

*Retired  
Ministers &  
Missionaries  
Offering  
2019*

Promotional Guide

# *Honoring the Service of God's Servants*



American  
Baptist  
Churches  
USA



*“Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to acknowledge those who work hard among you, who care for you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work.”*

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 (NIV)



# 2019 Retired Ministers & Missionaries Offering

In celebration of the rich 40-plus year legacy of the Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering (RMMO) on behalf of American Baptist Churches USA (ABCUSA), we gratefully acknowledge the loving devotion of those who have so faithfully answered their call to serve God. Our theme this year, *RMMO – Honoring the Service of God's Servants* uplifts the generosity, grace and tireless work of retired ministers, missionaries and their widowed spouses and families who have dedicated their lives to serving the body of Christ.

As Christians, we are called to honor one another with the love of Christ as found in the scripture from 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 (NIV) which teaches, *"Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to acknowledge those who work hard among you, who care for you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work."*

The long-standing tradition of the RMMO established in 1977 supports ministers, missionaries and their widowed spouses who have devoted 15 years or more to ABCUSA. As one of four offerings from ABCUSA, this offering is unique because it provides individual recognition to those who have served the ABCUSA family. The RMMO is a personal offering, one rooted in thanks for the countless ways ministers and missionaries guide members of the church toward faithful and committed discipleship and diligent service in mission.

This year we want to commemorate the unique legacy of RMMO and remember those who play a vital role providing guidance and inspiration to their congregation and community.

Your church's participation in RMMO makes it possible to provide emergency assistance in times of crisis and to send an annual "Thank You" check to those who are eligible. Through your generosity in 2018, RMMO provided "Thank You" checks to more than 3,497 recipients.

Our goal for the 2019 national RMMO campaign is to reach \$1.2 million. We hope you will partner with us and encourage participation within your congregation.

This year's RMMO marketing materials are created to support and help your congregation organize a successful campaign. Remember, paying tribute to those who have walked and prayed with you over the years is an example of *Honoring the Service of God's Servants*. Thank you.



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

A large yellow circle with a white number '2' in the center. The circle has a subtle dotted texture around its edge.

## *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.

A large yellow circle with a white number '1' in the center. The circle has a subtle dotted texture around its edge.

## *Set the date*

RMMO traditionally takes place the first Sunday in December (Dec. 1 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, *Honoring the Service of God's Servants*.







# 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 *Honoring the Service of God's Servants*.



# 4

## *Introduce the offering*

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



# *Before the Offering Promotional Ideas*

Lifting up the legacy and 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?

How would you encourage younger people to participate in RMMO?

*“RMMO means a lot because so often pastors have served congregations and communities, and they have not been able to obtain the salaries that they would have received in other fields or in for-profit organizations. It is a wonderful way to give back to them and to say thank you, we recognize your sacrifice. And even though this one check is not covering your true commitment and what you’ve done, it’s just a small thank you.”*

Carolyn Engram Sullivan  
Director of Operations  
First Institutional Baptist Church  
Phoenix, AZ



Carolyn Engram Sullivan

## Outreach to 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:

*“It is especially gratifying that American Baptists from across the country have been willing to give generously to show their thanks for retired clergy. I continue to serve in ministry, non-professionally, in my own community, as well as through mission trips to our mission work in Haiti. I will always be filled with pride and gratitude for my association with American Baptist Churches, USA.”*

Retired couple  
in East Wenatchee, WA



## Outreach to 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.



# *Honoring the Service of God's Servants*



Rev. Dr. Donald Ng

To honor the RMMO tradition, it is important to spotlight those who have given their time and talents to do God's work and their generosity to the campaign.

Rev. Dr. Donald (Don) Ng lifted up RMMO during his 17 ½ year tenure as the Senior Pastor of First Chinese Baptist Church (FCBC) in San Francisco. He recounts, "At FCBC, I inherited from my predecessors a historic commitment to ABC life, including the RMMO. Therefore, when the annual promotional materials arrived, we provided an opportunity for the congregation to give. I found it helpful to have one of my predecessors, Dr. James Chuck, in the sanctuary when receiving the RMMO. I would quip that you can say 'Thank You' to people like Dr. Chuck."

When asked why it is important to remember, the RMMO offering, Don disclosed, "As clergy, we always joke that there's no such thing as retirement in the Bible. Even in retirement, ministers and missionaries most likely are still serving the Lord as volunteers. Their legacies inspire me to continue to serve faithfully. The RMMO is a loving reminder for retirees that they are not forgotten and are an important part of the ABC family."

As time passes and new generations join the church, Don offered insight on how to convey the relevancy of RMMO. "Getting younger people excited about giving an offering to retired ministers and missionaries at any time is difficult! They can't relate. However, they do understand the concept of 'paying it forward.' For instance, if they like their current pastor, young people would be able to see that when their beloved pastor retires, others like them now and in the future will give generously to say, 'Thank You.'"

In the past, Rev. Ng presented the RMMO offering in his church, but encourages people in the church today to support RMMO. "When pastors become involved in the life of church members such as in weddings, funerals, baby dedications and even house blessings, the pastor is often seen as an auxiliary family member. It's always important to remember family especially when in need."

Rev. Dr. Don Ng retired from full-time ministry in June 2015. He served as President of the American Baptist Churches, USA in 2014-15 and Vice President in 2012-2013. Don also served as Past President in 2016-17. MMBB gratefully acknowledges Rev. Dr. Don Ng for his continued support of ABCUSA and RMMO.

# Celebrating a Legacy

The Reverend Dr. Lawrence O. Swain was serving as Interim Executive Minister and executive staff coach for the American Baptist Churches of Ohio at the time of his passing on August 24, 2019. His dedication, loyalty and continuous support of the ABC family and the many lives he touched throughout his life and career demonstrate the legacy he leaves for all of us.

This year's RMMO theme focuses on telling the story and *Honoring the Service of God's Servants*. The story is not complete without lifting up true advocates who have worked tirelessly to sustain this 40+ year tradition. Prior to his death, MMBB interviewed Larry about his perspective on why RMMO continues to thrive and the importance of supporting such an offering. At an early age, Larry understood the importance of mentorship. Larry fondly remembered his first pastor who at the age of 100 asked him to come back and preach in the church where he grew up. He recalled that his pastor never quite retired. Recognizing there is a healthier way to continue God's calling but not quite at that pace, Larry served as an area minister and an Executive Minister of American Baptist Churches of Ohio until he retired in December 2015.

Even in retirement, Larry and his wife Linda remained active by participating in the MMBB Visitation Program, a ministry where retired clergy volunteered to conduct pastoral visits to longtime annuitants. Larry always recognized the importance of keeping the story of ABC's ministries alive.

"As I was welcomed to preach on behalf of my mentor, I always had an open-door policy and welcomed other pastors' presence because it helped me become better." He understood and felt gratitude for those who serve regardless of their title within the church.



Rev. Dr. Lawrence O. Swain

The connection he felt was motivation to ensure others were included. "Keeping the RMMO going is imperative as not all pastors have pensions or adequate retirement plans. While the "Thank You" check helps financially, it also, keeps them connected and lets recipients know they are not forgotten."

Dr. Swain also acknowledged the importance of inspiring younger people to participate in RMMO. "Showing and telling the stories of our predecessors and those currently making an impact will hopefully inspire the next generation of church leaders to think far beyond the money and contemplate, 'what legacy will I leave?'"

Always embracing ever changing times, Larry knew firsthand the impact of good mentorship, "If the church would take advantage of older members it can really impact the lives of younger pastors. I am not against the church changing but like many others, I don't want to be left out. It's important to keep our retired pastors involved in some way."

We take this opportunity to celebrate the legacy of Dr. Larry Swain along with that of RMMO.

# *Before the Offering Promotional Ideas*

## **Telling Stories about Honoring the Service of God's Servants**

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

*“How thoughtful to be remembered once again with your gift from the RMMO. It always comes at just the right time. As long as I keep on serving, I’ll always make sure this special offering is emphasized.”*

Retired Pastor from Mineral Wells, WV





# *Before the Offering Promotional Ideas: Social Media*

Using social media to support RMMO is a meaningful way to inspire and share information to your congregation. 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 — Rooted in thankfulness, RMMO provides financial support for ministers, missionaries and widowed spouses who have helped build and sustain our churches. Please give at your church or visit [www.abc-usa.org/RMMO](http://www.abc-usa.org/RMMO)

#2 — Supporting RMMO is a wonderful opportunity to highlight the personal ministries that retired ministers and missionaries make in the community. Donate online at [www.abc-usa.org/RMMO](http://www.abc-usa.org/RMMO)

#3 — Honoring the Service of God's Servants #honorgodsservants 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](http://www.abc-usa.org/RMMO)

## **Twitter**

#1 — Lift up RMMO and honor those who serve @AmericanBaptist ministers, missionaries and their families. #liftingupRMMO #RMMO #RMMOgiving [www.abc-usa.org/RMMO](http://www.abc-usa.org/RMMO)

#2 — Celebrate the legacy of RMMO and honor God's servants. @AmericanBaptist ministers, missionaries and widowed spouses. Donate at [www.abc-usa.org/RMMO](http://www.abc-usa.org/RMMO) #RMMOgiving #honorRMMO

#3 — Offer Jesus' ministry of care towards others @AmericanBaptist retired ministers, missionaries and their families. #helpthyneighbor #RMMO #RMMOgiving [www.abc-usa.org/RMMO](http://www.abc-usa.org/RMMO)

## **Hashtags and Links**

#liftingupRMMO, #RMMOgiving  
#celebrateRMMO #HonorthLegacy  
#rememberingRMMO #honorRMMO #RMMO,  
#RMMOgiving, @AmericanBaptist,  
[www.abc-usa.org/RMMO](http://www.abc-usa.org/RMMO), [www.abc-usa.org](http://www.abc-usa.org)



# ***Widow's Mite Award for 2018 Parkesburg Baptist Church of Parkesburg, PA A Small Congregation with a Vast Heart for Community Service***



Parkesburg Baptist Church

We are honored to present the 2018 Widow's Mite Award to Parkesburg Baptist Church, Parkesburg, PA for their congregation's tireless effort and steadfast commitment to the Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering (RMMO). This annual award recognizes churches that demonstrate outstanding leadership and generous contributions to RMMO.

In 2015, Rev. Mary C. Lewis became the first female pastor to lead Parkesburg Baptist Church. Joining a congregation as a new pastor is challenging especially as the first woman charting new territory, but Rev. Lewis knew that she was the person God had called and that the Lord had brought her home in Parkesburg.

Rev. Lewis speaks with great admiration about the Parkesburg congregation as always being a mission centered community and supportive of the community. "With a little more than 100 members, I was drawn to this congregation to a great degree because of their involvement and impact on the community. For example, there is a newer ministry called Parable Quest that caters to elementary school youth beyond our congregation, offering fun, games, Bible stories and a meal a few times a month. The church has long had a large Junior-Senior High youth group which draws many students from beyond our church and provides discipleship, fun activities, yearly retreats, mission trips, and local service projects."

As a mission focused congregation, their community outreach programs range from food pantry donations, annual summer mission trips, and volunteering offsite on a monthly basis serving meals to supporting a local youth center, The Parkesburg Point.

Another noteworthy community program is the Parkesburg Churches Community Outreach (PCCO). This outreach provides those struggling financially by providing emergency funds for the payment of utilities and housing. Other ministries include a

store that provides very low-cost clothing, household goods, and furniture. Parkesburg Church supports this program and is a part of a network that triages hotline calls for those in need of assistance.

Parkesburg Church impacts the lives of so many with their kindness and generous spirit. Regional Executive Minister of American Baptist Churches of PA & DE, Rev. Dr. Frank T. Frischkorn proclaimed, "They have a mission heart that seeks to fulfill the call of the Great Commission and Acts 1:8, by having ministry that touches their neighborhood and extends literally to the end of the globe."

RMMO is a continuing priority for this church because the campaign's mission is relatable. Pastor Lewis explains, "When I mention the retired former pastor and his spouse, Rev. Dr. Dan and Sue MacDonald, as well as ABC missionaries, like Sue Hegarty and David and Joyce Reed who are still very active in the church, there is a personal connection. By thinking of them and how much they are loved, the congregation can personalize the importance of sustaining RMMO."

We are grateful for this opportunity to acknowledge Parkesburg Baptist Church for their steadfast support of RMMO, the ABC family and their community. It is important to remember those who have given their lives in service to do God's work and the faithful givers whose generosity contributes to the success of this offering.



Rev. Mary C. Lewis





# *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. 1 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

*“Remember that others paved the way for the younger generation to get where they are and so the goal is to teach this generation that they owe a debt to those who have provided leadership, comfort, care and provisions for them. Especially those who have served in the church, in times when pastors, ministers and missionaries had to make great sacrifices.”*

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



Rev. Dr. Warren Stewart



# *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 Honoring God's Servants*



## **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 honor and celebration have rich meaning for Christians throughout the year, not only around the time of RMMO.

Some ideas include:

- **Weekly Sermons**  
Look for ways to honor God's servants and highlight the contributions of your retired ministers and missionaries in sermons throughout the year

## Sample Sermon:

“Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to acknowledge those who work hard among you, who care for you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work.”

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 (NIV)

Earlier in this chapter, Paul reminded the Thessalonian church that it is not a matter of if Jesus will return but when he will return. The day of the Lord will come, however, in the meantime they have a responsibility to one another as believers to live into the future hope of the Lord’s return. Paul cautions them to remain faithful to their commitment by valuing and acknowledging their church leaders who are devoted to caring for them. Paul understands that love and respect for church leadership is essential for the community to thrive and be effective as servants of God.

This message speaks to us today inspiring us to be mindful of how we treat ministers, missionaries and their families who have answered the call to lead with humility and love. The notion of sacred community and shared responsibility in Christ is the thread which is woven throughout the activity of Christian service. Paul affirms that as a child of God, we each should honor our church family and recognize the support it provides to help us grow and progress in our faith.

As we consider the ways The Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering (RMMO) continues the long-standing tradition uttered by Paul to the Thessalonian church so long ago, let us take the time to give thanks for those who baptize, marry, dedicate, teach, preach, visit, pray, counsel, and bury disciples over the course of their dedicated service in the church and the mission field. The scripture text reiterates the importance of expressing thankfulness and providing for our church leaders. RMMO is one way we can demonstrate our thanksgiving financially and fondly remember those who have inspired and affirmed our faith in God.



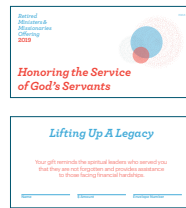
# Key Materials

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

## 1

### Envelopes

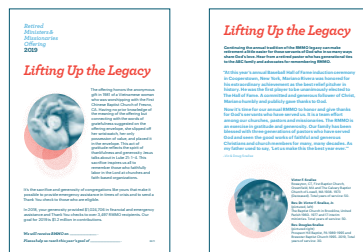
Offering envelopes can be distributed on RMMO Sunday or another day of your choice



## 2

### Bulletin Inserts

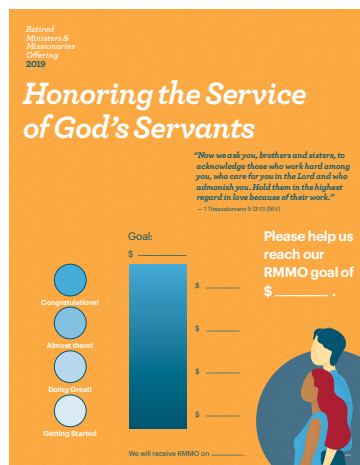
Three inserts that can be copied and distributed in your Sunday bulletin or weekly newsletter



## 3

### Poster

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



## 4

### Testimonials

Throughout all the RMMO materials, quotes and stories are provided to motivate and encourage your congregation

## 5

### Social Media Posts

Refer to page 11 in the guide for suggestions

Additional promotional materials are available for free. Please email [Rmmo@mmbb.org](mailto:Rmmo@mmbb.org).





# Sample Calendar to Organize RMMO

## November 2019

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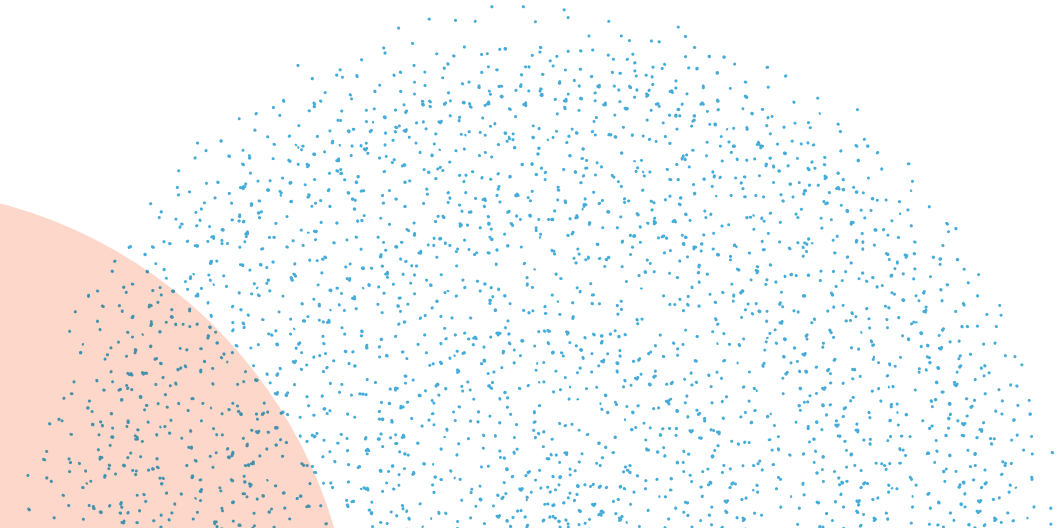
Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30



# December 2019

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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				



# ***RMMO: Week by Week***

## **Week of November 4:**

- Identify RMMO committee members and schedule first meeting
- Include a social media post to encourage participation
- Plan offering date(s), fundraising goal and schedule opportunities around it

## **Week of November 11:**

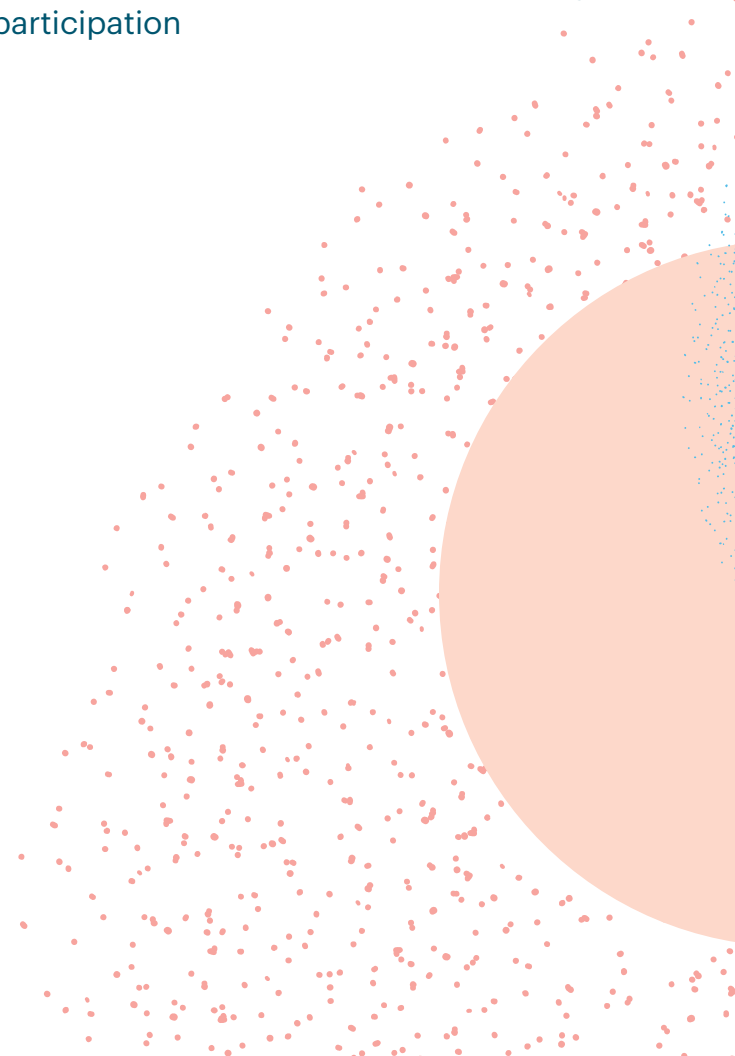
- Include article in church newsletter about RMMO, a retired minister or missionary. Post article to church website or Facebook page as well
- Display RMMO posters
- Invite a retired minister or missionary to do a guest sermon
- Organize a group visit to a retired minister or missionary
- Host a talk/visit from a retired missionary about their mission experiences
- Include a social media post to encourage participation

## **November 18:**

- Include bulletin insert
- Pastor shares stories of generosity during Thanksgiving Sunday services
- Include colored bulletin insert
- Children's sermon from retired minister or missionary
- Include a social media post to encourage participation

## **November 25:**

- Include bulletin insert
- Announce RMMO Sunday is one week away
- Include a social media post to encourage participation





### **December 1 – RMMO Sunday:**

- Provide a RMMO goal update and host a celebration
- Church members and retired ministers and missionaries share stories during Sunday announcements
- 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 2018*

- 1 Gardena Valley Baptist Church  
Gardena, CA
- 2 First Baptist Church  
Peoria, IL
- 3 Brandon Baptist Church  
Mount Vernon, OH
- 4 First Baptist Church  
Chrisman, IL
- 5 First Baptist Church  
Newton Center, MA
- 6 First Baptist Church  
Galesburg, IL
- 7 Newman Baptist Church  
Massillon, OH
- 8 First Baptist Church  
Freehold, NJ
- 9 Grand Prairie Baptist  
Church  
Marion, OH
- 10 Pulaski Baptist Church  
Pulaski, NY



- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| 11 Fifth Avenue Baptist Church<br>Huntington, WV | 16 Central Baptist Church<br>Springfield, IL         | 21 First Baptist Church<br>of Greater Des Moines<br>Johnston, IA |
| 12 Brewster Baptist Church<br>Brewster, MA       | 17 First Baptist Church<br>Sioux Falls, SD           | 22 Summersville Baptist<br>Church<br>Summersville, WV            |
| 13 First Baptist Church<br>Greenfield, IL        | 18 Burnt Hills Baptist Church<br>Burnt Hills, NY     | 23 First Baptist Church<br>of Indianapolis<br>Indianapolis, IN   |
| 14 North Shore Baptist Church<br>Chicago, IL     | 19 Arthur Baptist Church<br>Arthur, NE               | 24 Bethesda Baptist Church<br>Barrackville, WV                   |
| 15 First Baptist Church<br>Decatur, IL           | 20 Shuck Memorial Baptist<br>Church<br>Lewisburg, WV | 25 First Baptist Church of<br>Gresham<br>Gresham, OR             |



