

## ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

## HCN welcomes Columbus FBC to our Association



Columbus First Baptist Church was founded in 1880 and is the third oldest church in what quickly became an important trade center at the confluence of the Loup and Platte Rivers. Today Columbus boasts a solid economic base, a population of over 22,000, and serves as the county seat of Platte County.

In 2012 the church called Dan Odom as pastor. Dan came with a very diverse background. He was born in Pasadena, California, and grew up in Montana. After graduating from The Master's College in 1990, Dan graduated from Western Baptist Theological Seminary in Portland, OR. He served a church in New Hampshire before moving to Nebraska. His wife's name is Lauren, and they have two children: Graison, age 10 and Anna, age 9.

Pastor Dan's hobbies include reading and golf. He also have a Four-wheel drive bug and loves going "Jeep'n" anytime he can. He stated, "My heart's desire however, is to teach the Word of God. As Paul said, so I want to echo, *'That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and may share His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death.'*"

The church's current facility was built in 1977 and has just undergone a major remodeling and refurbishing over the last two years. The church's original building was built from lumber that came from the very first Union Pacific Train to pass through Nebraska—if you know your Nebraska history, you know there were few trees from which lumber could be cut. After several years had passed, the church tragically was burnt to the ground and met inside a railroad passenger car for several years until the next building was built. Through the years, First Baptist has survived many comings and goings and by God's grace has kept a steady witness in the community of Columbus, Nebraska. God is faithful and it has been humbling to see the blessings He has provided the church over the last five years.

We want to extend a warm Heartland Church Network welcome to Pastor Dan Odom, his family, staff, and the members of Columbus First Baptist Church to the Southern Baptist world.

## Congratulations to the first HCN MBTS graduates

The following students have completed their Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary – Spurgeon College coursework and will receive their **Certificate in Biblical Studies**. Everyone is invited to the graduation ceremony on Saturday, June 9, 1:00 p.m. at Heartland Church Network Worship Center. A reception will follow.

Bryan Deming  
Lee Dunn  
Juan Elizondo  
Naomi Elizondo  
Randy Evans  
Bob Getty

Angela Hayes  
Jason Hutchinson  
Brittney King  
Edward King  
Megan Kroft  
Doris Lassiter

Mark Leshar  
Vernon McMorris  
Judy McNeil-Wagner  
Janelle Montgomery  
Dina Nared  
Richard Needham

Andrew Olsen  
Dan Perina  
Joy Perina  
Karen Picht  
Deb Push



**Mark Elliott, DoM**  
**Angie Posey, Office Manager**  
**Denise Bauer, Bookkeeper**  
**Darrell Cumpton, Facilities Manager**



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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**JUNE**  
9 HCN Midwestern Seminary Graduation – HCN Worship Center  
12-13 SBC Convention – Dallas TX

**JULY**  
23-27 Children's Camp @ Camp Goodwill

### AUGUST

**SEPTEMBER**  
29 PIVOT Conference (*Small Church Conference*) at HCN

### OCTOBER

**NOVEMBER**  
1 Annual Meeting – Location TBD

*"I know, Lord, that a man's way of life is not his own; no one who walks determines his own steps." –Jer. 10:23*

## Three HCN churches called new senior pastors



In the last issue of *Heartland Happenings*, you read about a somewhat unique situation at **Harrison Street Baptist Church**. Their pastor, Roger Criser, announced his intention to retire, and the church formed a transition team to help navigate the process. In the fullness of time, that team passed the baton to a Pastor Search Team, which recommended Rev. Doug Hall as their next pastor. Doug came to the church in view of a call on the weekend of March 17-18. The church extended to him a unanimous call and Doug accepted.

Pastor Doug and his wife Diana are empty nesters and have rented an apartment near the church. Pray for them as they do “house hunting” in a seller’s market. Doug holds three degrees from Kansas State University: B.S. in Horticulture Science, B. A. in Modern Language/Spanish, and an M.S. in Agricultural Education. He taught school in Joliet, IL for three years before responding to God’s call to pastor.

His first pastorate was at First Baptist church, of Manteno, IL. While pastoring Concord Baptist Church in Missouri, Pastor Doug attended Midwestern Seminary where he received a Masters of Divinity degree. He later pastored FBC Annapolis, MO and came to Harrison Street after pastoring FBC Windsor, MO for sixteen years. Doug also holds a M.A in Biblical Studies from Baylor University.

Doug and Diana have three grown children and five grandchildren.

The Pastor Search Team did an outstanding job throughout the search process and provided to church members an attractive and thorough four page full color introduction to Doug and Diana in preparation for the weekend they were in LaVista in view of a call. But they weren’t finished yet. They also coordinated an excellent installation service which was held on Sunday afternoon May 6<sup>th</sup>. The service included an official baton pass and words of encouragement from Pastor Roger Criser and closing remarks from Pastor Doug. A reception in fellowship hall followed the installation.

Pray for Roger and Deb Criser as they begin to step back and anticipate retirement later this year. And pray for Doug and Diana as they settle into the Omaha area, get better acquainted with members and the community, and as was mentioned earlier, look for a home.

Pastor Adam (Shane) Lester has accepted the call to serve as campus pastor for **LifeSpring’s Midtown Campus**. He and his wife Haley have four sons: Noah (10), Chase (6), Sawyer (5), and Easton (3), and are coming to Omaha from Olathe, Kansas.

Pastor Shane is a native of West Virginia and came to the Midwest while serving in the military. Haley grew up in Dighton, Kansas and her parents have been on multiple mission trips to the Omaha area with FBC Dighton.

Shane holds a Bachelors in Biblical studies from Moody Bible Institute in Chicago and a Masters in Church Leadership from Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary in Lynchburg, VA. He previously pastored two churches in Kansas: Vista Baptist in Olathe and Sublette Southern Baptist Church. He has been an active participant in the local Baptist association and the state convention.

The last issue of *Heartland Happenings* talked about the process that the Midtown Search Team used in calling anew pastor. The Sunday Shane preached in view of a call, March 11<sup>th</sup>, he commented on the thorough job that the team had done. He felt like they got to know he and his family, and that he had a better feel for the church’s vision and needs. His first official Sunday at Midtown was April 1<sup>st</sup>, Easter Sunday.

Pray for Shane, Haley, and their boys as they transition to the Omaha area. A specific prayer need is to find a house that fits their needs and their budget.



## Three HCN churches called new senior pastors *continued*



The new pastor at Faith Baptist Church in Nebraska City is a native Nebraskan, born in Norfolk, and is the fourth preacher in the family over the past five generations. It started with his Great Grandfather Henry Ezra Sohl, followed by his Grandfather Ezra Henry Sohl. Pastor Dave’s father was a farmer, but Dave notes, “As an adult preacher’s kid he was my mentor in the ministry.” Dave’s son Joshua is a Children’s Pastor.

Pastor Sohl is a graduate of Norfolk High School, and Norfolk Junior College graduating with an AAS. He holds a BA in Bible and Theology from St Paul Bible College in St Bonifacious MN, and has completed several Master’s level classes at Moody in Chicago.

Dave and Patty have been married forty-two years and have 2 children: Jessica Sohl, an attorney in New York City and Joshua who is married to Sarah. He and Sarah live in northern Minnesota, have 5

children, and are currently between churches. Patty has been employed at Wells Fargo for 32 years starting as a part time teller and rising through the ranks to a consulting role.

Pastor Dave comes to Faith with years of diverse ministry experience. He has been involved in plating 12 churches, served in church revitalization situations, and pastored one congregation for seventeen years. He has served churches in Minnesota, North Dakota, Iowa, and Nebraska. Many of those situations were bi-vocational, so his entrepreneurial spirit has helped him to work in a variety of jobs and own a few businesses. Pastor Dave noted, “I have worked as a dish washer, food service worker, toilet cleaner, school bus driver, telephone lineman, painter, farm worker, fertilizer salesman, EMT, police reserve officer, satellite tech, manure dealer, farm machinery and parts salesman, tire sealant salesman, professional writer, truck driver, talking tractor sales man and a few other things. I have consulted as a leadership trainer for cities and county government, and pre-marriage counseling trainer, among other things. I own a small telecommunications business, and sell and install fire equipment, data networks, CCTV networks, phone systems, and security systems. I get bored easily.”

“My passion is evangelism and preaching, and my gift is service. I have trained about 120 evangelists and mentored several pastors. I have the manuscripts of 3 books in some stage of completion. I have written lyrics to one song, and written maybe two dozen tracts. I have attended every evangelism class or school I can, and my goal is to plant many churches and lead many more people to Christ before I die.” Pastor Sohl stated with enthusiasm, “Like this past March I want to go out like a lion!”

Pray for Pastor Dave Sohl as he leads Faith into the future. Also pray that Patty will be able to get a transfer with Wells Fargo and be able to move closer to Nebraska City.

## HCN Team Helps Equip Sunday School Leaders

Two of the key purposes of the Heartland Church Network are to connect and support churches. Gary Olsen, the Sunday School Director, for Heartland Community Baptist Church in Sioux City, IA called DoM Mark Elliott several months ago and asked for help to equip his teachers. Two concerns Gary had were to help with the very basics of teaching across the age spectrum: preschool, children, youth, and adults., and to help teachers be better equipped to respond to difficult situations in the classroom caused by the dramatic cultural shifts that have taken place in recent years.

God provided the right leaders to assist from three sister churches. Mark took the lead in opening plenary session and then led the two breakouts for the adult area having led adult small groups for over thirty years. Trish Bedel of LifeSpring Church in Bellevue, and Marci Gulbrandsen of Heartland in Sioux City stepped in to lead the preschool and children’s sections. Kevin Hess of Westside Gretna, led the youth breakouts. Marci is the wife of Heartland’s new associate Pastor Tony Gulbrandsen who was called to the church after the training event had already been scheduled—God knew who would be needed for the training. Trish and Kevin are both active lay leaders, have taught Sunday School, and work with the educationally disadvantaged in the public schools. The closing general session was led by Associate Pastor Tony.

The feedback was very positive and the church has teachers better equipped for the task of making disciples. A huge word of thanks to Trish, Kevin, and Marci for using their time and talents to equip others

## How to Avoid Traumatic Pastor Transitions: Multiplying Leaders from Within

Leadership transitions are critical times in an organization's life and the church is no exception. As the DoM for Heartland Church Network, I am in my 25<sup>th</sup> year of working with churches, and in those years I have placed a significant emphasis on finding, developing, and providing quality resources so that Pastor Search Committees had the best tools and information available. I have also been very proactive. In fact, the very first meeting I had with a church was with its Search Committee and that was in my very first week of serving as a DoM.

Unfortunately, I had to admit a few years back as I was updating the Search Team booklet and reflecting on the past, that even with good tools and coaching, too often the transitions yielded trauma for the church. That trauma often related to what I call poorly matched DNA, or in other terms the new pastor and the church were not aligned in critical areas. Churches can easily focus on important theological or denominational alignment issues and assume that all the other areas of day-to-day church life will also be aligned. That might have been true in the 1940s and 1950s, but the plurality of church life even with our own SBC tribe means that there are other critical DNA pieces that need to be considered.

One of the best ways to minimize this problem is to raise up the next generation of leaders from within your own church. One local example of that in progress is what God has been and is doing at Emmaus Bible Church in Omaha. It is a relatively new church, planted in the summer of 2008 by Omaha Bible Church (OBC) when it established a campus in Sarpy County. OBC-South began meeting at Bellevue West High School on Sunday mornings. After God's evident blessing of OBC "South" in its first two years, the elders moved to transition from a campus to a church plant. This was a result of the elders of OBC being convinced that there was qualified leadership in place, a strong and committed core group of members, and progress towards making an impact in Sarpy County. In September of 2010, "OBC-South" was renamed Emmaus Bible Church., and at that time Erik Raymond, Dave Pugh, and Josh Thiessen were affirmed as the church plant elders at Emmaus.

In September 2011 Emmaus became a fully independent local church. They continued to meet in Bellevue West High School while raising money for a more permanent location. In March of 2012 Emmaus purchased the historic Wheeler Presbyterian Church building across from Omaha South High School. Then in September 2012 the Emmaus elders sent Pastor Josh Thiessen and his core team out to Gretna, Nebraska to plant Providence Bible Church.

In late 2016 the church identified the potential God had placed in Luke Gorsett and Thomas Anderson and they began serving in a formal internship. Fast forward to April 2018 when senior pastor Erik Raymond felt called of God to return to his roots in the Boston, Massachusetts area. As it approached its tenth anniversary, the church was facing its first major transition in leadership. Instead of forming a search committee they looked within their own ranks and identified the gifting and faithfulness of Luke Gorsett. The elders prayerfully set in place the following simple transition strategy:

On June 3rd the church will vote on calling Luke Gorsett as Interim Senior Pastor. If approved, Pastor Luke would serve in a year long trial period during which the church would not be actively seeking to find another pastor. Then in June of 2019, another vote will take place that would call Luke as senior pastor.

If the June 3rd vote does not call Pastor Luke, he would be asked to stay on as an Associate Pastor and help in the transition process to find the church's next Senior Pastor. The same would be the case if the vote in 2019 did not extend the call to Luke.

Pray for the church as they approach the June 3<sup>rd</sup> vote with grace and wisdom. Pray for Luke and his family during this time of transition. Pray for Erik Raymond and his transition to the Boston area. And pray that more churches would passionately and patiently raise up leaders from within their own harvest field.



Please be in prayer for the **40+** churches or associations that will be represented on the mission teams that will be coming to serve HCN churches throughout this summer.

Sponsored by  
  
**HEARTLAND**  
 CHURCH NETWORK

\$90.00

DEADLINE TO REGISTER IS  
JUNE 20

2018  
CHILDREN'S CAMP

JULY 23-27

Our 5 day Children's Camp packs ALL the fun of summer. From making s'mores around the campfire and swimming to crafts and learning more about Jesus. Parents can count on a quality, safe, and affordable opportunity that ensures their children will have an exciting and memorable week at camp. Don't wait! Give your child the opportunity to learn and grow this summer. Deadline to register is June 20. **REGISTER TODAY** at your church office!



**AGES** – Children who have finished 2<sup>nd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> grade  
**LOCATION** – Goodwill Campgrounds / South Sioux City, NE

*Cost includes meals, lodging, T-shirt and TONS of fun!*

**Have Questions?**

Contact your church appointed Children's Camp Coordinator

You can download all Children's Camp Forms at  
<http://www.heartlandchurchnetwork.com/childrens-camp.html>





**Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (MBTS) bachelor's level courses are now available through Heartland Church Network's (HCN) Center for Continuing Education**

HCN is offering three separate certificates: **Biblical Studies**, **Pastoral Ministries**, and **Christian Ministry**. Each certificate requires completion of four three-hour classes and a student can transfer up to two certificates towards a Bachelor's degree at MBTS.

Fall 2018 we will be offering two classes; **Evangelism & Discipleship** taught by Dr. Steve Hicks and **Apologetics** taught by Mr. Adam Lloyd Johnson.

A one-time **Application Form** and **fee of \$25.00** (\$26 if paid online) for first time students along with the **Class Enrollment Form** and **fee of \$10.00 per class** (\$11.00 if paid online) should be completed and mailed or brought to the HCN office. Professors will not be accepting enrollment forms/money. Both payments should be made payable to HCN. We will in turn pass on the \$25.00 application fee to Midwestern and the \$10.00 class fee will be given to the teacher.

**LOGISTICS**

**Evangelism & Discipleship** will be held at LifeSpring Church and will start on August 21 from 6:00-9:00 and Dr. Steve Hicks will be teaching.

**Apologetics** will be held at Westside Church and will start on August 20 from 6:00-9:00 and Mr. Adam Lloyd Johnson will be teaching.

**Note:** Both of the classes above are credits for the Pastoral Ministries Certificate or the Christian Ministry Certificate.



**ONE TIME APPLICATION FEE**  
**\$25.00**  
 (\$26.00 if paid online)

**CLASS FEE**  
**\$10.00 TO HEARTLAND CHURCH NETWORK**  
 (\$11.00 if pay online)  
 (Students purchase their books)

**FORMS AND FEES**  
 Both fees should be made payable to HCN

All forms are available online at  
<http://www.heartlandchurchnetwork.com/heartland-bible-institute.html>

**DEADLINE:**  
**SEPTEMBER 4, 2018**



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[HEARTLANDCHURCHNETWORK.ORG](http://HEARTLANDCHURCHNETWORK.ORG)



For those wanting to expand their Biblical knowledge but are not interested in getting a degree from a Bible college or seminary, classes are available through the Heartland Center for Continuing Education. Mr. Allison Miller is the teacher for these practical classes that help pastors, minister, and lay people learn more about the Bible and other relevant topics that are useful in preaching or teaching. The classes are FREE of charge.

The classes are held at the Heartland Church Network Conference Room at 2100 S. 51st St. Omaha from 6:30-8:30 p.m. on Monday night on a bi-weekly basis. Please contact Allison Miller at 308.547.2486 / [am02000@windstream.net](mailto:am02000@windstream.net) to register.

**SCHEDULE**

| FALL 2018 |          | SPRING 2019 |                    |
|-----------|----------|-------------|--------------------|
| Aug. 27   | Nahum    | Jan. 7      | The Reason for God |
| Sept. 10  | Habakkuk | Jan. 21     | The Reason for God |
| Sept. 24  | Matthew  | Feb. 4      | The Reason for God |
| Oct. 8    | Matthew  | Feb. 18     | The Reason for God |
| Oct. 22   | Matthew  | Mar. 4      | Ephesians          |
| Nov. 5    | Matthew  | Mar. 14     | Ephesians          |
| Nov. 19   | Matthew  | Apr. 1      | Ephesians          |
| Dec. 3    | Matthew  | Apr. 15     | Ephesians          |



**CLASS IS FREE**  
 (Students can purchase book or borrow one from the HCN office.)

**QUESTIONS?**  
 Contact Allison Miller for more information:  
 308.547.2486  
[am02000@icloud.com](mailto:am02000@icloud.com)

**LOCATION**  
 Classes are held at the Heartland Church Network Conference Room  
 Located at  
 2100 S. 51<sup>ST</sup> St.  
 Omaha  
 (park in upper parking lot)

HEARTLAND CENTER FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION CLASSES ARE SPONSORED BY

