

# Central Region Life

JANUARY 2025

## CHRISTMAS SPIRIT SHINES AT CHERRY GROVE BAPTIST CHURCH

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Cherry Grove Baptist Church in Garland, Kansas, was abuzz with activity on December 15, making it a memorable day for the congregation and community.

The day began with a heartfelt worship service, during which the church choir presented the cantata, "The Splendor of Heaven." The beautifully arranged music filled the sanctuary with a sense of awe and reverence, setting the tone for the season and reminding everyone of the true meaning of Christmas.

Later that evening, the church's youth group took center stage with their Christmas program. Though small in number, the group delivered a remarkable portrayal of Bible characters, recreating scenes from the Christmas story. Their performance, guided by sponsors Chelsea Andrew, Haley Dohle, and Anna Swank, was a testament to their dedication and talent.

Following the program, the congregation gathered for a time of fellowship. The aroma of hearty soups and fresh sandwiches filled the air, while a festive cookie exchange added a sweet touch to the evening. Laughter and friendly competition marked the games that followed, bringing smiles to faces of all ages. The highlight for the youngest attendees came with the arrival of a special visitor who handed out gifts to every child present, spreading joy and excitement throughout the room. It was truly a day of worship, celebration, and community spirit. It was an occasion that brought people together to share in the joy of the season, leaving everyone with cherished memories and a deeper sense of connection.



# PLANNED GIVING

HELPING YOU TO GIVE GENEROUSLY,  
REV. TIM SCHWARTZ  
KBCF DIRECTOR OF PLANNED GIVING  
913-424-9939 / 785-272-7622  
TIMMANS39@GMAIL.COM  
TIM.SCHWARTZ@ABCCR.ORG

As we begin this new year of 2025, I want to feature one more couple who were annuitants with the Kansas Baptist Convention Foundation. They are Robert and Opal Phillips. I asked a few colleagues and friends in the region if they knew who they were, but they responded that they did not. I also did not know much about them until I attended Opal's funeral at the First Baptist Church of Manhattan, Kansas, in November. I met their three children and their spouses and a few grandchildren and great-grandchildren and I learned a lot about Opal that day.

Robert Phillips was born in June 1924 in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, and he was the youngest of five children. After his dad became disabled from a work injury, his family moved to Elk County, Kansas. His family moved to Wichita, Kansas, later and he graduated from East High School in 1942. He served in the Army Air Force in the European theater of World War II and was honorably discharged.

Opal Korean Brown was born at St Francis, Kansas, on Halloween day 1925.

She was the second of four children and she grew up on a farm south of Saint Francis during the depression and only had good memories of her childhood. She graduated from St Francis High School and later from the Wichita Business College. While in Wichita she met Robert, an Army airman returning from World War II. They were married in Wichita on April 7, 1946. They moved to Manhattan later that year where Robert started veterinary school and Opal worked as a secretary in Anderson Hall on the Kansas State campus.

Robert completed his veterinary medicine degree in 1951. He began his Veterinary career in Fergus Falls, Minnesota, moving in 1953 to Oberlin, Kansas, where he started a predominantly large animal practice. In 1969 he entered graduate school at the University of Georgia where he earned a PhD in medical microbiology in 1972. After 3 years at Jensen-Salsbery Laboratories in Kansas City, he accepted a virology position in the diagnostic Laboratory at the Kansas State College of Veterinary Medicine where he remained until his retirement in 1994. During this last chapter of his career, Opal worked as a bookkeeper at a medical practice.

In the six years after Bob finished veterinary school, they had four children—Tom, Mary, Paul & Jeff. During that time she began a lifelong project of being a mother. In younger years, she was a Cub Scout and Brownie leader and was involved in the PTA. In later years, parenting became more complicated, first involving children in law, then grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Even into her 90s, she never gave up trying to coax her offspring in the right way. Her best days were when her family was together, and a frequent lament was that her children lived too far away. Still, they both enjoyed spending time with their six grandchildren and their eleven great-grandchildren.

Opal was an excellent seamstress, making quilts, dresses and shirts, as well as one Nehru jacket. She was a superb cook and baker, with her family remembering her noodles, brisket and especially her quick breads, cakes and pies. She found great joy sending birthday and anniversary cards to family and friends, not expecting, but enjoying cards sent in reply.

She especially enjoyed her birthday as she always had visitors looking for Halloween candy. She was a hospice volunteer for many years. She and Bob enjoyed all things related to Kansas State. They were season ticket holders to KSU football and women's basketball for many years.

As a man of faith, Bob was active in his church and community, and considered it a joy to serve others. One story was told that Bob wanted to go to Bolivia one summer while he was in school to do work and mission work, so he & Opal got ready, loaded up the kids and went to Bolivia and lived and worked there during that time! Opal also had an unquestioned Christian faith and her church was a huge part of her life. If it was Sunday, she was in Sunday school and church. Over the years she was involved in teaching Sunday and Bible schools, sponsoring youth groups and working in the nursery. She enjoyed meeting with the American Baptist Women. She cooked and baked for countless church potlucks and funeral dinners.

Their adult son, Jeff, battled against an illness, and Opal and Bob were his caregivers during that time. He died in 2009.

After 77 years of marriage, Bob died at the age of 99, on September 17, 2023. During this past year, Opal lived at a memory care center in Little Rock, Arkansas, near her daughter, Mary. Although she missed Manhattan and Kansas State University, she found joy in spending time with her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren as well as winning games of Rummikub. Opal died on October 24th, 2024, just one week shy of her 99th birthday.

As I said at the beginning of the article, Robert and Opal had a charitable gift annuity with our Kansas Baptist Convention Foundation, and now that they have both gone home to be with the Lord, the remainder gift from their annuity will be given to the mission partners that they chose. If you are interested in funding a charitable gift annuity, please contact me by phone, email, text or voicemail and I will be delighted to help you in that process that will not only benefit you but also the mission partners then you can choose as well. Just say the word and I will be very happy to assist you! I also want to wish you a healthy, joyous, meaningful and rewarding new year as you continue to follow Christ and love your neighbor.





Students at Ada Baptist Church performing at their Christmas program.



Leaders and students of Lebo Baptist Church attended Xtreme Winter Youth Conference in Branson, MO.



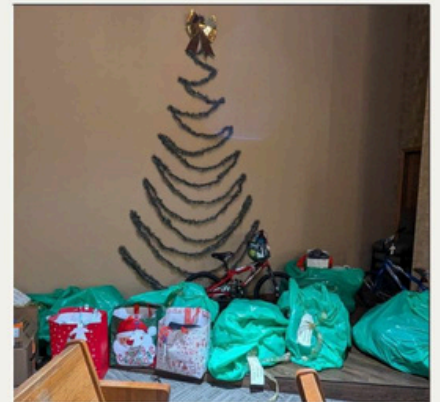
Members of First Baptist Church of Ottawa, KS gather for their Christmas Eve candlelight service.



Christmas Eve Candlelight Service at First Baptist Church of Council Grove, KS

# CAPTURED!

*In the Central Region*



The members at First Baptist Church of Lyons, KS came together to purchase gifts for kids in their community through the Angel Tree program.



Pastor Mike Lehmen and the mission team at First Baptist Church of Hiawatha, KS spent part of their Christmas break doing mission work, building homes for families in Reynosa, Mexico.

# MINISTRY IN ACTION



As we begin the new year of 2025, I think about the Mid-Winter Mission and Evangelism conference that is coming soon at Prairie Homestead in Wichita, Kansas. This year our featured speakers are Jeanine and Walt White who are Global Consultants for International Ministries. Let us pray for their health, safety, and welfare as they are training teams working with historically underserved religious groups. Let us pray that God will give them insight and wisdom as they teach these groups to be more effective communicators of the good news of Jesus Christ.

Let us pray for all who will attend the conference that they will have safe travels, and meaningful times of worship and fellowship. Let us pray that they might listen intently as Walt and Jeanine share their stories in the mission work that they are doing.

Let us pray for all of our churches and places of mission throughout the region that they might be open to new ways of caring for others and sharing the good news.

Let us also pray for Pastor Ivan Greuter, who serves on the IM board, as he goes back to Liberia to preach and teach and do mission work there. Let us ask the Holy Spirit to use his time there and bless the school, churches and community as a result of that good work.

Finally let us pray for the ministry of Prairie Homestead, where the conference will be held, that Jesus would guide all of the administrators, staff, workers and volunteers as they continue in their mission as well.

As the IM theme scripture reminds us, let us pray for and be mindful of the important mission work that we do here, "on earth as it is in heaven." Matthew 6:10b (ESV)

A close-up photograph of a person's hands clasped in prayer, with the text of the Lord's Prayer overlaid in white. The background is a teal color, matching the top of the page.

**“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.  
Your kingdom come, your will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts,  
as we also have forgiven our debtors.  
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**

**Matthew 6: 10- 13 (ESV)**

# MID-WINTER MISSIONS CONFERENCE

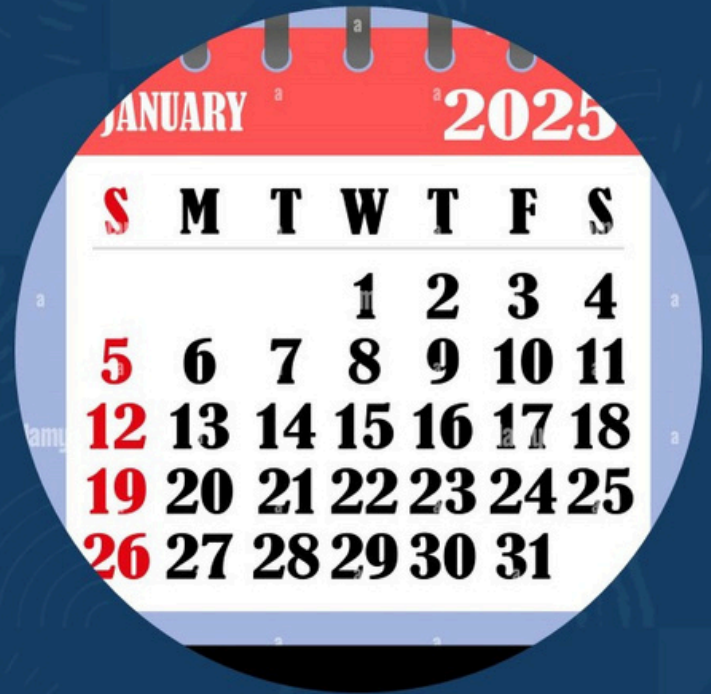
Save the Date:  
January 17-18, 2025

Mid Winter  
Missions Conference

Location: Prairie Homestead,  
Wichita



Guest Speakers:  
Jeanine and Walt White  
Global Consultants  
International Ministries



## Kick-Off the new year at the Mid-Winter Missions Conference.

Join us, January 17- 18, 2025 at Prairie Homestead in Wichita, Kansas as we hear from Jeanine and Walt White, Global Consultants for International Ministries.

**Registration is \$45 per person.** Registration helps cover travel expenses and the honorarium for Jeanine and Walt. The Registration fee also includes two meals: dinner and lunch, provided by Prairie Homestead.

**Registration form and fee are due no later than January 3, 2025.**

One registration per person. Lodging is on your own.

Please visit the ABCCR website for more information on lodging.

An offering for Missions will be received.

You can register and pay online, or you can mail your registration to:  
Melissa Newberry: 1502 Pawnee Street Leavenworth, KS 66048

Please make checks payable to: "Mid-Winter Missions Conference"

**REGISTER**

To register online  
click the link or scan the QR Code





## 2025 Mid-Winter Missions Conference

January 17-18, 2025

Prairie Homestead

1605 W. May St., Wichita, KS

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Jeanine and Walt White

IM Global Consultants

Registration is \$45 per person\*. This helps cover travel expenses and the honorarium for Jeanine and Walt. The Registration Fee also includes two meals, dinner and lunch, provided by Prairie Homestead.

Dietary needs (please circle if applicable):

Diabetic

Gluten Free

Vegetarian

\*Please make checks payable to: "Mid-Winter Mission Conference"

Mail completed form and registration fee to:

Melissa Newberry

1502 Pawnee Street

Leavenworth, KS 66048

OR—Register and pay online.

[www.abccr.org](http://www.abccr.org) click on "Events" tab

Registration form and fee are due no later than January 3, 2025.

One registration per person. Lodging is on your own.

An offering for Missions will be received.

### SCHEDULE

Friday, January 17

4:00 Registration Opens

5:15 Dinner

6:30 Evening Session

Saturday, January 18

9:00 Morning Session

12:00 Lunch (this will conclude our time together)



## Wichita Hotels

Aloft – Wichita  
3642 Oliver  
Wichita, KS 67220  
316-744-1100  
No breakfast mentioned on  
website

Ambassador Hotel  
104 S. Broadway  
Wichita, KS 67202  
316-239-7100  
Restaurant on site

Baymont by Wyndham –  
East  
12111 E. Central  
Wichita, KS 67206  
316-689-8000  
Complimentary Breakfast

Best Western Governors Inn  
4742 S. Emporia St.  
Wichita, KS 67216  
316-522-0775  
Complimentary Breakfast

Best Western Plus – West  
Airport Inn  
3800 W. Kellogg  
Wichita, KS 67213  
316-854-5050  
Complimentary Breakfast

Candlewood Suites  
5211 E. Kellogg  
Wichita, KS 67218  
316-685-2233  
No breakfast mentioned

Comfort Suites Airport  
7515 W. Taft  
Wichita, KS 67209  
316-773-1700  
Complimentary Breakfast

Courtyard by Marriott – Old  
Town  
820 E. 2nd St. N  
Wichita, KS 67202  
316-264-5300  
Restaurant on site

Drury Plaza Hotel  
Broadway  
400 W. Douglas  
Wichita, KS 67202  
316-262-5000  
Complimentary Breakfast

Fairfield Inn and Suites  
Downtown  
525 S. Main  
Wichita, KS 67202  
316-201-1400  
Complimentary Breakfast

Fairfield Inn – East  
417 S. Webb Rd  
Wichita, KS 67207  
316-685-3777  
Complimentary Breakfast

Hampton Inn – East  
9449 E. Corporate Dr.  
Wichita, KS 67207  
316-686-3576  
Complimentary Breakfast

Hampton Inn – Northeast  
2433 N. Greenwich Rd  
Wichita, KS 67226  
316-636-5594  
Complimentary Breakfast

Hampton Inn- - Northwest  
10047 W. 29th St. N  
Wichita, KS 67205  
316-925-6600  
Complimentary Breakfast





# AB GIRLS FALL RETREAT

Who doesn't love the Fall? It's the perfect time for painting pumpkins, drinking apple cider, and playing crazy Fall games like bobbing for donuts and pumpkin Tic-tac-toe! That's why we just had to get our AB G.I.R.L.S together for a Fall retreat before this delightful time of year was gone!

So, we met at Olathe First Baptist for the Girls Only Fall Retreat on Saturday, November 16th. Girls from churches all over the East Central Area came to be a part including Topeka, Louisburg, Paola, and, of course, Olathe.

The day was filled with giggles, hugs, and lots of smiles as the girls ate together, created designer pumpkins, and played epic games. They also saw just how important and irreplaceable they are in God's eyes with a devotion about their part on God's team.

AB G.I.R.L.S stands for Girls In Relationship, Leadership, and Service. This event was a great opportunity for the girls to build relationships with girls from other churches in the region. From those connections come opportunities for the girls to lead together in the region, attend camp and mission trips together, and serve together as a group of girls who want to spread the love of Jesus. God is at work among the young ladies of the East Central Region!

A huge thank you to Olathe First Baptist Church for hosting the event and to the team of Amazing Beautiful Women (ABW) who took the time to make these girls feel so special and loved. Be on the lookout for information on upcoming events! You don't want to miss it!

Pastor Kami Minor, ECA AB G.I.R.L.S coordinator

## FORMER ABWM SCHOLAR JESSAMINE GREUTER SERVING IN LIBERIA, AFRICA - JANUARY 2025

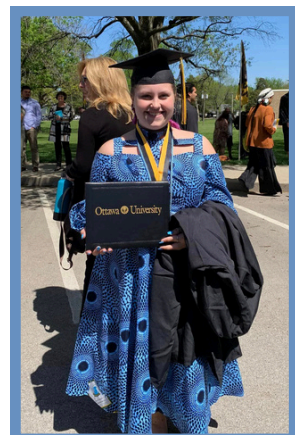
Jessamine, a graduate student at Ottawa University, will be serving as a short-term mission volunteer at the Antioch Baptist School in Monrovia, Liberia, this January 11-28, 2025. Antioch Baptist School was ABWMCR's 2022-2023 Special Project, through which over \$40,000 was raised to complete the final floor of their Christian school. This expansion has been instrumental in providing new educational opportunities for high school students.

In January 2023, Jessamine had the privilege of visiting the school during the building project, witnessing firsthand the incredible impact of ABWMCR's support. With the project now completed, Jessamine will return to Monrovia to teach teachers and share essential knowledge of First Aid, further contributing to the mission of empowering education and community development.

Jessamine's journey is a testament to the investment made by ABWMCR in young women called to serve. She graduated from Ottawa University in 2023 with a Bachelor's in Secondary Education - English and is on track to complete her Master's in Elementary Education in May 2025. Her long-term aspiration is to teach internationally as a full-time missionary, reflecting her dedication to using her education and skills for God's glory.

Thank you for your continued leadership and support of the ABWM Scholars Program, which has helped equip Jessamine and so many others for lives of meaningful service. Your work truly extends far beyond what we can see, touching lives in ways that are immeasurable.

Rev. Dr. Ivan Greuter



# SPOKEN 4

FACEBOOK.COM/SPOKEN4QUARTET



TWITTER.COM/SPOKEN4QUARTET



SPOKEN4QUARTET.COM



**SUNDAY**  
**JANUARY 19, 2024**



**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH - TOPEKA**

**DOORS OPEN AT 5:00 PM**

**CONCERT AT 6:00 PM**

**FREE CONCERT OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

**MERCHANDISE TABLE AVAILABLE**

**FREE WILL OFFERING : REFRESHMENTS WILL BE PROVIDED**



FACEBOOK.COM/FIRSTBAPTISTTOPEKA



FIRSTBAPTISTTOPEKA.ORG

3033 SW MACVICAR AVE | TOPEKA, KS 66611

**SPOKEN 4 HAS HAD A WONDERFUL RELATIONSHIP WITH SILVER DOLLAR CITY AND PERFORMS THERE SEVERAL TIMES A YEAR. IN 2019 SPOKEN 4 BEGAN SINGING ON A FULL TIME BASIS AT DOCKSIDE THEATER AT SILVER DOLLAR CITY**

# BIENNIAL MISSION SUMMIT 2025

REGISTER TODAY

## SAVE THE DATE!

American Baptist Churches USA  
**BIENNIAL MISSION SUMMIT**  
July 3-6, 2025 | Omaha, NE

**COME SEEK**  
**LIVING**  
**WATER**

## COME SEEK:

- ◆ New Life in Christ through dynamic worship services and learning opportunities.
- ◆ New Connections with other American Baptists. Build your network!
- ◆ What God has to share with you!

Come Seek Living Water

## Mark Your Calendar

# ROOTED

*in the*

# LION *of Judah* & the LAMB

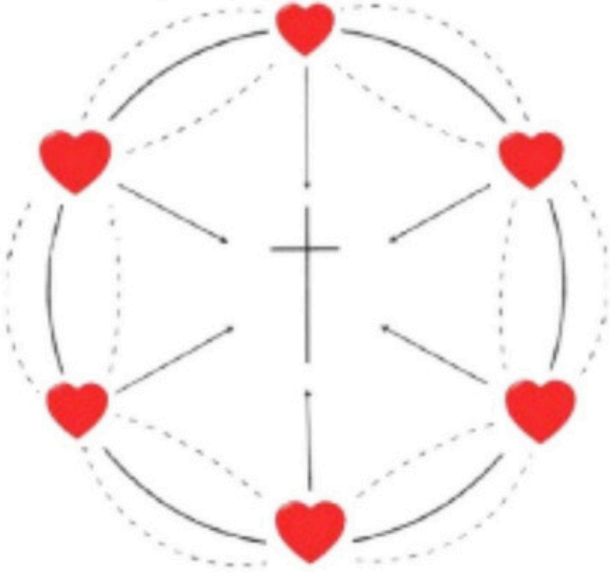
**American Baptist  
Women's Ministries**

**Summer Conference  
FBC Herington, KS  
June 6-7, 2025**

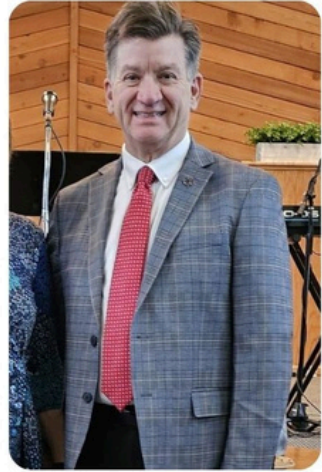


# 2025 SENIOR ADULT RETREAT

CENTERED IN CHRIST



Mark your calendars now for this event with keynote speaker, Rev. Dr. Robin Stoops. Dr. Stoops has been engaging in a special assignment working in Mission Resource Development for the American Baptist Churches USA and is now currently serving as the interim Pastor at First Baptist Church Topeka. He previously served as the Executive Minister of the American Baptist Churches of Nebraska.



April 23-24, 2025  
Central Baptist Church  
Great Bend, KS

Registration information will be available soon. Watch for more details throughout the Central Region's many avenues.

Ephesians 3:16-19

## Lodging and Hotels



Best Western – Angus Inn  
2920 10th Street  
620-792-3541  
Complimentary Breakfast

Super 8 by Wyndham  
911 Grant Street  
620-910-9523  
Complimentary Breakfast

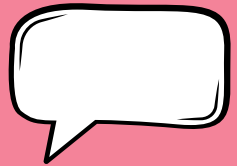
Days Inn  
4701 10th Street  
620-792-8235  
Complimentary Breakfast

Travelodge  
3200 10th Street  
620-792-7219  
No Breakfast mentioned on website

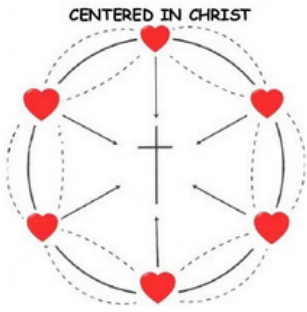
Holiday Inn  
3821 10th Street  
620-603-6565  
Complimentary Breakfast

Quality Inn  
3500 10th Street  
620-793-8486  
Complimentary Breakfast

## Workshops



Handbells with Jan Smith  
Craft Class led by Janet Crow  
Spiritual Gifts with John Williams  
Choir led by Bob Artz and Ruth Clark  
All Group Bible Study with Waylon Upchego  
Walking with Jesus led by Mike Justice & Jerry Neeley



**ABCCR SENIOR ADULT RETREAT**

**April 23-24, 2025**

**Central Baptist Church, 3301 Lakin Ave., Great Bend, KS 67530**

Guest Speaker, Rev. Dr. Robin Stoops

Theme: "Centered in Christ" Scripture: Ephesians 3:16-19 (NRSVUE)

**First Time to Attend the ABCCR Senior Adult Retreat?** Yes \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
*(If registering as a couple, please write spouse's name below)*

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Church: \_\_\_\_\_

& City \_\_\_\_\_

City / State / Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Full Retreat (includes program and 3 meals) per person  
One Day only (Wednesday or Thursday) per person

# of Guests		Total \$
_____	@ \$95.00 per person	_____
_____	@ \$70.00 per person	_____
<b>Total Amount Due</b>		_____

**Dietary Requirements:**  
 Sugar Free     Gluten Free     Vegetarian   
**PLEASE NOTE: We will try but cannot assure to meet all dietary requirements**

**Interest Groups** (please mark preference)

3:15 PM Wednesday – Bells  or Walking with Jesus   
 4:30 PM Choir

10:30 AM Thursday – Craft \$5  or Spiritual Gifts

**Abbreviated Schedule**

Wed. 11:00 AM Registration Begins  
 12:00 PM Lunch  
 1:00 PM Session #1  
 3:15 PM Interest Groups  
 6:00 PM Dinner

Thurs. 7:00 PM Session #2  
 8:30 AM Registration  
 9:00 AM Group Study  
 10:30 AM Interest Groups

1:15 PM Session #3

Please make checks payable to **Senior Adult Retreat** and mail payment and completed registration form to:

Senior Adult Retreat  
 John Williams, Registrar  
 C/O 5889 SW 29th Street  
 Topeka, KS 66614

**Online registration is available at [www.abccr.org](http://www.abccr.org)**

**Registration Deadline - April 8, 2025**  
**\*\*\* \$10 Late Fee Assessed if Postmarked After April 8, 2025**  
**Cancellation Policy: A full refund will be given if cancelled by April 15, 2025**  
**\$25 non-refundable cancellation fee per individual after April 15, 2025**

*(Cut here and retain this stub for your records and information.)*

**ABCCR Senior Adult Retreat:** Central Baptist Church, 3301 Lakin Ave., Great Bend, KS 67530  
**Dates:** April 23-24, 2025      **Registration begins at 11:00 AM**, Wednesday the 23rd  
 Retreat begins with lunch at 12:00 noon

Amount paid to Registrar: \_\_\_\_\_ Check number: \_\_\_\_\_ Date paid: \_\_\_\_\_

# CAMPING 2025



## CAMP CHRISTY

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JUNE 2025

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**2-6** HIGH SCHOOL CAMP

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**9-13** MIDDLE SCHOOL CAMP

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**16-20** JUNIOR CAMP

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**23-25** PRIMARY CAMP

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**26-27** DAY CAMP

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## WHITE MEMORIAL

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JULY 2025

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**14-18** HIGH SCHOOL CAMP

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**14-18** MIDDLE SCHOOL CAMP

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**21-25** JUNIOR CAMP

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**SAVE THE DATE**



*Mountain & Prairie*

**YOUTH CONFERENCE**

**June 14-18, 2026**

**YMCA OF THE ROCKIES**

*Snow Mountain Ranch*

**Granby, Colorado**

