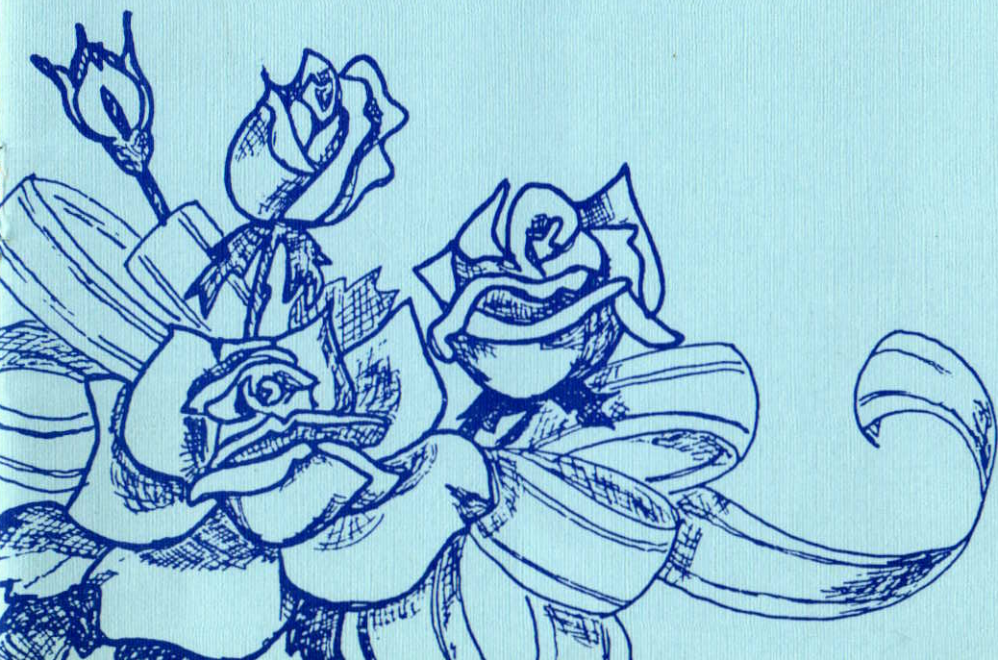
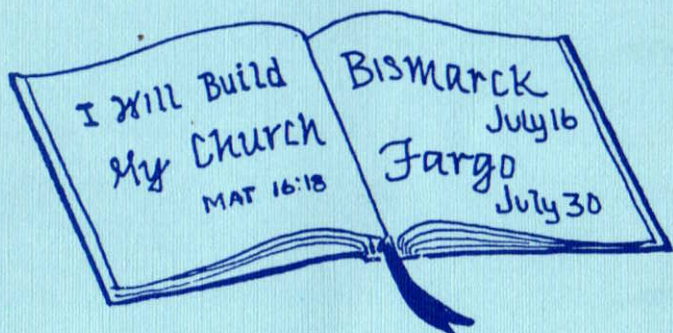
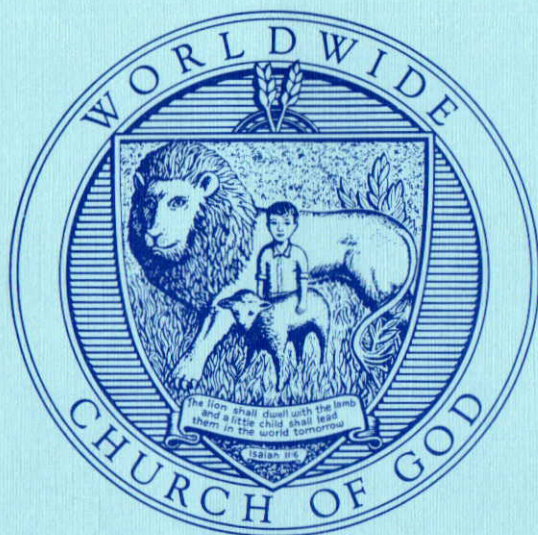






WELCOME FROM ALL OF US . . .

**The Pioneer Members, Present Members,
Elders and Pastors**

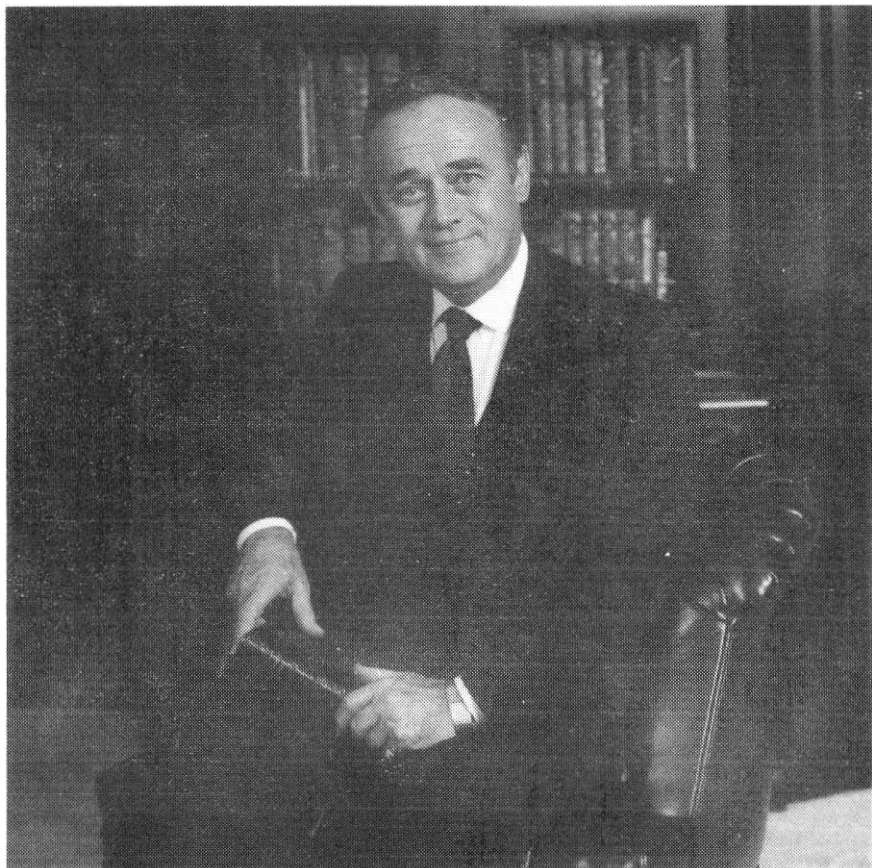
of

The Worldwide Church of God

**Bismarck and Fargo, North Dakota
Congregations**

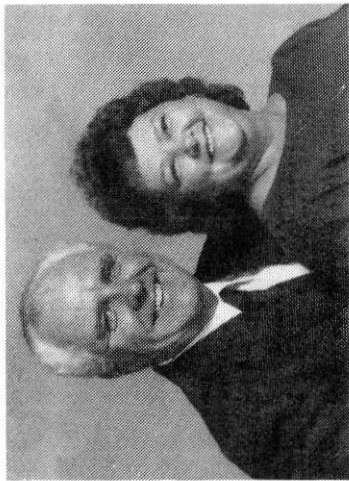
**On This, Our
Twenty-fifth Anniversary
July, 1966 - July, 1991**

MR. JOSEPH W. TKACH



**PASTOR-GENERAL
of the
WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD**

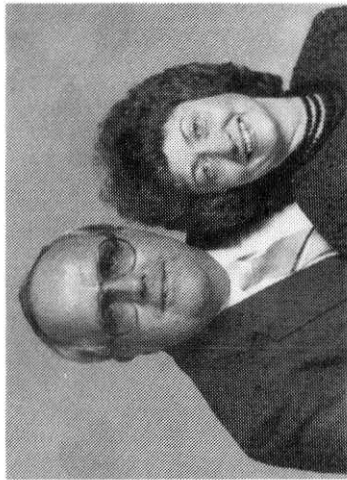
OUR PASTORS



Mr. & Mrs. Lowell Blackwell
Fargo & Bismarck 1966-1971



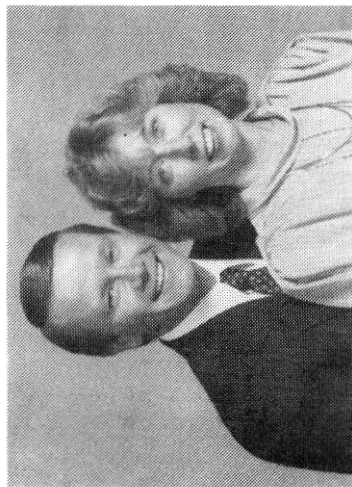
Mr. & Mrs. Hugh Wilson
Fargo 1978-1986



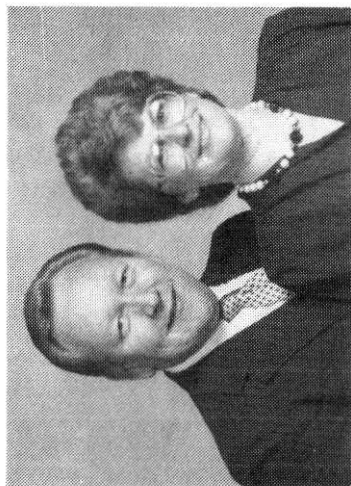
Mr. & Mrs. Mike Blackwell
Fargo 1986-1991



Mr. & Mrs. John Cafourek
Bismarck 1972-1976



Mr. & Mrs. Dan Creed
Bismarck 1976-1985



Mr. & Mrs. Jeff Barness
Bismarck 1985-1989



Mr. & Mrs. Paul Luecke
Bismarck 1989-

EARLY HISTORY OF THE NORTH DAKOTA CHURCHES

The story of the North Dakota churches begins several years before a minister was sent out and regular meetings began. For some in the Dakotas, the mid-1950's was the beginning of a new life — as some of our early North Dakota members were baptized into the "Radio Church of God" (which was the name of the church at that time).

Only those who were baptized at the same time and in the same location knew each other. These few scattered members had little idea that there were others with similar beliefs anywhere near.

Attending the Feast of Tabernacles in Big Sandy, Texas was an opportunity for the scattered brethren to get to know each other. The Day of Atonement was observed on the way to the Feast in Texas.

Coming back to North Dakota from the Feast of Tabernacles meant many weekends of either keeping the Sabbath alone, or with only immediate family members. Members were so hungry for fellowship that they began getting together just for the opportunity to have a picnic, or a shared meal to discuss their new-found truths. As many as 50 people attended these informal get-togethers in the years before there was a church or Bible Study.

The first holy day kept in North Dakota was the Feast of Trumpets in 1961, at the Jamestown Park. But there were no weekly Sabbath services in the whole upper midwest until the Minneapolis church began in September, 1963.

We now continue with the history of the Bismarck and Fargo churches as they both came to be...

HISTORY OF THE BISMARCK CONGREGATION

The first members in North Dakota were baptized in the 1950's. Among these early members were: Mr. and Mrs. Carl Mauk, Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Spitzer, Mr. Knut Knutson, Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Shulte, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Lang, Mr. and Mrs. Gottlieb Schaeffer, the Rudy Mettler family, Mr. and Mrs. Ron Schueller, the Hints family, and Phyllis Hederely. Many of these members, along with others, attended informal get-togethers in the years before there was a church or Bible Study in North Dakota.

Then came the day when the letter arrived in each of their homes, inviting them to meet in Bismarck for a Bible Study with one of God's ministers. This first meeting was in February, 1964. There were 113 eager faces with alert minds trying catch every word of what was said during that first formal Bible Study. Brethren were able to ask questions and get answers right from the Bible. They were able to hear the plain truth, which was so refreshing that many could hardly wait to go out and tell their friends, relatives and neighbors. Many had to be counseled to let their light shine by their deeds, rather than by attempting to convert loved ones. This first Bible study was held in the World War Memorial building in Bismarck. Bible^{Study} continued through the next two and one-half years, later being held at the Grand Pacific Hotel.

The first wedding in North Dakota of members of God's church was on August 1, 1965...with the marriage of Karen Fricke to Ray Daly. This wedding was held at the Grand Pacific Hotel.

Many of the brethren during these years were farmers, ranchers, or dairy people. Those who milked cows had difficulty maintaining the demands of their dairy operations while keeping the Sabbath properly. So some began to look around for alternative occupations. Since

there was no certainty of a church starting in Bismarck at that time, many members sold their farms and moved to the Minneapolis area, where a church there had started in 1963. As many as 50-60 brethren left the Bismarck Bible Study group in this time period - although it seemed someone new would always be called to fill the vacant seats.

Sunday, July 3, 1966 was the last Bible study prior to the starting of the Bismarck church. Ninety-nine people were in attendance at that study.

July 8, 1966 was the date on the letter from Mr. Herbert Armstrong informing members that a church was starting in Bismarck.

That first Sabbath service was held July 16, 1966 at 3:00 p.m., at the Bismarck Moose Lodge on Railroad Ave. The attendance was 121. Mr. Lowell Blackwell conducted this first service. Notes show that the very next day the brethren got together once again for a skating party social.

In these early Sabbath services Mr. Blackwell led the song service, did all the speaking, and gave the opening and closing prayers. It soon became evident that help was needed to serve the many needs of the church.

Mr. Ron Fricke and Mr. Paul Lang were appointed to help take care of the many details involved in holding Bible studies and church services. Several men from the congregation were surprised to be called on for opening or closing prayers...and then for song leading and later, to give sermonettes.

Spokesman Club was then started to help prepare men for leadership roles. November 1, 1966 was the first Spokesman Club meeting in Bismarck. It was held at the old Capitol Electric building at 7:00 p.m. The club met every Tuesday evening thereafter.

In April, 1967 - nine months after the church was started - Mr. Ron Fricke was ordained the first deacon in the Bismarck congregation. Later, in June of 1967, Mr. Barry Chase was sent out to assist Mr. Blackwell for the next year. Throughout these early years of the church in North Dakota, Mr. Blackwell was also pastoring the Fargo church on the other side of the state, resulting in a great deal of travel and being apart from his family. Mr. and Mrs. Ben Morrison were sent to assist Mr. Blackwell for a short period of time in 1968 and 1969.

One attendance report during these early years showed Bismarck with about 140 in attendance. Eventually, the growth in Fargo began to increase rapidly. It was then that Mr. Blackwell and his family moved to Castleton, North Dakota, and in July, 1969 Mr. Wayne Lugenbill was sent to Bismarck to assist the church and members in the western half of the state.

During these early years of the church in North Dakota, the Fargo and Bismarck congregations always met together for the annual holy days, as well as for many other church activities such as Spokesman Club meetings, softball games and campouts. Many long-lasting friendships were cemented during this time by spending these precious moments together as well as in each other's homes.

In April, 1970 Mr. Joe Stoebner was ordained a deacon, and Mrs. Darlene Daly was ordained deaconess to help with the increasing physical needs of the Bismarck church.

In 1972, when Mr. Lowell Blackwell and his family were transferred from the Fargo area, Mr. Lugenbill went to Fargo and Mr. and Mrs. John Cafourek and family were sent to Bismarck to begin serving the Bismarck congregation.

The Spokesman Club and other church activities

flourished throughout these years. The Bismarck men's basketball team even played in tournaments in Sioux Falls, South Dakota and Omaha, Nebraska...and won! Determination and North Dakota resolve proved that even though small in number, they were mighty in spirit.

Mr. Joe Stoebner was ordained a local church elder in June, 1975. At the same time Mr. and Mrs. George Kulish were ordained as deacon and deaconess to help with the growth and work load in the Bismarck church.

Mr. Cafourek and family were transferred to Missouri in 1976, after being in the Bismarck area for about four years. At that time Mr. and Mrs. Dan Creed were sent to Bismarck to serve the brethren and to continue building on the foundation set down by previous ministers.

Mr. Jerry Helt was ordained a deacon in 1978. Mr. Burt Daly was ordained a deacon in 1980, and at the same time Mr. Helt was ordained a local church elder. Mr. Ron Fricke was ordained a local church elder in 1985...some 19 years after he helped with the starting of the church in 1966.

In 1985 Mr. Creed and family were transferred to Illinois, after having spent nine years in Bismarck. Mr. Jeff Barness then became the next pastor of the Bismarck church — as well as the Minot and Dickinson churches, which had been raised up in the meantime.

In 1989 — at about the same time North Dakota was celebrating its 100th birthday as a state, Mr. and Mrs. Jeff Barness and family were transferred to New York. At that time, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Luecke arrived to take their place.

HISTORY OF THE FARGO CONGREGATION

Faithful members from eastern North Dakota and South Dakota and northwest Minnesota were overjoyed to receive a hand printed letter from Mr. Lowell Blackwell... announcing that the first Sabbath service was to be held in Fargo, North Dakota on July 30, 1966 at the Fargo American Legion Club.

Formerly, some of our members - who were baptized by baptizing teams sent out from Pasadena in the late 1950's and early 1960's - had to travel to Chicago for the Passover, and remained there through the Days of Unleavened Bread.

After September, 1963 when the Minneapolis, Minnesota church began, those members who lived in the eastern sections of North Dakota and South Dakota and Minnesota began attending in Minneapolis whenever possible.

So, to finally have a "local" church begin was a real blessing, even though Fargo was over 100 miles away from some member's homes. Eighty-five people attended that first service in Fargo. It was the first church of God service that many had ever attended.

Fargo's first pastor, Mr. Lowell Blackwell, did everything in these early services ...the song leading, opening and closing prayers, announcements, the sermon and then answering questions afterward. But that soon changed, as Mr. Gary Wendt was "volunteered" to lead songs.

Fargo's first Holy day service was the Feast of Trumpets, 1966. This was a combined service at Bismarck, with 152 people present and a total holy day offering of \$530.32.

On March 25, 1967 the Fargo church moved across the river to the Moorhead American Legion, a hall which was

more private and with better parking — although it was colder in winter and hotter in summer.

On April 1, 1967 the Fargo Spokesman Club began, with members coming from three states to be a part. Later that month, on April 15, the Fargo church saw its first ordinations...those of Mr. Robert Berg and Mr. Gary Wendt being ordained as deacons.

The Last Day of Unleavened Bread in 1967 was to be held at Bismarck...but typical of North Dakota's weather, over a foot of snow reduced any driving in Bismarck to four-wheel-drive vehicles...so the church in North Dakota had to stay holed up on that Holy Day.

In February, 1968 the first two deaconesses were ordained: Mrs. Huddelia Stutzman and Mrs. JoAnne Wendt. In April 1968 Mr. Robert Berg was ordained a local church elder — a little over a month after giving his first sermonette.

By 1968 the areas had grown to the point that in June of that year Mr. Lowell Blackwell was sent an assistant to help. In November, 1968 Mr. Blackwell and his family moved from their home in Mandan to Casselton.

During the winter of 1969, Mr. Blackwell and Mr. Ben Morrison were caught in a blinding blizzard on I-94. They had to stop because the interstate was blocked by two semi trucks. They were then hit by another semi from behind, and had a long cold night waiting rescue the next day.

The first wedding in the Fargo church took place in March, 1969 when Alice Howey married Art Schaffer of Bismarck.

April, 1970 saw more ordinations. Mr. Charles Hanson and Mr. Richard Wagner were ordained deacons. In June, 1970 Mr. Gary Castle became Mr. Blackwell's assistant.

The Day of Atonement, 1970 was our first service in the Fargo Eagle's Club...where we have met except for one year ever since.

June 19, 1971 was the farewell Sabbath for our first pastor...as the Lowell Blackwells were moving on to Ohio. Mr. Wayne Lugenbill became pastor June 26, 1971. Shortly afterward the Fargo and Bismarck churches ended their joint relationship.

Fargo's assigned Feast of Tabernacles site in 1972 was at the new church-owned site of Wisconsin Dells.

On the last Holy Day of Unleavened Bread of 1975, Mr. Andrew Freeman was ordained a deacon. During the Days of Unleavened Bread a year later, Mr. Kirk McDonald was ordained a deacon.

On July 22, 1978 we welcomed our third pastor, Mr. Hugh Wilson and his family. The north country presented quite a change from New Orleans, where Mr. Wilson and his family had come from.

As the church went through a time of turbulence in the late 1970's Mr. Wilson helped keep the impact on the Fargo Congregation to a minimum. Several visits from headquarters ministers including Mr. Carl McNair, Mr. Waterhouse, and Mr. Dean Blackwell also helped greatly with this.

Feast of Trumpets, 1980 was the ordination of another local church elder - Mr. John Hillerson.

During the early 1980's we enjoyed a variety of activities including float trips, costume balls, spring formal dances, etc.

The 15th anniversary of the Fargo church was celebrated on August 1, 1986. Mr. Dean Blackwell was guest speaker. On October 12 of that year the Fargo church went to Minneapolis to hear Mr. Herbert Armstrong.

In February, 1989 we had one of the worst blizzards to ever hit...and it came on a Sabbath. The day began comparatively pleasant and Sabbath services were well attended. But by the time services had ended, the wind was whipping the snow into a full blizzard. Several members attempted to get home--and ended up stranded in various locations. A large number ended up sleeping in the lobby of the Holiday Inn, and about one-third of the congregation rode out the storm at the Eagle's Club.

In June, 1986 the Fargo congregation bade farewell to Mr. Wilson and his family, and welcomed our fourth pastor, Mr. Mike Blackwell and his family.

Beginning in 1986 Fargo became a center for Y.O.U. activities for the North and South Dakota Y.O.U. district. Many functions revolved around these Y.O.U. family weekends.

On June 27, 1987 Mr. Tkach visited Winnipeg and many people from Grand Forks and Fargo made the trip to hear God's apostle.

On Feast of Trumpets, 1988 Mr. Charles Hanson became the first blind elder in this era of God's church. During the Days of Unleavened Bread, 1990 Fargo welcomed its newest deacon--Mr. Duane Keller.

Over the years, the Fargo church has had many visiting speakers from headquarters, including visits from Mr. Richard Ames, Dr. Donald Ward, Mr. Harold Jackson, Dr. Clint Zimmerman, Mr. Dean Blackwell, Mr. Leroy Neff, Mr. Dennis Luker, Mr. Carl McNair, and Dr. Dave Albert.

It is our great pleasure to welcome you all - the faithful brothers and sisters of God's church, back for our 25th anniversary celebration.

**IN LOVING MEMORY OF
PASTOR-GENERAL
HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG**



JULY 31, 1892 - JANUARY 16, 1986

NOTES . . .

This image shows a single page of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

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NOTES . . .

This image shows a full page of blank, lined paper. The paper has a light cream or off-white color. It is ruled with approximately 20 horizontal blue lines, which are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

**NORTH DAKOTA CHURCHES
25TH ANNIVERSARY**

DATE: JULY 6-7, 1991

LOCATION: FARGO CIVIC CENTER, FARGO, N.D.

SATURDAY, JULY 6

10:30 A.M. ---MORNING SERVICES-Mr. Paul Luecke-songleader
SPECIAL MUSIC---Fargo Octet
Mr. Creed/Mr. Wilson-splits
3:00 P.M. ---AFTERNOON SERVICES--Mr. Mike Blackwell--S'ldr.
Mr. L. Blackwell-sermonette
Mr. D. Blackwell--sermon
6:00 P.M. ---SLIDE SHOW AND PROGRAM OF HISTORY
Mr. L. Blackwell/Mr. R. Berg
7:30 P.M. ---CATERED MEAL
9:30 P.M. ---DANCE (Sioux Falls Dance Band)

SUNDAY, JULY 7

10:00 A.M. ---CHURCH PICNIC (LINDENWOOD PARK)
12:30 P.M. ---FISH FRY AND POT LUCK PICNIC

BISMARCK PIONEERS IN ATTENDANCE

Henry and Alma Asen
 Terry (Oesterle) Arnholdt
 Bert and Darlene Daly
 Linda (Daly) DeRaas
 Anne (Dietz) Fresno
 Dan Fricke
 Ron Fricke
 George and Bess Kulish
 Richard Larson
 Otto Lennick
 Ed and Opel Nauck
 Betty Oesterle
 Loren Oesterle
 LaVerne and Delfina Schaffer
 Joe and Carol Stoebner
 Leonard and Hilda Spitzer
 Linda Thom
 Verna and Emma Voegelé
 Tolly Vangeness

FARGO PIONEERS IN ATTENDANCE

Kellie (Berg) Avant
 Bob and Maureen Berg
 Greg Berg
 Jeff and Jill Berg
 Steve Berg
 Razona Bettendorf
 Lovell and Margaret Blackwell
 Jean Ceaser
 Robert Forsting
 Becky Houghlus
 Marge Houghlus
 Robert Huen
 Mike Huffman
 Orville and Iva Huffman
 Jim and Ruth Larson
 Sandy (Huen) Mourseth
 Neal Miller
 Hazel Nelson
 Pat Prunty
 Eugene and Maureen Rexine
 Ann Roeder
 Kathy (Huffman) Rusche
 Alice (Hovey) Schaffer
 Jimmy and Marcella Schnabel
 Karen (Rexine) Schwartz
 Marie Skorseth
 Jack and Mae Smith
 Robert and Velma Solberg
 Huddellia Stutzman
 Richard Wagner
 Jane (Berg) Vangeness
 Dale Wendt
 Dee and Teeny (Huffman) Wendt
 Gary and JoAnne Wendt