

Thank You For...

The roots of RMMO go back to the mid-1930s, when American Baptist congregations received a Communion Fellowship Offering on the first Sunday of each month to support needy and elderly clergy within their churches. In 1948 churches began donating to the November Communion Fellowship Offering, providing financial assistance to the denomination's elderly ministers, missionaries and their widowed spouses. In 1977 American Baptist Churches USA launched the Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering (RMMO) to continue this tradition of thankfulness.

Today RMMO is a tangible way for American Baptist congregations to say "Thank you for ..." the commitment, service and spiritual guidance of retired ministers, missionaries and their widowed spouses. The offering supports those who have devoted their lives to God's service by providing emergency assistance in their times of need and, for those eligible, a "Thank You" check at the end of each year. In 2011, RMMO provided Thank You checks to more than 3,300 recipients. This year's national RMMO campaign goal is \$1.2 million.

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RETIRED MINISTERS AND MISSIONARIES OFFERING



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American Baptist Churches of Nebraska



Nov/Dec 2012

"Holiday with the Merrills"
 November 17
 10 AM — 4 PM
 MMCCC

What's Inside?

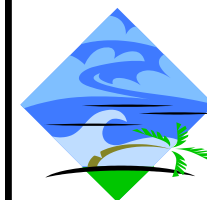
- M & M Offering
- Region Convention Update
- Thailand Project
- Bulgaria/Serbia Report
- Great News!
- 2300 Team

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HURRICANE SANDY

The entire northeastern part of the United States continues to make slow progress in recovering from Hurricane Sandy. The Caribbean islands have also been greatly affected. In its wake, they have endured a lack of electricity, heat, food supplies and gasoline. The time of hardship is hardly over, but it does feel good to see schools and businesses reopen, and public transportation get back on line. Each day brings new signs of hope and progress, and they do not journey alone! How can you help those affected by this storm? Give to "One Great Hour of Sharing," and pray!

AMERICAN BAPTIST
 WORLD RELIEF OFFICE



From the Executive Minister/Region Missionary. Robin Stoops

"This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Luke 2:12

I am not always the best to notice a sign. If the truth were to be known I have a hard time sometimes finding the sign. Maybe I should say I have a hard time paying attention to what the sign says. People have not changed much since the time of Christ's birth, signs were difficult then and they are difficult today. I am not talking about easy signs like, "One Way" or "Stop."



I have missed a few of those, it makes driving exciting. I am talking about the signs that are harder to spot. Signs that seem out of place and hard to understand.

In one of the communities I served we decided to put a sign up on Saturday nights at the local race track. It was a simple invitation to join us in church the next Sunday morning. A couple of our people were not too sure it was a great place for a sign about church. We also put signs in our yards, a hundred signs, inviting people to be with us on a Sunday morning for worship and fellowship. It did get some people's attention, all of those signs springing up overnight in our congregations front yard.

On that night so long ago the angels pointed the shepherds to a sign. It was not flashing, no neon was used but it too was out of place. Who would expect the King of kings to be born in a place so non-descript so humble? Who would believe the family who received him, the circumstances of his birth?

The sign for the shepherds should be a reminder for us of God's willingness to become like us in the most ordinary ways in order to invite us to be a part of his family. It was not what anyone expected, it was simple and humble and beautiful in a down to earth, authentic way. This Christmas do not miss the signs. The opportunities to be mission in your neighborhood, community, nation and world. Give generously, imitate some of the greatest attributes of our God, and celebrate the grace that has been shared, not for us to keep, but for us to pass on.

From the Associate Executive Minister/Region MissionaryGreg Mamula

I grew up in a military family. As such it was not always possible to have consistent holiday traditions. Some years we invited other people to join us in our holiday celebrations, since they could not travel home either. Some years it was just the four of us in a tiny apartment. Sometimes it was just three of us, since my dad would be on duty somewhere. Sometimes we got to travel home and spend the holidays with grandparents, cousins, aunts, and uncles who we only saw once every few years. There is one thing that did remain every single year no matter if we were all together or separated, in a foreign country or in my grandparents' home. Dr. Seuss's *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* was the one thing that was a constant for me every single year. Prior to DVR and Blu Rays my parents recorded the special off of CBS on a VHS tape alongside about seven other Christmas classic cartoons. That tape was my special Christmas tradition that encouraged and comforted me like nothing else during the holidays. My favorite was always the Grinch. It was my favorite because the "Who's down in Whoville, who liked Christmas a lot," were capable every year to hold Christmas in their hearts and sing about their joy despite the Grinch's attempt to steal it away. And the best part was when the "Grinch's small heart grew three sizes that day..."



I found a strange sense of hope and joy every time I watched it, and I watched it nearly every day between Thanksgiving and Christmas. As I reflect upon that cartoon and book, I can't help but see the joy of Christ in those little Who's. While it is not a Bible story, it's pretty easy to make connections with the singing angels in Luke 2, the priest Joshua's transition from clean to dirty clothes in Zechariah 3:3-9, the Isaiah 65 image of a New Heaven and New Earth, and most importantly the idea that anybody no matter how devious they are has the hope of Salvation and Restoration, if they can find the "true meaning of Christmas" that the Messiah has come to earth to dwell among us. May each of us find ways to live into the coming Messiah. May our hearts grow three sizes this year for Christ. For as the ancient Church proclaimed, *Christ has come, Christ has risen, Christ will come again.* Thanks be to God.

Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas, and Happy New Year.

GREAT NEWS!!!

FBC Broken Bow will be installing Jurdan Counts as their Senior Pastor on November 18 at 4pm. There will be a meal to follow. You are invited to attend and welcome Jurdan to his new post. If you cannot attend the event you can send your congratulations to the church and Jurdan at FBC at 1002 South E St., Broken Bow, NE 68822.

FBC Chadron will be celebrating its 125th Anniversary November 10-11 with a special banquet on Saturday the 10th at 6:00pm and a Worship Celebration on Sunday the 11th at 10:45am. You are encouraged to send words of Celebration to them and continue to pray for them as they search for a new pastor. You send your greetings to P.O. Box 8, Chadron, NE 69337 or 308-432-2701.

FBC Columbus has voted to welcome Dan Odom as their new Pastor. Dan and his wife Lauren have two children are coming from the New Hampshire area. Their first Sunday is November 11. To welcome Dan and his family you can send greetings to FBC at 3210 30th St., Columbus, NE 68601 or 402-564-4279.

FBC Omaha has voted to welcome Matt Toupin as their new Pastor. Matt and his wife Lisa have two children and are coming to Omaha from the Oregon area. They will be arriving in Omaha December 9th. To welcome Matt and his family you can send greetings to FBC at 421 Park Ave., Omaha, NE 68131 or 402-345-5009.

FBC Union will celebrating its 125th Anniversary November 25 with a special worship and baptismal service at 10:30am. Pastor Jim Cummings is very happy to be celebrating this time with his church. You are invited to join them in this celebration and to send words of encouragement to them. You can send your greetings to P.O. Box 93, Union, NE 68455 or 402-263-5735.



Moses Merrill News

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"So, it must be pretty slow at Camp Merrill now...." NOT!
Your ministry through Moses Merrill Camp and Conference Center continues throughout the year!

Upcoming Events:

THIS WEEKEND: Holidays with the Merrills (Nov. 17)
10:00 – 4:00 pm; no admission charge
Highlights: crafters, decorated facilities, Attic Treasures (There is sure to be some item you can't live without) with all proceeds to the summer camping program.
Special presentation "Excess Baggage: the Orphan Train"
By Charlotte Endorf, Norfolk
Musicians will be coming from Kearney, Fremont, Omaha and surrounding areas.
Lunch is available for \$7.00 (\$3.00 for children under 10)

Thanksgiving Dinner—Thursday November 22, 1:00 pm

Reservations required by Nov. 19
Advent Services – Dec. 2, 9, 16, 23 at 4:00 pm
Christmas Eve Service – Dec. 24 at 5:00 pm

Your support is needed and always welcome.
--**Thank you to the 120 members of the 2300 Team.** With your help our operations budget is much more stable. Not a member? There is a place waiting for you.
--**Consider a year-end donation to Moses Merrill.** Ministry grows as resources grow.
--**Consider volunteering as an individual or a group**—tasks await your help.

Our mission is to enable each person to connect with God and to deepen their relationship with God. This ministry continues to change and grow. Thank you for your partnership!

Camp Cat

Wow, this has been a beautiful fall at Moses Merrill. It's been great to see so many of you enjoying the place. I like it when the pastors come. They really enjoy being together. I think they work too hard studying when they are here but they do take a little time for rest and recreation. My own approach is to spend as much time resting as possible and then spend a little time sneaking through the woods looking for mice.

My favorite day of the year is coming. Put it on your calendar. They call it "Holidays With the Merrills." I suggested they re-name it "Holidays With Camp Cat," but they turned me down. It will still be great. This year it is Nov. 17. It's a great fall festival. Hope to see you there.