ABC/NE Executive Minister Susan Gillies. In making the nomination, Gillies wrote, "Bob and Margene are gifted leaders. I wouldn't have wanted to travel this road of ministry without them. They exemplify what American Baptists at our best want to be. They would be an exceptionally fine choice to receive the Cora and John Sparrowk President's Award."

The selection of the recipients was made by the current ABC-USA President, Mary Hulst, retired pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Denver, CO., the immediate Past-President, Dr. Arlee Griffin, Jr., pastor of Berean Baptist Church in Brooklyn, and ABC-USA General Secretary Roy Medley. The award will be presented by the President to Bob and Margene Phares at the Biennial Convention in June in Pasadena, CA.

It is hoped a good sized delegation from ABC/NE will travel to Pasadena to help celebrate the presentation of the award.

### Volunteer Opportunities

- Western Mission Event – Several volunteers needed to welcome, set up displays, etc. Contact either ABC/NE or FBC, North Platte.
- Moses Merrill Camp & Conference Center – volunteer for a day, a week, or the summer! Contact camp 1-402-666-5639.
- History Detectives – Become part of a team that collects historical data on Baptists in NE. Contact the ABC/NE.

### Nola's Take Five . . .

Ideas from Nola Oberhelman  
ABC/NE Christian Education Consultant

Five "do now" tasks for CE committees:

1. Assess learnings in the current Sunday School.
2. Review the present Sunday School materials for effectiveness.
3. Clean out and organize Sunday School storage areas.
4. Get VBS on the calendar.
5. Review VBS materials for suitability with your situation.

### Sunday School Teaching Training Featuring Nola Oberhelman

ABC/NE Christian Education Consultant Nola Oberhelman will be doing Sunday School Teacher Training at Lincoln-Second, on March 28. The training will be held from 10:00am until 2:00pm. Anyone wishing to participate in the training should contact the church. 402-464-8398

### ABC/NE Trivia

1. What is the focus of the Good Soil Project?
  - a. Churches "going green."
  - b. Fertilizer
  - c. Church Vitality
  - d. Local church structure
2. What is the focus of the ABC Center at the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally each year?
  - a. A place for bikers to see Christian movies
  - b. A place for bikers to live during the rally
  - c. A preaching station
  - d. A place to provide emergency services
3. Who started the Churches Helping Churches movement?
  - a. ABC of Nebraska
  - b. ABC-USA
  - c. Church World Service
  - d. ABC of the Dakotas
4. What is the focus of The Carpenter Fund?
  - a. Clergy education
  - b. Church construction
  - c. Mission construction
  - d. Lay leader development
5. The 2009 ABC-USA Biennial Convention will be held in what city?
  - a. Chicago
  - b. Germantown (near Philadelphia)
  - c. Omaha
  - d. Pasadena

### ITEMS OF NOTE . . .

- The 19th Annual Black Church Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS will be March 1-7, 2009. To learn more about how your church can help in the fight against HIV/AIDS, go to [balmingilead.org](http://balmingilead.org) or call 888-225-6243.
- If you order books through [www.judsonpress.org](http://www.judsonpress.org) you can benefit ABC ministry in Nebraska. Every time you order from the Judson Press website our region will share in the proceeds! Just enter code 16 in the Region Code box at checkout, and 10% of net sales will come back to the region to support our local ministries.
- Mark the dates now!! The ABC/NE Family Reunion (region convention) will be Sept. 18-20, 2009, at the Holiday Inn Convention Center in Kearney.

### Thanks to Darlene Rimpley for Local Church News

With this issue of *The Messenger*, Lou changes it's emphasis. Rather than sm about what a church has done in the las churches share ideas in each issue.

For a number of years, the Editor of L has been Darlene Rimpley. She will n The Messenger focuses on just four ch Associate Executive Minister Dave Lundholm said, "Darlene has been a great help in getting local church information into The Messenger. She has been faithful to the task."

On behalf of the over 3,000 people who read *The Messenger*, "THANKS, DARLENE, for all you've done!"



### ABC READS — 2009

Judson Press, a publishing ministry of ABC's National Ministries has selected *Tempted to Leave the Cross: Renewing the Call to Discipleship* by Ernest Flores as the "ABC Reads" title for 2009. The book is also available in Spanish as *Tentado a dejar la cruz: Renovando el llamado al discipulado*.

ABC Reads is a denomination-wide emphasis designed to bring together American Baptists—literally and figuratively—through the power of a book. In this resource, the author, pastor of Second Baptist Church, of Germantown, Pa., considers the cross of Jesus and what it represents in the Christian church today. Offering interactive Bible study, Flores embraces the cross as more than a symbol of personal salvation, but also as a call to ministry and service.

The book contains "Cross Examinations" for personal and small group reflection and study, which could be used for either a discipleship or Lenten study. Additional online resources, including a blog and an upcoming webinar with the author, will soon be announced.

Call 800-458-3766 to order copies of the book from Judson Customer Service. Or order online at [www.judsonpress.com](http://www.judsonpress.com) and remember to enter code 16 in the Region Code box at checkout.

Founded in 1824, Judson Press publishes Christ-centered leadership resources for the transformation of persons, congregations, communities and cultures.

### Book of Timothy







# Moses Merrill News

2849 Rd. 31 Bldg. 3, Linwood, NE 68036 (402) 666-5639  
 E-mail: campmerrill@nntc.net Web site: www.campmerrill.com

## Junior High / Senior High Annual YOUTH RETREAT March 20-22



Junior High and Senior High Youth from across Nebraska will gather at Camp Merrill on March 20-22 for their annual retreat.

The retreat is a great time for youth to make new friends and reconnect with friends from convention or summer camps.

Youth descend on camp with little concern for weather conditions. One young person said, "I don't care if it snows, rains or the sun shines. Retreat is awesome!"

For more information on the retreat, contact Brad Wiese, FBC, Hol-drege 308-995-2228 or Moses Merrill Camp & Conference Center.

## Preparation for Sewer Project Construction Continues

One of the challenges to the dream of an Activity Building at Moses Merrill is the requirement for a new sewer system. Engineers have been working through the winter. They have been in conversation with state officials. Director of Camping Clarence Reiss is now working on plans for when construction could happen. He stated, "Obviously we don't want to be tearing roads out when groups need them. With our year-round programming, for which I'm grateful, we are challenged to find a low-impact time." Camp Manager MaryBeth Robertson and Reiss are working to find the best way to fit programming and construction together. Many Nebraska Baptists have never prayed for sewers before, but they are now!

## Moving from Winter toward Spring . . .

Moses Merrill Camp and Conference Center usually is extremely quiet in the winter. This year, Ward Conference Center and Calvary Lodge have had more groups and individuals than in previous years. This is a positive indicator.



In addition to increased "business," the camp staff works through the winter months preparing for spring and summer.

Summer Camp Coordinators met in January to plan and share ideas. Also in January, training took place for people who will be volunteer care-takers when staff has to be away.

PLAN NOW . . . .

*EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE*

*MOSES MERRILL  
 APRIL 12 7:00AM*

*FOLLOWED BY BREAKFAST*



*Dear Friends,*

*It has been brought to my attention that some of you don't think I'm real. Excuse me. So I am attaching a picture. While it's not my best side, at least you will see that I am real . . . And I'm waiting for supper. The title of this picture is "Waiting for Clarence."*

*We had really great Christmas services at Friendship Chapel during December. January has been fun with people coming mostly for one day meetings or weekends.*

*Sometimes I worry about what will happen in years to come. Clarence/Trudy/MaryBeth are not*



*as young as they once were (don't tell them I said that—they're a little touchy). People who love this place really need to plan for its future and invest in that future. There have to be good leaders here to feed me! — as well as other things like caring for the facility and providing good programming and promotion. Priorities folks, priorities!!*

*Now is the time to get your plans made for 2009 at camp!*

*Your friend,  
 Camp Cat*



## From the Associate Executive Minister ..... Dave Lundholm

### But I Told You Once . . .

We've all laughed at the stories of the clueless husband who, when challenged about his lack of affection, declares things like: "I told you that I loved you back in 1957, if that ever changes I'll let you know;" or "I provide a good house and money for expenses for you, why do I have to say 'I love you,' don't these things show my love?"

Successful spouses know they have to say "I love you" in words and in many little (and not so little) actions and say it frequently.

I think the same thing is true for pastors and congregations. Many Nebraska congregations have gotten quite good at saying "I love you" to their pastors during Pastor Appreciation Month. Thinking back at my two pastorates I wonder if I did as good a job at communicating my love for my people. I did all the normal pastoral things: I preached the best sermons I could, I prayed for my people, I cared for them when they were in the hospital or hurting in other ways, I visited them and I celebrated with them. But I can't remember telling them directly that I loved them either in words or in special deeds. In other words I was kind of the "I provide a home and money" guy.

I wonder what "I love you" looks like from a pastor to a people. Maybe it is praising your congregation (not your own good work) when you gather with other pastors. Maybe it is expressing gratitude in the community for your people. Maybe it's in saying 'thanks' to your people when they have done a great job. I know of one ABC-NE pastor who declared November thru September as Congregation Appreciation Month(s).



Pastors, what does it look like for you?

## SEND ME, LORD!

You can be one of approximately 1,500 delegates at the 2009 ABC-USA Biennial in Pasadena, California! You and your family can represent your church at the ABC-USA 2009 Biennial in sunny southern California in June 2009. Participate in powerful worship, share fellowship and learn about being "These Hands ... These Feet" for Christ in our ever changing world. Talk to your pastor and church leaders—just say, "Send me"—and at this once-in-a-lifetime experience, you will...

**WORSHIP** with internationally known speakers David Coffey, president of the Baptist World Alliance; Kirk Byron Jones, professor of Ethics and Preaching, Andover Newton Theological School; Nick Vujcic, renowned motivational speaker and president of Life Without Limbs; Robin L. Smith, national television personality, best-selling author and licensed psychologist; and others.

**SHARE** new ideas about everything from "Small Churches in Small Communities" to "Outreach to the World" along with more than a dozen other topics of interest. You can also participate in a prototype Mission Summit.

**EXPERIENCE** the work of the Lord around the world through National Ministries, International Ministries and the Office of the General Secretary; learn how to protect your staff and your church through The Ministers & Missionaries Benefit Board; celebrate at the Saturday night gala celebration, "We Are ABC: A Multi-Cultural Family Fest."

**VOTE** on the important issues before us, and know that you are making American Baptist history.

**HAVE FUN** at the many family-oriented attractions in the Pasadena area.

**Begin planning to attend now. Tell your pastor or church leaders that you are willing to serve as a delegate. Go to the website at [www.abc-usa.org](http://www.abc-usa.org) and click on "more" under the Biennial paragraph.**



## CHURCH FEEDING PROGRAMS: *(continued from page 1)*

**Oxford** works with the Oxford Food Pantry which came up with a novel idea a couple of years ago for requesting donations through the local churches. They divided their pantry needs between the churches. For example: FBC is responsible to supply the pantry with paper products. When the supply is low, an item in the bulletin indicates the Food Pantry is in need of paper towels, diapers, toilet paper, napkins, etc. Another church is responsible for proteins, another is responsible for cleaning supplies, another is responsible for juices and cereals, etc. Everyone seems to like the way this approach works in this community.

**Chadron** is a very productive contributor to their local food bank. **Holbrook** actively supports the Arapahoe Food Bank. **Riverside** is also a food bank contributor. **Alliance** has supported the Indian mission and their food bank for 16 years, and an organization called Just Neighbors, and also donated each year to the Panhandle community services food bank.

**Mason City** encourages members to share food with the

needy individually. One member distributed over 100 pounds of hamburger from his personal stock this year. **Palestine Baptist** takes up food donations quarterly for the Genoa, St. Edward & Albion food pantries, as well as the Columbus Rescue mission. **Bridgeport** supports the Ministerial Association's food bank. They also have a ministerial association fund that provides meals, funds for transportation, and emergency housing for those in need. **Beatrice** supports the community food banquet and they prep and serve food at Warren's table. There is an annual competition among churches to restock the Blue Valley Food Bank and FBC **Fairbury** is a primary player in that. **New Life Bellevue** supports the Bellevue Food Pantry. During gardening season, the church contributes fresh veggies to a distribution center in Omaha. Last summer the congregation gave 1100 fresh vegetables. **Arthur** supports the Keith & Arthur Co. Food Pantry. **Blair** supports the Washington Co. Food Bank.

Other ABC/NE churches are also active in providing assistance to those in need.

# LOCAL CHURCH NEWS . . . Featuring ideas to share from four ABC/NE churches

## First Baptist Church . . . . . Kearney, NE

Long recognized as a flagship church among the ABC churches in Nebraska, First Baptist Kearney has a rich tradition and outstanding leadership.

The church is known for its commitment to mission at home and around the world. The church's 'Statement of Faith' states that one of the congregation's purposes as the body of Christ is to support missions.

One of the ways the congregation is engaged in local mission is through the church's program, **Associate Care Ministries**. The purpose of this ministry is to provide support and aide to individuals whose lives and spiritual health is burdened by misfortune. This support may be a one time event or of an extended nature. A few of the areas in which support is offered include:

- Vehicle & transportation problems
- Housing & home maintenance
- Financial aid & counseling
- Seasonal property maintenance

The church believes the Gospel calls us to lift burdens in love as Jesus directs in Matthew 25:1-45.

The church is committed to support of United Mission and the four ABC offerings. They support Roger Williams Fellowship, the local Food Pantry, Jubilee Center, and Salvation Army. The church provides active support for Moses Merrill Camp & Conference Center with work teams as well as financial support. Youth Mission Trips help young people develop a passion for mission. The church also supports ABC colleges and other institutions.

## First Baptist Church . . . . . Union, NE

Union is a small community south of Bellevue. The church was challenged in 2008 by the death of the pastor's wife a week before Easter and the pastor deciding to retire after that. They were grateful for Jim Cummings being willing to add to his hospital chaplaincy work by serving as their interim pastor.

Currently the church is committed to becoming more a part of the community. A team visited "Union Days", a city-wide celebration in the park and came away with ideas for fielding a team for the "mud volley ball" competition next summer. Pastor Jim gained local contacts by being a judge in the home made pie baking contest, and enjoyed the pie! It was reported to be an extremely pleasurable way to get "contacts"! Pastors from other ABC/NE churches have offered to help him in the future.

The Baptists and Methodists in town joined in a door-to-door survey of the town. They split the names of those families who seemed appropriate for follow-up and asked for ideas of how the churches could serve the community. **The one specific request was to provide religious instruction for children in town.** Some of the kids attend worship out of town. Others have no other church contact. What an opportunity! FBC responded. All of the parents appreciate having a youth group/Bible class for their kids that is conveniently close. Currently about 6 kids are involved. With that number doubling for summer Vacation Bible School and Christmas program. For these two events the church attracts grandchildren of members as well as neighbor kids.



## Parkside Baptist Church . . . . . Omaha, NE

Parkside has a small congregation that is not afraid of trying new things. A year ago, this predominantly European-American congregation called an African-American pastor to serve as an "Acting" Pastor. In January this year, following a successful year, they asked Rev. Dr. Onnie Drain to continue as their regularly called pastor. Pastor Drain has brought compassion and a new energy to the vision of the congregation.

Parkside serves as the host facility for First Kachin Baptist Church of America. The two churches join together for communion on the first Sunday of each month and they celebrate special occasions together.

The church seeks to model what it means to be a faith family. It's a place where people care about each other and share joys and sorrows. It's small enough that people know each other's names and are glad to see each other.

June Soderlund, a member of the ministry council described the congregation's determination to respond to community needs. In these difficult economic days, June is urging the congregation to offer cooking classes to the neighborhood — "Learn from Our Grandmas How to Eat Well on Less."

Last fall the congregation celebrated its 88th birthday with an ice cream social on the lawn, inviting passers-by to join in. The event became a symbol of the church's commitment to get outside its walls.

The church invites all and welcomes all. New folks quickly become part of the family and not an "add on."

## First Baptist Church . . . . . Beatrice, NE

First Baptist of Beatrice is a warm, inviting church. The building is located in a residential area of Beatrice.

When Theodora Boolin arrived as the new pastor in Beatrice, she discovered that the church had not been having dedication services for newborns. As she thought about this and talked with church leaders, they decided it was time to not only begin the practice, but to catch-up as well. On one particular Sunday last fall, a child dedication service was held with parents and children up to 6 or 7 years of age. It was a great time to affirm the commitment of parents and the congregation to these children.

The church had a retreat in November at Moses Merrill. Participants reported that Pastor Theodora had very creative worship centers in the chapel.

On Epiphany Sunday, the sermon title was "Another Route Home." The pastor wrote, "We at First Baptist believe that God is guiding us home by another route and we are to help others locate their different routes home." Steve Bils will be helping the church discover our evangelistic style. The congregation is anticipating the new possibilities that God will be bringing to First Baptist. Last year five people were baptized, five children dedicated. Three people are waiting to be baptized. Baptisms are a special day. The church has a celebration for each baptism and each person helps the pastor plan their service. Each baptism is a celebration that depicts that person. The congregation enjoys having a great time celebrating with them.



*Welcome  
New  
Members*

**I am always with you**

**ABC/NE Trivia Answers:**

1. c. The Good Soil Project promotes church vitality.
2. d. Bikers at Sturgis can find help at the ABC Emergency Services Center.
3. a. ABC/NE began the Churches Helping Churches movement
4. a. The Carpenter Fund assists with clergy education.
5. d. The ABC-USA 2009 Biennial will be in Pasadena, CA.

**ABC of Nebraska Staff**

Executive Minister .....	Susan Gillies
Associate Executive Minister .....	Dave Lundholm
Associate Executive Minister .....	Steve Bills
Director of Camping .....	Clarence Reiss
Manager, Moses Merrill Camp & Conference Center .....	MaryBeth Robertson
Camp Staff.....	Trudy Reiss, Barb Fisher Bob Schuelke, Denise Harris, Beverly Pacas
Office Manager .....	Sue Gammel
Office Assistant .....	Margaret Brown-Moore
Accounting Services.....	Jerry Buss
Christian Education Consultant .....	Nola Oberhelman
Church Life Consultant.....	A. J. Wagstaff
Pastor to Pastors (W).....	Paul Kondy
Pastor to Pastors (E).....	Dick Peterson
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**THE MESSENGER Publication Schedule**

In 2009, THE MESSENGER will be published the first of the month in Feb, April, June, August, Oct, Dec. The reduction in the number of issues from 10 to 6 is made necessary by budget constraints.

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