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■ **LANCASTER**
Community Menn. Church

We welcomed Ann Showalter from Hesston, Kan., as interim pastor Feb. 13. The congregation had been without a pastor since April 1999 when former pastor Michael Chandler began a leave of absence due to alleged pastoral misconduct. The allegation was substantiated by an investigation of Atlantic Coast Conference as sexual abuse of a female parishioner of the congregation. Michael resigned after the release of the conference report.

A team made up of professionals from the congregation is leading the congregation in a process of recovery. The Recovery Team has also brought in three resource persons to help educate the congregation on the understanding of clergy sexual abuse and abuse of power.

In spite of a very difficult year, the congregation has celebrated a number of significant events. *The Gathering*, a collection of art and poetry by members of the congregation, was released Dec. 12. The writers were featured at a poetry reading/chili supper Jan. 8.

The book was one of many fundraising initiatives for a new Christian education wing which opened Jan. 9. The 10-room addition was enthusiastically welcomed to accommodate the church's rapid growth.

Seven people joined the congregation by baptism this past fall. Five chose baptism in the lake at Black Rock Retreat on Oct. 17. Those baptized were Sunil Dick, Adam Lake, Stephanie Miller, Andre Shenk and Kate Umble. Matthew Bauman and Rachel Sommer were baptized a month later during Sunday morning services at the church. Betty Moats was also received into membership by confession of faith in January.

— Rod Houser

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