



Retired
Ministers &
Missionaries
Offering
2017

Promotional Guide

Generous Congregations

American
Baptist
Churches
USA



As we prepare for the 2017 Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering (RMMO) on behalf of American Baptist Churches USA, please take a moment to reflect on our theme this year, “Generous Congregations.”

Helping those in need is one of the major themes of the Bible and of Jesus’ ministry. The prophet Isaiah reminds us, “But generous people plan to do what is generous, and they stand firm in their generosity.” (Isaiah 32:8 NLT) Generosity is central to our faith. As Christians, we are called to serve and care for others, and RMMO aligns with the collective spirit of love that inspires us all to honor the devotion of ministers and their families for their service to the church.

Since RMMO began in 1977, it has helped provide much needed *thank you* checks to retired ministers, missionaries, their widowed spouses and families—those who have dedicated their lives to God’s service. In 2016, RMMO raised **\$1,059,444**, and more than **3,443** checks were distributed to recipients and their families.

In this year’s video, we highlight three generous congregations who understand that giving is a gift to the recipient as well as the one who gives. One pastor remarked about an RMMO recipient, “It meant a great deal to him...he didn’t even talk about the financial amount. He was talking about the idea that he was remembered.”

To encourage your congregation to give to RMMO, we have provided a new section in the promotional packet which includes suggested social media posts to use if you have a Facebook page. The Facebook messages link to ABCUSA.org. We also have incorporated color and new design elements into the bulletin inserts to make them stand out for your congregation.

I would like to extend my deepest thanks for your continued support. I urge you and your congregation to join us and share God’s abundance, and do all you can to support this worthy cause.



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

***“But generous people plan to do what is generous,
and they stand firm in their generosity.”***

Isaiah 32:8 NLT

1

Set the date

RMMO traditionally takes place the first Sunday in December (Dec. 3 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, *Generous Congregations*.

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 *Generous Congregations*.

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?

“We look at Jesus Christ as the perfect role model for generosity. I mean his life embodied what I call graceful generosity. And so, when we follow his model then we too become gracefully generous people. God gave his own begotten son; Jesus gave his entire life. He is our role model of generosity. You can’t beat him. He’s the top of the rock. And this congregation lives that out and God has blessed us abundantly.”

The Rev. Dr. Warren Stewart, First Institutional Baptist Church, Phoenix, AZ



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:

“For over 40 years I’ve been promoting the annual RMMO offering in churches. And now to be on the receiving end is gratifying to say the least. The check you sent helped pay for a much-needed car repair.”

Retired Pastor in Mineral Wells, WV



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 *Generous Congregations*

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

"After years of promoting the annual offering and highlighting the church retirees, now I am one of them and deeply appreciative."

Retired Pastor, Terryville, CT

Widow's Mite Award for 2016 South Parkersburg Baptist Church, Parkersburg, WV

On behalf of the American Baptist Churches USA, MMBB Financial Services is honored to present the Widow's Mite Award to the South Parkersburg Baptist Church in Parkersburg, West Virginia.

The award is presented each year to a congregation that reflects the spirit and generosity of giving. The South Parkersburg Church, under the leadership of the Rev. Dr. Thomas Lipsey, is an outstanding example of those qualities. They truly epitomize our theme of *Generous Congregations*.

The congregation beautifully sums up their generosity in the following quote, "While there are many ways we can contribute to our local church, we don't want to forget what may be the most fundamental. We all benefit from the generous financial support of those who have given before us. May the Lord speak to your heart as to what your role is right now in this area of giving."



Before the Offering

Promotional Ideas: Social Media



Social media can be a meaningful way to reach out and foster a spirit of community within your congregation. We encourage you to share information about RMMO to inspire your congregation to give. Below are suggested posts for Facebook and Twitter. Please feel free to edit or modify.

Facebook

- After a life of service, how does a retired ABCUSA minister, missionary or widowed spouse make ends meet? #RMMO helps provide financial support to ease their burden a little. Please give at www.abc-usa/RMMO
- RMMO is more than assistance for retired ministers, missionaries and widowed spouses. One grateful widow says, “The *thank you* check is more than a check; it sends love...thank you for remembering me.” Please give at your church or visit www.abc-usa/RMMO
- “I found it tough financially going through ministry. MMBB has been very supportive of my wife and I in these years of retirement,” says a retired ABCUSA minister. Show your thanks to them and their families. Donate online at www.abc-usa/RMMO

- Please give to ABCUSA RMMO at your church this month. RMMO provides financial support for ministers, missionaries and widowed spouses who have helped build our churches. “All the years that our church participated I never thought that one year I would be the recipient...” Donate online at www.abc-usa/RMMO
- #GenerousCongregations is RMMO’s theme this year—and RMMO is all about giving. Please give what you can to help alleviate the stress and hardship of retirement for ministers, missionaries and their widowed spouses. Give at your church or visit www.abc-usa/RMMO

Twitter

- Show your thanks to retired @AmericanBaptist ministers, missionaries and their families. #generouscongregations #RMMO #RMMOGiving www.abc-usa/RMMO
- Help ease retirement for @AmericanBaptist ministers, missionaries and widowed spouses. Give at www.abc-usa/RMMO
- Share God’s abundance with retired @AmericanBaptist ministers, missionaries and their families. #generouscongregations #RMMO #RMMOGiving www.abc-usa/RMMO

Hashtags and Links

#generouscongregations, #RMMO, #RMMOGiving, @AmericanBaptist, www.abc-usa.org, www.abc-usa/RMMO



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. 3 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 visits
- Hospital outreach
- Volunteer programs at homeless shelters
- Prison ministry

“This has been a church that has always stood for meeting the needs in the community. We are a church that loves God and serves our neighbor. That is the motto of our church. Our congregation understands that if we are in a stage of life and time where we can make contributions and attend to the needs of another person, what is better than that?”

Left: Rev. Carmen Cecilia Adames Vazquez, Lead Pastor, Primera Iglesia Bautista de Carolina (2015 Widow's Mite Award Recipient). Right: Rev. Miriam Chacon-Peralta, Retirement Benefits Consultant, MMBB Financial Services



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 Sermons:

Isaiah 32: 8 (NLT) Theme Scripture

"But generous people plan to do what is generous, and they stand firm in their generosity."

Our theme scripture text concludes the opening eight verses of Isaiah 32, a prophetic oracle which pointed to a time when a just king shall reign over Israel. The prophet Isaiah conveys the sense that a time is imminent when the unjust shall no longer have the upper hand in government. The new rule will bring respite and relief from those who seek to do evil, who withhold food and drink from the needy and who cheat the poor knowing their complaints are fair. A generous, noble spirit and character will pervade society from the highest quarters, and those who are benevolent will be unstinting in their commitment to establish a posture of compassionate care and giving.

- Where is the spirit of generosity most alive in contemporary society?
- How can the church be a catalyst for promoting generosity toward neighbors when societal forces appear to encourage us to be more focused on self?

Proverbs 11: 24-25 (NIV)

One person gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty.

A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.

The book of Proverbs poses the "big" questions about the kind of world we want to live in and how to create a world that is based in godly wisdom and justice. Chapter 11 compares those who are corrupt with those who work to live a life of integrity and honesty. The Lord "detests" the wicked but celebrates the person who understands that giving to others is a blessing which fosters a reciprocal cycle of blessing, so the needs of the giver and the recipient are both met.

- Could there be a poverty of the spirit in persons who are unwilling to give and care for others? What might that look like?

2 Corinthians 9: 7-12 (NIV)

These familiar verses remind us that giving is a matter of the heart, which for ancient society comprised not only the emotions but also the mind and the will. As he thanks the Corinthians for their generous giving, Apostle Paul observes that giving is an action which is determined by, and springs from, the fullness of one's innermost being. He further admonishes the Corinthians not to give sparingly because ultimately, giving reflects our thankfulness to and for God's generous giving, supplying our need so that we can richly bless others.

- If we are unwilling to be generous with that which God gives to us, how are we diminishing the message of the gospel? What message are we sending to God? to others?

Beyond the Offering



"We have retired ministers at the church, me being one of them. Last year I egged them on to increase support for the offering and they raised money. I'm hoping that again this year they will raise their gifts for the Retired Ministers and Missionaries. It's been a help because it is tough financially going through ministry. MMBB has been very supportive of my wife and I in these years of retirement. And so I will do what I can to emphasize this offering."

Rev. Howard Kruger, Retired Minister, Member, United Baptist Church, Saco, ME

Additional Scripture Suggestions

1 Timothy 6:18-19 (NIV)

"Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life."

Colossians 3:12 (NIV)

"Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience."

1 Thessalonians 5:11 (NIV)

"Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing."

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 pages 10 and 11 in the guide for suggestions



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

Sample Calendar to Organize RMMO

November 2017

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 2017

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 5:

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

Week of November 12:

- 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 19:

- 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 23:

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

November 26:

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

December 3:

- 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 10:

- 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 2016

- | | | | |
|----|---|----|--|
| 1 | North Shore Baptist Church
Chicago, IL | 11 | First Baptist Church
West Hartford, CT |
| 2 | Crossroads American Baptist
Church
Northglenn, CO | 12 | Parkensburg Baptist Church
Parkensburg, PA |
| 3 | Prairie Baptist Church
Prairie Village, KS | 13 | First Baptist Church
Lancaster, PA |
| 4 | University Baptist Church
Seattle, WA | 14 | Royersford Baptist Church
Royersford, PA |
| 5 | Flemington Baptist Church
Flemington, NJ | 15 | New Beginnings Christian
Fellowship
Renton, WA |
| 6 | First Baptist Church
Topeka, KS | 16 | North Scituate Baptist Church
North Scituate, RI |
| 7 | Japanese Baptist Church
Seattle, WA | 17 | First Baptist Church
Boone, IA |
| 8 | The Riverside Church
New York, NY | 18 | First Baptist Church
Malden, MA |
| 9 | Calvary Baptist Church
Denver, CO | 19 | Iglesia Bautista de Barrazas
Carolina, PR |
| 10 | First Baptist Church
McMinnville, OR | 20 | Garfield Park Baptist Church
Indianapolis, IN |
| | | 21 | Iglesia Bautista de Luquillo Mar
Luquillo, PR |
| | | 22 | First Baptist Church
Waterloo, IA |
| | | 23 | First Baptist Church
Midland, MI |
| | | 24 | First Baptist Church
Beverly, MA |
| | | 25 | Iglesia Bautista de Country Club
San Juan, PR |



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