



December 1, 2019

# The Rocky Mountain American Baptist

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

## Servant Offering

### What Are They Really Saying...

Even before the Hallmark Channel, during my lifetime Christmastime has always meant an abundance of special programs being shown on television. I was only five when A Charlie Brown Christmas made its debut, and it has been playing annually (multiple times) ever since. In addition to “Charlie Brown” there was The Little Drummer Boy and Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer! And then there was The Night the Animals Talked!



This one was less popular, but its basic plotline is that on the night that Jesus was born, the animals in the stable were given the gift of speech to proclaim Christ’s birth.

This idea that animals can be given the ability to speak for special occasions is not new. We see it in Scripture even...remember Balaam’s Ass who refused to go into the city where Balaam would be killed?

Even more, remember that when Jesus was chastised for allowing the people to proclaim His Lordship during His march into the city, He declared that “If they be silent, even the rocks would cry out!”

But more than all of this, anyone who works with animals or who has pets knows that animals communicate with us their needs in acute and specific ways. Sometimes, we even ascribe to them communication far beyond just “I want to go out” or “I’m hungry—feed me”. Sometimes we read into their actions—human concepts... we anthropomorphize their actions with meanings beyond that which is clear and distinct! “Oh, look! Kitty wants to watch that program!” or other ideas of complex human thought.

I’m not going to argue with someone who has seen this in their pet...it could be true. But what I know to be true is that pets do express their appreciation for... their “love” for their care-giver... and they do it in some rather powerful and intimate ways: head butts, rubbing their scent on us and even intimate

## What’s in this RMAB?

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cuddling.

Makes me wonder a couple of things...the first being "if they could talk, what would they actually be saying?" I like to think our interpretation of their actions are correct...that their actions communicate more than the desire to keep the gravy train flowing!

But I am more curious and interested in the human side of that relationship...the fact that so many of us seem to want and need the intimacy, the companionship of a "pet". Does this imply that we don't have enough intimacy, touch or cuddling from other humans? Does this demonstrate a need in our lives that is unmet by human relationships?

I think so.

And I think that our ability to "hear" and receive a message from our pets that "you are loved and have great value" from their cuddles and head-butts is the work of the "Holy Spirit" making sure we receive that message.

And I hope that somehow, someday the Church would rediscover our mandate to take that message to the World which Christ gave on that first Christmas-- You are loved and valuable – to all the world...even to the least of these to the point that our obsession with pets in our lives would come more from an appreciation of God's creation of these creatures than our need for intimacy, touch and relationship.

I keep hearing people question the relevance of the church in modern culture. I think there is a lot of relevance for the church—from a life-giving ethic to a social safety net. But even if these are less important in our culture today – the church is the one place that can truly proclaim to people that you are loved and have value in God's eyes and in our eyes... you are loved. May we grasp and live out that truth always.

Praying that you and yours will rediscover Christ's love in whatever way necessary this Christmas season and every day!

*Pastor Steve Van O*

## Non-Traditional Paths

Once upon a time, a young person was called to ministry, usually in their early twenties. After graduating from college, they immediately applied to and attended seminary or theological school. Upon graduation, they were called to a church and began their ministry as a solo pastor.



Today, the church needs multiple streams for those who are called to serve the church and in other ministries as ordained or licensed clergy. The church still needs clergy who are trained in theological schools. AND, the church needs to equip people who are unable to attend seminary. AND, people who can be called at any time in their life and the expense and time commitment of seminary might not be a reasonable or responsible choice. AND, in the coming years, many churches will simply not be able to afford full-time, seminary trained pastors.

Several churches and pastors in ABCRM are looking at ways to encourage and empower these called leaders who are following "non-traditional" paths into ministry. Two lay leaders from First Baptist Church of Lamar who are already serving in various ways in small churches near Lamar. Ecumenical Church of Pueblo West has four lay leaders who are actively seeking ways to be better equipped to lead the ministries to which God is calling. Pastors like Darren Stroh and Bill Johnson are working hard to support, mentor, and train these lay leaders.

This is really not a new path. The church has long equipped and trained lay leaders. The difference is that the need for these leaders will be growing exponentially in the coming years.

ABCRM has an online training plan that provides courses that help these leaders learn basic theology, history, and practical skills.

Could God be calling you to a "non-traditional" path to ministry?

*Mike Oldham*  
*Mission and Ministry Coach*

## Colorado Springs Retired Clergy Luncheon

I had the opportunity to attend the Retired Clergy Luncheon in Colorado Springs. I was so blessed by the conversations I heard and had. I watched the clergy catch up and some of these relationships were from ages ago. I even got the opportunity to meet the parents of my friend from my hometown of Sioux Falls, SD. I was honored to gain the wisdom and insight from the retired clergy at this lunch and from the notes I read from the Denver lunch as well.



At each of the Retired Clergy Luncheons they all got asked what advice they would give to someone in ministry or just starting their ministry. There were some common themes of making home where you are, do more listening than talking, and keep everything God centered. Making home where you are had great weight to me in my journey. I have always wanted to have my home be a safe place for people to feel comfortable coming. I think this makes it a reality that our homes reflect our ministry, so we should desire to have a home of love that is welcomed to all. Second, to do ministry well one must talk less and listen more. When people make their ministry or work about themselves instead of who they are serving, people tend to not feel respected or cared for. People come to those who care deeply and listen intently. In ministry, you are going to listen more than speak. Lastly, to make all things possible God must be at the center of one's heart, ministry, and work. God has the ability to guide us, transform our hearts, and change our ministries.

Lauren Parliament  
Camping Intern

## Denver Retired Clergy Luncheon

**What saying, aphorism or piece of wisdom has been most valuable to you in your life and ministry?**

Steve V. "Wherever you are at – make it home."

Carol M. "When you preach, always begin with a Biblical text, then you can explore a social issue."

Larry V "Attitude is everything."

Dr Peters "Money can cause problems – you need a system on how money needs to be handled."

Bill Mankin "If you are going to do this job, talk less and do more."

Mary Beth Mankin "Keep it God centered."





*Mike Oldham "Everything is a system. Stop looking for linear answers. And always end with hope."*

*Karen Van  
Region Administrator*



**Join us in honoring  
Dr. Kim Skattum and  
38 years of serving  
Crossroads Church**

**Sunday, January 12, 2020**

**Crossroads Church Thornton Campus  
53 E 128th Avenue  
Thornton, CO 80241**

**[https://crossroadsabc.com/events-2/?  
ccbpress\\_event\\_id=17796](https://crossroadsabc.com/events-2/?ccbpress_event_id=17796)**

**This is a free event, but it is ticketed.  
To register and get your tickets,  
click on the link above.**







*Join us  
in honoring*

**DR. KIM SKATTUM**

Senior Pastor  
Served Crossroads Church 38 Years

Sunday, January 12, 2020  
1-3, 3:30-5:30 or 6-8pm  
Crossroads Church Thornton Campus



**RSVP AT  
[CROSSROADSABC.COM/PASTORKIM](https://crossroadsabc.com/pastorkim)**

*Appetizers, Refreshments and Fun will be served.*

In lieu of gifts, please consider a donation that will go towards Pastor Kim's bike shop—**MORE BETTER BIKES**. Donations can be given when you RSVP.  
Find out more @ [MOREBETTERBIKES.COM](https://morebetterbikes.com)

Sunday  
January 12, 2020  
1-3  
3:30-5:30 or  
6-8pm  
Crossroads Church  
Thornton Campus  
53 E. 128th Avenue  
Thornton, CO 80241



# *Lifting Up the Legacy*

Continuing the annual tradition of the RMMO legacy can make retirement a little easier for those servants of God who in so many ways share God's love. Hear from a retired pastor who has generational ties to the ABC family and advocates for remembering RMMO.

"At this year's annual Baseball Hall of Fame induction ceremony in Cooperstown, New York, Mariano Rivera was honored for his extraordinary achievement as the best relief pitcher in history. He was the first player to be unanimously elected to The Hall of Fame. A committed and generous follower of Christ, Mariano humbly and publicly gave thanks to God.

Now it's time for our annual RMMO to honor and give thanks for God's servants who have served us. It is a team effort among our churches, pastors and missionaries. The RMMO is an exercise in gratitude and generosity. Our family has been blessed with three generations of pastors who have served God and seen the good works of faithful and generous Christians and church members for many, many decades. As my father used to say, 'Let us make this the best year ever.'"

-Vic & Doug Scalise



**Victor F. Scalise**

Rowayton, CT, First Baptist Church, Greenfield, MA and The Calvary Baptist Church of Lowell, MA 1938- 1973 (Deceased). Total years of service: 50.

**Rev. Dr. Victor F. Scalise, Jr.**

(pictured, left)  
The Baptist Church in Brookline, United Parish 1960- 1977 and 17 interim ministries. Total years of service: 50.

**Rev. Douglas Scalise**

(pictured right)  
Prospect Hill Baptist, PA 1989-1995 and Brewster Baptist Church 1995- 2019, Total years of service: 30.

Camp WYOBAs needs our help. Costs rise every year to keep the camp in working order. Therefore, I am reaching out, with the blessings of the camp board members, for help in maintaining the camp.

The WYOBAs 500 fund is being set up to raise \$50,000 each year for camp maintenance. Our goal is to have 500 individuals or families commit to pledging \$100.00 per year to support the camp.

If you feel led to help with this fund, please see the attached letter for how you can help.

Thank you for considering this fund and please keep WYOBAs in your prayers.



Wyoba has been a part of Wyoming since the 1930's and has reached untold numbers of youth and adults with the promise of God. The camp continues to share that promise of God with the youth of Wyoming and surrounding areas.

The majority of the campers currently attending the camp come from the 13 churches in Wyoming. This number has been dwindling through the years and about ½ of those churches have the means to support the camp. The prices have increased for those attending the camps but this has put a bigger strain on the families sending their children. The amount raised from those attending is not sufficient to cover the normal operating costs that are incurred during the 3 months that camp operates. Some of these costs are salaries for the camp director, maintenance workers, and kitchen staff. Therefore, the board authorized the creation of the "Wyoba 500" fund. The Wyoba 500 consists of 500 individuals or families who are willing to commit to help the camp and its daily operations every year.

This last year, a major fund raising campaign was undertaken by the Wyoba Board to raise money to help revitalize the camp and move Memorial Hall. The building was sinking and was unstable due to water below the building. The need was approximately \$120,000.00 to move the building to a new location. When the building is moved, a kitchen, and bathrooms will be added to the current structure. The churches of Wyoming came together, along with a major donor, to raise that amount of money. As a result, Memorial Hall will be moved this summer to the boy's side of camp behind the current snack shack.

We are asking that those who desire to give to Wyoba 500 send \$100.00 per year to the ABCRM office. Any amount you can give will be gladly accepted if you feel you are unable to give \$100.00. This can be sent any time during the year. You also can make a donation on the ABCRM website <https://www.abcrm.org/copy-of-giving-to-abcrm> or the money also can be sent through your church if it is an American Baptist Church. Please comment on the check the money is for Wyoba 500. The address for the region office is:

American Baptist Churches of the Rocky Mountains  
9085 East Mineral Circle, Suite 170  
Centennial, CO 80112

Unless you wish to remain anonymous, I would also like to have an email from you so we can keep a database of donors and let you know we appreciate the support. I don't always get notification when money is given through the churches. My email address is: [crigsby\\_712@hotmail.com](mailto:crigsby_712@hotmail.com)

The Wyoba Board and I would like to thank you for considering a gift to keep Camp Wyoba viable.

Jenita Calton, President, Rawlins, WY  
Jessi Adkison, Secretary, Rock Springs, WY  
Carl Hildebrand, Treasurer, Glenrock/Casper, WY  
John Watson, Glenrock, WY  
Maggie Harrop, Laramie, WY

Doug Rigsby, Gillette, WY  
Brenda Schladweiler, Gillette, WY  
Joyce Hinze, Torrington, WY  
Diane Edwards, Torrington, WY  
Rev. Steve Van Ostran, ABCRM Exec. Minister

*Cynthia Rigsby,  
Camp supporter*



# **Hospitality: A Pilgrimage of Trust Taizé in Denver**

**March 13-15, 2020**

**A weekend of song, prayer and dialogue  
with Brothers John and Emile of Taizé**

***The Threshold* in partnership with *Regis University***

**Mark your calendar**

Details: [www.thethreshold.us](http://www.thethreshold.us)

Contact Brad Berglund 720.489.8073 [brad@illuminatedjourneys.com](mailto:brad@illuminatedjourneys.com)





## Wyoming Pastors Gather to Share a Holiday Meal

December is a busy time for pastors, so the Wyoming pastors gathered on Saturday, November 23rd for their holiday celebration. Pastor Steve Gunderson and his wife, Sharon, hosted the group at Bethel Baptist Church in Casper. A delicious meal of prime rib and homemade apple pie (prepared by the Camp Wyoba cooks, Rosa and Shelley) was enjoyed as the group shared the exciting things that are happening in their churches.

After the meal, everyone participated in a fun "white elephant" gift exchange. I think the stuffed talking parrot and Steve Van Ostran's golf trophy from 1999 might be "gifts" that will be recirculated if the white elephant gift exchange becomes an annual event.

*Karen Van  
Region Administrator*



*Left: Steve Van Ostran presents Scott and Pam Engelhart a beautiful stain glass of a shepherd to thank them for faithful service to First Baptist Church in Lander.*



# American Baptist **Women's** MINISTRIES

## Mission Trip March 16–21, 2020



## Rainbow Acres

Camp Verde, AZ

Join the American Baptist Women on a mission trip to Rainbow Acres in Camp Verde, AZ. Rainbow Acres is a Christian community that empowers persons with developmental disabilities to live to their fullest potential with dignity and purpose.

Go to [RainbowAcres.com](http://RainbowAcres.com) to learn more.

Cost for room and board is \$236 (plus air fare)

Space is limited, sign up early so you don't miss out on this fantastic opportunity!

For more details and to sign up send email to  
[ABW@CherryCreekBaptist.org](mailto:ABW@CherryCreekBaptist.org)



## The Benefits of Ungratefulness

Dear First Baptist Family,

*It's been a bit crazy around the church here lately and getting this newsletter article kind of fell by the wayside. I apologize. I did ask a crusty old pastor acquaintance of mine if he'd write something for me. He agreed as he grumbled his way out of my office. I didn't get a chance to read it, so I hope it makes your Thanksgiving season a little more brighter and Christ Centered. He's been asking to preach for me some day. Let me know what you think.*

Your servant,

Pastor Darren

### The Benefits of Ungratefulness

Take a moment and think back over all the church newsletters you have read over the years. I'll bet that the vast majority of November newsletters had something to do with being thankful. Perhaps one or two of them suggested to start each day out by finding something for which to be thankful. Perhaps some of them did some fancy letter work where the letters of thanksgiving spelled out things to be thankful for, like,

T is for Today,  
H is for Happiness,  
A is for All of God's creation,  
N is for what's Next in God's plan,  
K is for Kindness shown by others  
F is for Forgiveness God grants freely  
U is for you, of course, and  
L is for our Lord, the giver of all good things

and on and on and on. Maybe a couple of those newsletter articles lamented how we skip to Christmas after Halloween. To all of that, this year, I say,



“Rubbish” and “Bah Humbug!” Let's look at the benefits of being ungrateful. You might be surprised at how many gains can be made by being dissatisfied and unappreciative.

The first thing that comes to mind as a benefit of being ungrateful is that being thankful requires us to both observe what's going on and remember things to a degree. Think about it, if we seriously looked around us and saw all of the things that God was doing right in our world and in us, we could easily be overwhelmed with amazement and awe. There's just so much about God that is good—so much about what God does is amazingly wonderful. The Scriptures tell us over and over and over again how wonderful and marvelous are His works, how true and just are His ways. Why not just focus on a few things that look negative instead? It is so much easier to find a few negative things to concentrate upon and grumble about. It also helps keep conversations with loved ones and even potential friends really short, because no one really likes a grumbler. It makes it easier for people to remember you as well. If you are a master grumbler, they'll do a 180 in a Walmart aisle when eye contact is made. Then, By Jove, you have someone new to grumble about!

There are a few things one needs to be aware of, though, if you choose practice ungratefulness. First, choose very carefully what you are going to grumble about, because what seems like a frustration today oftentimes is something that we'll look back on and say, “Wow, that circumstance actually was helpful for me to grow.” And that just turns your grumbling into gratefulness. Who wants that? Secondly, make sure you don't stick to one or two things to grumble about too long. God promises to turn all things into something good, and He has a 100% track record in keeping his promises.

The next thing is that grumbling gives you a complete sense of control over whatever you are grumbling about, and who doesn't like control? It makes us feel so smart when we're critical of others. It has always amazed me how much more a person watching a game on TV knows about refereeing. I am also amazed at how much more the employee knows

about being the boss than the boss does. Being ungrateful totally disregards whatever circumstances that someone else is going through and proclaims us as know-it-alls. The squeaky wheel gets the grease. The loudest or the rudest is the most feared. The most difficult get their way so that they will go away. See, control achieved.

Here too, I suggest caution and moderation. Yes, the squeaky wheel sometimes gets the grease, but when it won't stop squeaking, it just gets replaced. And although you may feel big when you make others feel small, others rarely see it as you do. God certainly never sees it that way. And apparently, if the Scriptures are correct, His opinion matters the most, but again I digress. What feels like control to you is just plain annoying ignorance to others. To keep this up for any length of time, you are going to have to up your game from ungratefulness to more sophisticated forms such as entitlement and just plain being mean. You are also going to have to be stubborn in your misguidedness and convince yourself that what others are lovingly trying to tell you isn't as important as you believing you're in charge.

And about that control. If you are going to try to sustain being ungrateful, you are going to have to live blindfolded, for the real truth of the matter is that God is in control—not any of us. If you let yourself explore how much God has control, that'll lead you to the understanding of how much He loves you and how He has blessed you, and that'll just plain ruin your downward spiral into ungratefulness.

Being ungrateful can also be helpful because it leads to all kinds of other things, like worrying, rage, jealousy, pride, selfishness, and sloth. Those things come so naturally to human beings. I mean, we don't even have to try to do those things. They just happen, right? Ungratefulness just lowers our expectations of ourselves and our understanding of the fullness of God. We could spend eternity trying to understand the height and the depth and the breadth of God's love for us, His power within us and His plans for us. And yes, that would be extraordinary—full of joy and peace and love, but this is about being ungrateful, so I guess just try to block that good stuff out.

Finally, ungratefulness keeps life's expectations low. If I think the sky is falling, and it doesn't then it's really easy to just believe it will tomorrow. It really sets up a very dim and dismal vision of the future. Yes, Jesus said, "I have come so that you might have life and have it to overflowing," but that just sounds messy, doesn't it? Who wants to clean up all that good life that spilled over? It's just best to keep trying to keep that life well dry and believe that life is out to get you so just hope for the worst. That way when trials and tribulations hit, you didn't get disappointed. Yes, James tells us to even have joy in our trials, but if you look for the good in your trials your ungratefulness is doomed and you start to develop this thing called hope. And when that starts to bloom—man—you are in serious trouble. It's impossible to be ungrateful in a place of genuine hope. You might as well give up if that happens.

Well, I hope this has been insightful and helpful. I'd say something like "God bless you," but that would seriously be counterproductive to this letter's intent—because God does all the time...and in many ways we don't even see. I can't even really say, "Happy Thanksgiving" either because unless I'm just being flippant and shallow, that'll take you to a higher place as well. So I'll just end with this:

"Bah Humbug!"

Ebenezer Scrooge

*Submitted by  
Darren Stroh, Pastor  
FBC, Lamar*



# What's Happening

## Calendar

### December

Retired Ministers and Missionaries  
Offering Month

- 6 Denver Pastors Christmas Party
- 7 Western Slope Pastors Christmas Party
- 10 NFR Pastors Christmas Party
- 12 SE/New Mexico Pastors Christmas Party

**24-January 1** Office Closed for Holiday Season

### January

- 1 New Year's Day (Region office closed)
- 20 MLK Holiday (Region office closed)

IRS Year-End Giving Guidelines	Report for 2019	Report for 2020
Checks written in December 2019 and deposited in church offering in December 2019	X	
Checks written in December 2019 and deposited in church offering in January 2020		X
Checks written and deposited in church offering in January 2020 but "backdated" to December 2019		X
Checks written and deposited in church offering in December 2019 but "postdated" to January 2020		X
Checks written in December 2019 and deposited in the mail and postmarked in December 2019, but not received by the church until January 2020	X	
Checks written in December 2019 and deposited in the mail in December 2019 but not postmarked until January 2020, and not received by the church until January 2020		X

### ABC-USA Mission Giving Guidelines

Monthly cut off is the 7th or 8th of each month (except for weekends, holidays, and December year-end). Checks received prior to this are posted to the prior month. For example; checks received October 9 through November 8 are posted to October.

	Report for 2019	Report for 2020
Checks received in Region office through January 10, 2020, but dated 2019	X	
Checks received in Region office through January 10, 2020, but dated 2020		X

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

### HOLIDAY OFFICE HOURS

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



Merry  
CHRISTMAS  
and  
HAPPY  
New Year

*The Rocky Mountain  
American Baptist*  
is published by the  
American Baptist Churches  
of the Rocky Mountains  
[www.abcrm.org](http://www.abcrm.org)

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Executive Minister  
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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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