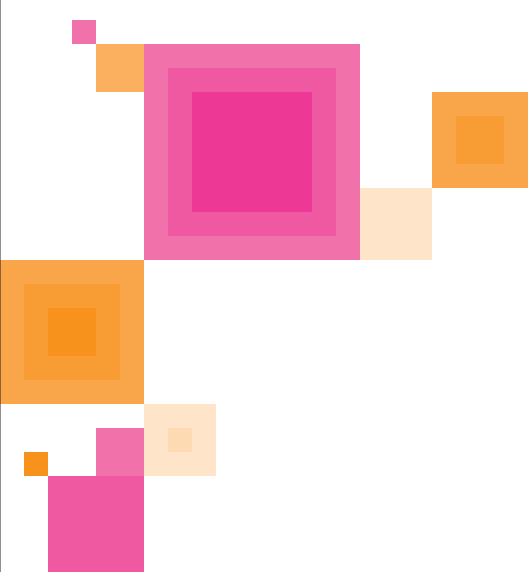


Retired
Ministers+
Missionaries
Offering
2015

Promotional
Guide

The Grace of Giving



American
Baptist
Churches
USA

“But since you excel in everything — in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you — see that you also excel in this grace of giving.”

— 2 Corinthians 8:7



The Grace of Giving — There can be no talk of Grace without first speaking about God. Even when it appears to come through human “hands” Grace is always God’s purview; it flows from God and God alone is able to manifest it in human experience. The totality of God’s Grace is found in the gift of Jesus Christ and his sacrificial act of love on the Cross — this is God’s Grace in action giving to us what we could never give to ourselves.

Grace turns our souls to Christ and stirs within us the fervent desire to be gracious to others. As we remember the powerful witness and care of devoted ministers and missionaries who have helped us to grow in our faith, stood by us in the face of adversity, and rejoiced with us in moments of triumph, we give thanks that they served as instruments of God’s Grace in their ministry to the people of God.

In the simple yet profound act of giving, congregations have the opportunity to be blessed and to be a blessing. Through the Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering (RMMO), American Baptist churches can share in an act of Grace that reminds the ministers, missionaries and widowed spouses who served so faithfully that they are remembered with love and gratitude.

Your church’s offering supplies emergency assistance in the midst of urgent need and the ability to send a “Thank You” check to those who are eligible. In 2014, your gracious gifts of \$1,128,257 enabled us to provide emergency support and send “Thank You” checks that made a difference in the lives of so many. Our goal this year is \$1.2 million.

We have designed this guide and the enclosed DVD to help you plan a successful RMMO campaign and encourage participation. May your congregation be greatly enriched this season by *The Grace of Giving*.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, which appears to read "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 (December 6 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 Grace of Giving.

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

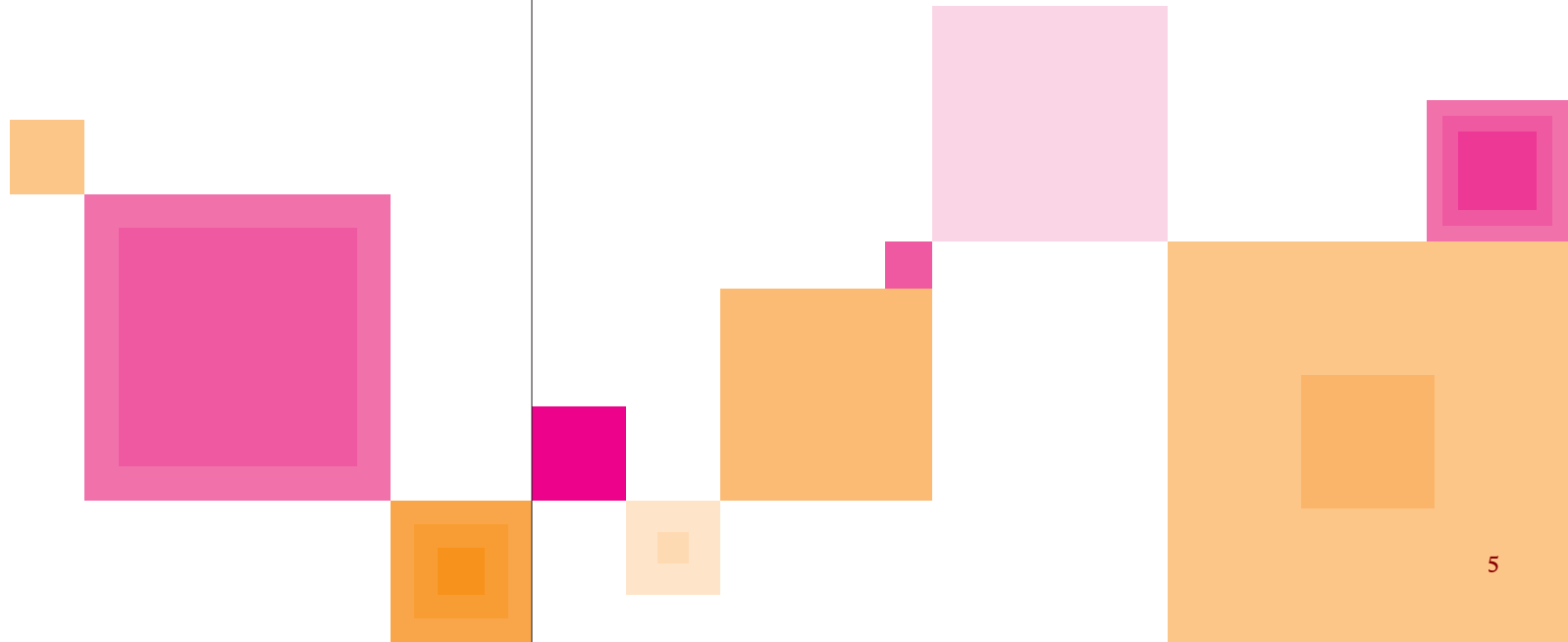
Create a calendar

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 The Grace of Giving.

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 The Grace of Giving 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 grace manifested in the life of our community?

Why are you inspired to give back?

“Our church family is supportive of the RMMO because we have several former pastors, denominational leaders and missionaries that are part of our church family. So, the church sees every day that those who respond to the call to serve in professional ministry are a gift in the life of the church.”

— Rev. Douglas L. Harris, English Congregation Pastor,
Northshore Baptist Church, Chicago, IL



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. A donor story may sound like:

“We always contributed while we were in ministry for over 50 years because we have always felt this was a worthwhile cause.”

— Retired Pastor and Spouse in New York

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:

“Thank you for the love gift which I received in time for the monthly bill for the insurance on my hearing aid. It amazes me the way God always provides for me.”

— Widowed Spouse in Indiana

Before the Offering Promotional Ideas

Telling Stories about The Grace of Giving

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. 6 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:

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 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

“We give to establish our heavenly investment, show gratitude, and obey God’s command. About 25 years ago we lost our Senior Pastor to a heart attack just before his 44th birthday. He left behind a wife and two young children. There was a home mortgage, no life insurance, and no college savings. By God’s grace provisions were made to meet the needs of our Senior Pastor’s family. We honor him by contributing to RMMO and acknowledge that those who have served are sometimes in need of emergency assistance.”

— Rev. Ming Lee, Youth Pastor,
Seattle Chinese Baptist Church, Seattle, Washington



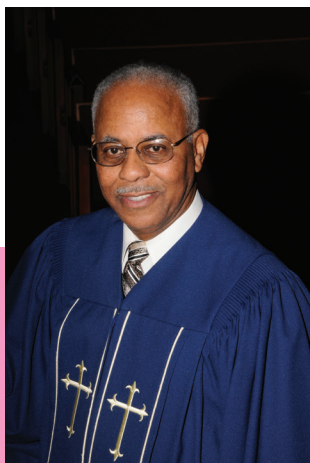
Widow's Mite Award for 2014 Mount Calvary Baptist Church, Rockville, Maryland

A Church That Loves
to Help People

"Mount Calvary is a generous church," observes their pastor, Rev. Leon Grant. "We realize that God has blessed us and we are called to bless others. This congregation is passionate about giving and is committed to responding generously to the four American Baptist Churches national offerings because they love people and love to help people. The Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering (RMMO) allows us to bless those who have been servants to God's people."

American Baptist Churches USA is pleased to present the 2014 Widow's Mite Award to Mount Calvary Baptist Church in Rockville, Maryland for their unwavering devotion and generous giving to the Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering (RMMO).

For many years now, Mount Calvary has designated every fifth Sunday as Mission Sunday and focuses on one of the national offerings. The church has recited *A Celebration of Giving Litany* that emphasizes how we are called to model God's benevolence in our behavior. On Mission Sunday, the sermon addresses the multiple ways the offering will be used to serve others. Raising funds for the offerings continues long after the designated Sunday has passed.



Commitment to missions and service is woven into the fabric of Mount Calvary's ministry through the many ways they serve Montgomery County and the greater Washington D.C. area. One of their longstanding ministries is the Helping Hands Shelter, a woman's shelter that serves single mothers and their children. Professional staff and volunteers from the congregation provide guidance and training until the women and their families become self-supporting. Pastor Grant remarks, "We have been blessed that many of the residents have joined the church and periodically we receive a letter from a former resident thanking us for encouraging her and providing the assistance that helped her and her family to get on their feet. It has great meaning for our congregation when they can witness the fruits of their service and see how they made a difference in a person's life."

Mount Calvary's activities reach all age groups in the community. They operate a day care center for pre-school age children and a tutoring program for grades K-12, provide housing for senior adults and low-income families, and offer assistance with clothing, school supplies, food, rent and emergency medical needs.

When asked what gives him the most satisfaction as the pastor of Mount Calvary since 1987, Rev. Grant comments thoughtfully, "I believe we have helped a lot of people and many who leave go on to other churches to carry on the work they began at Mount Calvary. It is all about giving and giving back."

We are deeply grateful to Mount Calvary Baptist Church and every church that, by contributing to RMMO, honors the work of those who have served so faithfully.

"This congregation is passionate about giving and is committed to responding generously to the four American Baptist Churches national offerings because they love people and love to help people. The Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering (RMMO) allows us to bless those who have been servants to God's people."

— Rev. Leon Grant
Pastor, Mount Calvary Baptist Church, Rockville, Maryland

“Calvary is motivated to give to RMMO because of the impact and influence of many American Baptist ministers and missionaries on our church throughout our almost 135 year history. Our congregation has a rich legacy of loving and dedicated pastors who, along with their families, sacrificed greatly to serve and care for our church and our community. In addition, we know that we need our ABC-USA missionaries who are working hard serving as the hands and feet of Christ in places we cannot reach on our own. Giving to RMMO is one way that we can say “thank you.”

— Rev. Anne J. Scalfaro, Senior Pastor,
Calvary Baptist Church of Denver, Colorado



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 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 Inspiring Gracious Giving

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.

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

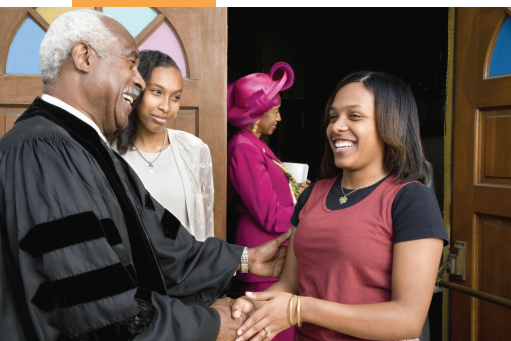
Sharing Inspiration Year-Round

Lessons of The Grace of Giving 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 Grace inspires Giving and highlight the contributions of your retired ministers and missionaries in sermons throughout the year



Sample Sermon:

2 Corinthians 8:7

"But since you excel in everything — in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you — see that you also excel in this grace of giving."

As the apostle Paul travels throughout Greece and Asia Minor he is concerned for those in the Jerusalem community who are in need. At the suggestion of James, Cephas and John, he is inspired to take up a collection for them. Paul speaks about the generosity of the Macedonian churches in order to stir the Corinthian church to do the same. He reports that in Macedonia, despite their hardship, the churches willingly gave even more than they could because it was a source of great joy for them.

Since Titus had already begun to collect money from the Corinthians, Paul urges them to complete this project and to make an even greater sacrifice than the Macedonians. He points out that they outshine others as models of excellence in so many ways — showing stronger faith, greater knowledge, fervent commitment and an outpouring of love to him and Titus. Therefore, they should surpass others in this area by giving more generously as an act of grace.

Why should we be moved to generosity? Why is giving an act of grace?

The ability to give is itself a sign of God's grace. Out of an understanding of their own poverty, the Macedonian church understood what it means to be in need. It gave them joy to know that they could alleviate difficult circumstances for believers in the Jerusalem church. (8:1-4)

The Macedonians began by giving themselves fully to God, surrendering their own needs and their will to God's will. In turn, God led them to have an open ear and heart when Paul requested their assistance for the poor in Jerusalem. (8:5) When we fully allow God to direct our hearts and minds, the desire to give flows from God's transforming presence manifested in our lives.

Paul reminds them and us that the ultimate grace flows from the sacrifice made by Jesus Christ. Our lives are enriched by God's loving forgiveness because of Jesus' willingness to diminish his own status and endure the humiliation of the cross. (8:9)

Beyond the Offering

Additional Scripture Suggestions

Deuteronomy 1:13

“Choose for each of your tribes individuals who are wise, discerning, and reputable to be your leaders.”

2 Timothy 1:3

“I am grateful to God — whom I worship with a clear conscience, as my ancestors did — when I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day.”

Hebrews 13:7

“Remember your leaders, those who spoke the word of God to you; consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith.”

“Thank you for the generous RMMO check. We have ongoing new physical issues so this will help with expenses. We have always contributed because we have always felt it was a worthwhile cause.”

— Retired Minister and Spouse in New York



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.mmmbb.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 2015

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 2015

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 8:

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 15:

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 22:

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 26:

Include bulletin insert

Pastor shares stories of The Grace of Giving during Thanksgiving Sunday services

November 29:

Include bulletin insert

Children's sermon from retired minister or missionary

December 6:

Include bulletin insert

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

Show RMMO video

Collect RMMO offering

December 13:

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 2014

- 1 Gardena Valley Baptist Church
Gardena, CA
- 2 Brewster Baptist Church
Brewster, MA
- 3 Evergreen Baptist Church-
Los Angeles
Rosemead, CA
- 4 First Baptist Church
Mattoon, IL
- 5 Pulaski Baptist Church
Pulaski, NY
- 6 Brandon Baptist Church
Mount Vernon, OH
- 7 First Baptist Church
Sioux Falls, SD
- 8 First Baptist Church
Olympia, WA
- 9 Greenwood 1st Baptist Church
Greenwood, IN
- 10 South Gorham Baptist Church
Gorham, ME
- 11 First Baptist Church
Peoria, IL
- 12 First Chinese Baptist Church
Fresno, CA

- 13 Williamstown First Baptist Church
Williamstown, WV
- 14 North Hills Community
Baptist Church
Pittsburgh, PA
- 15 Burnt Hills Baptist Church
Burnt Hills, NY
- 16 West Shore Baptist Church
Camp Hill, PA
- 17 Parkside Church
Bakersfield, CA
- 18 First Baptist Church
New London, NH
- 19 First Baptist Church
Dover, DE
- 20 Clifton Park Center Baptist Church
Clifton Park, NY
- 21 First Baptist Church
York, PA
- 22 Central Baptist Church
Springfield, IL
- 23 North Shore Baptist Church
Chicago, IL
- 24 First Baptist Church
McPherson, KS
- 25 Karl Road Baptist Church
Columbus, OH

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