



Retired
Ministers &
Missionaries
Offering
2018

Promotional Guide

Extending Our Hands to Our Neighbors

American
Baptist
Churches
USA

“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.”

Philippians 2:3-4 (NIV)



As we celebrate over 40 years of the Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering (RMMO) on behalf of American Baptist Churches USA, I invite you to reflect with me on how this Offering touches the lives of so many families. This long-standing tradition established in 1977 supports ministers, missionaries and their widowed spouses who have devoted 15 or more years of their lives to service in ABCUSA.

This year's theme, *Extending Our Hands to Our Neighbors* illustrates the importance of being there for one another and remembering that we are stronger together than on our own is central to the Christian faith.

We are called to remember our Christian character as mentioned in the scripture Philippians 2:3-4 which teaches *“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.”*

We are grateful for the generous giving to RMMO that raised **\$1,024,706** in 2017 and helped to provide 3,457 *Thank You* checks. This is a tangible expression of our faith and character as we collectively embody being “the hands and feet of Christ.” Our goal in the 2018 RMMO Campaign is to reach **\$1,200,000 in contributions.**

This year's RMMO marketing materials are created to support and help your congregation organize a successful campaign. We hope you will partner with us and encourage participation within your congregation. Remember, helping those who have walked and prayed with you over the years is an example of *Extending Our Hands to Our Neighbors*.

Handwritten signature of Rev. Dr. Perry Hopper.

Rev. Dr. Perry Hopper
Associate Executive Director
MMBB Financial Services



1

Set the date

RMMO traditionally takes place the first Sunday in December (Dec. 2 this year), but you may hold the offering at a time that makes the most sense for your congregation. Some churches choose a different Sunday, or receive RMMO as part of a month-long focus on the theme, *Extending Our Hands to Our Neighbors*.

2

Set the goal

Setting a specific offering goal helps church members better understand what they are working toward and allows you to celebrate the success of reaching that goal. In the **Key Materials** section you'll see we've provided a poster for you to set your goal and measure your congregation's progress. Monitoring this will create a sense of achievement for your congregation and encourage more donations and higher levels of participation.

3

Create a calendar

In the weeks leading up to your scheduled RMMO, use this guide to create a calendar that works for your congregation. This guide offers ideas for activities during church services, sermons, suggested social media posts and other events that reinforce RMMO's expression of *Extending Our Hands to Our Neighbors*.

4

Introduce the offering

Kick-off RMMO by explaining the offering's purpose, history and significance, or by showing the video during one of your congregation's services.

Before the Offering

Promotional Ideas

Expressing stories of generosity is one of the most meaningful ways to personalize RMMO for your congregation. Giving thanks, both for the service of retired ministers and missionaries, and for the gifts given by your congregation, fosters a spirit of care and connection within your community.

Questions for Discussion

In what way is generosity manifested in the life of our community?

Why are you inspired to give back?

“It’s an honor and a privilege to live for something other than yourself—and the gospel teaches us to do that.”

Rev. Dr. Tom Lipsey, South Parkersburg Baptist Church, Parkersburg, WV
(Recipient of the 2016 Widow’s Mite Award)



Rev. Dr. Tom Lipsey

Recipients

Identify RMMO recipients within your community and ask them to share the significance this support had for them.

A recipient story may sound like:

“RMMO is very important. And what I can do, either as a retired missionary, or as a recipient of it, is contribute to it. To try to keep that going because it’s dynamic. There’s nothing like having somebody alongside you.”

Evelyn “Dolly” Hillman, Retired missionary and Heritage of Sharing committee member, Penny Farms, FL

Donors

Identify past donors and ask them to share personal stories of why they gave. Ask them to be messengers and to serve as the catalyst for getting other individuals to tell their stories. Contact your ABC Regional Office for retired pastors and missionaries to invite.

Before the Offering Promotional Ideas



Telling Stories about *Extending Our Hands to Our Neighbors*

Sharing stories of God's work through the activities of your congregation is meaningful and has the ability to resonate in a more impactful way.

Highlight these stories, along with details about your congregation's participation in RMMO:

- In the Sunday service bulletin
- During the Sunday service
- On the church website or Facebook page
- In the church newsletter
- On posters throughout church facilities

“It is good to know that retired pastors are not forgotten—even after many years of retirement from active ministry, even though many of us are still involved in the Lord’s work. These generous gifts are a source of real encouragement to us to continue to use our talents.”

Retired Pastor from Abilene, KS

Before the Offering Promotional Ideas: Social Media

Social media is a meaningful way to spread the word about RMMO and inspire your congregation to take part in this offering. To help your promotional efforts, here are some suggested posts for Facebook and Twitter. Please feel free to edit or modify as necessary.

Facebook

#1 — RMMO is more than assistance for retired ministers, missionaries and widowed spouses. One thankful widow says: “This annual offering is a reminder that the work God has called us to do is remembered in the churches we have served over the years.” Please give at your church or visit www.abc-usa.org/RMMO

#2 — Please give to the RMMO offering at your church. RMMO provides financial support for ministers, missionaries and widowed spouses who have helped build our churches. The *Thank You* check from our ABC family demonstrates retirees are in fact remembered. Donate online at www.abc-usa.org/RMMO

#3 — *Extending Our Hands to Our Neighbors* #helpinghand is RMMO's theme this year. Please donate what you can to help retired ministers, missionaries and their widowed spouses. Give at your church or visit www.abc-usa.org/RMMO

Twitter

#1 — We are thankful for @AmericanBaptist ministers, missionaries and their families. #extendingourhands #RMMO #RMMOGiving www.abc-usa.org/RMMO

#2 — Be beacons of compassion towards one another @AmericanBaptist ministers, missionaries and widowed spouses. Donate at www.abc-usa.org/RMMO #RMMOGiving #extendinghelp

#3 — Offer Jesus' ministry of care towards others @AmericanBaptist retired ministers, missionaries and their families. #helpthyneighbor #RMMO #RMMOGiving www.abc-usa.org/RMMO

Hashtags and Links

#helpinghand, #extendingourhands #helpthyneighbor #helpingneighbors #extendinghelp #RMMO, #RMMOGiving, @AmericanBaptist, www.abc-usa.org/RMMO, www.abc-usa.org



Widow's Mite Award for 2017

Arthur Baptist Church, Arthur, NE

Each year the Widow's Mite award is presented to a congregation that continuously demonstrates their devotion to carrying out God's work. On behalf of American Baptist Churches, USA, MMBB Financial Services is honored to present this year's award to Arthur Baptist Church in Arthur, Nebraska for its steadfast commitment to give at a consistently generous level to the Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering (RMMO).

Led by Rev. Blake Wilkes, the Arthur Baptist Church exemplifies this year's RMMO theme of *Extending Our Hands to Our Neighbors*. Rev. Wilkes explained, "Living in a rural ranching community is different from other areas, the people in Arthur are each other's resources. We rely on those around us and serve where we live."

The notion of helping one's neighbor is an ongoing theme and tradition at Arthur Baptist. An annual community program called, *Give Where You Live* involves completing various projects in the town that need immediate attention. Everyone participates until all of the requested tasks are finished. This is a testament to the type of people living in the community—people who care about their neighbors.



Arthur Baptist Church

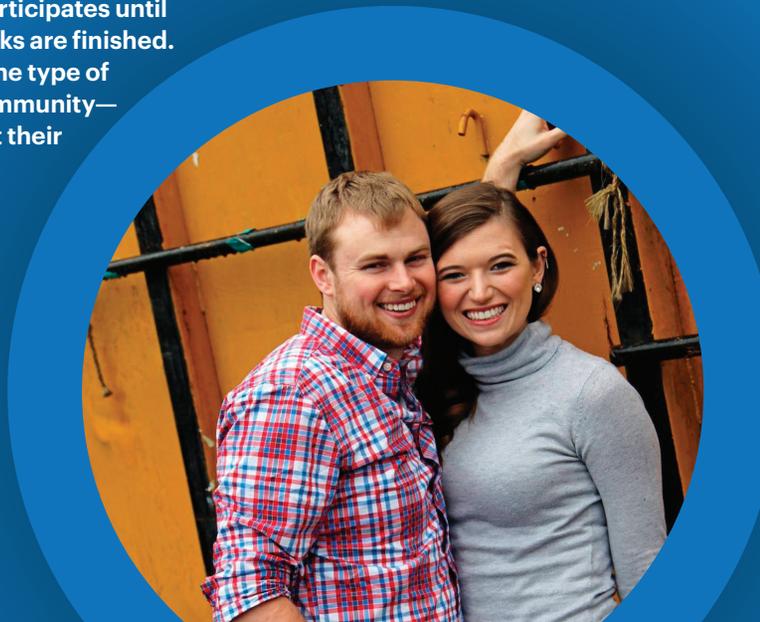


Rev. Dr. Robin Stoops

Small in numbers but large in impact describes the congregation of Arthur Baptist Church. Executive minister and region missionary of Nebraska, Rev. Dr. Robin Stoops provides a vivid picture of the region, "Nebraska is often the forgotten state, but people are committed to the mission and living out the gospel. Some may be surprised to know that Nebraska has a diverse worshipping community with 10 tribal churches and worships in eight different languages." Rev. Stoops goes on to add, "We focus on what we have in our hands to accomplish what we need, instead of concentrating on what we don't have or on our limitations."

When asked what motivates a church of about 60 members to give so generously to RMMO, Treasurer, Bonnie Needham who administers the offering each year reiterates, "The congregation has a huge heart for giving and mission support."

The spirit of Arthur Baptist Church is summed up with words appearing on a locally distributed flyer, "Welcome to our church where we offer support, service and scholarship." We are grateful and inspired by the unwavering support Arthur Baptist Church shows each other, the community and to our ABC USA family. Thank you to all the churches that give to RMMO and honor those who have served faithfully.



Rev. Blake Wilkes and his wife Lana

During the Offering

When to Collect the Offering

The most popular time for collecting RMMO is typically between Thanksgiving and Christmas.

As we reflect on those who have encouraged our faith walk we are also inspired to give.

Some congregations with successful RMMO traditions suggest:

- Designating the first Sunday in December (Dec. 2 this year) as RMMO Sunday
- Collecting the RMMO during Christmas Eve services or the Christmas pageant
- Collecting RMMO during the announcements
- Setting up online giving through the church's website to supplement in-person giving
- Selecting a time that will not compete with too many other offerings, even if it is a smaller window, to draw your congregation's full attention to the RMMO campaign



During the Offering

How to Collect the Offering

Creating a memorable tradition for your congregation's RMMO can make the offering more meaningful to members.

Some ideas include:

- Prior to collection, have the pastor read a message from a retired minister or missionary who is a member of the congregation
- Invite a former missionary to come and share stories of their life abroad with the congregation
- Ask church members to stand and share personal stories



During the Offering

Give People a Chance to Connect with the Offering

RMMO is a wonderful opportunity to highlight the personal ministries which demonstrate the ongoing impact that retired ministers and missionaries make in the community. Talk to church members who oversee various ministry programs to uncover personal stories.

These may include:

- Meal deliveries to the elderly or a food pantry
- Nursing home and hospital visits
- Volunteer programs at homeless shelters
- Prison ministry

“RMMO is a tangible expression of love and concern for our missionaries and pastors who have served us, and Christ’s church, so very well.”

Rev. Dr. Robin Stoops, Executive Minister and Region Missionary of ABC of Nebraska



Rev. Dr. Robin Stoops

Beyond the Offering

Inspiring Engagement + Connection

RMMO provides financial support for the retired ministers, missionaries and widowed spouses who have helped build our churches and American Baptist witness. Through RMMO, American Baptist churches have an opportunity to highlight the congregation’s love for all of the ways that spiritual leaders have contributed to their lives.

Engage Young People

Use RMMO as an opportunity to teach children, youth and young adults about the service of your church’s current leaders, along with retired ministers and missionaries.

Some ideas include:

- **Service Work**
Identify a recipient of RMMO still working to serve God and their ministry
- **Sunday School**
Encourage youth groups to write letters or draw pictures of thanks to ministers or missionaries who have touched their lives or who have retired

Beyond the Offering

Inspired by Generosity

Reconnect with Retirees

RMMO can give your congregation a chance to learn from retired ministers and missionaries. Some may still be active in your church community.

Contact your ABC regional office for suggestions. Some ideas include:

- **Special Service or Reception**
Invite a retired minister or missionary to your church to share stories of his or her life and work after regular Sunday morning service
- **Guest Sermon**
Invite a retired minister or missionary to deliver a sermon and ask him or her to include stories of their service
- **Outreach Visit**
Organize visits to the homes of retired ministers and missionaries in your community

Share Inspiration Year-Round

Lessons of generosity have rich meaning for Christians throughout the year, not only around the time of RMMO.

Some ideas include:

- **Weekly Sermons**
Look for ways to include messages of how God's generosity inspires giving and highlight the contributions of your retired ministers and missionaries in sermons throughout the year

Sample Sermon:

"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others."

Philippians 2:3-4 (NIV)

Paul instructs the Philippians to have the same mindset as Jesus when relating to others, and he details just how humble Jesus was. Jesus is, himself, a spectacular picture of humble obedience to God; placing our needs as broken humanity (to be saved), above his own divinity. Holy God became like us in the flesh. This is the wonder of both his birth (Christmas) and his sacrifice (Easter).

Selfish ambition is defined as elevating oneself by rank, fame or power without lacking consideration for others. Our humility prompts us to serve others. It leads us to give our own personal interests a lower priority than the concerns and needs of others—what RMMO is all about. Consider other people's well-being ahead of your own.

The emphasis of this Scripture is on others not ourselves. It is "being the hands and feet of Christ" personified. In a culture of selfishness and ambition, this Scripture teaches the virtues of empathy as exemplified by Christ and taught by St. Paul. Those who put others first exhibit Christ-like character through love and humility.

True Christian leadership is not reflected in position or advancement, but through the mind and heart of service and being a servant. We are truly blessed by what we can do for others. We do not elevate ourselves above others but willingly sacrifice in order to love them. When all believers act this way, we are of one mind and everyone is cared for.



Key Materials

We provided the following materials in this packet to help make collecting RMMO easy for your congregation. These include:

1

Envelopes

Offering envelopes can be distributed on RMMO Sunday or another day of your choice

2

Bulletin Inserts

Three inserts that can be copied and distributed in your Sunday bulletin or weekly newsletter

3

Poster

A poster to measure the progress made each week toward meeting your RMMO goal and to inspire participation

4

DVD and Video Link

A DVD is included with this Guide or visit www.mmbb.org/RMMOvideo to find a video you can show during service

5

Social Media Posts

Refer to page 9 in the guide for suggestions

Additional promotional materials are available for free. Please email Rmmo@mmbb.org.



Sample Calendar to Organize RMMO

November 2018

Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

December 2018

Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

Week of November 1:

- Identify RMMO committee members and schedule first meeting

Week of November 4:

- Include a social media post to encourage participation
- Plan offering date(s), fundraising goal and schedule opportunities around it

Week of November 11:

- Include article in church newsletter about RMMO, a retired minister or missionary. Post article to church website or Facebook page as well
- Display RMMO posters

November 18:

- Invite a retired minister or missionary to do a guest sermon
- Organize a group visit to a retired minister or missionary
- Host a talk/visit from a retired missionary about their mission experiences
- Include a social media post to encourage participation

November 25:

- Include bulletin insert
- Pastor shares stories of generosity during Thanksgiving Sunday services

November 25:

- Include colored bulletin insert
- Children's sermon from retired minister or missionary
- Include a social media post to encourage participation

December 2:

- Include bulletin insert
- Church members and retired ministers and missionaries share stories during Sunday announcements
- Show RMMO video
- Collect RMMO offering
- Include a social media post to encourage participation

December 9:

- Provide a RMMO goal update and host a celebration
- Collect RMMO offering

December–January:

- Continue to collect RMMO offering
- Invite members of the congregation to share why they give and how they are celebrating the older adults in their family this holiday season
- Provide regular updates on how fundraising is going and set a final deadline for donations

Top 25 Giving Churches in 2017

- 1 Brewster Baptist Church
Brewster, MA
- 2 Gardena Valley Baptist Church
Gardena, CA
- 3 First Baptist Church
Everett, WA
- 4 First Baptist Church
Pedricktown, NJ
- 5 Greenfield Baptist Church
North East, PA
- 6 Brandon Baptist Church
Mount Vernon, OH
- 7 First Baptist Church of Greater
Des Moines
Johnston, IA
- 8 First Baptist Church
Olympia, WA
- 9 Ransomville Baptist Church
Ransomville, NY
- 10 Fifth Avenue Baptist Church
Huntington, WV
- 11 First Chinese Baptist Church
San Francisco, CA
- 12 Memorial Baptist Church
Columbus, IN
- 13 Grand Prairie Baptist Church
Marion, OH
- 14 Indianapolis 1st Baptist Church
Indianapolis, IN
- 15 Hurricane, First Baptist Church
Hurricane, WV
- 16 First Baptist Church
Sioux Falls, SD
- 17 Valley View Baptist Church
Marietta, OH
- 18 First Baptist Church
Redlands, CA
- 19 Gassaway Baptist Church
Gassaway, WV
- 20 North Shore Baptist Church
Chicago, IL
- 21 First Baptist Church
Mattoon, IL
- 22 First Baptist Church
Davison, MI
- 23 First Baptist Church
Pasadena, CA
- 24 Murray Baptist Church
Murray, UT
- 25 Seymour 1st Baptist Church
Seymour, IN

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