

FELLOWSHIP Focus

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PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

Light in the Darkness

by KEVIN STONE, PRESIDENT

If you read my monthly letter to our churches and supporters back in December, you will recognize a theme here, but I think it is one that bears repeating and a bit of expounding.

We have recently experienced the Christmas and New Year season. This is a time of year that presents exceptional opportunities for the Church to impact our communities. While there are likely multiple reasons, I think the heart of the issue is that there is a deep longing for renewal in our society, both within and outside the church. We must respond to that need as ambassadors of Christ.

One reason the Christmas story resonates so deeply is that proclamation made by the angels in a field so long ago: "To you a Savior is born." Now by definition, a savior is one who saves you from danger or destruction. Even those who do not believe are longing for someone to save them from the obvious destruction that is around us. People who do not believe would love to have "peace on earth." And so, the message of Christmas resonates throughout society.

Who we are and what we have is broken, and we can all feel it. Romans 8:22 (ESV) says "For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now." Everything and everyone on this earth has been marred by the effects of sin. Nothing is as it should be. Everyone on earth can sense that, even if they will not admit what their spirit can clearly see.

Just a week after Christmas, we celebrate New Year's Day. Everyone can agree on that holiday, because it has no religious meaning. In fact, it

seems to me that it has no meaning whatsoever. We are celebrating because it is a year since the last time we celebrated it. I suppose it is a birthday party for the planet. Please don't misunderstand. I am not saying it is bad for you to celebrate New Year's. Put on the silly hat, blow the horn, watch the ball drop, or whatever you like to do.

But I want to consider why it is a popular holiday. The focus on New Year's is the idea that our future is bright (or at least it is what we make of it). Folks make resolutions about how they will improve themselves in the new year, they celebrate together that the new year has finally arrived. "Out with the old, in with the new" so to speak.

In my opinion, this holiday highlights the effect of sin, perhaps even more strikingly than Christmas. Sin has negatively impacted every single facet of life on earth. Folks are suffering from illness, struggling to make payments, enduring the death of loved ones, going through relationship issues or divorce, doubting their self-worth, contemplating suicide, getting confused about their own gender, worrying about global wars, and so much more – because of sin.

And after a year of going through all this brokenness and difficulty, people are ready for the year to end and a better one to begin. If I can just push forward, maybe find a better job or a better spouse or actually finish a couple of resolutions this year, things will be better. A new year is like a clean slate, and perhaps I can get it right this time.

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So, Christmas and New Year's are a time when everyone around us is thinking about how broken things have become and how much they long for something better. They know they are stumbling around in the darkness, and they are looking for a light.

And this is where we must shine.

We have the light that they are looking for within us, and we must be faithful to help others see it. We know why the world is broken and we know how it will someday be fixed. But it is easy to fall into the same pattern as everyone around us. Our lives are broken and imperfect too. We must decide whether we will join in hoping next year will be better, or proclaim that even in our imperfect lives, God is at work, and he will restore all things when he returns!

This is what we find in John 1:9-13 (ESV) about the Christmas story: "The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world... He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God."

It does not get much simpler than that. The light has pierced the darkness, and if you believe in Jesus Christ, you are adopted into his kingdom of light. There is nothing to fear, and no circumstance is too horrible to face, because you are headed to a new home with no imperfections.

This birth "not of blood... but of God" is the new start everyone is longing for!

We are the Fellowship of Evangelical Bible Churches. "Evangelical" because we believe that the good news of the Gospel must be shared with others, and "Bible" because that's where the good news is found. Do you see all the people around you who are hoping the new year is better than the last, grasping for some resolution that will make life more bearable? Those people are a ripe harvest field, and God wants you to go to work.

Share the truth! Share your joy! Shine his light in the darkness!

Oh, and Happy New Year!

Kevin Stone has been in full or part-time ministry for over 30 years. Before accepting the position of President, he spent 12 years as the full-time Pastor of Worship at Crosspoint Bible Church in Omaha, NE - one of our FEBC churches.

Updates From Across Our Churches

Rev. Alvin Buhler passed away on November 7. Alvin was the pastor at Christian Fellowship Church of Rhineland from 1997 until 2013. **Please pray for Alvin's wife Verna and their family.**

We hosted our Nebraska Pastors and Wives Retreat in January and will host Saskatchewan in February and Manitoba in March. **Please pray that your pastors and their wives are energized and encouraged by these events.**

The FEBC International Board of Directors will meet in late February to plan for the new fiscal year. **Please pray for safety as they travel and for productive, God-honoring meetings.**

Jansen Bible Church (Jansen, NE) is currently searching for a new full-time pastor. Pray for them as they seek God's man for them, or if you know someone who might be interested, see details at: <https://shorturl.at/uyztW>

Do you have an update your church would like to share? Send us the details through the submission form on our website (fellowshipforward.org) or by emailing fellowshipfocus@febministries.org.

Focus on Our Churches

Crosspoint Bible Church

Omaha, Nebraska

Hayden Norris, Pastor

crosspointbible.org

As we look back on 2024 with gratitude and ahead to 2025 with eager anticipation, we are reminded that God is truly at work among us, regularly revealing His possibilities and promises.

November and December were a time of fellowship, service, and celebration. The Crosspoint women held their annual Friendsgiving on November 14, inviting friends to enjoy food, laughter, and the Gospel message.

Also in November, we once again participated in Operation Christmas Child, packing more than 150 boxes for this vital ministry. On December 12, the Ladies' Christmas Tea featured speaker Susie Edgar, who shared her experience of God's care during a season of great upheaval in her life and family.

Our Advent sermon series focused on the book of John.

On December 15, our Sunday morning Christmas program, "A Morning at the Manger," reminded all who attended of the hope found in the gift of Jesus. Special music and narration during the program, followed by refreshments in the foyer, made for a particularly meaningful morning.

Now, as we move forward, Spring will soon be upon us, reminding us of renewal—not only in God's creation but also in our hearts. May we embrace the coming months with a humble recognition of all that God offers us each day.

Julie Sibert, Correspondent

Dalmeny Bible Church

Dalmeny, Saskatchewan

Dennis Friesen, Pastor

dalmenybiblechurch.ca

Christmas events were a ladies Christmas potluck and dessert supper with carol singing and a skit; a program presented by the children; our annual Peppernut and Apple Cider morning;

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service.

The year ended with a New Year's Eve party at the church with games and snacks.

We heard from Dave and Jan T; Brian and Nikki H; Darcy and Verna T who spent time in Cambodia with Harvest For Kids.

Our Annual Ladies Retreat was held at the end of January. 30 ladies attended and then the next weekend was a guy event which included lots of good food and watching the football playoff together.

Marilyn Harder, Correspondent

Indian Head Community Church

Indian Head, Saskatchewan

Justin Epp, Pastor

Christmas celebrations were in full swing at Indian Head Community Bible Church.

Each Sunday of Advent, a family from the congregation shared a meaningful Scripture reading and lit a candle in the Advent wreath to start the worship service. Pastor Justin preached topical sermons to coordinate with this, reminding everyone of the hope, joy, and peace brought by Jesus' birth.

On Dec. 17, the church hosted a ladies' event attended by about 30 women who took the opportunity to reflect on the blessings of this season.

Along with food and fellowship, the group enjoyed music, heard a devotional on the topic of joy, exchanged gifts, and participated in a painting activity. Children from the Sunday School classes prepared and presented a play about the Christmas story during the Sunday service on Dec. 22. Church members also looked forward to the candlelight service on Christmas Eve, which focused on Scripture readings and carol singing.

Now, as we step into the new year, the congregation fondly remembers these special moments of worship, fellowship, and celebration. Though the Christmas season has passed, its message of hope and joy continues to inspire us as we embrace the opportunities and blessings of the year ahead.

Sarah Pacio, Correspondent

Jansen Bible Church

Jansen, Nebraska

Paul Carpenter, Pastor

jansembiblechurch.org

On November 3, Jordan and Trisha Schlake were commissioned for their missionary service with The Evangelical Alliance Mission (TEAM). Along with their two sons, Roen and Matai, they planned to leave for Japan in February for their first four-year term. Jordan, the son of Kendall and Lola Schlake, had been studying Japanese independently for several years; however, their first year abroad would be dedicated to language study.

Operation Christmas Child reported reaching 12 million needy children with gifts and the gospel this past year. It was our joy to help contribute to that goal.

Awana kids and their families generously donated non-perishable foods to stock the shelves of the local food pantry for the season.

Our ladies and girls enjoyed a Christmas brunch on Saturday, December 7. The event featured a thought-provoking quiz on Christmas Bible questions, followed by a white elephant gift exchange.

The Awana kids were excited for Store Night on December 18, where they had the opportunity to spend the Awana dollars they earned for learning Bible verses.

On December 22 at 5:00 PM, the church hosted the Christmas program, a play titled "Keeping Watch – Christmas Through the Eyes of Shepherds." The program was followed by a soup supper in the Fellowship Hall.

The New Year's Eve Carry-In Dinner began at 7:00 PM, offering an evening of games, snacks, and fellowship to welcome the year 2025.

As we move forward in the new year, we reflect on these joyful moments and anticipate the continued work of God in our community.

Tena Dick, Correspondent

Langham Evangelical Bible Church

Langham, Saskatchewan

Greg Guarnett, Pastor

langhambiblechurch.homestead.com

God has blessed us here in Saskatchewan with a long warm autumn! September brought the startup of weekly fall ministries including adult Sunday School

class, children's church, Parent & Tots, and Junior Youth. Kids Clubs for ages 3 through to Grade 6 began in October.

Our External Ministries committee collected diaper & formula donations for Pregnancy Options Centre in Saskatoon; this as well as supporting several Teen Challenge students on an annual basis. We were privileged in October to have the Teen Challenge ladies from Prairie Hope Women's Centre share with us how God is changing lives there! Women's Ministry also organized a pizza and visiting evening at Prairie Hope in January of each year to encourage the ladies.

Two care home ministries continue year-round on a monthly/bi-weekly basis as well.

In January, we also had the joy of hosting our annual Awana Race. [View pictures of the race online at fellowshipforward.org]

Annually in the fall, a day-long Women's Seminar refreshes ladies in their walk with Jesus through video, fellowship, meals and singing. New this year, Pastor Matt organized a half-day Parenting Conference to equip and uphold moms and dads as they navigate parenthood.

We are grateful for the love, care and teaching that our pastors and elder team provide for our church family.

Marilyn Friesen, Correspondent

Martensville Mission Church

Martensville, Saskatchewan

Justin Klassen, Pastor

facebook.com/martensvillemissionchurch

Happy New Year! At the conclusion of the Advent sermon series, Pastor Justin continued his series on the Book of Exodus.

Pastor Brolin has been leading our youth in a study of the Sermon on the Mount. The youth are exploring Jesus' vision of life in the Kingdom of Heaven versus life in the world. Looking ahead, plans are underway to take a group of youth to the "Always Ready" Ligonier Ministries Youth Conference in Calgary in early March. The conference will focus on finding our identities in Christ and bearing His image to the world around us.

Highlights from last fall included the youth's second annual progressive supper on October 1, where they enjoyed dining and dashing from one house to another for their meal. Other memorable moments were our Thanksgiving potluck and the collection of..

...Samaritan's Purse Christmas boxes. Recognizing that some individuals find it difficult to shop for the boxes, the church has facilitated donations over the years, allowing volunteers to shop on behalf of others. The Sunday School children then pack the boxes, and on dedication Sunday in November, they process into the sanctuary, each carrying a box. It took several trips from the foyer to the front of the church to stack them all neatly!

We were blessed during the Christmas season with the sermon series on Advent, "The Story of Redemption," and with various outreach and fellowship opportunities. These included preparing food hampers and other gifts for families in need, as well as events such as the Ladies' Fellowship Supper, a special Ladies' Christmas Bible Study, the "Christmas Traditions... Then and Now" production by the Sunday School and youth, the Christmas Banquet, the Coffee House, and, of course, our Christmas Eve Service.

Since this past fall, before the children are invited to Children's Church, both children and adults have been learning a Bible verse together. At the beginning of each month, a new "Verse of the Month" is introduced through a video featuring the Bible Verse Man—a six-year-old member of our congregation. In the video, he recites the verse and invites everyone to join him. Even at such a young age, he is demonstrating leadership. Way to go, Bible Verse Man!

Brenda Quirt, Correspondent

Randville Bible Church

Iron Mountain, Michigan

Jim Janofski, Pastor

facebook.com/RandvilleBibleChurch

The Upper Peninsula of Michigan had entered that hushed season of silence: snow had fallen, and winter was upon us. Once again, we were reminded of God's faithfulness in all seasons, including the "seasons" of life.

Even more so, the colorful lights of Christmas recently reminded us of the One who is the Light of the World, and the familiar carols pointed us to the birth of our Savior.

"For unto you is born this day a Savior"—the angels' words echo across the ages as we once again commemorated the joy of Jesus' birth.

The highlight of December was our annual "Celebration of Carols." This musical journey to Bethlehem

began with the prophecies of the coming Messiah, the reading of Luke 2, and beloved carols featuring a variety of vocal ensembles. The musical message was further enriched instrumentally, with performances on piano, guitar, harp, baritone ukulele, trombone, trumpet, soprano saxophone, autoharp, Appalachian dulcimer ensemble, ukuleles, hammered dulcimer, handbell choir, violin, tenor, and plectrum banjo.

As always, we were in awe of the power of the Incarnation: "God with us: Emmanuel." Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift—the gift of His own Son, our Savior!

What a joy and encouragement it was for our small church family to welcome so many friends and loved ones who gathered for this cherished annual event! As we move forward into 2025, we continue to reflect on "A Spiritual Challenge for the New Year," preparing our hearts to love and serve our Lord in the months ahead.

Blessings to all in our fellowship as we embrace this new season with faith and gratitude.

Pastor Jim Janofski

Saron Mennonite Church

Fairview, Oklahoma

Arnold Curby, Pastor

We were privileged to have James and Laurel Pence visit Saron all the way from Texas. Jim shared an inspiring chalk art presentation and his story of God's protection during his sudden cardiac arrest almost four years ago. Our church participated in a Community Hymn Sing, sponsored by the Fairview Area Ministerial Alliance, on the first Sunday night in November. Will Nunn was one of four alternating pianists, and Pastor Curby helped lead the singing. Pastor Curby also sang in a quartet with fellow pastors, accompanied by Will Nunn on piano. More than 150 people attended the event.

Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes were collected and brought forward for prayer on November 17 during the morning service. Volunteers worked throughout the following week to receive shoeboxes from other churches in northwest Oklahoma and then helped load the trucks for delivery to the distribution center in Dallas, Texas. Denise Nunn, the area coordinator, reported a total of 5,864 shoeboxes from our area.

A group of young people and adults went caroling one

Sunday night in December, and additional carol singing took place at the Christmas Open House hosted by the Curbys.

We eagerly anticipated the annual Christmas Eve service, which featured special music and a contemporary retelling of the Christmas story performed by the young people. This production was written and directed by Charissa Nunn. In addition, guests were invited to bring friends along to enjoy games and refreshments on New Year's Eve.

Grace Curby, Correspondent

Stuartburn Gospel Church

Stuartburn, Manitoba

Mark Funk, Pastor

Greetings in the Lord!

We are thankful for God's people, "the more the merrier!" On November 3, we welcomed 5 more individuals into our membership. They blessed us with their testimonies during the Sunday This past season, we celebrated Christmas on December 23 with a candlelight evening service. The service included multiple Scripture readings, poems, special musical performances, and a shadow nativity skit. There was a strong turnout, and attendees enjoyed snacks, refreshments, and fellowship following the event.

For a long time, we had been debating whether to install a chair lift, an elevator, or construct a new building. Recognizing the need for progress, we decided to move forward with a solution. Praise the Lord! Donations were made toward installing an elevator, allowing us to proceed. Beginning in early February, renovations will take place to accommodate the installation of the new elevator. We are truly excited for this improvement, as it will provide accessibility and be a blessing to many in our congregation.

As we move toward the Easter season, we plan to hold a special week of prayer and adoration. Looking ahead, we remain committed to making disciples and reaching our neighbors with the love of Christ.

May the Lord be exalted, honored, and glorified in and through our service.

Eileina Niessen, Correspondent

Vita Bible Church

Vita, Manitoba

Jonathan Coutts, Pastor

The month of November was particularly encouraging for us at Vita Bible Church. At the beginning of the month, we held fall meetings and invited our sister church in Stuartburn to join us. We were challenged to walk alongside those struggling with mental illness as supporters, not saviors, lending them our joy and strength when it is most challenging for them to find their own. Our speaker, Pastor Jeff Friesen from Hebron Bible Church in Nebraska, led six sessions on the impact of mental illness in our society and church family and how to support one another.

Later that month, our Women's Ministry group invited our sister churches to join us for a Ladies' Day on Saturday, November 23. One of our guest speakers, Jenny Gerbrandt, a local counselor, echoed Pastor Jeff's message as she encouraged us to come alongside the hurting, offer a listening ear, bear one another's burdens, and be the church we are called to be. In the afternoon, we enjoyed hearing a testimonial from a woman navigating her cancer journey.

In December, Pastor Jonathan reminded us that one word should gain our attention and action. He urged us to refocus and truly read and ponder the words of John 1. Jesus is the Word, the message we need to focus on not just during the Christmas season but every day, as we are reminded of His gift—the gift of salvation. We also hosted a community supper on the second Sunday of the month and a Sunday School Christmas program the following week. We finished off the year 2024 with a New Year's Eve party at the church.

This new year is off to a great start as we work together to fill our church positions and refocus and refresh our faith. Many of us are stepping into different roles within the church and discovering new ways to give our best to God. We were blessed by a baptismal service on January 19. Dylan and Jazmine Barnabe were baptized upon confession of their faith during the morning service. We rejoice that these two young people have a passion to fol-

low God with obedient hearts. They were accepted into our membership as of February 9.

Pastor Jonathan has resumed our study of the book of Acts, which he began in September of last year. We have all been encouraged by the challenges faced by the early church as well as the unfolding of God's plan for them and for us. Each time they encountered hardship and persecution, it led to the spreading of God's Word and the strengthening of His church. To God be all the glory—then, now, and forevermore!

Tiffany Tuurenhout, Correspondent

To view pictures of all of the events mentioned in our church news section, please visit our website at fellowshipforward.org.

FELLOWSHIP ON THE MOVE

LEBC Junior Youth Bond at Camp Kadesh

by MATHEW OLIVER, FAMILY PASTOR

The youth of Langham Evangelical Bible Church recently experienced a powerful time of connection, growth, and spiritual renewal at Camp Kadesh. Their winter retreat was filled with fun, fellowship, and deep engagement with God's Word as they explored what it means to do "Hard Things" in faith. This is just one of the many incredible stories happening in our congregations, and we want to hear more!

Fellowship on the Move is our new recurring column dedicated to sharing the ways God is at work in our churches. Whether it's a special event, a mission trip, or a testimony of transformation, we invite you to contribute your stories. Let's celebrate and encourage one another as we witness the movement of God in our communities.

Langham Evangelical Bible Church's (LEBC) Impact Junior Youth Group recently traveled to Camp Kadesh for a winter retreat. It was amazing to see the group really gel together during the weekend we shared.

A lot of memories were made through meals together, group games, outdoor winter activities and all of the unplanned moments in between. Our group also dug deep into God's Word by looking at the lives of Samuel, David and Peter who all did "Hard Things" because of their relationship with God and love for Him.

The Holy Spirit was at work in the lives of the youth and leaders as we considered the possibility of engaging with the truth and having the courage to live it out! We all came back tired, but also very thankful for the entire experience.

About Camp Kadesh

More than just a great summer camp on one of the best lakes in Saskatchewan. Camp Kadesh cares about inspiring youth to live better lives. We are a second home. We hold the value of relationships as the foundation of why we do things and continue to build on that base to help kids explore who they are and are created to be. First opened in 1982 with summer camps, we now have programming in Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter. In all seasons we seek to create new and exciting learning experiences, always staying focused on people. We are a Christian camp and believe that God seeks relationship with all people and He challenges people to build a better world. We want to challenge youth to be world changers too!

Have a story to share? Reachout to us! We'd love to highlight what's happening in your church.

What is the CoGP Doing?

by MARILYNN LESTER

As stated in the CoGP Handbook, “FEBC’s Commission on Global Partnerships exists to glorify God by encouraging global partners and assisting FEBC churches in promoting global partnerships”.

Supporting Our Global Partners

Specifically, we serve our global partners while they are on the field in several ways. We pray for them at each of our meetings, send an annual monetary gift to purchase a book they have always wanted to read, and encourage them by reading their letters and responding to their needs.

We also serve our global partners when they retire from ministry by honoring them with a letter of commendation for their faithful work. Recently, several of our global partners have retired, including Dan and Carrie Ritzman and Joe and Denise Goossen. You will see commendations for these latest retirees in an upcoming issue of Fellowship Focus. Others who have recently retired include Dennis and Cindy Wiens and Darrel Heide—commendations for them can be found in previous issues of Fellowship Focus. We are thrilled to honor these individuals who have dedicated a significant portion of their lives to serving Jesus.

Confronting the Challenge of Recruitment

While we rejoice in the faithful service of our retiring global partners, we are also concerned that more are retiring than new ones are stepping into global ministry. In the past, our fellowship was known for having the highest number of foreign missionaries per capita compared to other fellowships. We take seriously the respon-

sibility of encouraging our local churches to recruit new global partners who will continue carrying forward the vision of serving Christ in His global mission.

One way to inspire and equip the next generation is by encouraging young adults to attend the biannual Urbana conference. This event challenges young people to consider global ministry opportunities. Representatives from various sending agencies across the United States and Canada are available to answer questions about specific fields and careers in missions. To support this effort, our Commission offers scholarships to help defray the cost of attending Urbana. Watch for more information about Urbana 25 on our website: www.febcmisions.com.

Encouraging and Equipping Churches

To further support both our churches and global partners, we have developed a website at www.febcmisions.com. This platform serves as a hub for informing and encouraging churches in developing their own global outreach programs. Several retired and active global partners, including Roger Reimer, Gary Williams, and Rob Quiring, contribute blog articles to educate and inspire churches about missions.

The Focus has chosen to highlight the CoGP’s October 26 blog post titled *We’re a Team* in this month’s content release. You can read the original post at fellowshipforward.org

This website also serves as a space to honor retiring global partners, highlight current global...

...partners and their work, and provide updates on God's mission around the world. Additionally, we include links to special events—such as Urbana 25—and to sending agencies connected to our many global partners. An upcoming feature on our website will be an article designed to help churches assess whether they would be considered a “Missions Active Church.” We encourage you to visit www.febcmissions.com and subscribe to receive notifications about the latest blog posts. Readers can engage with us by adding comments, submitting questions about missions, or sharing ideas for additional content. For further updates, follow our Facebook page, FEBCMissions, where we post news from various sending agencies to keep you informed on global missions.

Building Connections for the Kingdom

At the heart of our work is a desire to connect local churches, global partners, and God's mission worldwide. *Through prayer, encouragement, recruitment, and digital outreach, we strive to strengthen the bonds between churches and global partners so that together we may fulfill Christ's Great Commission.*

Your CoGP: Doyle & Marilyn Lester, Rob Quiring, Roger Reimer, Amanda Tuller, Gary Williams

FELLOWSHIP RESOURCES UPDATE

FEBC Fusion: Connecting & Growing

by GARY KREHBIEL

At CONNECT24, we introduced an exciting new way for individuals within congregations to connect with the FEBC and learn more about our ministry offerings and objectives. This new event, called FEBC Fusion, combines FUN and viSION to create an engaging and meaningful experience. We are delighted to bring this fellowship event to any church that would like to gather its church family together, share laughter, and, in the process, learn more about the FEBC—almost accidentally!

What exactly happens at Fusion?

Fusion events typically last about an hour and 15 minutes, featuring both cooperative and competitive gameplay among fellow church members. While attendees are split into groups by tables, everyone remains actively engaged throughout the event. Sometimes, participants compete against others at their table, and at other times, they collaborate as a team. Our goal is to ensure that no one feels uncomfortable, and we guarantee fun for all! To kick off the event, each group receives a box of game supplies. [view pictures at fellowshipforward.org] Participants are then guided through a series of interactive games, including spelling with letter tiles, voting for the best answers, guessing colors, matching tiles, connecting resources, and trying to match responses with others. Oh, and there are balloons! All the while you'll learn more about the locations of FEBC churches, the history of the FEBC, global partners and the FEBC and resources of the FEBC. You'll also learn about other engaging topics that simply add to the fun. Whether you're familiar with the FEBC or learning about it for the first time, you'll have fun sharing the evening with your church community.

Where are Fusion events happening?

We've already hosted Fusion events in several churches and look forward to bringing them to many more. The most common feedback we receive is that everyone, from children to seniors, had fun. Many have even said that the experience exceeded their expectations!

It's been an absolute blast to host the event and get to see congregations laughing together and bonding.

We hope to bring a Fusion event to your church soon!

Growing Our Fellowship

by KEVIN STONE, PRESIDENT

Just in the past month or two, I have had several very encouraging conversations about potential growth within our Fellowship:

- There is real potential for a new church plant in one of our extensions.
- Two of our pastors mentioned that they have been talking to fellow pastors about potentially joining our Fellowship.
- Another pastor called me directly to ask what the process would be for his church to join our Fellowship.
- A church that had previously left our Fellowship is now applying to reaffiliate.

To be clear – growth is not what our Fellowship focuses on. We focus on working together to support and encourage one another and to further the spread of the Gospel. However, growth is healthy, as it adds resources and increases the impact of our ministry.

In the past, our efforts to grow have been mostly focused on church planting. This is still a vital area, and we continue to pursue it. But several factors have changed since we began planting decades ago. For instance, many areas that can support an evangelical church have existing churches from which to choose, and areas of rapid growth are typically in the suburbs, where one can easily drive fifteen minutes to an existing church.

I believe that much of our future growth will likely come from one of two sources:

1. Churches who have been independent, and now see the need for mutual accountability, encouragement, and support

2. Churches who are currently part of an organization with which they no longer agree on theological or philosophical issues

These are the areas where we have seen the most movement in recent years.

In many ways, this is new territory for our Fellowship. We have lots of policies and procedures and shared experiences when it comes to planting a new church, but not so much when it comes to encouraging another church to join us. Efforts to identify and recruit a new church seem almost pointless at the top of our organization. Cold calling a church to ask if they are looking for something new is not effective. Churches are not posting “want ads” seeking a new fellowship. The most effective way to recruit new churches to join us is through the efforts of the member church pastors, leaders, and congregation members.

This could be a pastor sitting over coffee with a fellow pastor and saying, “I think our Fellowship could be a great fit for you,” or a congregation member telling their uncle who is on the board at another church, “Perhaps your church would find a better theological fit with our Fellowship.” These are the types of conversations that will help us grow and allow us to minister to even more people.

Make a connection and see if there seems to be genuine interest. If so, connect them with me. I am always happy to share about our Fellowship with those who are curious. **Join with us in watching for ways we can expand our impact on the church in North America.**

Navigating Theological Issues

Our Vision Statement is: *“Strengthening our churches with timely resources that strengthen their leaders.”*

One of the ways our Fellowship stands ready to help your church is by providing advice and counsel on theological issues. The following are some ways we do this.

- If there are theological issues that your church could use help deciphering, the first place to look is our Articles of Faith – available at fellowshipforward.org. These Articles provide the essence of our theology, including our beliefs about God, man, salvation, and much more.
- If your question is more about a societal issue or how we would apply the truth of the Bible to a specific issue, you are likely to find an answer within our Position Papers – available at fellowshipforward.org. The Position Papers spell out how we believe the Bible would guide us to respond to specific social issues, such as abortion, human sexuality, women in ministry, and more.
- If you still have unanswered questions, you can contact us directly for support. Our staff members are always happy to assist you, and we also have a Commission on Churches, which is made up of pastors from around our Fellowship. This commission is dedicated to helping with theological issues. They provide vetting of pastoral applications and conduct the licensing and ordination of our pastors, but they are also available to assist the Fellowship and our churches when needed.

Google always has answers, but if you want an answer that is rooted in our historical interpretation of God’s Word and backed by trusted theologians from within our Fellowship, we are happy to help.

Please let us know if you have any questions, if you could use one of these resources, or if you have ideas for new or existing resources that could be shared with our churches.

We're a Team

“My beloved friend, I commend you for your demonstration of faithful love by all that you have done for the brothers on their journey, even though they were strangers at the time. They have shared publicly with the congregation about the beautiful acts of love you have shown them. Now, if you would be so kind, send them on their way with a generous gift in a manner that would honor God. You see, it was their passion for the glory of the name of Christ that launched them out, and they’ve not accepted financial support from unbelievers. They are deserving of all the support we can give them because through our giving, we can partner with them for the truth.” – 3 John 5-8 TPT

The Lord’s work can be challenging and discouraging. The enemy wants to discourage any ministry that is effective. These people come to us as strangers but leave as partners when we support them through finances, prayer, and communication, providing moral and spiritual support.

The “sender” is the basis of global partnerships. Neal Pirolo, in his book *Serving as Senders*, quotes a statement made at an Urbana Conference, “In secular war, for every one person on the battlefield, there are nine others backing him up in what is called the ‘line of communication.’” (p. 9) And so it is with global ministries. Pirolo claims there are two levels of involvement: “Those who go and those who serve as senders.” (p. 14)

According to <https://nationsoutreach.org/blog/christian-missionary-statistics/#71-leave-for-preventable-reasons>, thousands of missionaries leave the field each year—many for preventable reasons. Missionaries tell Nations Outreach, “They struggle to stay connected to their home church and supporter base.”

In 1886 a movement was started that was heard around the world. At the Mount Hermon Meeting, the Student Volunteer Movement started with sending 100 students to foreign missions which mushroomed to over 20,000 men and women being sent over the next 100 years to

spread the Gospel worldwide. But, more than that, over the years, they enlisted more than 80,000 to stay at home and support those who went. God’s hand was in this movement, providing a firm foundation for those sent.

In *Mind the Gaps: Engaging the Church in Missionary Care*, David J. Wilson provides thoughtful and practical advice on organizing a “sending team” in your church.

That team must...

- ...draft a purpose statement to define who they are and what they are trying to do as a team. This keeps them from going adrift from their main reason for existence.
- ...create a clear confidentiality statement to establish trust and open communication between them and the global partner. They will hear things from their partners that should be for their ears only. The missionaries need someone whom they can trust to unburden themselves. Confidentiality is key in keeping that “line of communication” strong.

Churches can be an effective support base for missionaries. Read David Wilson’s book and also Neal Pirolo’s book to see how we can be a more effective support team partnering with those who have left home to serve the Lord in other places.

Mind the Gaps: Engaging the Church in Missionary Care, David J. Wilson, General Editor, published by Mind the Gaps, 2015.

Serving as Senders, Neal Pirolo, published by Emmaus Road International, 1991.

From Generation to Generation

WE WILL PROCLAIM YOUR PRAISE

Crosspoint Bible Church

Omaha, Nebraska

Kaylee Klaasen wed to Jared Doherty, November 9.

Walt Hamilton, 76, died October 9.

Dalmeny Bible Church

Dalmeny, Saskatchewan

Ezra Cole born to Colton and Amy Scheller, January 2.

Jansen Bible Church

Jansen, Nebraska

Geraldine Lee Katz, 92, died December 15.

Langham Evangelical Bible Church

Langham, Saskatchewan

Benjamin Phyto, born to Jeffrey Phyto and Pamela Shen, October 15.

Nova Estelle, born to Luke and Alex Meister, October 22.

Marietta Roslin, born to Joseph and Shaina Ardell, December 31.

Johnathan Ens wed to Markie Bossert, October 12.

Martensville Mission Church

Martensville, Saskatchewan

Benjamin Fehr, 86, died January 27.

Stuartburn Gospel Chapel

Stuartburn, Manitoba

Jack Dominik, born to Karsten and Abby Mueller, December 22.