



Servant Offering

All Eyes on St. Louis....

My interests have been turned towards Saint Louis this week, not for Cardinal's Baseball as they usually are, but because of the General Conference of the United Methodist Church that was held there and the issues that were being debated and decided. As your Executive Minister and because I have pastoral responsibilities for our fellowship, I have been interested in how this topic in our changing world is being addressed in other tribes. You may have followed this more closely than I, however I came away with some learnings from these meetings.



It is reported that the delegates voted down the proposed "One Church Plan" that would have left questions related to LGBTQ ordination and same-gender weddings up to the local conference. It is said that this happened largely on the votes of delegates from developing nations, especially the African delegation. They then voted to affirm the "Traditional Plan" which basically maintains the historic teaching of the church and implements some new sanctions for those violating the Book of Order. These actions by the UMC in St. Louis was informative to me, not so much in the roughly even divide of the American delegation on this issue, but in the understanding of the broader world and body of Christ.

As I followed this event and read various accounts, it became clear that the different sides had very different theologies despite being informed by the same Scripture and same tradition. The difference however was the differing secular cultures that informed the various sides. One side was elevating and acting upon a theology that has been informed and influenced by the culture of 21st Century America. The other side's theologies have been informed by various cultures both within and outside of the United States, cultures including 20th Century America, Rural America and even Ethnic America. A large group was informed by the culture of developing and economically weak countries. And I had to wonder how this impacts me, impacts us in the ABC and impacts the church.

Frankly, I don't know what the way forward is going to be on the issue of human

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sexuality and same-sex marriage. Our secular culture has taken a stand that seems clear and unstoppable, but even given that I don't know what is best for the church universal let alone any particular tribe of the church like the UMC. I surely don't know what the answer on this issue is for ABC-USA and know I must continue to study and pray about this.

I want to love and respect all people in their sinful nature, whatever that nature is. Remember, we are all sinners, even those of us who have claimed the righteousness of Christ, so in Christ's command to love one another, He is commanding us to love those whom we know to be sinners.

I want all people to be transformed and renewed by the love of Christ to become the person God is calling them to be. Sometimes this will mean helping a person to understand their actions as sin, as being outside of God's desired purpose.

But am I the best person to determine what is another's sin or even what God's calling to wholeness is specifically? Oh sure, Scripture gives us some generalities, but in asking Peter, "Who do YOU say that I am?", Jesus makes it clear that repentance and being are both personal issues, personal issues within the context of community but still personal. And sometimes, within that community we agree to sin together, to sin corporately. Sometimes our sin is to fail to speak to the injustice and brokenness of our community, our church or our nation.

And so, I have to ask myself carefully as one who lives and breathes in this context, does American Christianity and American Culture (a culture that likes to point out to others how they are doing it wrong) overshadow the Gospel; the Good News of Christ?

Baptists proudly proclaim to be a people of The Book. And while I know that to be true, I also know that our theology is shaped by a multitude of influences, not just Scripture. John Wesley, founder of the Methodist or Wesleyan movement, contended that our faith and/or theology is shaped by four things – Scripture, tradition, reason and experience. And like any good Protestant, chief among these must be Scripture. Luther of course contended *solo*

scriptura (Scripture alone), but Wesley was acknowledging that what we believe is shaped by more than just Scripture. Often, though, we are guilty of elevating these other three above Scripture. And yet Scripture is never read and understood... never interpreted without the influence of our traditions, experiences and reason (Culture, by the way is a mixture of all three of these, is it not?).

So, are the influences of a culture that represents only 4.4% of world population but holds over 25% of the wealth, a culture which has the largest concentration of the 1% who hold 50% of the world's wealth, are these influences really the influences that give us the most accurate understanding of Scripture, of who God is and what God desires? Does my privilege and prosperity as an American give me a better understanding of how Scripture points to the nature of God than someone who has less privilege and prosperity? Does it allow me to dictate how we as a body act and behave...a body we believe to be the Body of Christ?

The answer, I think, is "Maybe – sometimes, but not always!"

Maybe if you're fighting to just earn enough to feed your family, the nuances of human sexuality are less important. Maybe this prevents them from being able to fully appreciate the arguments about how the mores and taboos of an ancient, patristic culture might have been codified in Scripture and may not really be what God intended for His Body.

And then again, maybe their struggle gives them an even clearer picture both of God's heart and God's desire for us. Maybe it gives them a better appreciation of what true relationship with God and other is, relationships not based on physical intimacy but dependence and trust in the words of the Other, even words and commands that don't make sense to us in our human capacity. After all, who was it that said, "Blessed are the poor, for theirs is the Kingdom of God"?

Perhaps we in the United States, need to learn to listen more and shout less. But even in that, we still may not have all the answers.

*In Christ,
Steve Van O*

Loving God, Sharing Hope

This is the mission of New Hope in New Castle, CO. New Hope is a place filled with love, grace and forgiveness that Jesus offers to everyone. Cody Fulk has been a part of this church family since 2006 when he and his wife, Michaela moved to the area. Cody came to teach in a local homeschool cooperative. Their family became deeply committed to the church family.

Their family grew as their faith in Christ was tested and strengthened. They adopted Malachi from Florida in March of 2008. Then seven months later three more siblings from Liberia (Josh, Janaya, and Samuel) became a part of the Fulk family. During these days Cody and Micheala were also having babies, Carter, Eliana, Azariah, and Isabella. Yes, this is a family raising eight children. They sensed a calling to mission and New Hope was the sending church that supported the Fulk's in Uganda, Africa from October 2010 to May of 2016. Due to health concerns the Fulks came to the States hoping to return to the mission field in a few months. Cody has been diagnosed with ulcer colitis and been hospitalized several times.



When they returned from the mission field, they came back to New Hope Church to serve and share in the ministry. In fact, Cody told the church leaders that he would help their home church in whatever was needed. The Elders invited Cody to share in pastoring New Hope at the start of 2017 alongside Pastor Eddie Piker who continues in leadership. These brothers lead New Hope Church by using the gifts and strengths given to each man for the body of Christ.

If you had asked Cody if this was his calling, he would have been reluctant to consider the position. Missionary yes, but pastor? But God, prepared him and opened a ministry for Cody to serve the people and community of New Hope. When the Fulk family came from the mission field they found a mission of loving God's people in their home church and community. They believed that God is planning still greater mission for this ministry in the days to come.

In February, Pastor Cody lead a short-term mission team of 33 people from the New Castle area (17 folks from New Hope) to Oaxaca, Mexico. They spent a week working at a school by adding a classroom, teaching how to integrate faith into education and setting up a biosand water filter system to utilize waste water to irrigate garden plots. Cody plans to make this an annual mission trip from the church and area.

Under the guidance of the Elders and Pastor Cody, New Hope Church likes to invite and not impose beliefs on their neighbors. He believes the church is ready to step up and engage the community through witness and faith. Currently, Pastor Cody is preaching a sermon series through Jeremiah, the suffering prophet. New Hope Church purchased the New Castle bowling alley and remodeled the facility into useable meeting area, offices, classrooms and the sanctuary. They have great access just off I-70 Interstate at the New Castle ramp next door to City Market.

Pastor Cody meets with a couple of pastors weekly for friendship and accountability in addition to bi-weekly Elders meetings. He likes to use his days off with family activities and to enjoy nature. Most Monday's he sets aside for "me and Jesus" time for reading, prayer, and personal reflection apart from sermon preparation and study.

The Fulk family just purchased a home down the road in Silt, CO and are getting settled in this week. The

folks around New Hope are hopeful Pastor Cody remains healthy to lead them in mission with God.

*James Conley, Pastor
FBC, Delta*

A Quest for “Church” Fresh Expressions

What does a church look like? Not the building, but the church. We all learned when we were children that the church is the people, not the building. The people who gather for worship. The people who gather to grow in maturity as followers of Jesus. So, I ask again, what does a church look like?

For as long as many can remember, churches gathered to worship with music, a sermon, and prayers. For many, church is only church when it meets on Sunday morning. Could our current culture be forcing churches to reconsider what it means to be church in today’s world? How do we reach people who are “done” with the church or who have no sense that the church could possibly speak into their lives?



One of the shifts of the past few years is a new expression of what it means to be church. Granted, most churches still worship on Sunday morning. Most churches include music (maybe focus on music) and sermons. A few churches are starting to challenge these “norms.” They don’t challenge these because the pastors/leaders want to sleep late on Sundays. Their focus is to reach people who will never enter a traditional worship service. Sometimes they gather around a meal. Sometimes they gather around a ministry or service project. Sometimes they worship on Tuesday evening.

The purpose of these new communities is to reach those who have walked away from church. In essence, these are congregations that by their very nature, leave the ninety-nine to seek the one lost sheep (Luke 15:3-7).

In May, I will be traveling to Great Britain to learn more about a movement that seeks to birth new expressions of church. These churches seek to combine the efforts of established congregations with new expressions of church. The purpose of this is to discover if we can learn new ways of reaching those in our communities in ABCRM who have no connection to the church.

I will be taking specific questions. How do we find new leadership? Where do these new communities gather? How do we train leaders? How do we do a better job of connecting the gospel with people’s lives? How do we encourage established churches to work hand in hand with new congregations? The churches in Great Britain have been working on this emphasis for over a decade. I will seek to bring some of their wisdom and experience back to our Region.

*Mike Oldham
Ministry and Mission Coach*

Celebrating Fifty Years in His Sovereign Care

“Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” Matt. 16:18b

The King Baptist Church in Denver, CO was organized on April 26, 1969. (The original name of this new fellowship was St. King Baptist Church. In March, 1977 the church changed its name from St. King Baptist Church to King Baptist Church to honor the slain civil rights leader, The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.) The genesis of this new fellowship began with twelve members. The founding pastor called to lead these saints of God as they embarked upon their journey for kingdom service was Rev. Alvin J. Gay.



The early days of King Baptist Church were filled with challenges of life and faith. The congregation grew slowly. The church went through a period when they did not have a place to call “home”. During that period they experienced the love, power and presence of God in many ways. Other believers opened their businesses and their churches to the young fellowship. In spite of the trials that came with advancing the kingdom of Jesus Christ, these new church planters stayed the course.

Their faithfulness eventually allowed King to see and experience the fruit of God’s mighty hand. God brought King and Hertz Car Rental together. Hertz had a trailer house for sale. King needed a permanent location. The “divine encounter” was on. After a fierce negotiation between Brother X.O. Tidwell, Pastor Gay and others, Hertz sold King the trailer for \$1.00. Wow!! What a sovereign act of The Almighty!! And, even more, God gave them the land on which to place the trailer! It is the land on which King Baptist sits even unto this day in the 3300 block of Ivy Street in Denver!! God gave King a place to call “home”. And, He did it in a way that declared His sovereignty and His love for His people. After God planted King Baptist Church in the 3300 block of Ivy Street, He sent the people and resources to advance His kingdom! What a mighty God we serve! With twelve souls, God gave birth to King Baptist Church. That number has grown to well over 2,500! As we pause to celebrate King’s 50th Anniversary, we can see God’s sovereign hand all over this “branch of Zion”.

Over the years, King Baptist Church continues to be known for its many viable ministries that impact the lives of those both in the kingdom and in the world. King’s track record is clear regarding sharing their resources in serving those both in the church and beyond the walls, locally, nationally and internationally. However, it would be an oversight on my part not to mention the melodious Mass Choir of the King Baptist Church. King’s Mass Choir has gained national and international recognition over the years. In 1990 the King Mass Choir completed an album titled, **“Holding on To Jesus Hand”**. On their album, they were accompanied by Philip Baily (a Denver native of Earth, Wind and Fire fame) and Daryl Coley (a nationally and internationally recording artist). Let me go on record in saying that the King Mass Choir is noted for lifting up praises to God that reach the outskirts of heaven. (Smile) I said to one of the ministers at King during a recent worship experience, “When King’s Mass Choir sings the angels in heaven listen in and take notes.” A bit of hyperbole, but you get the picture. (Smile.)

In the first fifty years of her existence, King Baptist Church only had two pastors, the founding pastor, Rev. Alvin J. Gay and the present pastor, Rev. Dr. Terrence E. Hendricks. Recognizing that fact, during a recent visit with Pastor Hendricks I asked him the question, “What is the work of the King Baptist Church for the next fifty years?” Pastor Hendricks, responded by saying, “King is a church that is:

- 1) Anchored in God's word;
- 2) Serious about reaching out to lost and broken people. Everyone in church ought to be "An Ex" something as they take on the ways of Jesus Christ;
- 3) Serious about making "disciples";
- 4) Biblically grounded in our understanding of both "family and community", both in the Body and beyond the walls;
- 5) Called to be "biblical" agents for transformation for Jesus Christ in the world;

With those things in mind, as we go forward in Jesus Christ:

- 1) We will keep preaching and teaching the word of God;
- 2) We will continue to live boldly into our faith as we seek to advance the cause and kingdom of Jesus Christ on earth;
- 3) We will continue to be agents of transformation for Jesus Christ in an ever changing world; and,
- 4) We will always remember that the church is the redeeming hope of sinners; and,
- 5) We will always remember the work of the church is to make disciples for kingdom service.

As I reflect on Pastor Hendricks' words, I hear him saying we will pause and celebrate all that God has done for King Baptist Church in her first fifty years. And, as we go forward in life and faith our work, as believers in Jesus Christ, is to continue to build on the Solid Rock of our salvation, Jesus Christ until Christ return for His Church. To which I reply, Amen.

*Rev. Larron D. Jackson, DMin
Ministry and Mission Coach, Denver Cluster*

Rev. Betty Weaver to Retire

Rev. Betty Weaver was called to serve as the pastor of yoked ministry of the First Baptist Church of Center and the First Baptist Church of Monte Vista November 1, 2005. Betty's journey to be a pastor/servant/leader took her through many unexpected twists and turns.

Pastor Betty was raised in Southern Baptist churches. She accepted Christ at the age of 11 and began a long and fruitful journey. She developed a love for teaching God's word. In addition to raising two sons, she worked as an accountant, bookkeeper, and office manager. In 1994 she graduated Phi Beta Kappa with a B.A. from Baylor University.

During her time at Baylor, Betty sensed that God was calling her to pastoral ministry. (She was still in Southern Baptist churches, so she faced many closed doors as she sought to follow God's calling.) She wrote for Christian publications and continued to teach, but she struggled with her calling to do more. In 1997, she graduated from George W. Truett Theological Seminary with a Master of Divinity. She was

part of the first graduating class at Truett and was the first woman to graduate from Truett Seminary.

In 1997, she was called as the Child Care Pastor at the First Baptist Church of Salt Lake City and was ordained to pastoral ministry. She also served the First Baptist Church of Roseville, IL.

Since 2005, Pastor Betty has faithfully served in central Colorado. When FBC Monte Vista closed, she felt called to remain and serve FBC Center. In order to continue to serve this church, she also worked for several years at a local funeral home.

Pastor Betty will officially retire on March 31, 2019. She will preach her final sermon (as the pastor of FBC) that morning and celebrate communion with "her family." The celebration of her ministry will be Sunday, March 31 at 2:00 pm at the First Baptist Church of Center, CO. The community and the American Baptist family are all invited to come and join in this time of celebration.

*Mike Oldham
Mission & Ministry Coach*

2018 Annual Reports

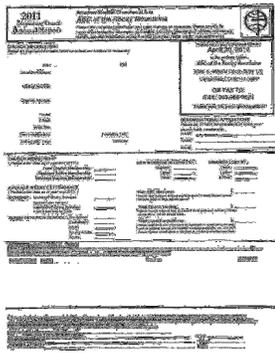
It is that time of year again to collect your church data to update our Region office data and National registry.



We know that this process takes some time to complete, but the information is useful to assess the health of our denomination. It helps us plan for future mission and ministry, so your reports are important!

2018 Annual Report's were mailed to our churches on February 21. Please take the time to complete your report and send it in early.

We thank all of you for your support to our Region.



Camp Dates 2019

Front Range Camp @ Quaker Ridge
July 21-27

Camp Wyoba

Mini-Camp — June 30-July 2

Post High Retreat — July 5-7

Senior High Camp — July 7-13

Junior High Camp — July 14-20

Junior Camp — July 21-27

Primary Camp — July 28-31

Women's Retreat — August 9-11

Family Camp — August 9-12

Grand Mesa Baptist Camp

The Trailhead (Elementary School)
June 27 – June 30

The Ascent (Middle School)
June 22 – 27

The Alpine Zone (High School)
June 16 – 22

Family Camp
June 14-16



Ministering to My Church by Stepping Aside

“Every pastor is an interim pastor. Few ministers consider that truth. Few are eager to admit that their time with their present church will one day end. But ultimately, all pastors are ‘interim’ because the day when a successor takes over will come for everyone in ministry. Planning for that day of succession may be the biggest leadership task a leader and church will ever face. It may also be the most important.”



That’s how the book *Next* by William Vanderbloemen and Warren Bird, begins in the preface. It’s a book published the same year I announced my five-year transition plan to my church in 2014. While I had already decided that a transition was necessary, *Next* helped me see the importance and significance of doing a transition well.

In my years of ministry, I have seen a fair share of pastors that in my opinion stayed too long at their church, and I didn’t want to be one of them.

I’ve served Crossroads Church since 1982 as youth and worship leader before becoming its second pastor in 1993; the same year Bill Clinton became our 42nd president and the Colorado Rockies started playing in the West division of the National Baseball League. I was 36 years old.

As the years went by and I started to see my sixties quickly coming into view, I went to the Lord with this prayer, “God, I think it’d be a good idea to start a transition plan, a succession plan at church. What do You think?” I was 57.

I knew that the young leaders who served with me at church would begin wondering about my plans for the future which would directly impact their plans for the future. I also knew that I was losing some contact with current cultural trends that grew the gap between me and the younger attendees of my church.

Over the course of some weeks that included a lot of prayer, conversations with my wife and key leaders at church, it was made clear to me that a succession plan/transition plan is only real when a date is set. So the date of January 1, 2020 was set. It would be on that day I’d pass the role of Senior Pastor-ship to Pastor Matt, my successor, God willing and pending congregational approval.



When we announced the plan to the church in October 2016, a plan we outlined in an official document, nobody really believed it. “That’s four years away!”, they said. “A lot can happen in four years!”.

Those years went by really fast! Pastor Matt was the lead pastor on staff with me at Crossroads and we dug deep into the mentoring process to prepare him for the role of Senior Pastor that would need to be ratified by an official vote of the membership of Crossroads Church. That vote happened on January 27th of this year.

So, it’s official. By an overwhelming majority the members of Crossroads cast their vote of approval to finalize the succession plan on January 1, 2020. Mere months away.

I've never liked the way churches do pastoral transitions. They always seemed clunky and disruptive. Instead of a pastor resigning or retiring and the church setting up a pastoral search committee which can take months of deliberation and interviewing candidates, I decided to try a full-blown succession plan. It worked.

Succession planning like this isn't for every church and I know that. But I also know that in my reading of the scriptures, succession seems to be the model of leadership change, just think Moses to Joshua as one example. My encouragement, give it some thought and seek God's guidance for leadership changes in your church.



*Kim Skattum, Senior Pastor
Crossroads Church*

Our biennial gathering of the American Baptist Family is scheduled to occur at Virginia Beach, VA, June 21-23. The every other year event features:

- Special luncheons of our major national programs (ABHMS, IM and MMBB) where we hear updates on their ministries, stories of how God has used them and learn how we can both be supported by them as well as support them.
- Powerful worship and powerful preachers and teachers
- Amazing fellowship with our diverse ABC Family

The Biennial Mission Summit is a great time of learning, inspiration and fellowship. To learn more, visit: www.americanbaptists2019.com

To Register, go to: <http://www.abc-usa.org/2019/01/25/individual-registration-for-2019-biennial-mission-summit-opens/>

ABCRM folks should enter the code: RockyRegion for a \$49 discount.



Announcing a Matching Gift Opportunity: The ABCRM Mission Team has announced an opportunity for your church to support IM and its involvement with *Sat 7*...an international ministry that provides 24 hour Christian television programming to the Arab world. Our three Region (ABCRM, Nebraska and Central Pacific Coast [Oregon]) pastoral discovery trip to Lebanon visited the Lebanese Studios of this ministry last fall and were so impressed that we agreed jointly to rise to the challenge of raising the membership dues for one year for IM (International Ministries). Cost of the membership every year is \$15,000 and each of the Executive Ministers agreed their Region would be responsible for 1/3 of that.

To that end, the ABCRM Mission Team has pledged to match the first \$2,500 donated by Region churches and/or donors to fulfill this pledge. Donations should be sent to the Region office and marked "Sat 7". For more information about Sat 7, visit: <https://sat7.org/> or call our Executive Minister, Steve Van Ostran at 303.988.3900. Dr. Van Ostran has also agreed to donate any honorariums received for pulpit supply in 2019 for this cause as well.

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Galatians 6:9-10



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www.abhms.org



Fashion Show

Several young Girls will be modeling Hand-made Fashions on June 8, 2019, 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm at Gardens of Divine Hope, located at 1955 East Arizona Avenue in Denver, CO. This should be a fun, interesting and loving event as Young Girls move around the patio in beautifully handcrafted designs. The event will take place on the patio as it is decorated with flowers and colorful designs.

ALL ARE INVITED. THERE IS NO ADMISSIONS FEE. There will be food, drink and entertainment. DONATIONS are welcome!

Contact Pastor Karen at reverendkarenwschneider@yahoo.com or call at 720.308.8418 if you plan to attend. We would like to get a head-count prior to the event so we know how many are coming.

Short Term Mission Opportunity Black Hills of South Dakota – August 3-11, 2019

The American Baptist Churches of Nebraska and the Dakotas have teamed up in each of the last eighteen years to minister at the annual gathering of over 400,000 people in Sturgis, South Dakota for Bike Week! (Attendance in 2015 was 739,000.)

The ABC Emergency Services Center was created in the basement of the First Baptist Church of the Northern Hills in Deadwood to help those who became stranded due to injury, abandonment, or mechanical breakdown. Many of those we help are referred to us by law enforcement, hospitals or social services agencies. Posters and brochures also help many find us for help. Since 2011 we have worked out of the First Baptist Church of Rapid City.

Volunteers from American Baptist churches around the country spend all or part of the week helping, feeding, transporting, and counseling the dozens of individuals who come to the ABCESC for assistance. Throughout the week calls come in at all hours of the day and night from churches, police and rescue workers, and individuals, wanting us to help men, women, and children in need.

Volunteers don't need to be motorcyclists, but need a heart for evangelism and a willingness to serve. Women volunteers are especially needed due to the large percentage of women and children that we end up assisting. If you can come for all or part of the week, we can find a job for you!

Interested in Sturgis Rally Ministry 2019?

- ♦ The ABC Emergency Services Center will be open Aug 3-11. Early arrivers can be accommodated on August 2.
- ♦ Sleeping space is provided. Most bring an air mattress.
- ♦ RVers will be provided with space to set up.
- ♦ This mission project is designed for adults. High school students will be permitted when accompanied by a parent.
- ♦ Follow-up on those ministered to will be coordinated by contacts in ABC regions around the country.
- ♦ Each participant is asked to contribute \$100 towards this project. Local churches are encouraged to assist participating members in raising this amount. Contributions may be made through ABC Nebraska and ABC Dakotas.

For more information contact:

ABC of Nebraska • 11244 Blondo Street • Omaha, NE 68164
(402) 556-4730 • (877) 244-7339 (toll-free)
LCline@ameritas.com

What's Happening

Calendar

March

- America For Christ Offering Month
- 8 MLC Meeting
- 10 Daylight Savings Time begins
- 30 Wyoba Board Meeting
- 31 True Light Baptist Church
30th Anniversary Service (9:30 am)
- 31 Betty Weaver Retirement Service (2 pm)

April

- 8-10 Western Slope Pastors Retread
Cedar Edge
- 13 Wyoba Camp Directors Meeting
Laramie, WY
- 14 Palm Sunday
- 19 Good Friday (Region office closed)
- 21 Easter Sunday
- 22 Easter Monday (Region office closed)



Daylight Savings Time begins Sunday, March 10. Don't forget to set your clocks ahead one hour on Saturday night.



FOCUS ON YOUR GOALS.

Christian Community Credit Union's **SCHOLARSHIPS FOR SUCCESS** program can help!

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2. Attending a college, university, or seminary for the 2019-2020 academic year
3. Enrolling (per semester/quarter) with 12 units or more for Undergraduate students; six units or more for Graduate students

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PLEASE NOTE: The maximum scholarship is \$4,000 for Undergraduate students; \$2,000 for Graduate students.

 **AMERICAN SHARE** INSURANCE. Each account is insured up to \$250,000. By members' choice, this institution is not federally insured.

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www.abcrm.org

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The deadline for submissions is the 20th of each month.
Send submissions to
akeys@abcrm.org

Reprint permission is granted to ABCRM churches.



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