

Blessed Events: At 150, First Baptist going strong

BY QIANNA BRADLEY, *World-Herald Staff Writer*

First Baptist Church of Omaha has been serving the Park Avenue community since the early 1900s, but the church is older than that. This year the church is celebrating its 150th year.

Started in 1858, the church first met at 16th and Douglas Streets. The church now is at 421 Park Ave.

During this anniversary year, the church has been having various special events. For more information, visit www.omahafbc.org or call 345-5009.

The church has about 200 members of all ages, nationalities and economic backgrounds, the Rev. Kip Mickelson said.

"We as church have been trying to reach out to our community," he said.

The church is known for various outreach projects for the Park Avenue neighborhood, including serving Thanksgiving meals and distributing Christmas gift bags. Last winter, First Baptist and King of Kings Lutheran Church held a coat drive and gave out about 200 coats, Mickelson said.

"We try to be conscious of our neighborhood," he said. "We want them to know we love them and are praying for them."

In collaboration with 10 to 12 other area churches and several community organizations, a meal program will be started in September, Mickelson said. Every Saturday from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., people who are hungry will be able to get a meal at First Baptist.

Mickelson also is excited about a children's program at the church called Electric Wednesdays. Youth from the church and the nearby community come together from 6:15 p.m. to 8 p.m. Wednesdays in the church's gymnasium and classrooms to hear Bible stories, sing and make crafts.

There also is a Spanish-English class, at which people come together to share their languages with each other.

"We want to continue to find those avenues where we can continue to be salt and light," Mickelson said. ,

Contact the writer: 444-1351, qianna.bradley@owh.com