By ROBERT PIERCE
• Leader & Times

Some local church leaders have found another solution to the community's lack of day care, and that answer will bring in some familiar faces from another Liberal church.
After First Baptist Church announced the closing of its day care earlier this year, many in the community began searching for ways to serve local children.

Workers from FBC's facility will now be working at a child care facility at First Presbyterian Church in north Liberal. Becky Pfenninger, who headed up First Baptist's operation, will now become the director of the new day care.
Pfenninger said First Presbyterian's services and hours will be as similar as possible to that of FBC's, and the new facility should be licensed for 50 children.
"We hope to have everything ready by Aug. 12, but we're waiting on state paperwork from the fire marshal's office and from KDHE," she said.
Tammy Sutherland-Abbott, who was part of the committee that brought the new day care to First Presbyterian, said the fire marshal has made an inspection of the property, and all of the paperwork from that inspection must be sent to the state.
"We're waiting on their response," she said.
Before opening, that response must be sent to the Kansas Department of Health and Environment along with an application to become a day care.
"Our local surveyor, Wanda Covert, has to walk through and do the final inspection," Pfenninger said.
First Presbyterian's facility has different classrooms for different age groups. Sutherland-Abbott said volunteers have had to work to get the church building in compliance with regulations. She added since the staff working in the day care are from FBC, all educational requirements and background checks have been done.
"All we're doing is making sure the facility itself is within compliance," she said. "We have to finish up a few things, make sure the fencing is up in the playground, outside is ready to go and start moving all the equipment and materials to actually do the care in the preschool."
Sutherland-Abbott said the group from First Presbyterian was 100 percent behind bringing the new facility to the community.
Pfenninger said having a new day care will be a huge help to Liberal.
"We were licensed for 100 over at First Baptist, and it'll be 50 here," she said. "That's half. I know that there are other places looking at opening day cares and preschools as well."
Pfenninger said work began on finding a new location for the children FBC served almost

immediately after the closing was announced.
“We’ve been looking around for buildings and locations that would be suitable for a child care center to go into,” she said. “We talked to a few of the other churches in town. The Presbyterian church was just the first that we had talked to that opened up their facility and offer to let us use it.”
“And actually embrace the idea,” Sutherland-Abbott said.
Pfenninger said First Presbyterian has had much in the way of help on the project.
“We’ve had many people from the community come in and offer their assistance, whether it’s their time, their money, verbal encouragement,” she said.
Sutherland-Abbott said that help has come partly in the form of workers from FBC itself.
“The staff that is currently with First Baptist has donated their own time for many weekends by coming down and cleaning and painting – just whatever we needed to do to bring the facility to code,” she said. “These girls and their spouses and the parents of some of the kids that are currently at First Baptist have given endlessly of their time and their self to get this ready with no pay expected just because they want a safe environment for the children to be in. Total selflessness on their part.”
Sutherland-Abbott said First Presbyterian hosted an informal informational meeting for parents on Monday, and she said an audience of about 50 to 60 people were on hand.
“We’re really encouraged that we’ll be able to help the community,” she said.
The First Presbyterian day care can be reached at the same number as the former FBC facility at 624-1616.
“They’ll still be able to reach the same staff,” Sutherland-Abbott said.
Sutherland-Abbott said the First Presbyterian group never sat out with the intention of making the day care profitable, but rather providing a service for the community.
She also added First Presbyterian’s day care ideally will compliment another child care facility at Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church, and the Presbyterian group would love to see both facilities filled.
Sutherland-Abbott praised the efforts of both the volunteers and church leaders who helped make the day care possible.
“We thank everyone who has given of their time to making this a success,” she said.