



December 1, 2015

# The Rocky Mountain American Baptist

A Newsletter of the American Baptist Churches in the Rocky Mountain Region

## Advent: The Start of New Church Year

Most churches today start their program year with the beginning of school. In our culture, that makes sense. But why then does the “liturgical year” of the church still begin with Advent and Christmas? Would it not make sense to have our “liturgical year” and program year be the same?

Perhaps.

But then again, maybe we have forgotten some of the significance of the liturgical year.

Remember, “liturgy” means “the work of the people”, not “worship calendar” as many have come to understand the term in a practical sense. And the “work of the people” (which is a more precise way of saying “the work of the church”) is to embody and be the hands and feet of Christ in our communities and world.

So how and when did Christ’s ministry begin?

*“In the beginning was the Word...and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory...” (John 1:1-14)*

Christ’s ministry on earth did not begin at the age of 30... it began at the Incarnation...when he became physically present to and with us. And so the beginning of the church’s ministry...of our ministry as followers of Christ is to be present with our communities...with our neighbors. We start our “liturgical year”...our year of work...by remembering that as Christ began His work by being present with us, we must begin ours by being present with others.

And what does “being present” look like?

In dwelling on this recently I have come to believe there are four characteristics of being present as exemplified in Christ’s life and ministry:

- To know others and to be known by them (John 10 – The Great Shepherd)
- To need others and to be needed by them (John 4- The Woman at the Well)
- To empathetically experience the joys and sorrows of others (John 11 – Lazarus, also Romans 12:15)
- To sacrificially meet the needs of others out of a sense of love (John 13 – Washing the Disciples’ Feet)

Each of these characteristics is an important part of Christ being present in the world of the Gospels and is an important part of our being present in our world today.



FIRST SUNDAY OF *Advent*



### What’s in this RMAB?

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I wonder. What would happen if we focused on these things during the holiday Season?

Could we, for example, take time to actually get to know the person who serves us our morning cup of coffee? Instead of just asking his name, could we find out a little about him and share a bit of ourselves with them. Or is our fear of “identity theft” so great that we are afraid to bare even the slightest hint of our feelings and emotions to others?

Could we not only take time to give our holiday baskets to the needy, but also admit to some of our friends and family that we need them in our lives... that their contributions to us make us a better and more complete person? Could we risk asking them to pour into our lives on a more regular basis?

Could we truly seek to understand what it is like for another to walk in the path that they walk? Could we listen to our Arab friend tell of the fear they experience now as they go out shopping or truly feel the joy of the teenager just getting their license? Can we step outside of our own tangle of emotions, joys, hurts, accomplishments and sorrows to feel the rise and fall of those around us, to see, feel and touch their experience of the world?

Can we take all of these things and give God and the world the gift of ourselves? Just as Jesus did? To fully pour ourselves out that others may live and in so doing experience LIFE ourselves?

Just as God did...

When the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

I pray you and yours will have a blessed Christmas season and celebration and a Happy New Year of service and ministry in His Name.

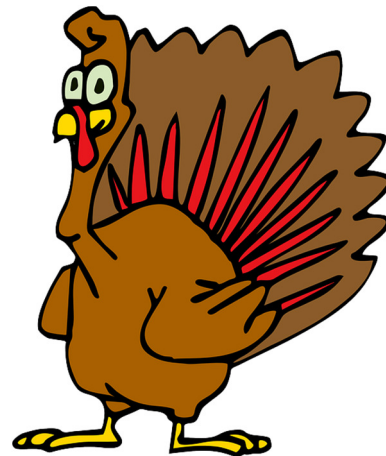
*Steve Van O*



## Turkey for the Holidays?

I suspect that we will all have a creative moment or two during the holiday period.

You see, science shows us a strong connection between creativity and dopamine, which is created by our bodies from tyrosine. And a great source of tyrosine is... **turkey.**



*But there's a catch.* Neuroscience shows us that a relaxed state of mind usually provides the trigger needed to give us those most creative moments. The necessary incubation period for your greatest ideas can come from such things as being in the shower, cooking, or sleeping.

I recently spoke about the opportunity we have this year to “Dream Dangerously” and to come up with ideas for things we've never ever done before. It will be the worse for all of us if five years from now you realize you had a great idea that you could have submitted and you didn't.

So, get that notepad and keep it in the kitchen. Put one beside the bed. And maybe even another near the shower! Ponder away, and be ready when that 5:00 a. m. thought comes alive.

And please, share it with us (please see the attached form).

*Yours in Christ,  
William Warren  
ABCRM Board President*



## BIG IDEA!

## Board of General Ministries Elects Interim General Secretary, Recognizes Medley as General Secretary Emeritus



**VALLEY FORGE, PA (ABNS 11/17/15)**—The Board of General Ministries for American Baptist Churches USA (ABCUSA) met November 12-14, 2015, at the Double Tree by Hilton Hotel in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania. At the meeting, the board elected Interim General Secretary Susan Gillies to serve beginning December 1, 2015, and approved a resolution to confer the recognition of General Secretary Emeritus to the Rev. Dr. A. Roy Medley.

Board of General Ministries President Don Ng opened the meeting and introduced Josue D. Gómez-Menéndez, incoming Vice President who will be taking this role for the next biennium, January 1, 2016-December 31, 2017.

During its opening plenary session, the Board of General Ministries elected Susan Gillies to serve as Interim General Secretary. Gillies will begin this new role on December 1, 2015, and will serve in the position until a new General Secretary is named.

“At a time of significant change in American Baptist life, Susan Gillies brings a steady spirit, exceptional experience, and ample administrative skills to the Office of the General Secretary as its Interim,” said ABC President Don Ng. “After 14 years of humble and dedicated leadership by Rev. Dr. A. Roy Medley, Susan Gillies will continue the clear direction of the denomination to assist ABC churches to adapt to societal and religious changes in our world through the *Transformed by the Spirit* initiative.”

On Friday afternoon, November 13, the board approved a resolution to confer the recognition of General Secretary Emeritus to the Rev. Dr. A. Roy Medley.

To view this article in its entirety, click or visit here: <http://www.abc-usa.org/2015/11/17/bgm-elects-interim-recognizes-medley-as-general-secretary-emeritus/>

## 2015 Mission Table Surfaces Seven Priorities for American Baptist Churches



**VALLEY FORGE, PA (11/12/15)**—The second American Baptist Churches Mission Table met November 9-11, 2015, at the Double Tree hotel in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania. The Mission Table brought together representatives from American Baptist regions, affiliated ministry partners, national staff, executives and officers, to join in conversation with one another and highlight denominational priorities.

The event began with three anticipated outcomes: to narrow the list of 21 Mission Summit Conversations topics to a manageable list of priorities, to build case statements for each of the final priorities encouraging ABC entities to engage these priorities over the next two years, and for Mission Table participants and American Baptist Churches USA as a whole to continue to champion ministries associated with the final priorities.

The topics focused on at the Mission Table were originally a part of the Mission Summit Conversations held at the 2015 Biennial Mission Summit, June 26-28, 2015, in Overland Park, Kansas. From these 21 topics, Mission Table participants spent time in small groups discussing priorities for American Baptist Churches USA, looking at what topics should be championed by ABC in the next 20 months before the Biennial Mission Summit in Portland, Oregon, June 29-July 1, 2017.

The 2015 Mission Table surfaced seven priority topics for American Baptist Churches USA:

1. Next Generation of Leaders
2. Violence
3. Discipleship
4. Poverty
5. Gospel in a Rapidly Changing Society
6. Women in Ministry
7. Alternative Models for Pastoral Ministry



“One of the great surprises of *Transformed by the Spirit* has been the value of conversations across our churches about priorities and challenges,” said American Baptist Churches General Secretary Roy Medley. “The fruit of those conversations has been the meat of our conversations at the Mission Table, leading to seven priorities for our life together. We praise God for the transformative work of the Spirit.”

After the seven priorities were recognized, Mission Table participants then divided into groups based on their interest, and together worked to produce case statements based on each of the seven priorities. These case statements will be available online at [www.abc-usa.org](http://www.abc-usa.org) in the near future.

The event was led by a planning team, along with Rev. Dr. C. Jeff Woods, Associate General Secretary for Regional Ministries and Conversations Coordinator. “Through the event, worship leader Rev. Zina Jacque kept us focused on God’s Spirit of discernment and inspired us to do our best work. We were blessed by her gifts of preaching and exhortation,” said Woods.

A website, used for conversations prior to and after the 2015 Biennial Mission Summit, was created in spring of 2015 for continued discussion about these and other highlighted topics: [www.missionsummitconversations.com](http://www.missionsummitconversations.com).

All topics discussed at the 2015 Biennial Mission Summit continue to be important ministry areas to address and lift up, but these seven topics will be focused on as denominational priorities by American Baptist Churches USA as a whole.

“The Mission Table reveals how our denomination is fully alive! The room of almost 100 people holds a vibrancy of creative thinking that can only be described as Holy Energy springing forth from God’s Spirit. Jeff Woods and the Planning Team have led us through a discernment process that will guide our focus for the next two years. We have much to celebrate with deep gratitude,” said Rev. Judy Fackenthal, Vice President/President-Elect of American Baptist Churches USA and Pastor of Garfield Park Baptist Church, Indianapolis, Indiana.

To view this article in its entirety, click or visit here: <http://www.abc-usa.org/2015/11/12/2015-mission-table-surfaces-seven-priorities-for-american-baptist-churches/>

## Honoring Rev. Dr. James D. Peters, Jr. 60 Years in Ministry



Rev. Dr. James D. Peters, Jr. was recognized at New Hope Baptist Church on November 17 for having served 60 years in ministry. Dr. Peters served as pastor of New Hope for 28 years. He is a supporter of civil rights having worked and marched with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr. Peters has received many awards for his work in ministry and with civil

rights. Thank you Dr. Peters for your many years of service. May God continue to bless you in all that you do.



## Netherlands and Hungary Mission Trip

The trip to the Netherlands and Hungary was primarily an educational trip. We saw many things and met with many people. In the course of this, we were able to see the work that is being done by our missionaries and mission partners. We also got a perspective on the opportunities and obstacles that the missionaries and partners face in ministry.

In Amsterdam, the Netherlands, we met Tooz. She works with Not For Sale, an organization that is working to help women leave the sex trade. She has Dignitas, a shop and restaurant, to help in the process. One of the things they do is to make and sell soup to the people involved in the sex industry, both the women and the security people. This way they can build relationships which facilitates the process when women decide to leave the business. The relationship is important in helping the women leave, because they have people who know them and will help them.

In Hungary, we visited schools and churches involved with the schools. The Hungarian government decided to allow churches and church groups to administer some of the public schools in the country. The schools now have the opportunity to teach Bible to the children (at their choice). Hungarian Baptist Aid, which administers 49 schools, has the goal of starting a church in every school. The goal is to have a chaplain in every school to teach the children the Bible, and to have a native English speaker in every school so the school can become bilingual in English and Hungarian. This will attract children to schools administered by Hungarian Baptist Aid so they can reach more children. The goal is more people who will relate to the children so that the church can impact more children with the gospel.

The legacy of WWII and its aftermath remains important in the mind of the people of Hungary, and to some extent in the Netherlands. We visited the Ten Boom House and saw the "Hiding Place." We visited the Museum of Terror which remembers the terror of the Fascist and Communist regimes in Hungary. We saw the Shoe Memorial along the Danube which remembers the Jews who were lined up, shot, and their bodies dumped in the river. I was part of the team that went to a church in Budapest. That church had been bombed during WWII. It had its pastor exiled from Budapest and most of its building used by the Communist Party Leadership during the Soviet



*Team at sight of "Baptist" origins in Amsterdam*

years. Now the former apartments of the leadership is housing students at the university and seminary.

At church, we met many deeply committed people who are committed to Christ and the improvement of life in Hungary. We met people who are hoping for improving relationships with Western Europe and the US. We met people who are proud of who Hungary was, and grieve what happened in the world wars.

We met people who are sold out for Jesus and are hoping to lead a generation that will seek Jesus.

One of the things I learned from the trip is the importance of relationships. As Pam and I minister on the Wind River Indian Reservation, that is one thing we try to do is to establish relationships. I was affirmed that we are doing the right thing. I was also challenged to see how we can help the mission teams that visit the Reservation to build and maintain relationships, because that is what is really important as we seek to lead a generation to seek Jesus. It is also important to work with families to keep the children safe from human trafficking and abuse, because those are realities on the Reservation.

We need to build relationships with children, parents and tribal leaders to change the way children are seen on the Reservation.

*Scott Engelhart  
FBC, Lander*



*Team visiting a class in the school.*



## In Search of Dignity

Dignity—to possess and/or display the characteristics of respect, worthiness, great value. Often when we think of dignity, we construct it as something awarded to another and less of what a person intrinsically has. Reflecting on one of my favorite Bible narratives where the woman instructs Jesus that even the dogs receive the crumbs from the master's table, I am certain that the latter is the perspective to which we are called to cleave.

Because I operate in the reality that all human beings live because they have the very breath of God flowing in and out of them, hence there is no one I can think of that should be denied the honor of human dignity. Yes, even the “worst” of us. Indeed I often encourage my students to “avoid absolutes”, but in this I have learned to be absolute. Despite our attempts to deny the dignity in one another and ourselves due to our perceptions of ourselves and them, their actions, and the conditions of our existences, dignity is neither ours to grant or take away. It is a matter of God's that we have the privilege to witness. For all of the behaviors that we may disapprove of, or the choices that don't resonate with our sense of “righteousness,” we must resist the temptation to deny another's dignity; for where there is life, there is God and where there is God, there is hope in a commitment to righteousness.

Journeying through Europe on a discovery mission in Amsterdam and Budapest this past October, I found myself surrounded by witnesses of dignity. Dignita is both a missionary outreach and commercial business that aids women to transition from laborers in the red light district to more life sustaining industries. While the work of Dignita focuses on empowering women with viable life skills and alternative economic opportunities, I must be clear that their work was not to “restore” dignity to the women who are sex laborers, but to bear witness to the dignity that has been and always is present in their very lives.

Having never been faced with the decision to work in sex labor, it was traumatically difficult for me to walk through the district and look upon the “women in the windows” though, as a woman, I was granted that permission. A myriad of critical thoughts and emotions of discomfort flowed through me during our formal tour that I was incapable of processing in the moment. However, one day as we were out just walking through the city—not specifically focused on being in the district—my eyes, mind and spirit took in what was presented before me, without reservation. And then it



*Stephany preaching to congregation in Hungary*

happened. My eyes rose from looking at my feet to what surrounded me and fell upon a woman reading. Yes immediately it dawned on me that we had unconsciously been guided back into the red light district and that by her dress and placement in a window she was a woman who labors in the sex industry, but in the same crashing instant it was clear that this woman—like all other women in the district—was primordially simply a woman—like me.

Situations and circumstances faced by all of us at some point in life—individually and collectively—may place us in experiences that don't always reflect the perfect will of God. This is true of life in the district, post-Communist Hungary, and neo-liberalist America, for the affect of sin exists throughout. But as believers must vigilantly remember that we are not the sum total of our conditions and circumstances that have dis-membered us, but that we are all members of the divine body being pieced back together again. Our wholeness rests upon the wholeness of others. And if I discovered nothing else those ten days, I did discover that dignity is gifted to all through the divines of God that allows us to live.

*Rev. Dr. Stephany Rose  
Ebenezer Baptist Church, Colorado Springs*



*Team listening to work of Woman who leads organization to help women caught in trafficking.*

## Spiritual Renewal is the New Ministry Focus for IM Missionaries Joyce and David Reed

News from [International Ministries](#)  
October 21, 2015

Joyce and David Reed, American Baptist International Ministries (IM) missionaries, are striking out in a new direction as regional missionaries to Iberoamerica and the Caribbean.



After 15 years serving in Baja California Sur, Mexico working with the local Mexican Baptist Convention to start new churches, build a theological school, develop its program and host mission teams, as of August 1, 2015, the Reeds embarked on a related but new ministry of spiritual renewal, spiritual formation and vocational calling.

In July 2016, the Reeds will return to Mexico to serve in their new role as regional IM missionaries working alongside local Baptist partners throughout Iberoamerica and the Caribbean. Their deepest desire is to draw pastors and lay people into a closer relationship with God through spiritual disciplines such as stillness, listening, prayer, creative worship and spiritual companionship.

"Dietrich Bonhoeffer says that people who are no longer listening to each other, will soon no longer be listening to God," shares Joyce. "Therefore, part of our new work will be cultivating an environment of intentional listening."

Joyce and David will offer retreats at which pastors and leaders can find rest, renewal and resources for self-care. They will develop curricula for spiritual formation courses to be taught in theological schools and will mentor young people who sense a call to ministry. This regional ministry is rooted in the concern that Christians around the world have become a very busy people who have lost sight of the movement of the Spirit.

The Reeds are excited to discover how their new role can renew and encourage local congregations in the United States, as well as in Latin America. Last fall they were invited to offer a workshop on Spiritual Renewal as part of one church's Monthly Leadership Training initiative.

David was invited to lead a regional retreat for pastors on the theme of rest and renewal. Joyce led a Women's Retreat that focused on the theme of "Standing on the

Threshold" and what it means to step into a deeper relationship with God. "People in our local churches are hungry for more of God," says David. "Our desire is not only to be available to our international partners, but also to our American Baptist churches."

For ten days in July, David and Joyce attended their first residency as part of the Spiritual Guidance program with the [Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation](#) based in Washington D.C. Shalem's Spiritual Guidance Program draws on the rich resources of Christian contemplative tradition to enhance and deepen the spiritual lives of those called to this ministry.

In a surprising development, the Reeds were extended an invitation to teach Spiritual Formation as part of an online Master's level of study by Palmer Theological Seminary for students in Latin America. When a good Internet connection is not available, the Reeds will be available to travel to Cuba to facilitate Spiritual Discernment with IM's Cuban partners.

In addition, Joyce and David will travel in January 2016 with representatives of the ABC Rocky Mountain region to explore how to deepen their relationship with indigenous churches in Chiapas, Mexico, and how to encourage these pastors and leaders to deepen their relationship with God.

Please join IM in celebrating this new focus of ministry and praying for Joyce and David as they complete their schooling and prepare to return to the field. The Reeds are inspired by this Scripture from Isaiah 30:15: *"In repentance and rest is your salvation; in quietness and trust is your strength."*

Learn more about their ministry and see photos and videos on their [profile page](#) on the IM website. Download a [bulletin insert](#) with David and Joyce Reed's ministry information, prayer requests and more.

For more information, contact [cathe-rine.nold@internationalministries.org](mailto:cathe-rine.nold@internationalministries.org).

## Thank You ABCRM

Faith Community Baptist Church received a Curtis Park Grant to support their Fatherhood Program. The next round of Curtis Park Grant applications will be for community service projects and the application deadline is January 31, 2016. Applications are available on our web site at [www.abcrm.org](http://www.abcrm.org) or you may call our office at 303-988-3900 to request one.



9520 East Jewell Avenue Denver, Colorado 80247

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November 3, 2015

Rev. Dr. Steve Van Ostran  
Executive Director  
American Baptist of the  
Rocky Mountains Region

Dear Steve,

I am writing this letter to thank you for supporting the Fatherhood Program at Lookout Mountain Youth Services Center. The Fatherhood Program has been in existence for five years. It was created to help, support and educated young men who are incarcerated to become better men and responsible fathers.

On October 26, 2015, we were able to have our first Fatherhood Program Celebration. We currently have nine young men in the program and five were recognized for completing the program. The five young men who completed the program received a signed copy of the Resolution for their consistent hard work and commitment to become responsible fathers.

These young men were allowed to invite their families, therapist and client managers to the celebration. Donations to this program were given and due to those donations all of the young men were dressed in suits and ties. It was a very proud moment for everyone involved. The smiles on the faces of the parents and the pride they all felt were priceless!

It is with great excitement and appreciation to Rev. Dr. Steve Van Ostran and the American Baptist Churches of the Rocky Mountains that I say thank you for your financial support in helping to make this a day everyone involve will remember for long time and prayerfully for some a life time.

Sincerely,



Rev. Douglas Farley

Mailing Address ♥ PO Box 200160 ♥ Denver, Colorado ♥ 80220 ♥ Phone ♥ 303-873-9622  
Rev. Douglas and Rev. Katherine Farley, CO-Pastors



# Camp Wyoba

I have the distinct honor to be the first writer in a series of essays and memories about Wyoba, which continues to be (in my not so unbiased opinion) the best Christian Camp in the world. I've been involved with Christian camping for most of my 43 years. In that time I have lived the roles of camper, counselor, pastor and director. As a child, I took for granted the amazing place that Wyoba was, but after counseling and directing camps there, I'm certain that there is something holy, dare I say sacred, in that small part of Casper Mountain. Each time I leave I am filled with God's Spirit in a way that is nearly indescribable.

I've spent a lot of time trying to figure out what makes it such an amazing place, and why we all feel so much loss when we return to our normal lives. I'm certain that no matter what answer I come up with, God's mystery and power will continue to be ultimately, beyond my ken. That said, I do have a theory as to why Wyoba Camps are so spiritually significant. To my mind, the most significant difference between camp and our normal lives is that our lives are structured around the disciplines and acts of spiritual worship.

Each morning we rise and gather, physically exercising to waken our bodies to the new day, and once we are fully awake and yet not distracted with busy-ness, we focus our energy into the discipline of reading scripture and prayer. At each meal, we praise and thank God for providing for us. After breakfast we care for our environment by cleaning our cabins, showers and public spaces. We then move to a time of singing praise to God before sitting at the feet of God's called preachers and teachers to bring our hearts and minds together before God.

Each afternoon we have free fellowship. We play before



God, exercising, crafting and creating in the awareness of the presence of God's glory. And in the evenings, we take time to evaluate whether our lives are being lived in accordance with what we hear God speaking to us through teaching, prayer and honest conversations with our peers. And finally, at the end of each night, we open our hearts to be seen by God and our neighbors, knowing that God's love and acceptance of us provides a safe space to expose our truest selves.

Each day is not full of acts of worship; each day ***IS*** itself, an act of worship. Prayer, study, confession, absolution, laughter, play, praise and holy tears are the very acts of true worship and these acts permeate each day at camp. Is it any wonder that seven days of worship result in changed hearts and lives in our youth? The hardest of hearts can only resist so much, especially when exposed to a life of worship year after year.

Yet I believe this life of worship is also why we struggle after coming home from the mountain. The structure and disciplines we did each day there get left behind, and we wonder why we've lost that sense of intimacy with the Lord...

Brother Lawrence, a Carmelite monk, wrote about practicing a sense of Lord's presence in every moment and action. His claim is that this practice will enable each person to fully connect with the Spirit of God, and by extension create a life of peace and joy. For me, this is what camp is, a week long training camp in maintaining my awareness of God. Each year I come home better trained at living a life engaged with God's presence. Please consider how you can support Wyoba and other Christian camps with your fiscal, prayer and bodily support!

*Jeff Lundblad  
FBC, Laramie*

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Dear Wyoba Family & Friends,

I just finished closing up camp after another great year on the mountain. It is hard to believe that we have already started planning for the 2nd Annual WyobaFest. I am pleased to announce that it will be held centrally at **First Baptist Church of Casper on January 15, 2016 at 5:30pm**. I am writing to share the WyobaFest vision for this event and to let you know the ways that you can be a part of it.

## Extra, Extra Read All About It...

The WyobaFest Committee is trying to get the community involved in this event. One way we are doing that is to have a program for the event where we are asking local businesses, individuals, and churches to buy an ad in the program. If you or your church would like to purchase an ad, please contact Jenita at [mjmjpack@vcn.com](mailto:mjmjpack@vcn.com).

## What will we eat?

This year we are asking churches to host a food table. Some of your churches have already volunteered for a food table.

Each church will be responsible for bringing food enough for 125 people, keeping the table stocked, and clean-up. There is a kitchen where the food can be prepped beforehand and Casper also has great restaurants that can cater the food you are responsible for. Also, each church that brings food will get a free ad in the program.

This year we are going to have pies for dessert. We need all of the amazing pie bakers out there to bust out their secret recipes and whip up their masterpieces...chocolate, pumpkin, blackberry...oh, those are my favorites.

**Will there be a silent auction again?**

Yes! We will be having a silent auction again, since it was a great success last year. Churches and individuals are invited to bring items for this. The more creative the item the better. Items last year ranged from quilts to church signs, from compost to a wild horse tour.

**So what are we raising money for this year?**

We raised approximately \$10,000 at the 2015 WyobaFest. This money will be put toward the foundation and septic of the new Snack Shack. We are planning to break ground on this project this spring. At WyobaFest 2016 we are raising money for Phase 2 of the Snack Shack which is the actual building itself. Our goal is to raise another \$10,000 at this event! It is going to take a lot of dedication and people to make it happen, but I believe that all things are possible with God.

**Will it be fun?**

Of course! Do you remember "potty time" last year? Well,

you are going to want to make sure you bring some cash and checks...perhaps brainstorm about who needs some extra special treatment...that's all that I can say about that.

**Want church bragging rights?**

This year we are going to start the **1st Annual Camp Cash Crusade** between churches. Bring as many coins or bills as you can to help your church win a special prize! Winning this competition will give your church bragging rights for a whole year!

**What is the theme?**

The theme this year is "Mountaintop Testimonies". We will be hearing from various campers, board members, and guests of Wyoba and how God has worked in their lives through this ministry. Also, we will be celebrating my ordination. It has been my honor and privilege to serve Wyoba for the past four years. First Baptist Church of Lander believes in my calling and has graciously ordained me into the ministry of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Would you come be a part of celebrating God's calling on my life and the amazing ministry of Camp Wyoba?

The Hotel for overnight accommodations is the Ramkota Hotel, located at 800 N. Poplar St., Casper, WY 82601. Phone number is 307-266-6000. Cost is \$79.99 per night. Please tell the desk that you are with Camp Wyoba to receive this special room rate.

*Serving Him,*

*Rev. Amber J. Shearer  
Camp Wyoba Administrator*

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## ABCRM Disaster Relief Ministry Report

As many of you know, ABCRM now has a fully equipped disaster relief trailer. Thank you to those who have donated tools, money, and gift cards to have the trailer outfitted. The trailer is prepared to respond to floods, fires, and tornados. The next thing we need is people to volunteer to be second responders to disasters in our region and surrounding states. If you have already signed-up online, then we have your information and will be in contact soon.

After we receive your information, we will send you some training information. We are offering online safety training. In the future we will schedule various training events or short local mission trips to practice and get familiar with the equipment. This is a great ministry for those who enjoy serving others with their hands and do not mind getting down and dirty!

Please keep this ministry in your prayers as we continue to develop and recruit volunteers. I would also be happy to answer any of your questions.

Sign-up to be a volunteer here:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/abcrmlrelief>

*Serving Him,*

*Rev. Amber J. Shearer  
Disaster Relief Coordinator*



## First Baptist Church in Fort Morgan, CO Installs Drake Hunter as their Pastor

Friends and family gathered on Sunday, November 8 at 2 pm to celebrate and install Drake and Sherrie Hunter into their church leadership. The Installation Service was filled with wonderful music provided by Ms. Jorstad, the Praise Team, FBC Choir, the Men's Trio and two hymns sung by all. Dr. Rev. Steve Van Ostran, the Executive Minister for the American Baptist Churches of the Rocky Mountains, lead the service. Rev. Jason King, Pastor of the First Baptist Church in Cheyenne, WY offered the invocation and scripture reading from the Gospel of John. Dr. Ray Lincoln, delivered the message saying "Drake was sent by God" and they need to pray for their new pastor. It was a very moving, insightful and loving service.

After the service, everyone gathered in the Fellowship Hall for delicious cake with three choices of ice cream and lots of talk and laughter.

Please join the members of First Baptist Church in Fort Morgan and pray for Drake and Sherrie Hunter as they serve in Fort Morgan.

*Karen Van  
ABCRM Region Administrator*



*Bottom left picture:*

*Standing: Steve Mitchell, Jason King, Steve Van Ostran, Ray Lincoln*

*Seated: Drake and Sherrie Hunter*



## Two Recent Ordinations in Region

As the month changed to November, ABCRM saw the ordination of two women to the Christian gospel. On October 31, Amber Jean Shearer was ordained by the First Baptist Church of Lander, WY, and on November 1, Sharon Kum Lee was ordained by First Baptist Church of Loveland, CO.

Amber grew up in an American Baptist family in Pennsylvania and early in life committed to becoming a minister. She moved to Colorado, where she graduated from Denver Seminary. She is the Director of ABCRM's Camp Wyoba on Casper Mountain and has also served as the Region's communications coordinator. She loves the outdoors and enjoys the work with camping. She hopes to be called to pastor a church sometime in the future. Rev. Scott Engelhart presided at the ordination. Amber's mother, Linda Shearer, gave a testimony and sang a solo in the service. Bill Mankin, ABCRM ministry coach for Wyoming administered the ordination vows and presented gifts on behalf of the Region.



Sharon Lee grew up with a Christian mother who attended seminary after a miraculous cure from cancer, which influenced



Sharon's Christian development. She made several mission trips to Communist China before attending Southern Seminary in Louisville. She moved with her husband and son to Fort Collins where she became active in the Korean Christian community. The community recognized her gifts for ministry and asked her to be the founding pastor of a cross-cultural Korean church where both Koreans and non-Koreans would be welcome. Since Southern Baptists no longer ordain women, she became an American Baptist and sought ordination through ABCRM. The First Baptist Church of Loveland welcomed the new church into their facilities. At the ordination, Rev. John Turnage officiated with Rev. Steve Van Ostran, Executive Minister, and Rev. Mike Oldham, the ministry coach for Northern Front Range Cluster. The service was in both English and Korean and featured a lot of wonderful music, including a solo by Sharon's husband, Seong.

We welcome these two new ministers into the ministry of the American Baptist Churches of the Rocky Mountains.

*Bill Mankin  
Mission and Ministry Coach  
Wyoming Cluster*



# HAPPY HOLIDAYS!!

## *C is for Christmas*

- C** is for Christ, Son of God, and Lord of Love.*  
***H** is for Heaven, blessing each and all from above.*  
***R** is for Remembering the words to your favorite carol.*  
***I** is for the Icicles hanging inside every barrel.*  
***S** is for Stockings stuffed up to the knee.*  
***T** is for the Tinsel that Mom wrapped 'round the tree.*  
***M** is for Mistletoe hung from the wall.*  
***A** is for my Advent Calendars that decorates the hall.*  
***S** is for Santa and his eight reindeer.*  
***E** is for the Eggnog that fills us with cheer.*  
***V** is for Visiting all our family and friends.*  
***E** is for Everyone who is sad when Christmas ends.*



IRS Year-End Giving Guidelines	Report for 2015	Report for 2016
Checks written in December 2015 and deposited in church offering in December 2015	X	
Checks written in December 2015 and deposited in church offering in January 2016		X
Checks written and deposited in church offering in January 2016 but "backdated" to December 2015		X
Checks written and deposited in church offering in December 2015 but "postdated" to January 2016		X
Checks written in December 2015 and deposited in the mail and postmarked in December 2015, but not received by the church until January 2016	X	
Checks written in December 2015 and deposited in the mail in December 2015 but not postmarked until January 2016, and not received by the church until January 2016		X

[What's in this RMAB?](#)

ABC-USA Mission Giving Guidelines		
Monthly cut off is the 8th of each month (except for weekends, holidays, and December year-end). Checks received prior to the 8th of each month are posted to the prior month. For example; checks received October 9 through November 8 are posted to October.		
	Report for 2015	Report for 2016
Checks received in Region office through January 12, 2016, but dated 2014	X	
Checks received in Region office through January 12, 2016, but dated 2015		X

RMAB 12/01/15

## Extending Our Christian Culture of Gratitude Retired Ministers & Missionaries Offering Sunday is Sunday, December 6

*"I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayer."*  
Ephesians 1:16

In this familiar passage, Paul shows his gratitude to the church for Ephesus for the love and devotion they displayed as he ministered to them. This culture of gratitude – where spiritual leaders give thanks for the church's fellowship, and God's followers give thanks for ministers' and missionaries' spiritual guidance – is deeply ingrained in the Christian faith.

Today, RMMO is a tangible way for American Baptist congregations to say "Thank you for ..." the commitment, service and spiritual guidance of retired ministers and missionaries. The offering supports those who have devoted their lives to God's service by providing emergency assistance in their times of need and a Thank You check at the end of each year.

Join us in saying "Thank You for ..." the countless ways ABC's retired ministers, missionaries and their widowed spouses have contributed to our congregations.

Retired Ministers & Missionaries Offering



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## Opening the Door to Better Lives Shepherd's Gate Counseling Center

At Shepherds Gate, our mission is to meet the diverse needs of the front-range community. To that end, we provide individual, couple and family counseling in areas such as:

- Adolescent Issues
- Anxiety and Stress
- Depression
- Grief and Loss
- Marriage and Family
- Men's Issues
- Parenting
- Premarital
- Women's Issues

Costs: our services are available on a sliding scale ranging from \$5 to \$40 per 50-minute session, based on household income.

Counselors: clients receive professional expertise and personal attention from our qualified staff of graduate counseling students. Our counselors have dual training in counseling and theology and are educated in the most current therapy techniques. They are selected for their Christian commitment; however, our counselors are able to work with people no matter where they are on their spiritual journey. All counselors are supervised by counseling faculty, licensed professional counselors or licensed psychologists.

For details or to make an appointment call 303-762-6987.

*Shepherd's Gate Counseling Center*  
6399 S. Santa Fe Dr.  
Littleton, CO 80120  
303-762-6987  
[www.ShepherdsGateCounseling.org](http://www.ShepherdsGateCounseling.org)



**SHEPHERD'S GATE**  
COUNSELING CENTER

  
**DENVER SEMINARY**



## ABC-USA 2016

### ABC Directory/Planning Calendar

Please note that the ABC-USA 2016 ABC Directory/Planning Calendar is available online. The Directory/Planning Calendar helps to connect American Baptist local churches with the larger denominational family, and provides churches with dates important to American Baptist Churches from October 2015 through April 2017.

The calendar is located here: <http://www.abc-usa.org/2015/10/15/free-download-2016-2017-abc-planning-calendar-directory/>

### January Newsletter Deadline

**Articles for the January newsletter are due by December 15. Please send your articles to [akeys@abcrm.org](mailto:akeys@abcrm.org).**

### HOLIDAY OFFICE HOURS

Your Region office will be closed December 24 through January 1 for the Christmas and New Year Holiday Season.



## Calendar

### December

- 6** Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering Sunday
- 7** Western Slope Senior Pastors Christmas Party
- 10** NFR Senior Pastors Christmas Party
- 11** Wyoming Cluster Senior Pastors Christmas Party
- 11** Denver Cluster Senior Pastors Christmas Party
- 15** SE/NM Senior Pastors Christmas Party
- 24-Jan 1** Christmas/New Year's Holiday Break  
*Region office will be closed*

### January

- 1** New Year's Day *Region office will be closed*
- 9-17** Chiapas Mission Trip
- 15** Wyoba Fest @ FBC, Casper
- 18** MLK Holiday *Region office will be closed*
- 21** CrossWalking Movie Night  
Location TBD
- 29-30** ABWM Colorado State Board Meeting



## The Back Pew - Jeff Larson



Being 3 **wiseMEN** the journey to baby Jesus took longer than expected because they refused to stop and ask directions.

*The Rocky Mountain  
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*This newsletter is published  
on the 1st of each month.*

*The deadline for submissions  
is the 20th of each month.  
Send submissions to  
[akeys@abcrm.org](mailto:akeys@abcrm.org)*

*Reprint permission is granted  
to ABCRM churches.*



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