



# Dakota Baptist



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## Vital Signs



The initial medical assessment is a check of a person's vital signs. Blood pressure, breathing and temperature. Checking blood pressure yields the presence of a pulse, the heart is beating and blood is flowing. Further this assessment is diagnostic indicator for the many consequences of high or low pressure. The presence of this blood pressure indicates the various organs and systems in the body have the possibility of functioning.

Checking one's breathing is an indicator that carbon dioxide can be exchanged for oxygen. The bodies' organs and systems have the possibility of receiving originated blood for healthy function.

A check of one's

temperature can be an indicator of the bodies responding to its internal environment. An elevated temperature is sending a message that our system is responding vigorously to something it senses is a threat to our body.

One of Joyce's physicians said that it is necessary to treat a person's body and soul. And that he has identified three spiritual vital signs that need assessment. He articulated that Faith, Hope and Love are the three vital signs. I responded that in my profession "that will preach".

I agree that the first assessment is of a person's faith in Jesus Christ. The presence of faith is not a solo indicator of spiritual health, but the absence of faith is a conclusive indicator of spiritual ill health. A life with faith present has the possibility of full spiritual health. A cardiologist once told me I was deconditioned. That meant I was overweight and out of shape. Some of us have a faith that is

deconditioned due to absence of use. That situation can be changed. Use your faith to guide your choices and loves.

Hope is the spiritual function that engages our faith. Without faith put in action by hope that God is present in our life and that God will guide and sustain us, we may never develop the faith that may be present. We must exercise our hope and move as God leads. The hope that God is with us in all of our life give us courage to live more fully.

Love is the final vital sign to be assessed. Spiritual health is not possible without the presence of Love. Love of God and Love of God's creation. It is necessary to love and value persons God created because there is a presence of God in them through their creation.

It is possible to move from poor health to robust health in most cases. We know what to do; eat right get exercise and get enough sleep. It is also possible through Scripture study,

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sustained prayer and service to God to improve a weak spiritual life to a vital witness of God's goodness and grace. You don't need to go to a physician for this assessment. God's Holy Spirit is already communicating what you need to hear. Are you ready to respond with the faith God has already given you?

*Riley Walker*  
Executive Minister

## ABC OF THE DAKOTAS FINANCIAL UPDATE

One of the most firm commitments I have regarding my service to American Baptist Churches of the Dakotas is to maintain the financial health of the region while serving the needs of our churches at the highest level possible. Before I came, the region went through some very trying times to gain financial health and it is my commitment not to take you there again.

Income to ABC of the Dakotas is down meaningfully year to date. It is very hard to project year-end figures because our last quarter income exceeds the other three. I have recommended reductions in region spending that looks like it will save more than \$15,000. Some of these we are changes we should do anyway. For instance the manner that you receive the Dakota Baptist. Our plan is to make the newsletter available to you via email and our web page: abc-dakotas.org. Churches which express the desire can still receive limited copies by mail. We are reducing the travel reimbursement for region professional staff. We are rebidding our health insurance which could easily save \$6,000.

We will have to draw a little heavier on our region endowment this year. Before this year we have drawn less than 4%. This year we likely will draw just over 5%. That means the sky isn't falling, but we are getting a good rain. We will continue to be good stewards of what you give to support the ministry of ABC Dakotas and we trust you to be good stewards in supporting us.

Riley Walker  
Executive Minister

### WITH WILLING HANDS



AMERICA FOR CHRIST OFFERING 2010

#### Care by Pinching Pennies for Children in Poverty

American Baptists everywhere are rediscovering the thrill of contributing their own two cents—literally and figuratively. The Penny Project was conceived by youth at First Baptist Church in New London, N.H. In response to the National Ministries' Children in Poverty initiative, they set out to collect one penny for each impoverished child in their state. Even more valuable than the 60,000 pennies collected has been the awareness raised around the issue of children in poverty.

That awareness is growing as the Penny Project is taken up by the American Baptist Home Missions Societies itself. National Ministries (NM) has launched a nationwide Penny Project, challenging congregations and regions to begin their own penny collections toward the goal of one penny for each of the 14 million children living in poverty in the United States and Puerto Rico.

First Baptist Church (FBC) in Kermit, W.Va., took up the challenge and discovered the value of pennies for community building and outreach. Attendance at FBC Kermit tops at 15 on a "good" Sunday, but the dedicated members quickly raised \$150—and made some vital connections. After being featured on two local television stations, the church welcomed participation from community members and other local congregations. And recently, Pastor Scotty Robertson spoke with their state senator about opportunities for faith-based organizations to help impoverished children.

The Penny Project is another example of how churches, regions, and NM are collaborating with willing hands to connect, care for, and celebrate the work of God in our communities. Your contributions to America for Christ further empower these kinds of transforming partnerships.

■ Find out more about The Penny Project and other Children in Poverty initiatives supported by your America for Christ offering. Visit [www.nationalministries.org](http://www.nationalministries.org) or contact Rev. Lisa Harris at [Lisa.Harris@abc-usa.org](mailto:Lisa.Harris@abc-usa.org).

"For the love of Christ urges us on..." 2 CORINTHIANS 5:14-15

American Baptist Churches USA

AF105

### WITH WILLING HANDS



AMERICA FOR CHRIST OFFERING 2010

America for Christ gifts support Christ-centered ministries that are transforming lives across the United States and Puerto Rico—from addressing Children in Poverty initiatives and resettling refugees violently driven from their homelands to providing evangelism training, developing discipleship resources and leading ministry workshops and conferences.

[nationalministries.org/GIVE/Serve](http://nationalministries.org/GIVE/Serve)

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Ronald J. Sider and Heidi Unruh, editors



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## **CHURCH OF HOPE**

The church has done a lot of praying lately. We observed the World Day of Prayer a day early since that fit in with the prison schedule better. We heard stories about Christian life in Cameroon. We sang songs that were recommended for this year and ended by breaking into prayer groups. Some groups prayed on their knees for the women and children of Cameroon and those in the U.S. Tears flowed freely.

Prison is a tough place to be on Mother's Day. I received permission for those who attended church on the Saturday before Mother's Day to bring pictures of their children to the service for a time of prayer. Those who didn't have pictures wrote the names of their children on slips of paper. Some also write the names of their mothers, nieces, nephews and grandchildren. Our Communion table was covered in a double layer. My message was that one of us are perfect mothers. That God always forgives us when we fall short as mothers and Christian women, if we come to him in true repentance. God gives us second chances and heals and restores relationships.

Five women have accepted Jesus as Savior during the last weeks. I will be having baptisms soon. Prayer for these new sisters in Christ.

Expecting a large attendance than usual we received permission to hold our Easter Service in the gym. We decorated our four foot wooden cross with lots of artificial flowers and ribbons, and had more candles than usual on the Communion table.

Four inmates presented special music numbers, the choir sang and an Easter play was presented. We ended with Communion, prayer and the congregation singing one of my favorite Easter songs "Because He Lives." A time of fellowship with coffee and cinnamon rolls followed.

The guards who were on duty that night commented on the quality of the service and the good behavior of all who had attended.

*Rev. Michele Bradley*  
*Pastor*

## **Junior High was JAMMIN'**

First Baptist Church of Rapid City was the host for Junior High JAM on the weekend of March 19-21. Forty-four students and adults from Fargo First Baptist, Sioux Falls First Baptist and New Hope and Rapid City First Baptist participated in this year's event. The theme for the event was "REFLECTIONS" and Adam Sieff from Hillcrest Baptist Church in Sioux Falls was the speaker. The theme scripture was Proverbs 27:19, 'As water reflects a face, so a man's heart reflects the man.' Adam's sessions dealt with the fact that we are a reflection of God and created in His image. But man, because of his sin, has become broken and separated from God. It is only through God's son, Jesus, that we can reclaim that image and reflect to the world God's love. Worship was led by "The Band" and an offering was taken up for the Haitian Relief Fund.

Along with the sessions and the small group times, some fun stuff was scheduled in on Saturday. In the afternoon the group went to the YMCA where everyone participated in Rock-wall climbing, jousting, basketball, swimming, dodgeball and other fun activities. On Saturday evening, Adam and his crew put on a hip-hop concert.

Plan now to attend next year's event. The location has not yet been selected, so if your church would like to host the event, give the Region Office a call. The dates for the next Junior High JAM are March 18-20, 2011. We hope to see you there!

*Larry Lang*  
*Region/Youth Ministry Coordinator*

## ABCD Youth Ministry Report

Youth ministry has gone through some changes over the last three years. We have seen the rebirth of the Junior High Jamboree, a change in the structuring of Winter Camp, and the addition of an event for region youth leaders. I will share with you briefly the ministry and mission of these three events.

After a several year absence, the Junior High Jamboree was reinstated in 2008. The event name was changed to Junior High JAM and takes place on the third weekend of March. The purpose of the event is to provide a time for Junior High students from the region to come together outside the Camp Judson experience. At this event, relationships from camp can be reestablished and new relationships can be made. Spiritual discipleship can be deepened through Bible teaching, small group discussion, worship and shared ministry experiences. Leadership is provided through a guest speaker, a worship leader and youth ministry leaders from the churches involved in the event. Locations for the event would ideally be provided by ABC churches in the region. In this, the third year, we realized a sizable profit for this event. It is hoped that this could happen every year.

Winter Camp is for students in high school. This event has graduated into what we now call the Judson Student Life Conference. This event takes place at Camp Judson on Presidents Day weekend. The purpose of this event is to provide students and youth leaders with the opportunity to deepen their faith through worship, discipleship and service. A speaker and worship leader work together to provide times of biblical study and personal meditation to help students and youth leaders grow in spiritual disciplines. A time is set aside to personally put into practice those things that have been learned throughout the weekend. These ministry experiences have been provide by the Black Hills Habitat of Humanity, Boys Club of Rapid City, the YMCA of Rapid City and Camp Judson. By working together, students and leaders are able to deepen relationships that have been developed. These ministry experiences have been a highlight for everyone involved. In the last three years, this event, though well attended, has not been able to break even. However, by providing a quality event, we have seen spiritual growth take place in the lives of students and leaders.

The event for youth leaders is called Oasis. Though we had to call off our first event due to weather and bad timing, many youth leaders showed an interest in attending an event where they could meet with other youth leaders in the region to strengthen and encourage each other in ministry. This event will take place in Sioux Falls on the campus of the University of Sioux Falls. We want to offer a quality event for a minimal charge with the hopes that many churches will offer to pay the way for their youth leaders, youth volunteers and youth pastors to come together. It has been discussed by several leaders that the fall, rather than the winter, is a better time for this event to take place.

*Larry Lang  
Associate Area Minister &  
Youth Ministry Coordinator*

## **NEW HOPE CHURCH SIOUX FALLS, SD**

We have failed in the past years to keep our region churches informed of our activities and progress and would like to update you on how things are going at this time.

We will start with last summer when we were privileged to work with The Point Is To Serve, Iglesia Bautista Nueva Esperanza, and Friendship Baptist churches to host a neighborhood block party near New Hope Church. It was a great event with a lot of good fellowship, games, music and food shared with our community. We are the beginning stages of doing another one of these in the near future.

Our youth group has bussed tables at Pizza Ranch twice since last fall to help raise funds to get to Camp Judson and other youth activities. We are now set to do the same at CiCi's Pizza on June 13 and again at Pizza Ranch on 41st Street on Nov. 29 The youth attended a couple of concerts by SieffStyle and Blitz Maximus. We usually have about 10 youth attend our Wednesday night meetings. We are looking forward to beginning a "war" that will take the entire summer to get the youth trained and ready to "fight" for what they believe!

We were blessed with a great concert on Friday, April 30 as Roy Hope of Sinai, SD came and shared his talents with about 75 people in attendance, It was a great sharing time of fellowship and cookies with our visitors after the concert. We hope to have more of these in the future.

Our adult Sunday School class will occasionally venture out to the American Legion for a pancake breakfast.

One of the most exciting times was our baptism service on Feb. 7. Santos and Amanda Colon, and two of our youth, Joe Esmay and Caden Larsen, were baptized and welcomed into our membership.

We have also been enjoying Joe Brown as our pulpit supply pastor for several months and really appreciate his wife Joyce playing for our services.

In Joe's absence we have also heard from James Anderson, LeRoy Mathieu, Duane Versteegh and Richie Hutchinson.

We hope to be more regular in keeping you informed on our progress.

## We Welcome These New Members to the ABCD

### Joining by Baptism:

Robert Huff, SF 1st B.  
Frank Cooks, SF 1st B.

### Joining by Letter or Christian Experience:

Wayne & Gladys Noren, Bismarck  
Rhonda Reuther, Bismarck  
Jon Larson, Bismarck  
Scott & Liane Auch, Bismarck  
David & Carol Stoudt, Timber Lake

## Mission Stories



### Jesus said, "Do you love me? Feed my sheep."

*Thanks to One Great Hour of Sharing, Katrina Victims Go Home—Finally*

HURRICANE KATRINA STRUCK FIVE YEARS AGO, AND WE HAVEN'T recovered yet.

Its winds and storm surges changed not only the houses and lives they tore apart, but all of us. Today, earthquakes and war take Katrina's place in the headlines, and we're in danger of forgetting—even though there's still extensive rebuilding to be done.

The 500 volunteers who converged on New Orleans' Little Woods neighborhood in spring 2009 to repair and rebuild, however, will never forget.



*National Ministries recruited 33 volunteers—supported by One Great Hour of Sharing funds—who rebuilt 13 homes destroyed by Hurricane Katrina.*

told local reporter Blaire Arvin as he walked into his restored home for the first time in four years. Little Woods, a diverse fishing neighborhood in the Ninth Ward, sits on the southeastern shore of Lake Pontchartrain.

It was unprecedented. Spearheaded by Church World Service (CWS) under the banner "Rebuilding Homes, Reclaiming Hope," folks from 10 Christian denominations gathered for an intensive month of pounding and painting. By working—and praying—side-by-side, they made it possible for 13 families to return to their homes.

"It looks much better than what it was. It's like the day I first bought it," Eugene Riddle

Though it was hard hit when the levees broke, it's lacked the attention other neighborhoods have received.

CWS decided to change that. Each participating denomination contributed for supplies: American Baptist Churches USA sent \$50,000 from the One Great Hour of Sharing Katrina-designated disaster fund. Also, National Ministries' Volunteer Coordinator Victoria Goff recruited 33 volunteers primarily from churches in Maryland, Illinois, Vermont and New Hampshire for week-long shifts.

When the month was over, homeowners were paraded to their homes in true New Orleans style. "It was wonderful," Goff says. "To work together as partners and denominations through CWS, and to help homeowners and families return home to rebuild their lives was wonderful."

Through One Great Hour of Sharing, you help victims of disasters like Katrina find hope in new life.

Put feet on your faith in this year's ecumenical effort—April 12 to May 21—rebuilding homes destroyed by the June 2008 flood in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Volunteers must be at least 16 years of age; no construction skills required, but if you have them, even better. For more information, contact Victoria Goff (1-800-ABC-3USA, x2449 or [vgoff@abc-usa.org](mailto:vgoff@abc-usa.org)). Give a week of your life to help.



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[www.onegrouthoursharing.org](http://www.onegrouthoursharing.org)

# American Baptist Churches of the Dakotas Tenth Biennial

October 8-10, 2010

Immanuel Baptist Church

Minot, North Dakota

Passing on the  
Light of Christ

Ephesians 5:14