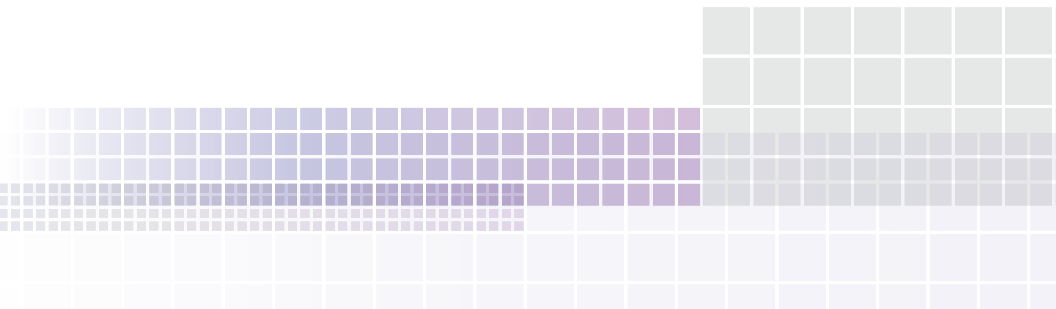


Retired
Ministers+
Missionaries
Offering
2016

Promotional
Guide

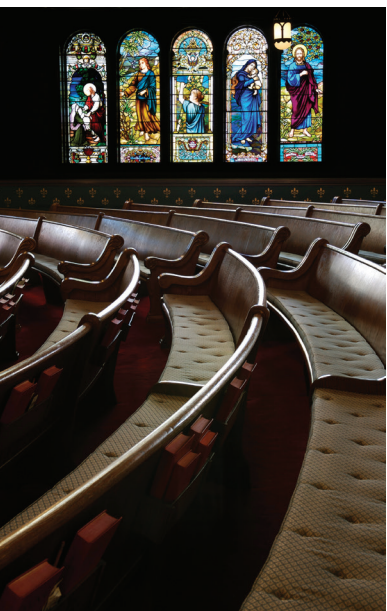
Faith through Gratitude

American
Baptist
Churches
USA



“We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers. We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.”

— 1 Thessalonians 1: 2–3



Faith through Gratitude — According to the dictionary, faith is a noun. But in practice faith is closer to a verb, an action word. Through our faith in God, and our gratitude for the salvific actions of Jesus Christ we are called to be faithful servants of the gospel and to live out the ministry of Jesus in word and deed. The gratitude that we have for Jesus’ gift to us is the seed from which springs the gratitude that manifests toward the people of God. Therefore, we understand that actualizing our faith matters. And faith expressed through gratitude for others matters — to those who are hurting, and to those who are in need.

In the scripture from 1 Thessalonians, the apostle Paul commends this community for their service that is grounded in their faith, love and hope in Jesus Christ. As Christians we recognize that thousands of years later we too, must serve just as the Thessalonians before us. The Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering (RMMO) replicates the important message of the Thessalonians passage. Through RMMO, American Baptist congregations are given the opportunity to express their gratitude to the many servants who stepped forward and said, “Here am I, send me.”

In 1948, churches began donating to the November Communion Fellowship Offering, providing financial assistance to the denomination’s elderly ministers, missionaries and their widowed spouses. As a way to continue this practice of gratitude, in 1977 American Baptist Churches USA formally introduced the Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering.

We continue this tradition each year and provide assistance to those who have devoted their lives to God’s service by providing a “Thank You” check. Through your generous giving, in 2015 RMMO provided checks to more than 3,436 recipients and distributed \$1,105,147. Our goal for RMMO in 2016 is to raise \$1.2 million. Will you help us with this appeal? We hope you will join us in honoring God’s committed servants.

This year’s RMMO materials were developed to support the wonderful work you do and to help you to conduct a successful campaign.

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

1

Set the date

RMMO traditionally takes place the first Sunday in December (December 4 this year), but you can 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, Faith through Gratitude.

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 around 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, Sunday school and other events that reinforce RMMO's expression of Faith through Gratitude.

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 Faith through Gratitude 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 ways is gratitude manifested in the life of our community?

Why are you inspired to give back?

“My wife Lynn and I have been privileged to visit our retired colleagues on behalf of MMBB, and without prompting, when asked if they have any ‘feedback to share with MMBB’, well over 80% of them voluntarily mention wanting to thank MMBB and the churches for the RMMO offering. ‘It is a special blessing,’ is a common refrain.”

— Rev. Virgil and Lynn Nelson, Retired Pastor, and Missionaries, (IM) – DR Congo, 1998–2008, MMBB Visitors, Roseville, CA

Recipients

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

A recipient story may sound like:

“What a privilege and joy for us to serve our Lord in four American Baptist Churches during our 30 plus years in ministry. We thank the MMBB Board and all the churches who made this *Thank You* check possible. It came at a much needed time and we are grateful not only for the check but for the thoughtfulness and love attached to it. Thanks again for not forgetting us.”

— Retired Couple in Bedford, IA

Donors

Identify past donors and ask them to share the 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 Faith through Gratitude

Sharing stories of God's generosity with 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

“In retirement years it is such a blessing to know that we are remembered in such a nice way.”

— Retired Pastor and Spouse in Kansas

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. 4 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 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 visits

Hospital outreach

Volunteer programs at homeless shelters

Prison ministry

“I tell the people in the pew how important it is for them to help those pastors who are retired to maintain a good life. This is a way they can say thank you to all the pastors and their families for the sacrifices they made while they were pastoring and doing God’s work of saving souls.”

— Rev. Dr. Laura B. Sinclair, Affiliate Professor at New Brunswick Theological Seminary, Retired Pastor and MMBB Visitor, West Babylon, NY



Widow's Mite Award for 2015 Primera Iglesia Bautista de Carolina (First Baptist Church of Carolina), Carolina, Puerto Rico



“RMMO is used to meet the needs of Primera Iglesia Bautista de Carolina’s retired ministers, who have served our Lord with such a strong commitment,” Carmen Cecilia Adames, lead pastor shared. “Now, it is up to us to care and provide for them as they culminate this stage of their lives.”

This gracious remark is not just a reflection of Pastor Adames’ beliefs but indicates the support and love extended by her entire congregation. On behalf of the American Baptist Churches USA, MMBB Financial Services is honored to present the 2015 Widow’s Mite Award to Primera Iglesia Bautista de Carolina located in Carolina, Puerto Rico for the congregation’s steadfast support and giving to the Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering (RMMO).

The Widow’s Mite Award is presented to a congregation that reflects the spirit of thankfulness and generosity Jesus talks about in Luke 21: 1–4. The RMMO honors the anonymous gift in 1981 of a Vietnamese woman worshipping with the First Chinese Baptist Church of Fresno, California. Having no prior knowledge of the meaning of the offering, but in response to the words of gratitude suggested on the offering envelope, she slipped off her wristwatch, her only possession of value, and placed it in the envelope. The Widow’s Mite Award, like the act of the poor widow at the temple treasury whom Jesus commended, reflects the spirit of thankfulness and giving from the heart.

The RMMO has become such a priority for Primera Iglesia Bautista de Carolina that it is included in the church’s annual budget.

Pastor Adames explains, “The message for the church is that we should not neglect those who taught and preached the Word of God.”

Primera Iglesia Bautista de Carolina serves the community in a variety of impactful ways. By setting aside a certain amount each year to fund various community outreach programs. The church purchases and delivers food to families struggling with economic difficulties. Each Thanksgiving, the congregation identifies families in need and provides them with a holiday dinner.

When Pastor Adames was asked, What would you tell the people in the pews to help them understand the impact of RMMO? She replied, “Our brothers and sisters are important because they left a legacy which now blesses us. Some of them continue blessing the church with their experiences and participation in ministry.”

“The most satisfaction that I receive is when people come to the Lord and allow Him to transform their lives. I am filled with satisfaction to see the church live, worship, and serve in community,” she expressed with heartfelt appreciation.

We are grateful to Primera Iglesia Bautista de Carolina for their unwavering support and to all churches that contribute to RMMO. The Offering allows us to continue to honor those who have served so faithfully.

“The Lord’s church needs to engage with men and women who have served God. They deserve our respect and special care in this stage of their lives.”

— Rev. Carmen Cecilia Adames, Lead Pastor,
Primera Iglesia Bautista de Carolina





“RMMO fits into the category of ‘chesed’ (a gift given to express the loving kindness of the Lord). The gift cannot be paid back and the retirees do not know the individuals who have given it. For those who receive it, it is a humbling experience. It is about people that I do not necessarily know, who care enough to say thank you for my past service — even when that service was a long time ago.”

— Rev. Frank Leeds III, Retired MMBB Visitor, St. Petersburg, FL

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 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 Hope



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 Faith through Gratitude have rich meaning for Christians throughout the year, not only around the time of RMMO.

Some ideas include:

Regular Sermons:

Look for ways to include messages of how God's Faith or Gratitude inspires Giving and highlight the contributions of your retired ministers and missionaries in sermons throughout the year

Sample Sermon:

1 Thessalonians 1: 2–3

"We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers. We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ."

Paul visited this port city of Thessalonica during his second missionary journey and although he only spent a short time with them, this letter gives us a window into the close familial bond he felt towards them. To highlight his longing to visit them again, he describes himself and his travel companions, Silvanus (Silas) and Timothy using the metaphor of an orphan separated from family members (verse 17).

Since he was not able to make a second visit Paul sent Timothy to encourage these new believers in the faith. He affirms his belief that they were chosen by God and points out how the Holy Spirit has allowed them to receive the gospel with great conviction. Their enthusiastic witness of turning from idol worship to "serve a living and true God" serves as an inspiration for believers throughout Macedonia and beyond.

Why are faith, love and hope central to Christian character?

In our focus text, Paul lifts up three core Christian values which he mentions again and again in his writings — faith, love and hope. These are the same values many have heard in 1 Corinthians 13. Paul refers first to the Thessalonians' "work of faith," which in the character of the believer is lived out in several ways. Faith, faithfulness, or trust in the Lord not only binds us to God, but also requires our commitment to the bond of oneness by carrying out the ministry of Jesus, the one in whom we place our faith. Our faith should be a source of inspiration to offer Jesus' ministry of compassion and care to others through a giving and generous spirit.

We know that God is the embodiment of love and God loves us in spite of our human frailty and limitations. The phrase, "labor of love" implies an understanding that expressions of love require intentionality. It is a reminder for us that love entails the willingness to make an effort which usually involves sacrifice and thoughtfulness that lead to loving actions.

Finally, with the ability to exhibit "steadiness of hope" in Jesus Christ there is the confidence that enables believers to overcome in the face of difficulty and have joy even in the midst of adversity. As we have hope in the power of Jesus to walk with us and strengthen us through life's ups and downs, we too, can be beacons of hope for one another.

Beyond the Offering

Additional Scripture Suggestions

Galatians 6:10

“Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.”

Romans 12:13

“Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality.”

Colossians 3:16

“Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.”

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

Posters

Two posters, one to measure the progress made each week toward meeting your RMMO goal and the other to inspire participation.

4

DVD and Video Link

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

“It is with humble gratitude that we served in our church for 40 years, and are now serving the Lord in retirement homes. Your thoughtful gift is a tremendous blessing. Your prayers and gratitude warm our hearts.”

— Retired Couple in Garden City, IA



Additional promotional materials are available for free. Please call Judson Press at 1.800.458.3766.

Sample Calendar to Organize RMMO

November 2016

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 2016

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

by November 1:

Identify RMMO committee members and schedule first meeting

November 6:

Identify and order RMMO support materials from Judson Press at 1.800.458.3766

Plan offering date(s), fundraising goal and schedule opportunities around it

November 13:

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 20:

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

November 24:

Include bulletin insert

Pastor shares stories of Faith through Gratitude during Thanksgiving Sunday services

November 27:

Include bulletin insert

Children's sermon from retired minister or missionary

December 4:

Include bulletin insert

Church members and retired ministers and missionaries share stories during Sunday announcements

Show RMMO video

Collect RMMO offering

December 11:

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

Continue to provide regular updates on how fundraising is going and set a final deadline for donations

Top 25 Giving Churches in 2015

- 1 First Baptist Church
Jersey City, NJ
- 2 Gardena Valley Baptist Church
Gardena, CA
- 3 Crossroads American Baptist
Church
Northglenn, CO
- 4 First Baptist Church
Galesburg, IL
- 5 Portola Baptist Church
San Francisco, CA
- 6 First Baptist Church
Sioux Falls, SD
- 7 Brandon Baptist Church
Mount Vernon, OH
- 8 Parkside Church
Bakersfield, CA
- 9 First Chinese Baptist Church
Fresno, CA
- 10 Calvary Baptist Church
Denver, CO
- 11 Burnt Hills Baptist Church
Burnt Hills, NY
- 12 North Shore Baptist Church
Chicago, IL

- 13 United Baptist Church
Saco, ME
- 14 Mt. Calvary Baptist Church
Rockville, MD
- 15 Community Baptist Church
Cordova, AK
- 16 Fifth Avenue Baptist Church
Huntington, WV
- 17 Franklin Union Baptist Church
Worthington, PA
- 18 First Baptist Church
Pedricktown, NJ
- 19 Grand Prairie Baptist Church
Marion, OH
- 20 First Baptist Church
Waynesburg, PA
- 21 Gassaway Baptist Church
Gassaway, WV
- 22 Noank Baptist Church
Groton, CT
- 23 First Baptist Church
Hurricane, WV
- 24 Newman Baptist Church
Massillon, OH
- 25 First Baptist Church
Cadillac, MI

RMMO
475 Riverside Drive
Suite 1700
New York, NY
10115-0049
Tel 1.800.986.6222
Fax 1.800.986.6782
rmmo@mmbb.org