



the ESSENGER

American Baptist Churches of Nebraska



April 2008

ABC/NE Date Data

Moses Merrill Project Weeks
April 7-12
May 5-10

Spring Pastors' Seminar
Moses Merrill
April 14-16

Christian Education Event
Moses Merrill
May 2-4

Memorial Day Picnic
Moses Merrill, May 26

Family Reunion -
ABC/NE Convention
Sept. 19-21—Kearney

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Coordinator of ABC's Alaska Ministries Missionary Dr. Alonzo B Patterson Jr To Speak at September Family Reunion

The Coordinator of ABC's Alaska Ministries will be the keynote speaker at the ABC/NE Family Reunion (annual convention) Sept. 19-21 at the Holiday Inn Convention Center in Kearney. Dr. Patterson is a dynamic preacher who serves as both an ABC home missionary and as pastor at Shiloh Baptist Church.

Since the founding of Kodiak Baptist Mission in 1893 by the Woman's American Baptist Home Mission Society, American Baptists have sought to "make God's appeal" in the far north. For more than 100 years, American Baptist home missionaries in Alaska have encouraged life in Christ through ministries of witness, renewal and justice.

Today, mission in Alaska is organized and energized by members of local American Baptist churches, just as it is in other parts of the U.S. Currently, 14 American Baptist congregations, located throughout the state, reach out as ambassadors for Christ to Alaska's multicultural population. These congregations join other American Baptists from across the U.S. and Puerto Rico in supporting the work and witness of historic home mission partners in Alaska.

Kodiak Baptist Mission on Kodiak Island and Alaska Children's Services in Anchorage continue to minister with children, youth and their families. American Baptists also support ministries such as Cordova Community Christian Center which offers a variety of services to local residents and Daybreak, Inc., in Palmer, which provides housing for adults with special needs.

The road ahead for Alaska Ministries is marked by both opportunity and adventure. American Baptists in the 49th state appreciate the prayers and volunteer support of the entire denominational family as they seek to continue to model Christ's love in a demanding environment.

Christian Education Event "Follow the Path" Features Nancy Ferguson

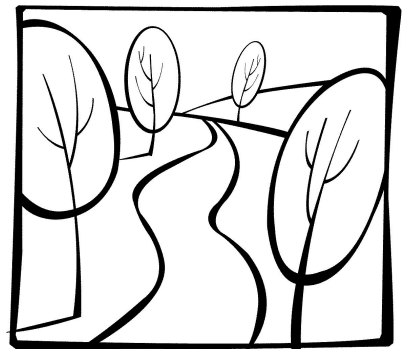
Moses Merrill Camp & Conference Center will host the Second Moses & Eliza Merrill Christian Education Event May 2-4. The guest speaker will be Nancy Ferguson, author of a new Judson Press resource: *Christian Educators' Guide to Evaluating and Developing Curriculum*.

The theme for the event is "Follow the Path." The theme scripture: "Lead me in the path of your commandments, for I delight in it." Psalm 119:35

The event is open to all. It will be particularly helpful to those who are interested in finding the right curriculum to meet their church's needs. Nancy Ferguson equips churches to make educated decisions about the use of available resources.

Nancy Ferguson is an ordained minister and certified Christian educator in the Presbyterian Church (USA). She is a member of the American Camp Association and is the project manager/editor of *Christian Resources for the Outdoors*.

The total cost for the event is \$95. For more information, or to register, call ABC/NE, 877-244-7339 (in Omaha 556-4730).



From the Executive Minister Susan Gillies

Walking the Valley

Jesus walked this lonesome valley.
He had to walk it by Himself;
O, nobody else could walk it for Him,
He had to walk it by Himself.

We must walk this lonesome valley,
We have to walk it by ourselves;
O, nobody else can walk it for us,
We have to walk it by ourselves

This song can tug at our hearts. Everybody, at some time or another, has a valley to walk through. We don't get to live our entire lives on the mountaintops. It's just the way life is. The challenge for us is to think about how we, as disciples, will walk through valleys in our lives.

Some folks would like to escape. They would like to avoid the valleys. And, quite frankly, there are ways you can minimize the valley experiences. But there will be valleys.

Following the death of my father, a friend said, "Don't waste the pain," I thought it was a stupid thing for her to say. I didn't understand it. And, although I am not a violent person, it did occur to me to hit her. Instead I asked her what she was talking about. Since she has a Ph.D. in psychology I thought there was a chance she might know what she was talking about. She explained that often in times of great pain, we are most open to the Spirit. We may be more able to plumb the depths of our hearts and minds. We may be able to connect with God in a way that has been difficult when all was well. Turns out, she was right.

The strongest witness of faith comes from people who have stayed faithful during crises. A testimony in the midst of sorrow, stress, loss, or depression, often reaches many more than a testimony from one who seems to never have had a problem.

And here's what comes as amazing news to many Christians, pastors have to walk valleys, too. Pastors can find themselves in the midst of a disaster or a personal or family or church crisis. The disaster can be externally caused or even of their own doing. But there they are, deep in a valley. And how does the family of faith respond when a pastor is in crisis? Sometime we look the other way, sometimes we seek punishment or even vengeance because we wanted the pastor to be more like Jesus and we are disillusioned by his or her humanness.

As disciples, care about yourselves and others who are walking through valleys. We can love even those persons who have made poor choices. We don't condone the bad behavior. We recognize there are consequences. But we open our hearts to any beloved child of God who is walking the valley.

As disciples, I believe we are to walk our own valleys humbly but with openness. God may be speaking and we need to listen. It is also important to know that we are often more of a witness in our struggles than in our successes. If you are walking a valley, please remember, nothing can separate you from the love of God in Christ Jesus.



Blessings!

From the Associate Executive Minister Steve Bils

Will this be your year? Short term mission opportunity at Sturgis!

The American Baptist Churches of Nebraska and the Dakotas have teamed up in each of the last seven years to minister at the annual gathering of over 400,000 people in Sturgis, South Dakota for Bike Week! (Attendance in 2007 was estimated at over 507,000.)

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

Volunteers from both regions spend all or part of the week helping, feeding, transporting, and counseling the dozens of individuals who come to the ESC for assistance. Throughout the week calls come in at all hours of the day and night from churches, police and rescue workers, and individuals, wanting us to help men, women and children in need. About an hour away, Rapid City has become a frequent destination as transportation to the hospitals, rescue mission, bus station and airport is provided.

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

Last year the patterns established in previous years continued with even more rally participants ministered to at the ESC. Volunteers don't need to be motorcyclists, but ought to have a heart for evangelism. We have discovered that it is helpful if we have more women volunteers due to the large percentage of women and children that we end up assisting. If you can come for all or part of the week we can find a job for you!

Interested in Sturgis Rally Ministry 2008?

Here are more details . . .

- The ABC Emergency Services Center will be open August 2-10. Volunteers wishing to help set up can plan on arriving as early as July 31.
- Sleeping space is provided.
- RVers will be provided with space to set up camp.
- This mission project is designed for adults. High school students will be permitted when accompanied by a parent.
- Routes to Sturgis will be planned for bikers who wish to ride to the event in a group.
- Followup on those ministered to will be coordinated by contacts in ABC regions around the country.
- Each participant is asked to contribute \$100 toward the cost of this project. Local churches are encouraged to assist their participating members in raising this amount. Churches and individuals may also make contributions to this project through their regional office.

For more information, contact me at the region office or visit the www.SturgisAid.com web site.



ABC/NE Board Opens Discussion On the Role of Associations

The Board of ABC/NE began discussion of the role of associations at its February meeting. Associations that are meeting this spring are also having conversations on the subject.

In many ways, the historic function of associations is now being carried out by the region. Some ABC/NE associations have ceased to function as administrative units. Some are finding that the valuable role of associations today is in fellowship.

The ABC/NE has nine associations that range in size from 2 churches to 20 churches. Omahaland Association voted to disband nearly a decade ago. There are no more officers or business meetings. However, the churches have found value in getting together for music programs and Thanksgiving eve services. The pastors continue to meet regularly as a group, as do the men's and women's groups

The Board looked at proposals for reducing the number of associations and it also looked at a proposal for a more creative approach that would highlight the ABC/NE Mission Statement for churches to "encourage, challenge, and empower one another to be transforming Christian communities in the world."

Under the approach the Board is considering, churches would agree to participate in fellowship or service events with groups of churches at least twice a year and report back to the region convention.

Board members are seeking feedback between now and the next meeting, Aug. 23. If a change is proposed, it would come to the annual meeting (held during the Family Reunion) for a vote.

Churches would receive notification prior to a vote because a change would require amendments in the constitution and by-laws of the Nebraska Baptist State Convention (ABC/NE).

Questions may be addressed to board members or region staff.

Nola's Take Five . . .

Ideas from Nola Oberhelman
ABC/NE Christian Education Consultant

Take five hints for teaching kids to pray:

1. Establish patterns by praying at the same time daily.
2. Use litanies with responses.
3. Use circumstances for quick prayers such as hearing a siren or hearing bad news on TV.
4. Establish a quiet time for personal thought/meditation during the day.
5. Put a reminder such as a figure of a praying angel in a specific place.

These ideas are from Betty Cloyd's *Children and Prayer: A Shared Pilgrimage*.



Gas is Expensive! What Can Churches Do?

Everyone knows the price of gas is very, very high. How can churches respond?

- Carpool . . . It isn't hard once you get the knack of it. Carpool to worship and to church events. See if you can figure out how to get your whole family to church in one car!
Use carpools to get your kids to camp!
- Re-evaluate your expectations of pastoral calls. Deacons or pastors should make contact with shut-ins in person or by phone on a regular schedule. BUT, do the pastor and deacons need to do as many "in home" visits with healthy members? Many people prefer a pastoral phone call to a home visit anyway.
- Be very attentive to see if anyone in your congregation is not able to buy essentials because of high prices.
- Maybe this is a good time to reduce the busy "running-all-the-time" lifestyle we've been practicing. Encourage families to have family nights or family Saturdays at home . . . playing in the yard, reading, playing table games, working on creative projects, and actually talking with one another!
- Get copies of Moses Merrill's Family Vacation Specials brochure. Maybe this is not the year to head for the Grand Canyon or the Smokey Mountains but vacation much closer to home.

Norfolk Makes the Most of an "Out of Building" Experience

After last month's *Messenger* story about the Grand Island men having an "out of building experience," reports have been received of FBC, Norfolk, picking up on the theme.

The church rented a booth at the Norfolk Bridal Fair. Hundreds of couples, young and old come every year to find what they need to plan a wedding and a life together. First Baptist invited them to consider making their spiritual lives a part of the plan.

The church offered a fifteen-question compatibility test with information for follow up with Pastor Robin Stoops. There was also a give away with books full of engagement and marriage helps and a drawing for a couples devotional Bible.

"We were well received," Pastor Robin commented, "it was amazing how many couples were looking for a church home and also a safe place to ask a pastor questions about the process of getting married in a church. We have already reserved a spot for next year." Some of the younger couples in the church manned the booth putting a fresh and friendly face to the outreach. Over a thousand people attended the fair allowing for a lot of contact with the couples.

What other ABC/NE churches are having "out of building" experiences??



Missionary Mike Mann Visits Nebraska Churches



ABC Missionary Mike Mann made a return visit to Nebraska in March, speaking at the ABMen's Breakfast in Omaha and visiting churches across the state. Mike has been informally "adopted" by Nebraska Baptists.

Assoc. Exec. Minister for Mission Development, Steve Bills, will be assisting churches that want to direct their World Mission Offerings in the fall to Mike's ministry. Mike will be going on the Prayer and Fishing Retreat in July led by Grand Island pastor, Charlie Gregory. It is hoped Mike will be back in Nebraska in October.

Countdown the Top Reasons Why Now is A Great Time to Order from Judson Press

7. *Jordan's Hair*, one of Judson's children's books, was recently awarded national recognition as one of the top 100 "Best You Can Be" products of the year.

6. Ryan Newman, winner of the 2008 Daytona 500, wrote the foreword for the Judson Press book *Before the Thunder Rolls: Devotions for NASCAR Fans*. Jimmie Johnson, last year's Nextel Cup champion, also contributed a foreword for this best seller.

5. May is Teacher Appreciation Month and Judson Press has the perfect gift for that public school teacher who is working so hard to make a difference in our children's' lives. *Morning Meetings with Jesus: 180 Devotions for Teachers* by Susan O'Carroll Drake includes a foreword from the ABC's Tony Campolo.

4. Graduation season is also upon us. Looking for gift ideas? Consider *Call Waiting: God's Invitation to Youth*, the newly released *Playbook for Christian Manhood: 12 Key Plays for Black Teen Boys*, *The Real Deal: A Spiritual Guide for Black Teen Girls*, or *What to Expect When You're Accepted: An African American Christian's Guide to College*.

3. Author Joseph Robinson Jr. has revealed that much can be learned from a man who ends up losing his head! In the newly released *7 Leadership Imperatives from a Wild Man* Robinson looks to the life and character of John the Baptist as model for leadership in the church and in the boardroom.

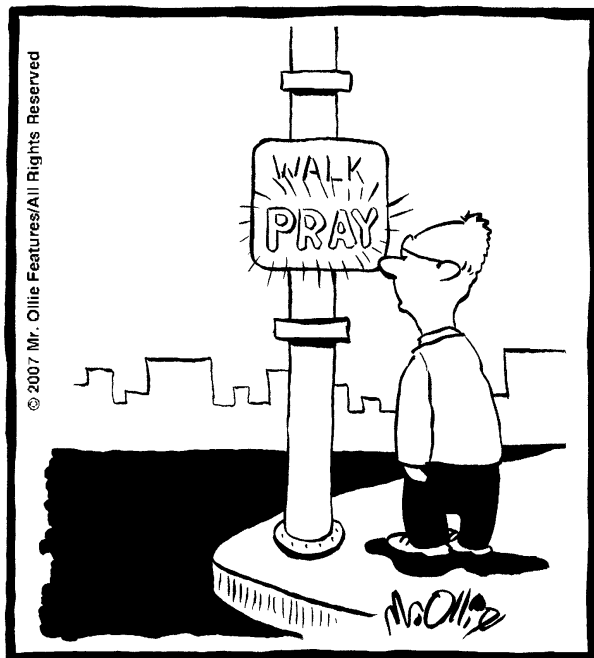
2. It's spring and that means it's time for baseball. Get in the spirit with the inspiration found in *Steal Away: Devotions for Baseball Fans* by Hugh Poland.

And the #1 reason to order from Judson Press today...

1. Our region benefits from every online purchase you make when you enter code 16 in the Region Rewards box at checkout! These funds will help our region's ministry efforts. Every dollar counts, so place an order today!

www.judsonpress.com

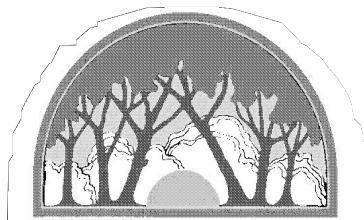
Book of Timothy



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ABC/NE Trivia

1. Is *The Messenger* available "on-line"? Yes or No?
2. How many people attend church in Alaska?
 - a. 80%
 - b. 50%
 - c. 30%
 - d. less than 20%
3. How many ABC churches are there in Alaska?
 - a. 14
 - b. 24
 - c. 34
 - d. 44
4. Is ABC Alaska a region like ABC Nebraska? Yes or No?
5. Is Puerto Rico a region like ABC Nebraska? Yes or No? (answers on p. 8)



Moses Merrill News

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E-mail: campmerrill@nntc.net Web site: www.campmerrill.com

Come for the Summer . . .

Make A Difference!

SUMMER STAFF OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG ADULTS & SENIORS

Moses Merrill

Camp & Conference Center

is looking for Christians who:

- Desire to serve in camping ministry
- Are self-starters
- Are organized
- Relate well to people
- Are well motivated
- Have good character, integrity, adaptability
- Are willing to learn

There are paid & volunteer positions.

Seniors volunteers can negotiate for a work day of 4 to 6 hours.

- This is a ministry setting.
You will serve in an atmosphere of acceptance and encouragement.
- Every task is ministry!
To some people, running a dishwasher and cleaning cabins can be drudgery but we see these team tasks as critical ministry support.
- Opportunities for Christian Growth:
Sunday worship on the grounds.
Daily Bible study available.
Meet Christian leaders.
Christian Fellowship.

Specific Jobs Available:

ACTIVITIES ASSISTANT

Assists camp coordinators with recreation activities. May be asked to plan and lead activities for groups of campers. Maintains recreational equipment; provides equipment to coordinators as requested. Also assists with cleaning, dishwashing, and other tasks.

LIFEGUARD

Serves as lifeguard at the pool during its use. Also cleans and maintains the pool area and bathhouses. Dishwashing, cleaning, and other tasks are assigned when the pool is not in use.

WRANGLER

Responsible for the horses and trail riding activities. Also builds and maintains fences as well as tack and other equipment used by this program. Dishwashing, cleaning, and other tasks are assigned during non-riding times.

KITCHEN AIDE/DINING ROOM HOST

Assists the cooking staff in preparing and serving food to campers and staff. Serves as a dining room host to guests; oversees duties involved in closing the kitchen and dining hall for the day. Also assists with cleaning, dishwashing, and other tasks.

CRAFTS ASSISTANT

Plans and supervises arts and crafts activities for campers during the camp week. Maintains supply of art and craft supplies. Also assists with cleaning, dishwashing, and other tasks.

SNACK SHACK/PHOTOGRAPHER

Responsible for taking photographs and creating/distributing the camper directory for the camp week. Operates the Snack Shack, stocks the soda pop machines, and delivers campers' mail. Dishwashing, cleaning, and other tasks are also included.

BUILDING AND GROUNDS ASSISTANT

Responsible for lawn mowing, trimming, and other grounds-keeping duties, building maintenance and equipment maintenance. Also responsible for campfire areas. Cleaning, dishwashing, and other tasks are also included.

From the Associate Executive Minister Dave Lundholm

The Routine Maintenance of Pastors Includes Sabbaticals

When I came on staff in 1991, I bought a new Honda Civic VX. That car had almost 200,000 miles on it and was still running perfectly in 2006 when it was rear-ended and totaled by an SUV. Those 15 years of service and near 200,000 miles were made possible because I religiously followed the recommendations for maintenance. Once every 90 thousand miles the manual recommended a major engine overhaul that included replacement of the timing chain. This overhaul was expensive but it prevented the engine from self-destructing when the timing failed.

The care of pastors is similar. There are things that they can do themselves like daily devotions, times of prayer, monthly retreats, yearly extended retreats, taking care of their family, caring for their health and participating in continuing education. And there are things that the congregation can do for them like complimenting great sermons and other work, letters and notes of thanks and the annual pastor appreciation celebrations (usually in October).

There is however one part of pastoral maintenance that is the equivalent of that timing chain maintenance. I'm talking about the practice of the church providing a **sabbatical**. A sabbatical is a time to be released from normal responsibilities so that the

pastor can rest, renew, engage in focused study and re-vision future ministry. A sabbatical is usually granted after each 6 or 7 years of continuous ministry with a congregation or religious organization. The time granted varies. It needs to be at least three months. During this time the congregation continues to provide full salary, M & M retirement and health benefits.

Sometimes ministry needs require creativity in scheduling and timing. My sabbatical came in one-month "chunks" over a period of three years. Each "chunk" consisted of times of rest, times of education and times of integration and planning. (I attended Alban Institute training and learned ministerial coaching during my sabbatical.)

Sabbaticals provide rest, renewal and new possibilities for ministry. They are listed in the Pastor Maintenance Manual under "Every 7 years." They enable energized ministry and prevent ministry self-destruction.

Resources: Google 'pastor sabbatical'. MMBB has great article on their web site. ABC Interim Ministries can provide interim leadership. Lilly foundation can provide sabbatical grants (www.lillyendowment.org/religion.html).



LOCAL CHURCH NEWS

by Darlene Rimpley

May Deadlines

April 4, 2008 - Print Copy

April 9, 2008 - E-Mail

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Subject: Messenger

ARNOLD FBC: The community Easter Pageant, sponsored by FBC, was held on March 22, and a community Sunrise Service was held on Easter morning at the Church of the Nazarene. A church bowling party was held on Feb 24, and a Fun Night, with a movie and games on March 30.

ARTHUR BC: Adventure Club has resumed for the spring. Three special services were planned for Easter in addition to the special Palm Sunday and Easter Worship services. A delegation of deacons, the pastor and his wife went to Bridgeport to pray for the church there on March 9. They visited with the pastor and several elders. They prayed at both the old church and the new church being constructed.

BEATRICE FBC: Rev. Theodora Boolin has accepted the call to minister at FBC, and will begin her pastorate on April 1. She has been pastor in Pierre, SD. Eight youth and three sponsors attended Dare2Share in Lincoln Feb 22-23. They stayed overnight at Lincoln FBC. The youth group presented the Easter Sunrise Service, and served a breakfast following the worship. FBC joined in with other churches from the Capitol Association in a "make a Joyful Noise" talent presentation on Feb 24.

BELLEVUE NEW LIFE: Our Neighborhood Exploration Teams (NETS) are at work, doing

various mission and ministry projects that use members' gifts and aim, ultimately, at new relationships with unbelievers and the unchurched. A number of our members are participating in Urban Plunge - an outreach in Omaha. We have discipleship covenant groups meeting weekly, using the book Discipleship Essentials as their guide, but focusing on building discipleship relationships. By this time next year, about 15-20 new disciples would be equipped to each disciple about 3 others during the following year and so on. We are seeing evidence that this is producing quality of service and membership. We celebrated baptism on Resurrection Sunday. We continue to attempt to stretch ourselves with creative worship.

BLAIR FBC: The Church celebrated a Valentine's Day brunch on Feb 17. February was the one year anniversary of the Wednesday fellowship luncheons that are held every Wednesday for church members and citizens of the community. Work is almost completed on the 2008 church membership list that has seen several new additions over the last year. Work is also ongoing for the church cookbook by fellow members and is already as thick as a novel. Wednesday evening Lenten services were well attended. Work is also close to being completed on the new church website.

CHADRON FBC: The youth group gave a spe-

cial presentation at the Kenwood service and FBC service on Palm Sunday, and held a meal after the late service as a fund raiser for their projects. The youth also held a fund-raiser dinner on March 2, and were guests at a formal dinner on March 5, hosted by Tim and Pam Anderson and Bill and Ava Hawthorne. The MRS Circle sponsored a food drive for the Food Pantry during the month of March.

COLUMBUS FBC: Camping Sunday was March 9. The C. E. Board furnished "camp lunch." Easter morning the Diaconate Board served breakfast. There will be a Baptismal Service on Easter Sunday. March 30: Farewell luncheon for Kathy and Jesse Brown. Our new e-mail address: 1stbaptist@frontiernet.net

FAIRBURY FBC: Maundy Thursday services, "Christ in the Passover, was held. Fifty people from FBC attended Dare2Share. Easter Sunrise services were held, followed by a continental breakfast, and an Easter egg hunt after Sunday School. Easter baskets were made up and given to the Adopt-a-youth program that FBC has. A Gay Nineties melodrama, "Beautiful Beulah Belle" was presented on March 30, along with a dinner, sponsored by ABW.

FREMONT FBC: A parade of Palms and the musical, "Then Came the Morning", was presented on Palm Sunday morning. A Maundy

Thursday communion service, Sunrise Service, and Easter breakfast were held. Simple Grace presented a program on Feb. 24, and Calvary Echoes, a gospel quartet, a program on Mar 6.

GIBBON BC: The cantata, "Jesus Lives Forever," was presented on Palm Sunday morning, followed by lunch prepared by the choir members. Maundy Thursday communion service was held. The FBC youth group and Faith United youth group held a supper at Faith United on March 9. A "Got Style" workshop was held on March 15, focusing on the church's style of outreach.

GRAND ISLAND FBC: Holy Week services were held at FBC March 17-21, with the ABW serving the lunches. Blanket Sunday was held on Feb. 17, with enough funds donated to buy 60 blankets.

HOLDREGE FBC: There was a procession of palms by the children on Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday communion service, a Community Good Friday service, and the youth hosted the Easter Sunrise service and the breakfast which followed. Invite-A-Friend Sunday was held on Palm Sunday. Marv and Carolyn Classen recently celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary.

JUNIATA CC: A community Sunrise Service was held at the Methodist Church. JCC took part in the World Day of Prayer on March 7 at St Paul's Lutheran Church in Hastings. The Southern Union Assoc. Meeting was held on Mar 30 at Holbrook, with Roger Williams Ministry presenting a program. A Valentine's banquet was held.

LAVISTA JUDSON: The J.O.Y. Club enjoyed a songfest by the Old Time Gospel Senior Musical Group and Story Teller, Pat Smith. Judson recognized the World Day of Prayer and Girl Scout Sunday. Easter bags were assembled and delivered to all the shut-ins. A communion service and meal were held on Maundy Thursday. The Judson Easter Garden was filled with flowers given in honor and memory of loved ones. The Judson youth treated the congregation to an Easter Program. The Christian Motorcycle Association members attending Judson have asked the congregation for travel size supplies that will be given out at a rest stop during the pilgrimage of bikers heading to Sturgis, South Dakota. While the supplies are appreciated and needed, hearing about their Savior from our CMA members is priceless. The America for Christ Offering was also taken during March.

LINCOLN SECOND: Congratulations to Bob and Joyce Howe for being the Sweetheart Couple of 2008 at the 42nd Annual Valentine's banquet. On March 9, a reception was held for Ed and June Moss. We honored them as they move closer to their son in Kentucky. "Jews for Jesus" came on March 13, we enjoyed a Jewish meal and presentation. The Drama and Music Committee sponsored the Maundy Thursday service with a Cantata entitled "Song of the Shadows" followed with communion. The annual Easter Egg Hunt was held on March 22, filled with activities for area children. We were invited to attend First Baptist Church for Easter Sunrise Services and breakfast. During the Lenten sea-

son the Diaconate made every effort to reach about 28 shut-ins and serve them with communion.

NORFOLK FBC: Maundy Thursday communion service was held, and a Sunrise service and breakfast was held on Easter morning. Taking opportunities to inform people of FBC's programs the church had a booth at the Children's Festival, where they gave out books to 2,300 children, and at the Bridal Festival to share with young couples, and at the annual Norfolk Home Show. FBC collected for the Food Pantry during March. Eleven students and sponsors attended Dare2Share.

NORTH PLATTE FBC: 2008 has been a good year for First Baptist Church, North Platte as we have been blessed with four beautiful babies. They are Ashton Michael Ray Adkisson born 12/10/2007 - parents Mike and Penny Adkisson, Alexandra Grace born 01/12/2008 - parents Ryan and Audrey Thompson of Omaha, Curtis Daniel born 01/31/2008 - parents are Larry and Kristin Eschen, Sophia Marie born 02/05/2008 - parents are Pastor Greg and Lisa Mamula. The Children's Church youngsters holding red heart signs reading "I LOVE" & "FIRST BAPTIST" led the congregation in reciting the Lord's Prayer at the worship service on Sunday, Feb 17. The Epicenter youth praise band helped lead in the worship service on Feb 24.

OMAHA BENSON BC: The Chancel Choir presented several moving pieces on Palm Sunday morning, Communion in the round was held on Maundy Thursday, a Good Friday service featured Songs of the Cross by Bryan Poole and Pastor Paul, A Sunrise Service featuring the youth and Nick Mayo preaching, a fellowship breakfast and worship on Easter Sunday highlighted the celebration of Easter. The Easter Offering went to Together Inc. Joe Powers celebrated his 90th birthday on March 27.

OMAHA FBC: We have begun the celebration of our 150 years as a church. Some events include: a beard-growing contest was launched on Jan 27 and will extend until our all-church banquet in October. New bi-centennial cookbooks are being sold in commemoration of our anniversary and can be purchased from our website, www.omahafbc.org. A women's Bible study was launched March 4 with the group studying the book, Bad Girls of Bible by Barbara Essex. Another women's group is meeting once a month to review a book of their choosing. The youth held their annual chili feed and pie auction on March 9. Proceeds for this event went into the youth/children's programs. The Maundy Thursday service was held in the sanctuary where the choir presented the cantata, "I Am". Resurrection Sunday began with a light breakfast prepared and served by the youth of the church.

OMAHA MIRACLE HILLS: The highlight of Holy Week was a Live Portrayal of the Last Supper presented on Maundy Thursday. The church is rejoicing that all of the teachers for Vacation Bible School have already signed up. VBS will be in June.

OMAHA PARKSIDE: Linger Longer was held on Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday communion,

Sunrise Service with Kachin congregation, and a continental breakfast were joyous celebrations of Easter.

OMAHA, SUNSET HILLS: The redesigned church web page is up and running at www.sunsethillschurch.org. It has much more information, including audio of Pastor Ron's sermons and a photo gallery. Plans are coming together for a big event on Saturday, June 7, as part of Sunset Hills' yearlong 50th anniversary celebration, including an upscale yard and bake sale, barbecue and Sing Until Sunset, all outdoors. Proceeds will benefit the youth group and the kitchen renovation project. Nearly 60 attended the AB Men's annual prayer breakfast. A new elementary school-age youth group is nearing reality. Forgiven will celebrate 10 years of music ministry with an outdoor program in September.

SCOTTSBLUFF FBC: Maundy Thursday service was held, with Darren Stroh of the Bridgeport church bringing the message as they united in worship. Sunrise Service was held on Easter morning, and the men provided an Easter morning breakfast. Pastor Jim and Annette attended a Billy Graham School of Evangelism March 4-7. The children and youth gathered in the fellowship hall, had pizza, and then made cookies to be delivered to friends of the church. The youth held a bake sale on March 15 to raise funds for their trip to Acquire the Fire in Denver. [CareActor Inc.](http://CareActorInc.com), a ministry of drama from Hastings, NE presented a program on March 19.

STELLA, PRAIRIE UNION: The church presented an Easter Cantata on Good Friday evening at the church.

TEKAMAH FBC: A Maundy Thursday service, Good Friday service, and a community Sunrise Service were held to celebrate Holy Week. An all church bowling party was held March 2, followed by supper at the church. Plans are underway for celebrating the 150th year of the founding of FBC. A scholarship is available for graduates, as well as a student loan fund.

UNION FBC: Judy Hall, wife of pastor David Hall, passed away. Her memorial service was held at the church on March 17. Susan Gillies, Steve Bils and Bellevue New Life pastor Michael Friday represented ABC/NE at the service.



NEW MEMBERS:

FAIRBURY FBC: Paige Arnold, Brent Hirsch
HOLDREGE FBC: Alivia Nelson, Sue Anderson, Neil Weaver, Jim and Edna Englund,

NORFOLK FBC: Scott and Rebecca Wilson, Gene and Ginny Mahan

COLUMBUS FBC: Paul & Elaine Liekhus, Randy Effa Jr., Ed & Vernice Voight and Neil Huston

ARTHUR: Jan Gochenour

**All Churches —
All Youth —
All Youth Leaders . . .**

Contact the Region Office if you are planning to attend the Youth Gathering in Estes Park this summer. This is a great opportunity — Don't Miss It!

Let us know if you are interested but haven't figured out yet how to make it happen!

Trivia Answers (questions on page 4)

1. Yes, *The Messenger* is available on-line at www.abcnebraska.com
2. d. Fewer than 20% of Alaskans are considered "churched."
3. a. There are 14 ABC churches in Alaska.
4. No. ABC Alaska is still considered a home mission area and relates to the denomination through National Ministries. The churches would like to become a region and have begun a process to move toward that status.
5. Yes. Puerto Rico is a region of ABC.

ABC of Nebraska Staff

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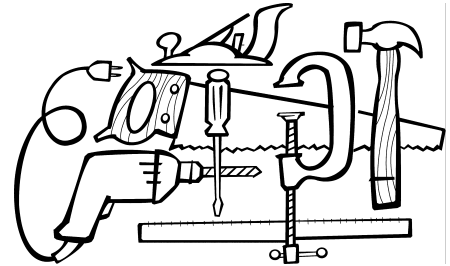


Don't Forget . . .

Moses Merrill PROJECT WEEKS

April 7-12 May 5-10

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