

---

Retired  
Ministers+  
Missionaries  
Offering  
2014

---

Promotional  
Guide

inspiration + community

American  
Baptist  
Churches  
USA

*“God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them.”*

— Hebrews 6:10



**Inspiration** — To be inspired by those who willingly answer to God’s call, “Here I am, send me,” is one of God’s many gracious gifts that enrich our faith journeys. Christian community is lived out amongst those who are sent to listen, uplift, feed, share a word, comfort, teach, preach and inspire. These are the ministers and missionaries who have walked with us through life’s most fragile moments and most joyous celebrations; we remember them as a source of love and learning who modeled caring and Community, who encouraged our witness.

The very nature of Inspiration is a cycle of being moved by someone and becoming an encouragement to others along the way. The Retired Minister’s and Missionaries Offering (RMMO) gives us the opportunity to be part of the continuing cycle of Inspiration that is an expression of God’s love.

RMMO gives American Baptist congregations the chance to show our heartfelt appreciation for the service of ministers, missionaries and their widowed spouses who inspired each of us with Jesus’ love.

Your church’s offering makes it possible to provide emergency assistance in times of crisis and to send a “Thank You” check to those who are eligible. Through your generous giving in 2013 we were able to provide \$1,141,295 in assistance and “Thank You” checks. Our goal for 2014 is \$1.2 million.

We hope this guide will help you to organize a successful offering and may RMMO be a source of rich Inspiration and Community engagement for your congregation.

Rev. Dr. Perry Hopper  
RMMO Program Director

# 1

---

## Set the date

RMMO traditionally takes place the first Sunday in December (December 7 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 Community and Inspiration.

# 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 urgency 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 more that reinforce RMMO's expression of Inspiration.

# 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 Community and Inspiration 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.

“We have such a personal connection with our retired ministers. When we give money to the offering, we have actual names and faces to connect to our gift. They are the names and faces of people who have guided us for a portion of our collective and individual faith journeys.”

— Rev. Jill Harvey  
Pastor, Niantic Baptist Church, Niantic, Connecticut



### 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. A donor story may sound like:

“My church has had several missionaries visit us to share their mission experiences. I have been moved to give by their dedication and sacrifice.”

— Donor in Kansas

### 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:

“I recently received a ‘Thank You’ check from the RMMO. After 40 years serving as an ABC pastor, I have now been retired for seven years and I continue to be surprised and very grateful when the RMMO check arrives. It means so much to be remembered and appreciated this way, and in tight economic times it is very helpful.”

— Retired Minister in North Carolina

## Before the Offering Promotional Ideas

### Telling Stories of Inspiration

Sharing stories of Inspiration with your congregation is more 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

---

## 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. 7 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 get your congregation's full attention

---

“Thank you for your gracious annual gift. Your annual gift means a great deal to us. Both of us are in our 90’s so it is an assuring blessing.”

— Retired Minister and spouse in California



## During the Offering How to Collect the Offering

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

Some ideas include:

---

Have the pastor read a message from a retired minister or missionary who is a member of the congregation, prior to collection

---

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 exhibit 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

---

Nursing home visits

---

Hospital outreach

---

Volunteer programs at homeless shelters

---



“I believe that RMMO is our biggest offering of the year. We have people who have had family members who were clergy and there have been several beloved pastors. Whatever the congregation gives during the offering is matched by the Church.”

— Rev. Trudy Pettibone  
Pastor, Burnt Hills Baptist Church, Burnt Hills, New York



# Widow's Mite Award

## First Baptist Church of Topeka, Kansas

### A Church with a Heart for Missions

This year we are pleased to present the 2013 Widow's Mite Award to First Baptist Church of Topeka for their longstanding commitment to the Retired Ministers & Missionaries Offering (RMMO) at a consistently generous level.

Their pastor, Rev. Dr. Cheryl Henson, speaks with pride about the tremendous love the congregation has for their former pastors, several of whom have had tenures of ten years or more.

"Honoring those who have pastored the church through RMMO is one of the many ways this congregation shows their appreciation for those who have served them so graciously and helped them to live out their faith in very tangible ways," remarks Dr. Henson.

FBC Topeka also has a heart for the work of those who are in the mission field.

Dr. Henson notes that, "Several times a year our members hear first-hand from missionaries we invite to speak to the congregation about the work they are doing, often at great personal sacrifice. Time and time again, we are moved by their stories." One couple who are retired missionaries and members of the congregation also help to bring to life the joys and challenges of the missionary experience.

"Honoring those who have pastored the church through RMMO is one of the many ways this congregation shows their appreciation for those who have served them so graciously and helped them to live out their faith in very tangible ways."

— Rev. Dr. Cheryl Henson  
Pastor, First Baptist Church of Topeka, Kansas

Hearing the testimonies of how former FBC Topeka pastors have offered words of encouragement and enriched the faith journeys of members is always moving. As the time to collect the RMMO offering draws closer, it also fosters a giving spirit.

Dr. Henson spoke of one instance in which the testimonies were seen as well as heard. "Those who shared passed around a large ball of yarn from one speaker to the next and not only were we moved by the stories but as we observed the pattern of the yarn all over the sanctuary, we also recognized how deeply the stories connect us as a congregation."

In addition to the support they give to RMMO, FBC Topeka is involved with numerous local mission efforts.

Five years ago they adopted the concept of the missional church and made a commitment to move beyond their own church walls. Not only has this initiative transformed their approach to missions but it has increased the level of individual volunteer work as well.

"We have members who are active in Big Sister and Big Brother, the Topeka Rescue Mission and the Citizens Watch," comments Dr. Henson.

We offer our gratitude to FBC Topeka and all the churches who make it possible for RMMO to touch the lives of so many retired servants.



“My life and pastoral ministry have been abundantly blessed by pastors, other clergy and laypersons who have given so freely to me which has helped me to become the pastor that I am today. Just recently, I had the privilege of going to visit one of my most significant mentors, Dr. Gardner C. Taylor who is 96 years old, just to thank him again for impacting my life and ministry. Giving to the RMMO is a small way that FIBC and I may express our appreciation to those in our ABC family who have paved the way for those of us still active in Christian ministry.”

— Rev. Dr. Warren H. Stewart, Sr.  
Pastor, First Institutional Baptist Church (FIBC), Phoenix, Arizona



## Beyond the Offering Inspiring Engagement + Connection

RMMO provides financial support for the retired ministers, missionaries and widowed spouses who have helped build our churches. Through RMMO, American Baptist Churches have an opportunity to highlight their congregations' 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 touched their lives

---





# Beyond the Offering Inspiring Engagement + Connection

## Reconnecting 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.

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 service

### Outreach Visit:

Organize visits to the homes of retired ministers and missionaries in your community

## Sharing Inspiration Year-Round

Lessons of Inspiration and Community 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 Community/Inspiration and the contributions of your retired ministers and missionaries in sermons throughout the year

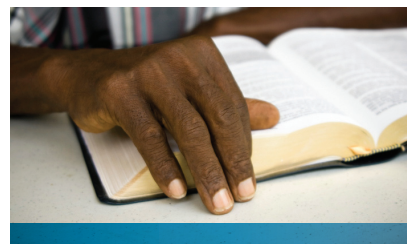
## Sample Sermon:

Text: 1 Thessalonians 1:3

*"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."*

When Paul visited Thessalonica many Gentiles became Christians, but he was unable to remain with them as long as he had hoped. His abrupt departure left them vulnerable to persecution as they practiced their new faith. Paul writes this letter after receiving a favorable report from Timothy on his visit with the Thessalonians.

From the outset of the letter it is clear that Paul had developed a deep affection for these new converts. Paul shares that he has been praying for them continually. He seeks to inspire and reassure them in the face of their trials and to thank them for being steadfast in their faith. The letter offers guidance for how this new Christian community can live out their faith.



How does Paul's message to the Thessalonians encourage this community and those who inspired their faith?

It reminded them that the ultimate inspiration for their faith, their actions, and their persistence is based in the hope they have in Jesus Christ (1:3)

It lets them know they are an encouragement to others because their faith and strong sense of community has become a model for other communities (1:7-8)

It tells them how Paul is heartened by their faith and their fond memories of him (3:6)

It urges them to show appreciation for their leaders (5:12-13)

The Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering provides a chance for the American Baptist family to continue to live out their faith like the Thessalonian converts by continuing the longstanding practice of remembering those who have inspired them and giving generously in appreciation for their service.

# Beyond the Offering

## Additional Scripture Suggestions

---

1 Samuel 23:21

---

*“Saul replied, ‘The Lord bless you for your concern for me.’”*

---

Philippians 1:3

---

*“I thank my God every time I remember you.”*

---

Hebrews 10:24

---

*“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.”*

---

“We are grateful for those who have loved us, led us and inspired us. The wisdom and grace of the retired ministers and missionaries in our midst greatly enhance the life of our congregation. When we promote the RMMO we rely heavily on lifting the stories of those who have touched our lives and those who will benefit from the offering.”

— Rev. H. James Hopkins  
Pastor, Lakeshore Avenue Baptist Church, Oakland, California



# 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

Two 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

### Video Link

Go to [www.mmabb.org/RMMOvideo](http://www.mmabb.org/RMMOvideo) to find a video you can show during service.

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

# Sample Calendar to Organize RMMO

## November 2014

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 2014

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 3:

Identify RMMO committee members and schedule first meeting

November 9:

Identify and order RMMO support materials

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

November 16:

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 23:

Guest sermon from retired minister or missionary

Organize a group visit to a retired minister or missionary

Host a talk/visit from a retired missionary about their mission experiences

November 27:

Include bulletin insert

Pastor shares stories of Inspiration and Community during Thanksgiving Sunday services

November 30:

Include bulletin insert

Children's sermon from retired minister or missionary

December 7:

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

RMMO collection

December 14:

Provide a RMMO goal update and host a celebration

RMMO collection

December–January:

Continue to collect RMMO donations

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 50 Giving Churches in 2013

1	Gardena Valley Baptist Church Gardena, CA	19	North Shore Baptist Church Chicago, IL	35	Greensburg 1st Baptist Church Greensburg, IN
2	Brewster Baptist Church Brewster, MA	20	Fifth Avenue Baptist Church Huntington, WV	36	First Baptist Church Portland, OR
3	Brandon Baptist Church Mount Vernon, OH	21	Karl Road Baptist Church Columbus, OH	37	West Shore Baptist Church Camp Hill, PA
4	First Baptist Church Ann Arbor, MI	22	West Side Baptist Church Wichita, KS	38	First Baptist Church Davison, MI
5	First Baptist Church Marshalltown, IA	23	Chinese Baptist Church Seattle, WA	39	Noank Baptist Church Groton, CT
6	First Chinese Baptist Church Fresno, CA	24	Mount Vernon Baptist Church Hurricane, WV	40	Grandview Baptist Church Kansas City, KS
7	Peters Creek Baptist Church South Park, PA	25	Vienna Baptist Church Vienna, WV	41	Burnt Hills Baptist Church Burnt Hills, NY
8	First Baptist Church Cheyenne, WY	26	Second Baptist Church-Germantown Philadelphia, PA	42	First Chinese Baptist Church San Francisco, CA
9	Central Baptist Church Springfield, IL	27	Greenwood 1st Baptist Church Greenwood, IN	43	First Baptist Church Pasadena, CA
10	First Baptist Church Topeka, KS	28	First Baptist Church Freehold, NJ	44	First Baptist Church Decatur, IL
11	Grand Prairie Baptist Church Marion, OH	29	Indianapolis 1st Baptist Church Indianapolis, IN	45	First Baptist Church Pedricktown, NJ
12	First Baptist Church Sioux Falls, SD	30	Calvary Baptist Church Denver, CO	46	First Baptist Church Wellsboro, PA
13	First Baptist Church Jerseyville, IL	31	Pulaski Baptist Church Pulaski, NY	47	First Baptist Church Redlands, CA
14	Bethel Baptist Church Southgate, MI	32	First Baptist Church of Greater Cleveland Cleveland, OH	48	Second Baptist Church Saint Louis, MO
15	Williamstown First Baptist Church Williamstown, WV	33	First Baptist Church Cadillac, MI	49	First Baptist Church McPherson, KS
16	Community Baptist Church Tulsa, OK	34	First Baptist Church Manlius, NY	50	Mill Creek Baptist Church Mill Creek, IN
17	First Baptist Church Chrisman, IL				
18	Greenfield Baptist Church North East, PA				

RMMO  
475 Riverside Drive  
Suite 1700  
New York, NY  
10115-0049  
Tel 1.800.986.6222  
Fax 1.800.986.6782  
[rmmo@mmbb.org](mailto:rmmo@mmbb.org)