

2020 ANNUAL GATHERING

American Baptist Churches of the Rocky Mountains



A **Virtual**Gathering of Events in September and October
September 8-28, 2020 | October 5-26, 2020 |
www.abcrm.org

The current pandemic has taken our breath away, often literally. We see the unrest and uncertainty in our nation. We hear the “breaths” of those shouting for justice in our land. And, we hear the whispers upon the wind of our prayers for God to intervene and to lead us ... his people.

And so, in a time of social distancing and precautions, we’re gathering virtually this year. With it, comes new challenges, but also new opportunities. More people—from further distances—can participate in this **virtual Gathering**. We can join together in our homes and in our churches, remembering the Hebrew word used to describe “breath, wind, and spirit” — **RUACH** — a reminder that God’s Spirit is still at work in our world!

O’ God, may you breathe upon us as we remember your name and celebrate your goodness!

RUACH
Breath.
Wind.
Spirit.
Experiencing God.
Empowering Churches.



A Special Welcome to an Unprecedented Annual Gathering: Virtual, but Experiencing God

Dear ABCRM Family,

Thank you for joining ABCRM's Virtual Annual Gathering this year. We have some exciting changes ahead! Workshops will be held weekly, with the **Gathering Worship** to be held Friday, Sept. 25 at 7 p.m., and the **Business Meeting** on Saturday, Sept. 26 at 9 a.m. The theme for this year's Gathering is *Ruach*: Breath – Wind - Spirit.

"Ruach" is the transliterated form of a Hebrew word that means "breath, wind, or spirit". It is the word used when God's Spirit moved over the earth in its creation. It is the word used when God breathed life into Adam. And it is the word used when God dries up the flood to deliver Noah and his family from the flood.

This year, the word helps to illustrate many of our current social concerns. In fact, we have been unable to freely breath due to our anxious times. So, it is time to stop holding our breath and to allow God to BREATHE into us, to feel His Wind beneath our wings and to allow the Spirit of God to fill us.

Will that happen at this year's Gathering?

Well, we hope so. But in the end, we must remember that the Gathering is ultimately a business meeting. We trust it will be an "inspired" business meeting, but still a business meeting. The Wind, the Spirit or the Breath of God is not something any of us can promise. But we can promise it will be a time of waiting together for the Spirit, just as the disciples waited together in the upper room.

And in addition, we will have:

- Five powerful workshops that can be joined live or watched at your convenience
- A creative and Spirit-led if not Spirit-filled worship service
- An opportunity for Clergy and invited guests to join with ABCRM Staff and Board members in a fun, interactive, online cooking class!
- Video reports of how God is at work in the various parts of ABCRM and ABC-USA
- Recognition of some of the Region's faithful leaders and pastors
- Introduction of new ABCRM staff, and
- Missionary Mondays - Weekly video gatherings with some of our favorite IM Missionaries

Because this event is so different, we are covering the cost of registration for participants and delegates this year. But registration is required. You can see the full schedule and register on our website. Also, we encourage congregations to gather responsibly in one place for the Friday evening worship and the Saturday business meeting.

I hope that you will join with other ABCRM Family and Friends for this year's event.

In Christ,

Steve Van O

Visit www.abcrm.org
 The Gathering 2020
 For updated information and active links



SEPTEMBER WORKSHOPS

Tues., Sept. 8	1-2:30 p.m.	<i>Creating Engagement in Worship</i>	Brad Berglund
Mon., Sept. 14	1-2:30 p.m.	<i>Can Prayer Be Silent?</i>	David & Joyce Reed
Mon., Sept. 21	1-2:30 p.m. 3-4:30 p.m.	<i>Manuscript Bible Study</i>	Stan Slade
Tue., Sept. 22	1-2:30 p.m.	<i>Anxiety in the Time of COVID-19</i>	Margaret Marcuson
Wed., Sept. 23	7 p.m.	<i>I Can't Breathe: Racism and the Church's Response</i>	Dr. Zina Jacque Rev. Eugene Downing

GATHERING WORSHIP & BUSINESS

Thur., Sept. 24	5:30 p.m. 6-8 p.m.	Clergy Appreciation (Zoom) Mtg. Choice of Four Virtual Cooking Classes	
Fri., Sept. 25	7-8:30 p.m.	Virtual Worship Service	Steve Van Ostran <i>Presenter</i>
Sat., Sept. 26	9-10:30 a.m.	Regional Business Meeting	

MISSION MONDAYS

Mon., Sept. 28	1-2:30 p.m.	Mission Bolivia	JD & Rhonda Reed
Mon., Oct. 5	7-8:30 p.m.	Mission Mexico	Juan & Denise Aragon
Mon., Oct. 12	7-8:30 p.m.	Mission Dominican Republic	Vital & Ketley Pierre
Mon., Oct. 19	10 a.m.	Mission Lebanon	Melanie Baggao Dan & Sarah Chetti
Mon., Oct. 26	7-8:30 p.m.	Mission Global	David & Joyce Reed

* Links & more information will be available online at abcrm.org

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WELCOME!

The Gathering 2020 committee started with a different location, a different plan, a different theme but then we had to pivot. Our committee had several members who had to pivot in their individual lives too.

So here we are, take a deep calming breath and join the adventure of a Virtual Gathering in a time of Social Distancing and Uncertainty.

Learn something new in the various workshops offered. This year you don't have to choose which workshop to attend, instead attend them all.

Steve Van Ostran and Mike Oldham have coordinated with our excellent workshop leaders to bring us relevant workshops. Thank you.

A tasty treat for the Clergy Appreciation Dinner is a cooking class by Chef Champion. Get those whisks and aprons out! Chef Champion is friendly, informative and encouraging. He loves teaching about food and cooking. It will be a blast and you get to eat your class work. He also believes in yummy desserts.

Thank you to Karen Van for setting this up. She did

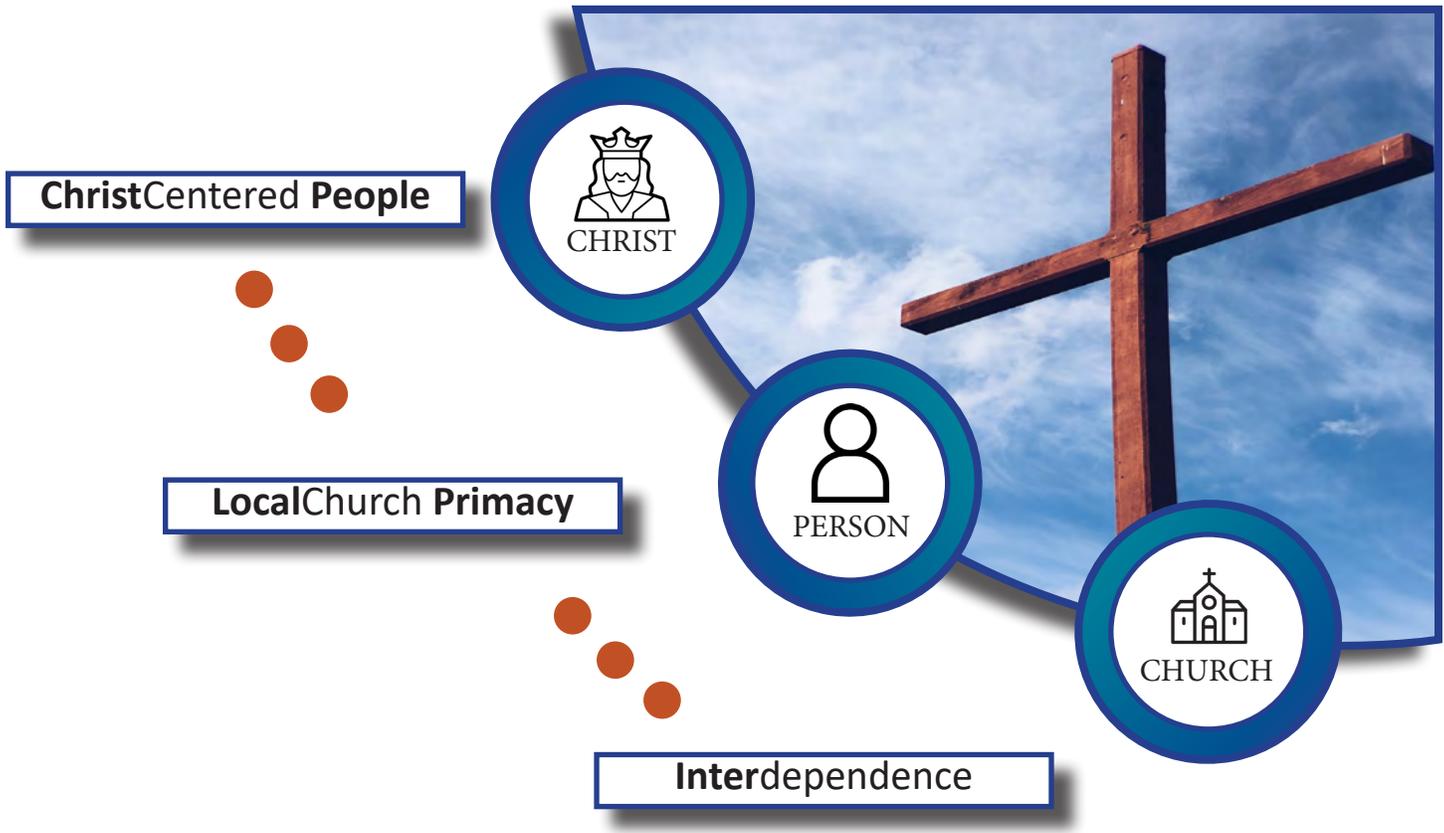
have to do a lot of class sampling to find us a super chef.

Worship with all of the region on Friday, Sept. 25 at 7 p.m. Distance doesn't matter, we can all praise God together at the same time with our families and friends near and far.

Be at the Region Annual Business meeting and hear what has happened this past year and learn of the plans for now and the new year to come. Be there Saturday, Sept. 26 at 9 a.m. Wear your pajamas, have a second cup of coffee, get comfortable, no one will be checking up on your appearance but you do need to register online.

I see our Region family as strong, faithful and blessed in this pivoting time. There is always more to do in our churches and our communities. While we are apart in person, remember we are one in the Spirit. Thank you again to the committee and the Region Staff and thank you to all that are participating in our Virtual Gathering 2020.

Estelle Torpy
Gathering Committee Chair



CORE VALUES

2020 has been a year of “pivots.” Pivoting has become the way of life during this pandemic season, and, while a source of frustration for some, it is also leading to significant and needed changes in our culture and world.

As we have become more adept at pivoting, we have also come to learn that when pivoting, it is important to keep our focus on our core values and on our mission or purpose.

And so, as ABCRM has pivoted numerous times in the last few months – pivoting not just from holding a face-to-face Gathering to a virtual but also changing themes as we began to sense God’s Spirit at work in the midst of this crisis- we took time to examine what we have said are our core values and our mission statement.

Christ-Centered People and Ministry

At the core of all we do is our Faith in Jesus Christ and His calling us to ministry and mission. Our understanding of Christ and His calling is centered on the teachings and values revealed through Holy Scripture and understood by the guidance of the Holy Spirit and our gathered communities of Faith. Our Faith calls us to be instruments of grace, healing, redemption and justice in our communities around the world. We understand that this Faith is best expressed in authentic actions and not mere words or statements.

Primacy of the Local Church

Jesus established the Church with Peter’s confession of Faith in Christ for the purpose of being a visible and corporeal expression and presence of Christ in the world. It is through the local church that mission and ministry is most effective. Therefore, ABCRM seeks to support, build-up, equip and aid the local church in its multiple-expressions both within the bounds of our ministry context and Faith as well as beyond those boundaries as led by the Spirit and human relationships.

Interdependence of the Individual Believer and the Church

As Jesus came into the world to restore relationship between God and humanity, He also sought out others to walk with Him in His earthly ministry and to continue that ministry following His resurrection and ascension. We understand we cannot live out our Faith alone but must be in grace-filled relationships with and work alongside others individually and ecumenically.



2020 GATHERING RUACH PRESENTERS



Brad Berglund

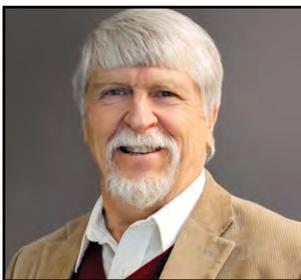
Brad is an author, practitioner and teacher of the fundamentals of participatory worship. His roots are here in the ABCRM as Brad serves The Threshold in Denver to encourage creative worship, to which he has practiced as a pastor and a leader for thirty-five years. He has been influential in introducing the reflective Taize worship service to numerous congregations; and currently, he works for Illuminated Journeys as a leader for ecumenical ministry pilgrimage tours, which includes spiritual renewal retreats. It's obvious that his talent and desire is to help clerical leaders and congregations to renew their minds as to the many methods in which Christians can find their spiritual rhythm in God -- and to create sustaining and engaging worship!



David & Joyce Reed

International Ministries

The Reeds serve as IM's Global Coordinators for Spiritual Care. Building on 20 years of ministry as global servants in Mexico and service as Regional Consultants in Iberoamerica and the Caribbean, they seek to cultivate a culture of health in which IM personnel around the globe can thrive and be effective in ministry. They offer spiritual guidance, support and presence, and walk with colleagues through significant times of transition, transformation, grief and loss; and mentor global servants during their first years on the field.



Stan Slade

International Ministries

Stan is a teacher whose "classroom" might be located almost anywhere in the world. Whether leading a workshop for pastors with almost no formal schooling or serving as a visiting professor with doctoral students in high-tech classrooms, Stan is passionate about helping church leaders become more effective servants of Christ, especially in the area of understanding and communicating the message of Scripture. For our Gathering this year, Stan will lead two sessions of a Manuscript Bible Study, which is an intuitive way to study the Bible that's perfect for everyone!



Margret Marcuson

Rev. Margaret Marcuson knows how to help pastors to bring their very best to their ministry without giving it all away, so they can have a greater impact and find more satisfaction. She speaks and writes on church leadership and works with church leaders nationally across denominations as a consultant and coach. Margaret is the author of *Leaders who Last: Sustaining Yourself and Your Ministry* and *Money and Your Ministry: Balance the Books While Keeping Your Balance*. An ABC minister, Margaret was the pastor of the First Baptist Church of Gardner, Massachusetts, for 13 years. She lives in Portland and is a member of First Baptist Church.



Dr. Zina Jacque

The Rev. Dr. Zina Jacque has served as pastor of the Community Church of Barrington since February of 2007. In addition to her Doctorate in Practical Theology (Boston University), she holds a Masters of Divinity (Summa Cum Laude, Boston University), a Masters of Education (Columbia University) and a Bachelor of Arts (Northwestern University). She has served on the staffs of multicultural, urban and suburban churches, both large and small. Rev. Zina has done extensive work in the areas of education, counseling, and support programs, and she has participated in many workshops, forums, and special religious programs. She will lead the "I Can't Breathe" Racism and the Church's Response workshop, which is both a timely and important discussion about past and current injustices.

MASKS, MANDATES & MEMOIRS

Personal Reflections in a time of a worldwide pandemic



Singing out praise across the windswept prairie

Brian Keithline

Pastor of First Baptist Church of Torrington

I often don't travel far from Torrington, Wyoming, these days. And so, I often fail to notice the decorative town sign located just south of the shuttered sugar beet factory with its lonely silos rising above the prairie. The sign itself recalls Torrington's former prestige as the "Pheasant Capital of the World" with its silhouettes of those grasslands birds crafted out of metal.

But, there's another indicator of this aging town's heritage: out of a population of 6,683 people, Torrington has twenty four churches. Every Sunday morning, the streets look like a ghost town, but the churches themselves are alive with the Holy Ghost. That was—until the Coronavirus snuck across our rural borders, and like the rest of the nation, we closed the doors to our churches.

I remember the initial shock of the situation. And, I'll admit, for the first full week of the developing pandemic in late March, I flipped through the television news stations and awaited the latest information. The most vulnerable were those individuals who constituted the majority of our congregation—the elderly.

Almost overnight, I couldn't visit my oldest members except through a phone call. Almost overnight, many of our faithful attendees had to self-isolate in their homes. Almost overnight, the two small grocery stores in our town ran out of toilet paper and other supplies. Here in Torrington, we don't stock up—we buy only what we

need, because the store is just down the corner. Plus, we want to see our friends and neighbors as we push those shopping carts down the aisle.

And, almost overnight, we had to find a new way to share our worship service. There might be coal, natural gas, and oil under those wind-strewn plains, but high-speed Internet is a little harder to find. But, with my iPhone and some mad-scientist experimentation, by the second week of the closure, we were streaming our services on Facebook. And, a faithful (small) group of members came to provide the worship soundtrack each Sunday morning. I also discovered how many "takes" it takes to get to the center of a "Tootsie Roll Pop" video when you record, and re-record, and still notice the crackling sound in the background, the distracting objects in the foreground, and a pastor fumbling for his words.

But, I look forward to the day when conversations over coffee at Deacons Restaurant can freely resume. I look forward to when we can all fully gather once more without fear. May our twenty four churches be full once again with Torrington singing out its praise across the prairie.

A teacher's reboot as a virus rewrites education

Kristy Keithline

7-8th Grade Middle School Teacher

The world came to a sudden stop in mid-March of this year. For a teacher, I can honestly say: there is an eerie feeling to seeing empty classrooms and closed schools. We had eagerly prepared to leave for Spring Break ... and then, we never came back. No graduations. No “end-of-the-school year” activities. It was just closed doors and empty schools—and a seemingly timeless wait to see what would happen next.

Being a teacher goes beyond what's written on a whiteboard. Being a teacher is more than assessments and assignments. In the classroom, I know when a student is hurting. I know when one of my seventh or eighth graders has become homeless, or is experiencing trouble at home. I know when they're struggling, and I can “step in” to stop that precipitous fall when a young teen starts to feel that sense of failure.

But, I can't do any of those things from the opposite end of a computer screen. Not only did I feel the panicked rush to learn how to create a Google classroom and to provide “enriching” online curriculum, I also discovered that a number of the students didn't show up online. There's no incentive to “show up” for an online classroom. There's no accountability through e-mail communications. There's no way for parents to really support their children, because this is frightfully new to them, too.

I'm happy to declare that we have a great and dedicated team of teachers with the best technological resources, but technology, even with its sterile and advanced tools, cannot build the

proper student and teacher relationship. In fact, all of us (students and teachers alike) are on “technology overload” without a clear idea about how to get back on board with in-classroom education during this pandemic.

And so, as my school district prepares for the return of students this fall, we have plans and strategies on how to sanitize and how to socially distance. We have face masks, and for the teachers, face shields. We have procedures that we know will be rewritten and readjusted, because for us, this is a learning process ... one with real risks for both the students and the teachers.

And, I'm scared. I often find myself lying awake at night. I worry about my husband and my sons in that I could be the one who might inadvertently expose them to this invisible and vicious virus. And yet, this jumble of emotions also recognizes the potential for God to use this dastardly time to positively change things in our education system.

So, at this particular moment, I can only find refuge in the words of Jeremiah 29:11: *“For I know the plans that I have for you,” says the LORD. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.”*

Seminary never prepared us for church shutdowns

Darren Stroh

Pastor of Lamar First Baptist Church

I sat at my desk holding the phone in my hand. I had to make a call. It's a call that I never imagined I would ever have to make. Nothing in seminary or even in life itself had prepared me to make this call. I pressed the numbers on the phone to set up a phone tree call to all church attenders and said something like this:

"Good morning First Baptist Family, I regret to inform you that due to the COVID-19 crisis, the Governor has ordered that we not meet at the church for the foreseeable future..."

I had to make that call two days into what was supposed to be my vacation—a vacation that I really needed because I was feeling crispy—and that was before the COVID-19 crisis hit. I was empty. I was clueless as to what needed to happen. I didn't even know what questions I was supposed to be asking, much more the questions that I needed to answer.

I made the call, and then waited for the phones to erupt with comments and questions from people who had never in their life ever expected to receive such a call. Some were angry that we were giving into governmental control. Others were supportive. Most were just scared and looking for someone to be an anchor. I didn't feel qualified in that moment.

When the phone went silent, I sat in the quietness of my office and felt the hot tears begin to stream down my face. The first wave of emotions was that God had given me so many opportunities to prepare for such "tribulation," and all I could think of was how I had squandered many of those opportunities. The guilt was overwhelming.

But then, a wave of peace came over me. I sat there in silence, hearing only the sound that a Kleenex makes when one pulls it out of the box. In that silence, that Still Small Voice seemed to be saying, "OK. Now that you are exactly where I want you to be, let's begin. Step one: I AM. You aren't. Step two: I AM far from done yet."

With those two realizations, God began to turn my mourning into dancing. "See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not per-

ceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland." (Isaiah 43:19, NIV) And from there, both hope and peace have sprung forth. Each restriction became a challenge to work with and through. Every obstacle became an opportunity. Can't do Sunday School and kids are locked up at home? Let's do care packages for kids to do at home with memory verse challenged, activity sheets, crafts, and devotionals. What kid doesn't like to get old-school mail? Can't meet in the building? Let's step up our radio presence. Let's create a video ministry—a ministry that reached over 800 people on Easter Sunday—four times our greatest attendance on an Easter ever. And when we can gather again, let's celebrate communion every single week, not taking the blessing of being able to gather together for granted any more.

Can't do visits like I used to? Let's do a daily call out on the phone tree with our church news and a short devotional. Let's challenge people to read through the Bible with their new found free time. Let's create a ministry in picking up medicines and groceries for the higher risk people and let that expand to people outside our church, advancing God's witness in our community. Let's look at our resources and start leaving church library books on the doorknobs of people who want something other than what news agencies offered. We had more books checked out during the first two months of the COVID-19 crisis than we had had in the previous decade. Let's be the church!

Nothing in seminary or previous church life prepared me for the ministry post-March 2020, but that's exactly what it appears that God wanted. For in the not knowing, I discovered a deeper relationship with the All-knowing and the hope, peace and joy He affords.

An MDiv. with an emphasis in 'COVID-19' life

Lauren Parliament

Future Leaders Minister, ABCRM

Finishing Seminary online was not my picture-perfect ending to my Seminary career. I am so thankful I only had one class to transition to online. The other class I had was a mini thesis. That was a harder class because the Library closed, and I needed references from there. One of the librarians was very thoughtful. She would come in each Monday and get each reference for me at my request and deliver it to my apartment. AMAZING!

Also, my roommate and I had to share a small apartment to work. She had to be in her room with the door shut to counsel her clients to be HIPAA compliant. It was not the easiest to do homework, work, and fun all in the same room, but as I look back, I am thankful for my roommate. We shared meals, played games, and had many movie nights. For my sanity, I took at least two walks a day to stay focused. Also, I am thankful for my cousins who had me included in their bubble. We had many meals and game nights together! I cannot imagine being single without good community because this would have been very lonely without my community.

This whole experience will not be forgotten in my life. Seminary is done but feels like it never got a formal celebration. There are three words that describe graduating during this crazy recession and pandemic: forgotten, uncertainty, and celebration.

Have you ever felt forgotten? That is what many of my friends and I who graduated from Denver Seminary in May 2020 felt. Have you ever worked for four years to get an accomplishment or degree and then no one celebrates your accomplishment? We worked so hard for something that was not recognized well by our school. This is not my first time graduating with uncertainty. I graduated in the last recession from

college and many friends worked as baristas or other odd jobs for a couple of years because there were no jobs in their fields. People who have never graduated during a recession should not be telling people something will come or hang in there. That is the last thing someone wants to hear. They do not know what it is like to have a degree with no where to use it. My friends who were going into missions or who were in the hiring process this Spring are still in a time of uncertainty.

Amid all this, I can celebrate. I am so thankful for this opportunity to have a full-time job with ABCRM. I can celebrate that. Also, some of my closest friends from Seminary got together in August and had our own celebration of completing Denver Seminary. I look forward to the day to my ordination with family and friends.

That is going to be the monumental moment of celebrating my time at Denver Seminary and celebrating my ordination. That will be culmination of my time at Denver Seminary.

Strength for the battle of uncertainty ahead

Matt Manning

Senior Pastor of Crossroads Church

On March 10, 2020, I got on a plane to head to my parents' house in Kentucky. The men in my family were doing a big blowout weekend at the SEC basketball tournament in Nashville. It was going to be a fantastic guys' weekend! And then the unimaginable happened. While we were all sitting in the living room of my parent's home, the news started to come in, and the normalcy of our lives started to shake.

That Wednesday night, I, with most of you, watched President Trump sit soberly behind the Resolute Desk addressing the nation on the seriousness of the Coronavirus. It was a very real moment where business "as usual" was giving away to a pandemic that required a new set of rules. The next day, the sporting world shut down, the stock market started to crash, and panic set in.

I knew that I needed to get home. I changed my ticket and on that Friday morning I was at the airport. While there, I called Pastor Tim saying that we ought to look into being prepared to live-stream our entire services on Sunday. By the time I landed, the decision was obvious: we needed to cancel our inhouse services and go forward with our first-ever online-only church services. As I made the decision, I was fully aware of the weight that I was the first pastor in the 58-year history of Crossroads to cancel a service. It had never been done before. Minimally, 1500 people would be affected.

Looking back on all of this, I have been the Senior Pastor at Crossroads for 230 days (in total). For 160 of those days, I have led our church through the unprecedented crisis of the pandemic. In the midst of all of this, we have reorganized our staff. We have stabilized our attendance and our giving. Best of all, people are coming to Jesus. For all of this, I feel incredibly blessed. And at the same time, uncertainty still reigns. Almost six months

in, we are still not able to use our buildings. Caring for people is difficult in this season. Nobody knows how the economy is going to play out, and what effect that will have on churches. Reports show that in the next 24 months 70% of people in vocational church work will burn out. There is a lot of uncertainty. So every day, I start with the same prayer:

"God, strengthen my arms for battle like you did David (2 Sam 22:35). I don't know what is going to be required of me, but I know I don't have it. I need it from you! Give me the foresight to see what is coming, the wisdom to know what to do, and the contentment to rest in you."

Encountering God through the prism of a pandemic

Anne Dondapati Allen

Staff Chaplain at University of Colorado Hospital (Anschutz Campus)

In my ministry as a hospital chaplain, I witness the complexity of life on display each day in the frenzy of the E.R., in the quiet corners of the waiting room, and in the whispered conversations at an anxious patient's bedside. During either brief encounters or hours-long conversations, chaplains meet people at their most vulnerable and fragile points and, at their invitation, we accompany them on their journey of "meaning-making." An empathetic presence, a listening ear and a word of encouragement can transform those points of vulnerability into opportunities for spiritual discovery, meaningful connection and restoration.

One of the most crucial components of a hospital chaplain is to bear witness to life as it unfolds through the prism of a medical crisis. On any given day, I encounter generations of a family crowded into a patient's room to celebrate a birthday. Patient's rooms are adorned with the freshest arrangements from the flower shop. Anxious grandparents race through the lobby with balloons announcing the birth of the newest addition to a family. Cards from the gift shop offer words of comfort and encouragement after a loss. Volunteers read to an elderly patient or play cards with someone experiencing a long hospitalization. Lobbies and cafeterias bustling with people was a common sight.

This normalcy was shattered abruptly and unceremoniously as COVID-19 took over our lives. Balloons and flowers became sources of contamination and visitor restrictions were in place to protect patients, families, staff and the community. This new reality hit home on a Saturday this past spring as I stood transfixed at the double doors leading to the newly converted COVID-19 I.C.U. The thin sliver of glass embedded in the solid wooden door revealed a sight that was shocking to me. Masked figures, unrecognizable through their protective gear moved about hurriedly and with quiet determination as they conferred with each other and disappeared into the patient rooms. Questions raced through my mind – could I be fully present with my patients camouflaged behind layers of protective equipment? How do I comfort a family member through the screen of an iPad?

I felt a sense of guilt that I could still minister from afar, unlike most healthcare workers. Standing at the threshold of the unit I prayed Psalm 121: *"I lift up my eyes to the hills, where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth."*

I found refuge in prayer, and in time, I embraced this new reality. Unprecedented times offered unexpected opportunities to minister! Technology became an essential tool in the effort to minimize the isolation caused by social distancing. Chaplains occupied that tender and sometimes tenuous space between the patient and their loved ones as we worked tirelessly to create meaningful connection. Phone calls, video chats or Zoom all brought families to the bedside, which offered a brief respite from the distress and loneliness.

And so, to the parents of a young man with some developmental delays, I was the voice on the phone for weeks. I listened to them as they shared stories about their son, his resilient spirit and his strong faith. Each conversation ended with a request to say a prayer at the door of their son's room. We met for the first time on the day that he was taken off life support. They had one last request as they left the unit – "Chaplain, would you say a prayer over our son after we leave?" I honored their wish, and prayed one last time, commending their beloved son into the presence of his Creator.

When travel restrictions made it impossible to be at the bedside, a device ushered in a large extended family into the room of a young mother who was dying. As trembling hands held the iPad over the patient, loved ones gathered virtually, speaking quiet words of comfort and encouragement. Standing at the foot of the bed, for a moment, I was overcome with a profound sense of sadness. But as I listened to the young child say her goodbyes and assured her mother that God loved her, I was moved by her faith and resilient spirit.

Through the prism of an unpredictable pandemic, I encountered a God who is steadfast, a Word that is unchanging, and I encountered opportunities to serve in surprising and new ways. I am grateful to God for the opportunity to serve in a hospital where chaplains are considered "essential" to the spiritual and emotional wellbeing of patients and families! The impact of the pandemic continues to unfold, and at times, I am still haunted by the grief and the loss – of time, normalcy, the predictability of visitors, flower arrangements, balloons and the chaos of the cafeteria. When the unknown overwhelms me, I bind these words to my heart: **I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you (Psalm 32:8)**

A summer to plan for future summers at camp

Maggie Harrop

Cabin Leader & Co-Director for Primary Camp at WYOBA

I have been going to Camp WYOBA since fourth grade. And so, this year would have marked my ninth year of being the director of Primary Camp. I'm also a cabin leader, which I have been doing since high school. Starting in 2012, I have been a cabin leader for the Senior High, Junior High, and Junior camps. Plus, I'm a board member for WYOBA as well.

Every summer, I look forward to camp. Usually by February or March, the brainstorming begins as I start to plan with my co-director for Primary Camp. I work for the school district as a para-professional, and usually by April (when things start get to be a little stressful with the kiddos), I remind myself that in just a few months I get to be at Camp WYOBA! This year, however, was different since we did not have camp at all. Deep down, I know that those who go to camp each summer may have felt a "little down or angry." For me, I was bummed at first, because there would not be any camp, which meant I would need to find something to occupy my time, such as enjoying the beauty of Wyoming and going on a hike or two. Despite all of this, I understood—and now really believe—it was a good decision to not have camp this year.

Since there was no camp in 2020, the WYOBA Board decided to have three different work weeks. One in June, July, and August. I decided I would go up to help at the work weeks and to get my WYOBA fix! I helped paint bunks, build the new snack shack, and create some cubbies. Oh wait! I cannot forget helping with the fire suppression, which included moving logs so that we could make some woodchips! Check out the Camp Wyoba Facebook page to see pictures of other projects that were done! The best part (and the thing I enjoyed most about the work weeks) was meeting new people and being able

to catch up with some of the WYOBA family including campers, cabin leaders, camp nurses, board members, the cook, the administrator and his staff.

As the school year begins, I'm preparing to go back to school knowing that things will be different this fall. I am looking forward to being in school and being able to see kids. The best part about school starting is that in just a few months, usually in November, my co-director and I will start talking and thinking about a theme for Primary Camp and before we know it, we will start planning for the Summer of 2021!

I know not having camp in 2020 was hard on many, but I believe that God had other plans and having work weeks was what was needed to get some big projects completed that were needed for WYOBA! I look forward to 2021 knowing that we will have camp again and I will be able to reconnect and to see more of my WYOBA family!

My first week of virtual teaching ...

Bill Wolfe

Pastor and Writer

Like a lightweight boxer going back to his corner, I survived the first round of my virtual teaching week. My trainer mopped up the perspiration on my virtual face and checked for technology cuts and scrapes as I stood in front of her counter. She patted me on the head and gave me some quick instructions.

“Watch out for the clueless expressions you see. They’re just trying to catch you off-guard. And be aware of the faders, the ones who suddenly only are showing the top part of their head and hiding their eyes from being seen on the screen. That’s the student who’s probably eating a Chipotle burrito. Since his sound is muted, you can’t hear the munching! Or, even worse, he’s holding a video game controller in his hands and playing Fortnite!”

She sent me back out to face Schoology and Google Drive. I thought they had me in the opening moments, but as the first-round week of classes progressed I gained more confidence, a little swagger in my virtual dancing, and dodging.

“What about the kid who figured out how to mute me? What do I do about him?”

“Don’t worry about him! We’ll take care of his disrespectful attitude and just when he thinks he’s causing you to pull your hair out and he puts his guard down, he’s going to take a fall!”

“You’re doing great! You don’t act like an eLearning rookie teacher. You’re impressing some of these kids, but don’t get cocky! You lose your focus and all of a sudden you’re in some no man’s land screen and there’s no going back. Stay with the game plan, stay with the assignment! Remember, this is going multiple rounds. The first round is just to get you breathing hard, but not to the point that you hyperventilate.”

The bell was about to ring to indicate another round of going at it.

“What if there’s a multi-punch attack? Should I cover up, protect myself, stay on the defensive for a moment?”

“No! That’s when you dance around and tell one of the thousands of stories that calm the swell. Be smart! Revert back to that story about the kid who could never remember to bring a pencil to class with him. These kids still remember the pencil days. Use that to your advantage! Dance around with that episode for a few moments, that will settle down their aggressive natures and put you back in control.”

“Gotcha’!”

“Schoology is going to try to throw an uppercut at you. Stay focused and stay sharp. You get through this next round and you can get another cup of coffee!”

“I could use that caffeine right now.”

“Suck it up, buttercup! You’ve got to earn it!”

There was a fire in her eyes. I clapped my gloves together and faced my next screen filled with 12-year-old faces. “I’ve got this...kinda’!”

Having the faith to see and to sing beyond COVID

Don and Fran Lambert
ABC Fort Collins

Our lives, like most of yours, have been impacted by COVID-19. Sometimes, we think we are just sitting around, but, as you can see, we have a lot going on!

To start, we began this time with something we had talked about ever since we had to euthanize our beloved cocker spaniel in 2014. We decided to adopt a rescue dog in mid-February of this year and began looking online. We adopted Annie on March 10, and the next week began the time of stay-at-home “orders.” I tell you this because we not only helped her out of what had been a horrific time on the streets, but she has brought us much joy during this time! We have had many reasons to laugh every day. (No, I am not suggesting that you all should have a dog ... this is the Lamberts’ story of COVID-19.)

We also realize that having each other (and both of us being in good health) has kept us from being lonely. Yes, of course, we miss seeing our friends in person, but we have kept in touch via phone, text, ZOOM, and an occasional look from our garage or through the glass in our front door! Our ZOOM church experience has been a wonderful gift, though not like being in-person. Our being able to visit with one another after worship, before our scheduled time is up, has been a lifeline among us! Rev. Kimberly asked Don and me to “lead” the singing! We can see everyone singing along at home. Not a bad way to go considering the situation!

We both miss our group activities, including the singing groups, which probably will not be restarted until Fall of 2021. If it is sooner, we will be happy! Don also was volunteering on a remodeling project for homeless families and a day center, but both were halted. We can still talk over the fence with our young neighbors. We even celebrated a neighbor’s 80th birthday party

in our cul-de-sac ... masks and social-distancing required! A band at a distance ... a wonderful evening with neighbors and friends.

We have been very fortunate to spend time with our children because each of them felt the need to self-quarantine before coming from Gillette, Minneapolis, Durango, and Casper to spend the 4th of July with us! What a lift of spirits that was, for them, as well as their parents!

During this time, we also were able to spend time with our MN son and daughter-in-law for Don’s 85th birthday. They had traveled with a trailer, and had a permit for entry to RMNP, where we had a picnic lunch. Dad’s don’t turn 85 very often!

We, just last night, celebrated 65 years of marriage with dinner from Olive Garden ... curbside pick-up!

We have followed the recommendations from the CDC and our public health department, learned to order groceries online for pick-up, learned to ZOOM for church, and for visits with family and Elderhaus board meetings, learned “What’s App” with our granddaughter in Ireland, read books, and have done puzzles, etc.

We, along with all of you, are looking forward to the end of this, knowing that it could be some time, but our faith keeps us looking to the future! We will be wearing masks (not what we would ever have envisioned), social distancing, and washing our hands more often than we ever thought necessary! Being in the vulnerable population does not frighten us, but we will continue to be cautious!

We pray for all of those “gathered,” our churches, communities, the world, as a whole. **May we be a comfort to those who so need comforting!**

Note: In mid-March, as the COVID-19 situation began to unfold in America, Executive Minister Steve Van Ostran wrote a collection of pastoral letters to address our Christian concerns and obligations. These letters also included an Easter reflection, guidance for re-opening our churches, and a heart-felt address of the racism and social unrest in our country. Facsimiles are thus presented here as a historical marker of this year.



March 12, 2020

Dear Pastors and Congregations,

I am writing today related to your response as a Community of Faith to COVID-19 (aka, the Coronavirus.) I am fully aware that you don't need another piece to read that reminds you to "Wash your hands!" Instead, I want to address the spiritual impact of this crisis.

During the past few weeks, my attitude about Coronavirus has vacillated from interest to annoyance to frustration and even to sadness and depression. I suspect your attitude has vacillated as well. The vacillation is due to many factors:

- The sensationalism in our world today is not just in media but also in politics, advertising and the world in general
- The flood of information that has come our way related to the virus
- The preponderance of misinformation in media of all forms; from social media to advertising and yes, even some preachers who stoke fear or have some miracle products to sell
- The tendencies of our culture toward mass hysteria and fear
- The sense of moving from crisis to crisis
- The need to respond and the recognition that our response will require sacrifice and giving up some of the things we want and/or are used to doing.

I suspect I am not alone in this myriad of emotions related to the virus.

This crisis and the many like it remind me of the original responses to AIDS or HIV. It reminds me of how the fear of that virus and the things we didn't know caused us to alienate and vilify the victims of this virus. Not only where the victims denied contact with their uninfected loved ones, but even the health care community denied them the gift of human touch. To be fair, this was mostly out of ignorance about the disease, but the isolation and separation was dehumanizing to those who were afflicted.

"Social distancing" is the most effective way to curb the spread of the Coronavirus. That will mean some folks will be quarantined (either voluntarily or by mandate) and others will be encouraged to limit their interactions in multiple ways.

As our nation makes progress in a program to deal with the Coronavirus that emphasizes social distancing, I want to caution against allowing this social distancing to lead to dehumanization. I know that comparing the two viruses and our response is unequal. But I also know the importance of human touch, contact and love. One of Jesus' greatest acts of compassion was to reach out and touch the lepers ... not just heal them. While the ability to meet together via technology allows us to conduct worship, committee meetings and even lots of our business, it excludes personal touch. We are going to have to be careful to find ways to provide this; not just for our membership, but for others.

So, please educate yourselves on the things we need to do to help slow the spread of the virus. If you need help with this, visit our website where we are compiling a list of resources that offer a variety of suggestions (abcrm.org/coronavirus).

Continued on next page ...

I encourage you to live into our calling to be an “agent of peace.” It is important that in the church we cull the excessive anxiety created by media and politicians. The church can and should be a community in which we can discuss our fears and share trustworthy information.

Please live stream your services for those who really should not be out, because as you know COVID-19 is particularly hard on the elderly and those with compromised immune systems. But continue to hold services with those who can and will come. Again, if you need ideas related to this, visit our website.

Please practice alternative forms of greeting--fist bumps and elbow taps--but don't be afraid to hug someone who REALLY needs it (as long as you are both healthy). If not, or if you are not sure, find a way to communicate that same concern and love without the physical touch to be fully present with them in their hurt, grief or sorrow without taking the chance of infecting them or being infected. Often a small, thoughtful gift or a well-timed text or phone-call can be just as powerful as a physical hug!

Please stay home when you are sick, but don't forget to visit those who can't get out even if you have to refrain from the “sit down” and all you can do is drop off a fresh supply of toilet paper! (I would prefer a pie, but it seems like TP might be more valuable today!)

And throughout all of this, please remember to proclaim the message that our God is a God of Hope, Healing and Love, not a god of fear. There are enough evangelists of the god of fear already ... we are called to be evangels of Jesus; proclaimers of Good News!

To that end, I pray that each of you, pastors, congregations and friends, will remain healthy throughout this time of crisis. And, if not, that God would grant your body the strength to ward off the virus quickly. But whatever befalls, I trust that you will be filled with God's Spirit of Grace, Peace and Love throughout.

In Christ,

Steve Van O
Executive Minister



American Baptist Churches
of the **Rocky Mountains**
Empowered Churches.

A Pastoral Letter to Our ABCRM Family ...

From: Rev. Dr. Steve Van Ostran, Executive Minister

ABCRM Family and Friends,

Lent and Easter 2020 not going to turn out like any of us expected. When we were making plans for this week and this coming weekend back in January, none of us foresaw a world-wide pandemic that would not only threaten the health and the lives of so many, but would literally shut-down our economy, banish us to our homes and keep us from gathering together to worship.

No, the real world situation has made it so that unless our congregation is no bigger than eight, unless we ignore the current guidelines from the CDC and other experts, unless we let our own selfish piety take the place of common sense and love for our neighbor – we will not worship together, face to face, shoulder to shoulder, dressed in our new Sunday best and packed into the rows of pews like Peeps in their stylized cardboard coops. Oh, we might be able to see one another as we sit in individual cars watching the worship team perform at the far end of the parking lot while straining to understand the preacher's words over the tinny sound of the radio speakers, but we won't be face to face.

And for many of us, this inability to gather in worship grieves us.

But the fact that we can't gather together in worship, can't gather together with those outside of our own household, can't gather in our familiar sanctuaries does not mean we cannot gather together in the same place and experience the same inspiration for worship.

You see, although we can't gather together physically, **we can gather together** around the places and events of this Holy Week — and we don't even need to have a telephone or computer connection.

On Thursday evening, **we can gather together** around The Last Supper. We can gather individually, as a family in or homes or maybe even with a small group together around the scriptures that describe that event (Matthew 26:17-30, Mark 14:12-26, Luke 22:2-23 and John 13: 1-17) and remember what it must have been like for the disciples that night. **We can gather together** in our silence as we reflect upon the events that unfolded as Jesus washed the disciples feet and commanded them to serve others as He had served them; or as we reflect upon the radical statement of Jesus that one of them would betray Him, or even as He takes the Bread and Cup after supper. **We can gather together** around this story.

On Friday, **we can gather together** at the foot of the cross (Matthew 27:27-44; Mark 15:16-32; Luke 23:26-43; John 19:16-27). **We can gather together** with the disciples and Jesus' mother and those who bravely accompanied her. We can watch as Jesus struggles up the road to Golgotha and as He stumbles and falls. We can hear the clang of the

Continued on next page ...

nails as they are driven into the hands and feet of Jesus's hands and feet that we aspire to be for Him today — and then hear not only the Seven Last Words of our Savior, but also the confessions of the centurion and the thief. And we can feel the air grow cold as the clouds gather and block out the sun, draping it as one would a cloak in more modern times upon the passing of our Lord. And we can witness the rush of getting His broken body off of the cross and buried in the tomb in order to satisfy the Sabbath regulations — regulations He had proclaimed should serve man, not the other way around!

And even more, **we can gather together** on Sunday morning outside the grave where they had rushed to put His body (Matthew 28:1-10, Mark 16:1-8, Luke 24:1-44, John 20:1-29) and witness the women coming early in the morning for the horrible, gruesome but loving job of cleaning and preparing the body only to find the tomb empty. We can witness the disciples running to the grave to verify the words of the women and even see the one whom the women had thought was a gardener reveal Himself to Mary Magdalene.

No, we cannot gather together to worship physically this year, but **WE CAN GATHER TOGETHER** around the stories and the places of Jesus's life, death and resurrection, even if we are sitting alone in our own living room.

Instead of focusing on not being together physically, this Easter we can focus on being together in God's Kingdom through experiencing Christ's great love together in Scripture.

Praying for you and yours this Holy Week and looking forward to Gathering Together In His Word.

Amen.

In Christ,

Steve Van O



American Baptist Churches
of the **Rocky Mountains**
Empowered Churches.

A Pastoral Letter on The Paycheck Protection Program

From: Rev. Dr. Steve Van Ostran, Executive Minister

Pastors and Church Leaders,

Dear Friends,

Uncharacteristically, I am writing this third pastor letter to you during this Covid-19 Crisis. The occasion for my writing is related to the second round of the Paycheck Protection Program, but I'm not so much concerned with that as I am with the state of the church.

This round, like the first, would provide funds for churches, businesses and other organizations who continue to provide employment to their staff during this difficult time. On first blush, this is a good thing that I and my colleagues in denominational leadership have endorsed and promoted to you. If you and your congregation were unable to successfully obtain funding in the first round, I encourage you to get informed and be ready for this second round — although I must admit some reluctance on my part! It was there with the first round as well, but I was unable to put into words my concerns then.

You see, as a Baptist, the idea of the state funding a program of the church is always a little concerning — and yes, I know there are protections built into the bill to guard against the more common concerns we Baptists and other religious leaders have expressed over time. My greater concern is the church nestling down further in the bed of state and government, both institutions that were created and ordained by God, but for separate and distinct purposes. The more we nestle down in the same bed, the more difficult it is for us to fulfill our separate functions.

If we remember our history, it was the marriage of the institutionalized church to the monarchies of Europe that spawned the “protestant” revolution. In particular it was the marriage of the Anglican Church and English Monarchy that caused a group of English Separatists to find their way to the New World and organize what has become the Baptists of America (not just ABC mind you, but the whole lot of us “Baptists”). This marriage of the church and the monarchy kept the Anglican church from fulfilling its role as a moral guidepost for the monarchy when it began wander into morally questionable lifestyles. Further, it was this marriage of the church and monarchy that caused the Crown to delve into and to order the arrest of those whose theologies would question that of the Anglican church. In other words, it was the marriage of the two that politicized the church and kept it from serving one of its core roles, to be a moral guide-post as was Nathan for King David.

And while I am not as concerned that the American church will be reluctant to criticize the American Government out of loyalty to one who bailed us out in our time of need, I am concerned that we are becoming a political lackey for the Government AND even more am concerned that this leads to a further abdication of another of our

Continued on next page ...

duties as Christ's church; the duty to care and provide for the "least of these" (Matthew 25). Our failure there has compromised our ability to speak with authority to our culture.

It seems to me that one of primary responsibilities of the church is to care for the poor, the sick, the abandoned, the disenfranchised, as commanded (or at least commended) by Jesus in the parable of the Sheep and Goats. If my understanding of our history is correct, from the formation of our country the church took responsibility for "the least of these" by creating and running orphanages, hospitals, schools and other of what we today call social service ministries.

But in the last hundred years we have begun to abandon that responsibility.

We have abandoned it by the insistence that government take responsibility for many of these concerns and by our spinning off the church's ministries into separate organizations that can receive funds from the government without complication. Many of these organizations remain connected to the church in name only, operated by an independent board as a non-profit organization that may or may not give homage to its Christian heritage.

And all of this has led us to a point that when the church stands up to say, "This is wrong", society says "Who cares? What has "the church" done for me? The government gives me money to put food on the table! This hospital with a Christian name may take care of me, but it's not the church! It's Medicare that pays my bills!"

And now the government is offering to help the church itself out in this time of crisis.

Nothing ostensibly wrong with it.

Unless it shifts our dependence in times of crisis from a God who cares to a Government who pretends to care (I don't see the politicians weeping over the deaths of the Corona victims as Jesus did over Lazrus!).

In whom we depend will shift if this money is used to merely keep the doors of the church open (so to speak within the limits of social distancing), and we neglect fulfilling the purpose of the church.

But if this money is used to allow the real ministry of the church to be carried on—to feed the hungry, to heal the sick, to educate our young, to visit the lonely, to encourage the fearful—if it will be used to actually do the things Christ created the church for, then it is one God ordained institution helping out another.

So, I am writing not so much as an expression of support or concern about the PPP.

I am writing to encourage the church in this time to continue to be the church.

I am writing to remind the church that our help comes from on High, not from Washington.

I am writing to remind you that the church can still be the church, even without a paycheck.

In Christ,

Steve Van O



American Baptist Churches
of the **Rocky Mountains**
Empowered Churches.

Phone: 303.988.3900 • Fax: 303.988.0620
Email: office@abcrim.org • Website: www.abcrim.org

Wednesday, April 29, 2020

To: ABCRM Pastors and Church Leaders
From: Steve Van Ostran and ABCRM Staff
Re: Plans and Preparations for the Reopening of Your Church for Congregational Meetings

Dear Friends,

As state and local governments are beginning to loosen their shelter-in-place and stay-at-home orders, many of you are wondering when you might be able to reopen your buildings for public worship and other congregational programs. We are writing today to urge patience and the utilization of a process that keeps the safety and security of your congregation and community foremost in your minds.

We remind you that we in church leadership are called by Christ to be “shepherds” not only of our flock, but of the extended flock within the community whom Christ hopes to call to Him. Shepherds are charged with leading their sheep to good pasture AND to protect the flock from predators and other dangerous conditions that might harm them. For this reason, **shepherds proceed with caution**, they do not lead their flocks into areas where danger exists but instead into places where their flock can graze and rest “beside the still waters” not the rushing and dangerous waters.

To that end, as you and your leadership team consider reopening your building, you must be sure you have taken safety of your congregants into account before you open the building. We would encourage you to **have deep conversations with your leadership team**. This is a decision that is best made together. With some on your leadership team, you will need to calm their anxiousness to open, for others you might need to calm their fears.

You will want to **do appropriate cleaning and sanitizing of the facility**. In addition, you will need to make arrangements for ongoing cleaning and sanitation. Some churches are hiring professional cleaning services to ensure that proper practices and procedures are being followed.

Steve Van Ostran
Executive Minister/Secretary

Estelle Torpy
Past President

Matt Manning
President

Jackie Clark
Treasurer

Eugene Downing
Vice-President

You also need to take care to **abide by “social distancing” requirements that remain in place.** For example, you need to require that masks be worn by all and that hand sanitizer is readily available. You need to be sure that you have reviewed your worship service and made accommodation for those traditional parts of the service that might unintentionally spread the virus like the passing out of bulletins, the offering plate and the use of hymnals and pew bibles that are hard to sanitize. If you do a fellowship or a “passing of the peace”, how will you do that?

You will need to have a **plan for visitors and for the care of nursery aged children.**

Keep in mind that just because the economy opens up does not mean that the church should open if you are not able to do it safely. Frankly, we feel that in most cases, it is too soon to consider opening your building for regular worship services and encourage you to proceed cautiously, prayerfully and faithfully in this matter. Trust the Spirit to guide you to the appropriate time for your community, balancing their safety and security needs with their needs for spiritual care and community connection.

We encourage you to review the recommendations from ABC-USA found on our website at: <insert link here> and your state’s Executive orders: <Place Links here with State Name> . The ABC-USA resource is currently being updated with some additional ideas and suggestions to be released later this week. We will repost the updated resource as soon as it is available.

Please know that your Region staff continues to pray for you and to seek to walk alongside you during this time. If you have questions about how to proceed, call me or your Ministry and Mission Coach or join the Covid Conversation on Tuesdays at 11:00 a.m. where we discuss these issues.

In Christ,

Steve Van O and the entire ABCRM Staff

Steve Van Ostran
Executive Minister/Secretary

Estelle Torpy
Past President

Matt Manning
President

Jackie Clark
Treasurer

Eugene Downing
Vice-President



American Baptist Churches of the Rocky Mountains

Empowered Churches.

...Deliver Us from Evil....

Every Sunday, American Baptists throughout the Rocky Mountain Region and across the USA pray together the prayer that Jesus taught us to say. In this prayer we repeat the phrase, *Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil*; a reminder that it is indeed God who will ultimately deliver us from the evil that we encounter in this world. Jesus also taught us to pray this prayer as a reminder that we are to participate with Him in being instruments of that deliverance from evil; just as He called Peter to follow Him to become a “fisher of men.” We pray for deliverance from evil as a reminder of our responsibility to do what we can to project Christ’s love into the world where we so often experience pain and despair through social and other injustices. Our hope is to usher in Christ’s Kingdom here on earth as it is in heaven, all the while knowing that the best we can achieve in this world is a mere reflection of our future reality..

In recent weeks, evil has been especially rampant here in the US for our African American community. The global pandemic has disproportionately impacted the Black Community for a number of reasons that include the realities of “institutionalized racism” in our country that limits their access to adequate health care and that the shut-down has also disproportionately impacted this community. Even more blatantly, during the last several weeks, this community and our nation have experienced a number of incidents of social injustice as a result of this racism, culminating in the untimely and horrific death of George Floyd in Minneapolis at the hands of police officers.

The angst and anger of this has boiled over and renewed the justified protests of many in our communities that change must happen. As these protests have happened, others have used these protests to further their own evil interests by inciting violence, looting and creating destruction, rather than merely protesting the injustices that have been experienced.

As followers of Christ, we are called to be instruments of peace and to prophetically proclaim and come alongside the victims of evil and injustice wherever it is found. As followers of Christ we are called to love one another as Christ has loved us. As followers of Christ, we are taught that when one of our brothers or sisters is suffering that we too are suffering, that we are to bear one another’s burdens. what impacts one part of our body, impacts the whole body, so no matter whether we are a rural church or downtown church, whether most of the faces in our congregation are black or white, we have to own this as OUR problem. We confess that too often and for too many years, our white congregations have been deaf to this plea from our black congregations.

Therefore...

Steve Van Ostran
Executive Minister/Secretary

Matt Manning
President

Eugene Downing
Vice-President

Estelle Torpy
Past President

Jackie Clark
Treasurer

- **I am calling for the leaders and members of American Baptist Churches in the Rocky Mountains to join me in responding to the evil that is among us;** to not only pray for the deliverance from evil, but to actively work to drive it from our midst and to create a stronghold for Christ’s kingdom by signing a public statement of our mutual commitment to become educated about and active in Christ’s work of loving others as ourselves.
- **I am calling on the ABCRM Board to make the work of actively eliminating institutional and socialized racism as one of its core functions** by the appointing of a task force that will work collaboratively with other like-minded organizations to educate our constituents about these issues, to create programs and ministries that actively seek to tear down the walls of isolation that prevent us from seeing these injustices, and to encourage our congregations and people to create relationships that cross the lines of our race, age, social status, professions and ethnicities.
- **I am calling for ABCRM Congregations whose are predominately European in ethnicity to commit to seeking out partner congregations** of different majority ethnicities or race for the purpose of building relationships that will help us to understand both the reality of “white privilege” and the effects of institutionalized racism.
- **I am calling on ABCRM pastors to speak out** through their preaching and teaching opportunities on the Christian responsibility to walk alongside our brothers and sisters who experience injustice.

In Christ,



Rev. Steven C. Van Ostran, D. Min.
Executive Minister

Steve Van Ostran
Executive Minister/Secretary

Matt Manning
President

Eugene Downing
Vice-President

Estelle Torpy
Past President

Jackie Clark
Treasurer

BUSINESSMEETING

Visit abcrm.org/the-gathering-2020 to vote and for more information.



BUSINESS SESSION 2020

Saturday, Sept. 26, 2020

| 9-10:30 a.m. |

1. Call to Order
2. Adoption of Process and Consent Items
3. Presentation of President's Report* | Rev. Matt Manning |
4. Presentation of Executive Minister's Report* | Steve Van Ostran |
5. Presentation of Financial Report* | Karen VanValkenburgh |
6. Business Items
7. Meeting of the Wyoming Baptist Convention
8. Meeting of the Colorado Baptist Convention
9. Recall of ABCRM and Adjournment

* These reports will be available online at www.abcrm.org for your review.



RULES OF PROCEDURE

Delegates to the Annual Session

1. Each member congregation is entitled to two (2) delegates to the Region meeting for the first 150 resident members (or fewer), plus one (1) delegate for each 150 resident members. More than 75 additional resident members will entitle the congregation to an additional delegate. These delegates shall be certified by the congregation as its official representatives.
 - a. Each delegate shall have one (1) vote.
 - b. An alternate delegate may be elected for each delegate.
 - c. Voting members of the Region Board shall be voting delegates.
 - d. Others who are not delegates are encouraged to attend and may participate in discussion of motions, but have no vote.

BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES 2019**American Baptist Churches of the Rocky Mountains
2019 Annual Gathering****Minutes
Business Session
Friday, September 27, 2019**

1. Call to Order—The American Baptist Churches of the Rocky Mountains Annual Gathering Business Session held at Central Baptist Church in Denver, CO was called to order at 11:45 am by Board President Matt Manning.
2. Adoption of Agenda—This year, if you have a business item to bring up, just raise your hand. With 63 delegates and 26 churches represented, the agenda, as presented in the Gathering book, and this change was voted on and passed.
3. A motion was made by Rich Schweissing to approve the Minutes of 2018 Gathering. Second by Cynthia Rigsby and passed.
4. Matt Manning presented his President's Report which can be found on page 17 of the Gathering book. He feels very proud to serve at the Board President and to see the vision served.
5. Executive Minister's report—Executive Minister Steve Van Ostran presented his report, which is found on page 18 of the Gathering book. One of the big things he sees as our next step is to continue to rebuild trust within the Region. To become "we" and not seen as "you all". He would like for you to pray for us and with us to see what it is we are to do as a Region.
6. Financial Report—Karen VanValkenburgh presented the financial report. She'll be referring to pages 37-47 in the Gathering book.
7. Audit Report (pages 37-43). She stated that our numbers are really good, the controls we have in place are to keep honest people honest, and that our audit came back clean. She then reviewed all of the financial statements. Called for questions, there were none.
8. Business Items – Matt called for business items. There were none.
9. Nominating Committee—Estelle Torpy reported on the Nomination Committee. We do not have any officers to vote on this year. We will need to replace the Northern Front Range Representative since Jeff Lundblad has resigned. The staff and board are working on this. In the coming year, she and the staff will be talking with you. We will need to replace some board members soon. If you have suggestions please reach out to Steve Van Ostran, Matt Manning or Estelle.
10. Wyoming Baptist Convention—the meeting of ABCRM was recessed at 12:20 pm and the meeting of the Wyoming Baptist Convention was convened.
11. Wyoba Board Nominations. Jenita presented the Wyoba Board elections: Doug Rigsby, FBC Gillette and Maggie Harrop, FBC Laramie for reelection. Diane Edwards, FBC Torrington for election as a new board member. No motion was needed. Nominees were passed by voice vote. The meeting of the Wyoming Baptist Convention was adjourned.
12. Colorado Baptist Convention—the meeting of the Colorado Baptist Convention was convened at 12:23 pm. Matt declared that there was no news and the meeting of the Colorado Baptist Convention was adjourned.
13. Adjournment—the Annual Meeting of the American Baptist Churches of the Rocky Mountains adjourned at 12:24 pm with closing prayer by Rev. Eugene Downing of New Hope Baptist Church.

GATHERINGREPORTS



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REGION STAFF

Executive Minister	Steve Van Ostran
Ministry & Mission Coaches	Larron D. Jackson Mike Oldham Rodney Perry
Ministry & Mission Facilitator	James Conley
Pastor to Pastor	Kim Skattum
Region Administrator	Karen VanValkenburgh
Future Leaders Minister	Lauren Parliament
Communications	Brian Keithline
Camp Wyoba Administrator	Gary Hazen

REGIONAL BOARD OFFICERS

President	Matt Manning*
Vice President	Eugene Downing*
Treasurer	Jackie Clark*
Secretary	Steve Van Ostran*
Past President	Estelle Torpy*
Executive Minister	Steve Van Ostran*

REGIONAL BOARD MEMBERS

Jenita Carlton	Brenda Schladweiler
Seong Choi	Darren Stroh*
David DeMott	Harry Talbott
Kay Farley*	Lori Winblood
LaRose Karr	Joe Zepeda
Rodney Perry*	(* Executive Committee)

MINISTERIAL LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE

- **Dave DeMott**, Chairperson
- **Adam Johnson** (Ebenezer Baptist Church)
- **Gordon Kieft** (Calvary Baptist Church)
- **Bruce Lange** (First Baptist Church Laramie)
- **Jan McCormack** (Denver Seminary)
- **Bryan Newman** (Grace Gathering)

MISSIONS COMMITTEE

- **John Turnage**, Chairperson, First Baptist Church (Loveland)
- **Roger Dickenson**, Calvary Baptist Church (Denver)
- **Bill Johnson**, Ecumenical Church (Pueblo West)
- **Richard Schweissing**, Crossroads Church (Northglenn)
- **Ida Gice Smith**, Rising Star Missionary Baptist Church (Denver)

*Look at the birds of the air:
they neither sow nor reap nor gather
into barns, and yet your heavenly
Father feeds them.
Are you not of more value
than they?
(Mt. 6:26, ESV).*

NOMINATIONS

PRESIDENT



Eugene Downing

Has currently served as the Board's Vice President for the past two years, and he is the pastor of New Hope Baptist Church in Denver. Reverend Dr. Eugene Downing has helped to shape a church with God's vision of becoming a congregation known for Inspiring Hope in Christ. Learn more about Eugene at www.newhopechurch-denver.org.



Lacy McCuiston

I have been married to Brandon McCuiston for 15 years and we have 3 boys: Hagen 14, Bruley 12, Syler 8. I am a high school Language Arts and Spanish Teacher at Fowler High School. I am currently teaching two dual credit or concurrent English courses through Otero Junior College. I am also our school's sponsor for FCAS (Fellowship of Christian Athletes and Students). I have a BA in Organizational Communication, MA in Literacy Language and Culture and +18 masters credits in English. Brandon and I were married in the Fowler Christian Church, but found after our boys were born that First Baptist Church of Fowler better suited our family. We have been members of FBC Fowler for over 10 years. Our boys have been raised in FBC Fowler, and we cannot express how blessed we are to have the church family we have. Throughout our time at FBC we have been involved in Backyard Mission Projects, mission fundraisers, and adding technology, music, and reviving our old church camp. This summer we held a youth camp for our youth and their friends as COVID-19 kept our kids from Quaker Ridge. Our children are very involved in athletics, music and academics. My "free-time" is usually spent in a gym, at a pool, at the ball field or shuttling boys from one point to another. When the opportunity to serve on a broader spectrum was presented to me, I prayed for guidance and asked our church family to pray for me, in addition I discussed it in depth with the boys and Brandon. This decision was not met lightly, and I am excited for the opportunity.

VICE PRESIDENT

TREASURER



Jackie Clark

Currently serves as the Board's Treasurer, and is the Office Administrator of Aurora Hills Church, and the wife of ABCRM Pastor Charlie W. Clark. Jackie has served as the Region Treasurer for the past year.

ACTIONS OF THE REGION BOARD NOVEMBER 2019 TO AUGUST 2020

Executive Committee - November 22, 2019:

Mission Support: Steve Van Ostran recommended increasing the Aragon's Support from \$4500 to \$10,000 yearly. Matt Manning seconded the motion. Motion Passed.

For 2020 the Executive Minister recommended our mission budget be:

- \$10,000 to Juan and Denise Aragon
- \$10,000 to IM (for administrative costs)
- \$15,000 for Mission Support
- \$15,000 for miscellaneous mission needs

Matt Manning seconded the motion, and the motion passed.

Personnel Committee: The Executive Committee approved the compensation for the ABCRM staff for 2020. The Executive Committee also approved housing allowance amounts for larron Jackson, Mike Oldham and Steve Van Ostran. The Executive Committee approved Christmas gifts for the staff.

Executive Committee - March 20, 2020 (Zoom):

Clarification has been sought about the Region's Ministerial Leadership Committee (MLC) currently chaired by Rev. Dave DeMott. The MLC has a review process for recognizing ordinations.

Matt: proposed the Executive Committee to designate \$40,000 for \$500 gifts to our churches, and that we designate up to another \$100,000 for grants up to \$1,000 per church for Covid support grants.

Steve: I move we send out a letter to all churches offering a gift of \$500. If they respond affirmatively, ABCRM will send them a gift of \$500. Then, ABCRM will send out an application for a \$1000 grant for any extenuating circumstances. This grant will require that the church identify how the grant money will be used. Second by: Darren Stroh. Motion carried.

Board Meeting - March 5, 2020:

Executive Minister Rev. Dr. Steve Van Ostran led the group through a basic overview of the ABCRM Region structure and the Region Board's role. The board guides the mission or ministry of the region. The region consists of 80 churches.

At the time, the staff consisted of three full-time and three part-time positions. The staff has the most interaction and influence with the churches, their pastors and lay leaders. The region's mission is to empower the local church, equipping leaders and effecting missions both locally and worldwide.

Effective Missions: Steve led a team of five to visit projects started by Vital and Kitly Pierre in the Dominican Republic. They want to develop further relationships with the ABCRM. An extension of gratitude was sent to the Region by Juan and Denise Argon in Mexico, and David and Joyce Reed, whom will participate in Mission Mondays in October during the Virtual Gathering.

(Continued on next page) ...

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National Relationships: Our regional leadership has attended meetings and other opportunities to continue developing relationships with ABHMS and regional executives. ABCLA has partnered with ABCRM giving more opportunity for dialogue than before. Jeff Woods is the acting General Secretary with no set date for a new general secretary to take office.

Mission Table is a guided process to create a future vision. Rodney Perry and Steve Van Ostran were scheduled to participate in a May event that was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Financial concerns for churches during the pandemic thus prompted a discussion and future action to provide a one-time \$500 gift as requested by pastors, and afterwards, to make an application available for a grant as designated and approved by the Board.

Property: Karen reported that \$9,000 was transferred to ABCRM from the closing of Center First Baptist Church. The property was quit-claimed to the Southern Baptist Church in town.

The Foursquare Church that rents the church structure in Greeley has experienced problems with diminishing membership and finances, which continues to be monitored by the Board. The region had four churches close in 2019. There are several churches in fragile condition at this time, Audubon Heights, Simla FBC, Highland Park, and Cherry Creek.

Proposal to Fund New Staff Position: The staff requested that the board approve a new staff position (Future Ministers Leader). A motion was made at that point to approve and to fund that position as stated in the description with \$300,000.00 from board-designated funds for three years.

Executive Committee Meeting - June 5, 2020:

Matt: I move that ABCRM affirms that seeking racial equality is a key focus for the Region therefore staff roles and priorities align to this focus. Jackie Clark seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Sombre Del Monte Christian Church in Albuquerque, NM has voted to close at the end of March 2020. Matt Manning moved to remove the church from the region roles of churches. Darren Stroh seconded. Motion carried.

Executive Committee - July 30, 2020:

Matt made a motion to move the proposed 2021 budget to the board for consideration. Estelle Torpy, past president, seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

(End of the Report).

REGION BOARD PRESIDENT



Dear ABCRM family,

It probably goes without saying, but this has been a wild year. Many of the plans that we were making and overseeing as a board were put on hold as the world changed almost overnight with COVID-19.

Since then, it feels like almost everything is different.

The board, alongside the staff, has tried to navigate this season the best we can. Almost immediately, we realized that churches would need financial support in this season. We sent out an initial gift of \$500 to our churches and then followed that with an additional gift if more was needed. It was a small gesture of support and appreciation for churches continuing to bring the hope of the Gospel in times like this.

As we move forward, we are actively seeking ways to help churches navigate through this season. We believe that the region has a vital role to play in supporting and helping churches find a way through this challenging time and it is our commitment to do so.

If the COVID pandemic was not hard enough, the racial tensions in our country hit a magnitude that we have not witnessed in my lifetime. Under Steve's leadership, a coalition, and eventually a statement, was developed to speak into the racial injustice in our nation. While that was a needed moment of response, the board has also started to look to the future. We have asked Steve and the staff to think through our continuing effort to bring about racial equality in whatever form it needs to take.

We believe that racial justice is core to the Gospel and central to what we are about as a region. I am praying that in the coming years the church and the region can

be a source of hope and provide solutions to the racial tensions that we face in our country.

I am grateful to our staff in the region as they continue to lead us in this new world. They have been navigating this challenging season with grace and courage. I am grateful for the way God blessed the region financially—when a lot of places are worried about how to survive, we have the freedom to move forward with the calling that God has given to us to be the hands and feet of Jesus.

There are a lot of other issues that we have discussed and decided, all of which I am happy to go into with more detail, outside this report. If you have any questions or comments, I am happy to take them. Just give me a call. My number is 720.273.4003.

*Pastor Matt Manning
Crossroads Church*

EXECUTIVE MINISTER

This report to the Board and membership of the ABC of the Rocky Mountains, my 13th such report, cannot be like any of the other 12 reports that I have submitted. Indeed, each of those reports are different; some seeking to convey what has been accomplished, some seeking to “cast a vision”, some written to encourage or promote new ministry.

None, however, were written during a year like this.

The first third of this reporting year was somewhat normal. Following our Annual Gathering, we moved into a “normal” fall program. For me, that meant being involved in a number of meetings for national boards and ministries, doing pulpit supply as asked, planning for spring activities, celebrating the holidays with our constituency and supporting pastors and churches as needed. In January, I took a team from ABCRM to the Dominican Republic to visit our missionaries and their work there. This, ironically was a “pivot” on our part as we had recruited and planned for the team to go to Bolivia, but political unrest made it impossible to follow through on those plans.

The DR trip was quite successful in building new relationships and extending our partnership with IM Global Servants, Ketley and Vital Pierre as well as with their partners, the Maranatha Church and its Association of Haitian congregations in the DR. We even made plans for the Maranatha Church Band to join us in the 2020 Annual Gathering.

Then Covid hit.

Since February, we have all been “pivoting”, trying to fulfill Christ’s purpose and mission for us as communities of faith and as an association of churches joined together to do mission and ministry in a time of social distancing, stay at home, safer at home and - not just restricted travel but basically “no” travel. “Pivot” has become a part of our vocabulary as has “Zoom”, “live-streaming” and “self-quarantine”. Our staff has gone from seeking to have an on-going ministry of presence with our member congregations and their leaders, to trying to be in consistent virtual communi-

cation with them. Our churches have transitioned from seeking to have powerful, live worship sessions in their meeting place to the meeting place being via technology in one of several forms.

As the months progressed, our churches began to talk about how to go back safely to live worship while still providing for those who were uncomfortable with the risk of larger gatherings. We have seen the initial impact of Covid wane and then resurge again as Spring Break, Memorial Day and the reality of too much time being socially distanced have led us to take more risk and reduce the carefully orchestrated routines of mask wearing, fist and elbow bumping, keeping social distanced, hand-washing and temperature taking.

And in the midst of all of Covid, the reality of a society and culture whose structure and construction served to benefit and privilege certain classes and the “white” race by the subjugation of other races and by the perpetuation of suspicion and injustice to those people came to another boiling point.

These injustices and prejudices exist for many races, none more dramatically than the Black community. And so, the pain and agony of black lives lost due to both the corona virus and due to this systemic racism – racism that was lived out in personal actions of abuse and injustice - created another pivot point to which our churches and our association have and must continue to respond.

This has been a year of adjustments, corrections, experiments and trial and error. A year of trying to narrow down and home in on our core values and purpose to make necessary adjustments and corrections.



To that end I issued a series of “Pastoral Letters” to our churches about these various issues. (Copies of these letters are attached as a matter of historical record).

Our staff created and tried a variety of responses to these crises. One of the first things we did was to implement weekly staff check-ins to coordinate our work, and to respond effectively and cohesively to ongoing changes.

These weekly meetings have helped us to develop a better understanding of our core mission and identity. We have refined and restated the core values upon which our work is based and have presented them to the Executive Committee and Board for their approval. By holding these core values and our mission statement before us, it has and will continue to help us support our churches and pastors across their diverse cultural, geographic and theological settings. Like Paul, our focus is upon Christ and His gospel of God’s Love for all of us in our diversity, not upon our diversity itself.

One of the big things that has helped us in this time are the new voices at the table. We have added a new, full-time person to help us in our work, Lauren Parliament. Lauren has been at the table the past couple of years as a seminary intern, but will take a different role as our Minister to Future Leaders. We have also been blessed by the addition of Brian Keithline as a part-time communications director. And while we will be saying good-bye to Rev. Dr. Larron Jackson in his work as Ministry and Mission Coach to the Denver Cluster, we welcome again to the table Rev. Rodney Perry as the Denver Cluster Facilitator and the Director of regional initiative for racial justice and reconciliation.

In addition to our own work, our staff has also created opportunities for weekly conversations with pastors seeking to find ways to encourage, promote and provide opportunities for their “self-care” and to provide on-going pastoral care of their ministry colleagues. At the direction of our Board and its Executive Committee we have created several new Grant Programs and have tried to provide financial support to churches that were responding to the needs generated by these crises.

And at the same time, we tried to carry on the core ministries of ABCRM in ways that model the adaptability and creativity that will be necessary to thrive going forward. Reports about these ministries are provided elsewhere in this book.

Finally, perhaps the most powerful thing that has come out of this year of change and adjustment for me is the identification of three, powerful core initiatives for our team and our work together as an association of churches whose mission is “Empowered Churches:

- **Incarnational Churches** — this is an ongoing initiative for me in that we seek to help our churches to BE the body of Christ in their community and context. I have been preaching that since coming to serve as your Executive Minister and will continue to do so — the best expression of our love for Christ is not the nature of our worship but the nature of our service to the people for whom He came to love and to save.
- **Future Leaders** — no matter what happens to the churches that exist today, we are still responsible for preparing and blessing the leaders of the future church. We must continue to identify, disciple and develop future pastors, preachers and teachers, administrators and other church leaders that will be needed for future generations.
- **Racial Justice and Reconciliation** — I am convinced that God is calling us in our unique place and time to help our churches be the leader in racial justice and reconciliation in their communities.

Because of who we are historically and who we are demographically, we have the unique advantage of being able to initiate and sustain difficult but necessary conversations, actions and change in our communities. Our diversity is our opportunity!

In closing, I thank you again for the trust, the support and the opportunity to serve you in this capacity. I look forward to what God will do in each of our congregations individually and in our association corporately.

In Christ,

Steve Van O

MINISTRY AND MISSION REPORT

Southeast Colorado, Wyoming, New Mexico & Northern Front Range

"I can see people, but they look like trees walking."
Mark 8:24

I think many of us are feeling this way. We knew what church and worship used to look like. We have worked hard at creating meaningful connections with people in the church and those who are not yet in the church, we have worked hard at creating worship that is engaging and impactful, and we have sought new ways of connecting with the world. And yet, we are not sure what tomorrow or the next few months hold.



We are not sure how long we should continue to do virtual worship, we are not sure at what point we might need to suspend face-to-face worship if the number of cases of COVID increases in our area, we are not sure how to navigate the politicizing of a disease.

We are not sure what our next steps are to support our brothers and sisters who have struggled too long with oppression and the relentless and crushing weight of racism.

I think the words of the blind man from the Gospel of Mark become our prayer, "Lord, we know that things have shifted rapidly and dramatically, but we can't always see clearly. Help us to see our next steps more clearly. Help us to trust you as we walk forward in these new days."

As I reflect on the challenges related to COVID-19, this is what I see. Many of our pastors and churches have done a phenomenal job of pivoting from face-to-face to online worship and then to a hybrid of the two. I am humbled by the creativity, energy, and passion our leaders. In the beginning of the pandemic, churches saw great increase in their online worship, within weeks numbers were dropping precipitously. Pastors pour more hours into preparing online worship, and yet struggle to get everything else done in ministry within state guidelines and safe practices.

In the midst of these incredible efforts, many churches have found this a daunting time to be church.

Churches that are in the process of searching for a pastor are truly struggling to find the right pastor in this time. Churches that were struggling before the pandemic have experienced the pandemic as a "challenge multiplier." Sombre del Monte Christian Church decided that it was time to close. Other churches in our Region are facing this challenge as well. Churches with older congregations are working very hard at keeping their congregation safe, even if that means postponing a return to face-to-face worship. Mid-size churches who have been able to return to worship, are realizing that worship in the age of a pandemic is very different than what we knew before. Small, rural churches have been able to return to some level of normalcy; people have returned to worship and are able to be in face-to-face community.

Pastors have been stretched thin and forced to learn new skills just to maintain a sense of community. They are doing incredibly powerful work in keeping their flock together, but many of our pastors report that they are feeling exhausted and running on fumes.

Moving forward, the church faces challenges that we have not faced in generations. We will have to change ways that we gather for worship. This will require many churches to reset their expectations of worship. If we are to maintain a sense of community, we are going to have to create new pathways of being together. We are also being forced to develop new benchmarks for measuring the effectiveness of our ministry. We must become more nimble in anticipating and responding to challenges.

In response to COVID-19, ABCRM has sought to support pastors and churches in new ways in addition to our more traditional ways. Many pastors joined together to share in a weekly conversation that focused on the challenges whether it was preparing for an online worship, refocusing goals, leadership in the current context, or moving towards regathering in a safe manner. ABCRM has also provided a number of grants to support churches and community ministries.

We will continue to seek new ways to partner with pastors and churches. Together we continue to ask God to help us seek clearly.

Mike Oldham

MINISTRY AND MISSION REPORT

Denver Cluster

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matt. 5:16, NKJV).

As the Ministry and Mission Coach for the Denver Cluster I have interacted with all twenty-seven churches in the Denver Cluster during the past twelve months. Our interaction has been in various ways. We have interacted around the various needs of our churches, as well as, around initiatives being promoted by the Region. Our focus in either event has been striving to meet the needs of our churches as we joined forces in advancing the cause and kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Fellowshipping With The Saints:

Over the past twelve months, I have fellowshipped with the churches in the Denver Cluster in the following ways:

- A. I have prayed for and with pastors and churches.
- B. I have worshipped in various churches.
- C. I have been invited to preach and teach in various churches.
- D. I have walked with churches through seasons of turmoil and sorrow. And,
- E. I have shared in seasons of joy and celebration in the lives of our churches.

Helping Churches To Live Into Their Mission and Vision For Ministry:

Over the last twelve months, I have help churches in the Denver Cluster to live into their mission and vision in the following ways:

- A. I shared information made available through the Region that may be helpful in advancing their mission and vision.
- B. I helped churches to develop and implement ministerial plans that God placed on their heart.
- C. Upon request, I assisted churches in identifying and acquiring curriculum to assist with their ministry, mission and vision.
- D. Upon request, I provided specific workshops and trainings to assist churches with their particular needs.

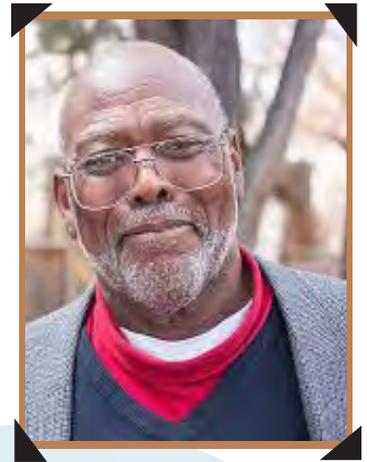
- E. I provided on-going pastoral care to pastors and their staff, as needed. And,
- F. I continually made myself available to meet with pastors and their churches in accordance with their particular need.

ABCRM Staff Responsibilities:

Over the last twelve months, I completed all of my ABCRM staff responsibilities on a timely and continual basis.

It's Time To Say "Farewell":

Effective September 30, 2020 I will be resigning from my position of Ministry and Mission Coach for the Denver Cluster. I have reached a place in my life that I hear God calling me to labor in another part of His vineyard, and I feel led to respond to God's call. The past eight years of being a part of the Regional staff of ABCRM has been rich and rewarding. I am not saying "good by", but simply "farewell". If I can ever be of assistance to the Region, and I am asked to do so, I will make room in my life to respond.



May the favor of "Our Father" rest upon the Region, its churches and staff as you go forward in advancing the cause and kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ throughout the world.

*With prayers and blessings,
Rev. Larron D. Jackson, D. Min.*

MINISTRY AND MISSION REPORT

Western Slope Cluster



In my second year as part-time staff with ABCRM I have learned to be flexible. The pandemic has changed plans, cancelled meetings, and caused us to find new ways of doing ministry. Most of the churches, chaplains, and ministry leaders that I work with

on the Western Slope have adapted to the present culture. If we had not already embraced technology, we certainly have adjusted in 2020.

Here are some examples, First Baptist Grand Junction (Dr. Dave DeMott) is using Vimeo to share his messages; Keith Van Arsdol at Moab, UT Community Church is using Facebook Live to broadcast messages; Tony Abbott at Palisade First Baptist has preached to attenders, used FB live and a Zoom platform at the same time to reach the worshipping community; at New Hope in New Castle, they were already using

FB live to share their Sunday morning worship with members so they were doing ministry as usual when COVID-19 closed churches to live worship. Delta & Austin First Baptist began by setting up house church with groups of ten or less during the first days of the pandemic. They purchased camera equipment with funds from the Region's COVID-19 grant and started a YouTube channel to log messages.

Creativity and thinking outside of normal trends have increased participation in the local church. It has been encouraging to hear reports of both failures and successes in the ministry field. The ABCRM Chaplains on the Western Slope have adjusted to patient and family care by phone, Skype, Zoom, and FB Messenger contacts. Even in the hospital setting early adaptation has assisted with patient care and staff morale. It will be significant to see how we continue to remodel our ministry and mission to the culture of the twenty-first century.

*Rev. James Conley
Ministry and Mission Facilitator
Western Slope Churches*

PASTOR TO PASTOR

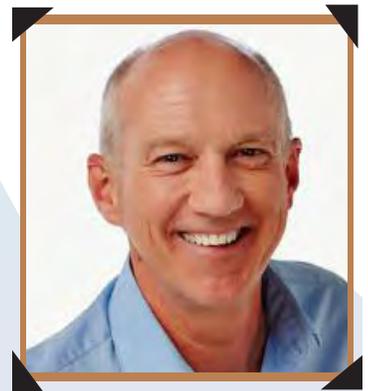
Needless to say, this year has presented challenges to my work with the region. While I've made many phone contacts with pastors, visited in person with a few, and had the privilege of preaching for some on a couple of occasions, the virus has prevented me from fully engaging with our pastors at a level I am anxious to.

I am thankful that Zoom and FaceTime have allowed me to make virtual face to face contacts which have included Mike Oldham's Tuesday Covid updates and pastoral conversations.

I have been honored to write devotionals, articles and sermons as part of my region work as well as attend staff meetings on a weekly basis. My vision for this fall is to (prayerfully) make personal visits to some of our 'distant' churches. This would include Wyoming, New Mexico and the eastern plains.

As I talk with our pastors the recurring theme is one of encouragement, shared frustrations and a vision for the future. Our common belief seems to be that God is molding us to be more effective in His Kingdom work in the reality of a 'new normal'.

It is a regular joy to work with our region staff and interact with these bright leaders whose focus is to support and empower the work of the local church. I am honored to be a part of it.



*Sincerely Submitted,
Pastor Kim Skattum*

FUTURE LEADERS MINISTER

Over the past two years, I have gotten the opportunity to intern for ABCRM. In these two years I have learned and grown as a leader. This past year I have gotten to pivot just like many of you into some new areas. The following are some of the highlights:

- I started building relationships with some of the youth leaders in our region. I have met one-on-one with multiple leaders over this past year.
- When transitions happened in our world because of COVID, I reached out to the youth leaders I had gotten to know. We started a Youth Leader Virtual Meet Up for them to share with one another, gain wisdom and insight from each other, and pray with one another.
- For Front Range Camping, I have mentored some of the coordinators over the past two years. Also, I helped create and implement a training program for the camp volunteers. When the rest of the world was pivoting, we as a camp staff pivoted to doing virtual camp. Virtual camp has been an adventure.

- I have guest preached and joined in worship at various congregations in our region.

I am so excited about being hired as the Future Leader Minister. I will continue to keep building relationships with the youth leaders and to meet others. I plan to take youth leaders through a leadership and gifting training for the next school year. Building relationships with our camp leadership teams is a priority of mine. In the moment, I am praying and discerning what the Lord will have in this role for myself and for the region. I am excited to go on this journey.



*Lauren Parliament
Future Leaders Minister*

AMERICAN BAPTIST WOMEN'S MINISTRY



State Conference:

We sadly cancelled our ABWM State Conference this year due to COVID-19.

Our plans that were already in place will be implemented at the next annual conference. We are going to hold our

Colorado Annual State Meeting by Zoom on Aug. 15, 2020, with our National Associate Director, Rev LaThelma Yenn-Batah attending.

Special Gifts: We contributed \$1,000 to the National Office for a fundraiser to help the women in Puerto Rico.

Committee and Board Meetings: Our Jan. 24, 2020, State Board Meeting was held in Denver at Faith

Community Baptist Church. Our June Board Meeting was held by Zoom. We have had many conference calls and Zoom video conferences during the time of lockdown and reopening to ensure that our mission and ministry remain current even without the event of physical meetings and gatherings.

Mission Trip: Our March mission trip to Rainbow Acres in Arizona was cancelled due to COVID-19. We had rescheduled for October but that too, has been cancelled.

White Cross: We do not have a White Cross State Coordinator at this time. Our churches enjoy and are actively participating in Overland Mission and other projects. Our churches continue to support White Cross with funds designated for mission and projects.

*LaRose Karr,
President
American Baptist Women's Ministries (Colorado)*

CAMPING REPORT

Camp Wyoba

(August, 2020)--Gina Gibson, of Laramie, began concerted prayer a year ago for Camp Wyoba. She weekly sends out a prayer prompt, began monthly prayer calls in April, and has been leading a prayer walk during our monthly Work Week's. We believe this prayer effort will bring unknown blessings from God's store houses, and I believe it is the most exciting thing happening at Camp.



With the decision to cancel all youth camps and retreats in 2020 because of COVID-19, I would like to give you a glimpse into what is

happening at Camp Wyoba this summer. This is a look at Thursday, July 9, during the July Work Week.

Camp Wyoba staff, Gary, Frank, and Art are working on converting Bailey Cabin into the new snack shack; laying water line in the 30" trenches; and doing demolition in the girl's shower house readying it for a very complete refreshing.

Tilers are busy in the boy's shower house installing tile.

Landscapers are digging trench for the new water lines.

Dan Smith is digging French Drain to go around the new Memorial Hall site. The trench is 90' long, 4' wide and 6' deep. It will be lined and filled with rock to divert water away from the foundation of Memorial Hall.

Volunteers are hauling old, downed timber out of the Lodgepole forest for fire suppression. They are stacking it on the athletic field to be chipped in August.

Volunteers are painting cubbies and the inside of Sunrise Cabin. A campaign is under way to make the cabins more comfortable by getting rid of the graffiti in girl's cabins and the installation of storage cubbies.

Volunteers are securing the new timber board walk on the trail to Miner's Meadow. A new bridge has been installed over the creek in the meadow to relieve erosion caused by ATVs.

I've probably forgotten something, but you can see we are in the midst of an enormous campaign to better the facilities at Camp Wyoba. We appreciate the massive funds given to Camp by the ABCRM to underwrite many of these projects.

The following individuals would like to serve an additional 3-year term on the Wyoba Board: Jess Adkison, Brenda Schladweiler, Jenita Calton.

We look forward to having youth at the camp next summer. All of this work is good, but it is not sharing Jesus Christ with kids.

Peace of Christ to you in these crazy times.

*Jenita Calton,
Wyoba Board President*



FRONT RANGE CAMPING

COVID-19 has changed so much in our world. We know this from the way we worship, go to the doctor, and how we vacation. Camping has been a highlight of many kids summers for years. Across the country, camps have not been able to open. In May, ABCRM staff decided that we were unable to have a safe residential camp in the midst of this pandemic. Even though many activities are held outside, things like sleeping in cabins, eating in the dining hall, and worship times are activities that are hard to do while observing social distancing.

When we decided that we would be unable to hold a residential camp, we knew we wanted to connect with our campers and provide some form of “camping” for our kids. Like many churches, we began the process of pivoting to a new model of ministry in the midst of the pandemic. All along the way, we wrestled with what would be allowed, what was safe, and what would the kids enjoy the most.

Some of our staff really struggled with what a “virtual camp” would look like. Every pastor knows that there are members of the churches that simply don’t engage with virtual worship. We experienced this same struggle. At the same time, some of our staff really jumped in to make camp work.

Our coordinators developed plans for Virtual Camp. It included “camp in a box.” Each camper that register received a box that included crafts, activities, lessons, and a schedule. Each day, campers met for a couple hours on Zoom. Elementary camp had a very rowdy scavenger hunt in which the campers raced around their house looking for items on the scavenger hunt list. They also did crafts online. Mostly, they enjoyed being together, even if it was online.

Included in each meeting, ABCRM’s pastors taught on the Fruit of the Spirit from Galatians 5:22-23. Each pastor brought the unique style and gifts. Pastors serving as camp pastors were:

- **Dan Schumacher**,
FBC Colorado Springs
- **Tim Griesbach**,
Crossroads Church, Northglenn
- **Kay Farley**,
Faith Community Baptist Church
- **Rhonda Truesdale**,
Truelight Baptist Church, Denver
- **Bill Wolfe**,
FBC Simla
- **Doug Farley**,
Faith Community Baptist Church
- **Joan Allen-Anderson**,
Faith Community Baptist Church
- **Michelle Phillips**,
Crossroads Church, Northglenn

Once again, we were blessed with the musical gifts of Brittany and Cyndi Kuemmerle. They prerecorded the

GRAND MESA BAPTIST CAMP REPORT

In an unprecedented move the GMCA board made a decision to cancel all of the summer camps, and other activities at the Grand Mesa camp site. This was primarily due to the uncertainty concerning the so-called Covid-19 outbreak. How it might be handled and the uncertainty of how it would last, and how it would affect those who might potentially attend any of the camps or have events held at the campsite.

The trustees decided, to use the time to upgrade the dining hall and to do other infrastructure projects.

We had a strong wind storm hit our camp in June, and it toppled a large Spruce tree destroying the east entrance of the dining hall. In addition there are other downed trees on the campus that need to be sawed, and moved as well. If any churches in the region would like to combine working on projects with fishing time on the Grand Mesa, we would invite them to contact Jamie Mackley who is the head of the grounds committee. Church groups could contact the regional office and, and they could contact us. We will take it from there.

We have installed an internet program on our website, allowing us to many more churches in the region. It is up and ready. We need campers and camp leaders.

Harry Talbott
GMCA representative to the ABCRM

music and then joined the groups to help them engage in a time of worship. Front Range Camp could not operate without the incredible gifts and talents of our volunteers and Coordinators. They include: (Elementary): Christen Schumacher and Maida Lindblad, Char Wells organized crafts; (Middle School): Charly Whisenhunt and John Williamson; and (High School): Miranda Johnson-Clark and Kevin Hodges with help from Alana Lipscomb who wasn’t a “coordinator,” but sure made camp happen.

The campers all knew that this wasn’t like “real camp” but they enjoyed seeing each other and learning to walk closer to Jesus.

ABCRM also donated \$5000 to Quaker Ridge Camp. QRC, like most residential camps, operate on a very tight budget and most of their income comes from summer camps. We wanted to support this ministry partner. The registration fees for campers will also be donated to QRC.

Mike Oldham



MISSION COMMITTEE REPORT

COVID-19 has impacted International Ministries as much as it has impacted local church ministry. In 2020, ABCRM was planning trips to the Dominican Republic, Chiapas, MX, Zambia, and an ABWM Rainbow Acres Trip. Each of these trips have been postponed.

ABCRM invited the youth choir from Maranatha Church in La Romana, DR to sing at the Gathering, but this has been postponed as well.

Missionaries are faced with doing ministry in new ways. They are spending more time with home

schooling or online school with their children. They are traveling less so that they don't spread the disease to remote communities. Missionaries are also conscious of the financial impact of COVID-19 on their support churches and individuals.

International Ministries shifted from a face-to-face mission conference to a very abbreviated schedule online over a two week period.

We are not sure when short-term mission projects will be viable again. We continue to pray for and support our missionaries.

INTERNATIONAL MINISTRIES (IM)

This year has turned the entire world upside down and its affect on International Ministries is no different.

Directors for the Board of International Ministries typically meet in person three times a year. Zoom, Face Time and other forms of conferencing became the normal method of communicating and meeting as a group. While there is no replacement for face to face interactions, the board quickly became adept to on line meetings.

As a member of the Finance Committee we meet monthly to review the current financials. As COVID caused the shut down of church gatherings the natural tendency was to be concerned for the drop in giving towards the mission work of International Ministries and their partners.

I am glad to report that God has been faithful (as always) in financially sustaining IM during this crisis.

IM currently has a staff that is efficient and committed. The board enjoys a great working relationship with key personnel starting with the Executive Director, Sharon Koh. She is leading by example during this difficult time and is the right person for IM.

Know that the Board of International Ministries are seeking God's direction each day for this wonderful organization and we thank you for your support in every way. Should you want to know more please don't hesitate to communicate directly with me at joe.zepeda@crossroadsabc.com or (720) 838-6446.

*Respectfully Submitted,
Joe Zepeda*

PUEBLO LEGACY GRANT

The Pueblo Legacy Grant continues.

In 2020 the committee approved:

- \$2000 for Solomon Temple's Community Service project called Relationship Evangelism.
- \$5000 for Crossroads Church's Community Service project called Beyond Home.
- \$5000 for FBC Sterling's Community Service project called Community Recovery Program.
- \$750 for FBC Colorado Springs' Community Service project of Community meal and MLK Service with other downtown churches.
- \$5000 for Elevating Life's Community Service project of Celebrate Life Recovery program.

The fund has \$187,265 remaining in the Community Service account and \$193,612 in Pastoral Resource account. See the guidelines for applying on the ABCRM.org website. Application Deadline: January 31 & July 31 of the granting year.

What new beneficial thing can your church do in your community?

Pastors, what new resource would help you further your ministry?

The Pueblo Legacy Grant fund may just help make that move forward, plan now and apply for the **January 31, 2021** review.

FINANCIAL REPORTS



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SUMMARY

2019 Financial Highlights

If you look at the 2019 audit report, ABCRM had a fantastic year. Total assets increased from \$20,508,397 to \$23,587,451, an increase of over \$3 million. The biggest change was the increase in our investments during 2019. In 2018, we had to recognize over a million-dollar loss due to the negative trend of the stock market at the end of the year. During the year, ABCRM used \$815,000 out of the endowment to fund activities in the Region. This was the budgeted 5% which was calculated from the quarterly average balance of the endowment at the end of each of the twelve preceding quarters. This yearly amount to be used for operations was established in the governing documents for the endowment.

Overall, ABCRM operated close to the 2019 except for a couple of lines. In the 2019 budget, the board had planned for taking \$55,000 out of Board Designated Funds and use it for additional programming. Because ABCRM was in a positive cashflow position, we could fund the programs without pulling money from investments. Each year in the budget, we budget zero for grants. This is because the money to payout the grants was received and recognized as income on previous financial statements and we do not know how many grants will be approved the coming year. So, each year the amount we pay out in grants (\$121,135 in 2019) is a negative variance to the budget.

If you factor out the movements of financial markets and grants and not pulling money out of investments for programs, the Region spent about what it received in revenue.

2020 Financial Projection

2020 is over 50% complete and ABCRM is operating within the budgeted amounts except for the following items:

- Grant expense is projected at \$200,000. The expense for the grants that are paid out during the year is recorded as an expense the year the grant is paid. The money that we use for the grants was recognized as income in 2016 when the church building in Pueblo was sold and the Pueblo Legacy Grant Fund was created. Because we don't know what the grant expense will be at the beginning of the year, this amount isn't budgeted for and is a negative hit to the Statement of Operations.
- Investments took a huge hit in March but have mostly recovered. At the end of 2020, ABCRM will need to record their growth or decline in value at the end of the 2020. At this time, your guess is as good as mine.

2021 Budget Discussion

Because of the growth in the financial markets over the last three years, the ABCRM investment allocation for 2020 is \$850,000; the same as 2020. Overall, the 2020 budget looks a lot like the 2020 budget. Because this year is so crazy, we don't know about many aspects that influence expenses (financial markets, will we be able to travel, how many events will be "virtual" versus "in person", will we be able to hold our ABC camps, etc.). For budgeting, it made the most sense to keep the 2021 budget about the same as the 2020 budget.

INVESTMENT REPORT

In 2005, ABCRM made the extremely hard decision to sell the Black Forrest Camp property. The Ministry/Mission Fund was established using \$13 million from the sale and the Funds purpose was established to provide for the ongoing, long-term support of the mission and programs of ABCRM. In recognition of the importance of a vibrant, viable camp and youth ministry, \$2 million of this Fund is designated to support this specific purpose and the other \$11 million to support church and pastors in the Region.

In this year’s Gathering Book, the report (Quarterly Market Values ABCRM Ministry/Mission Fund) shows the total value of the fund at the end of each quarter starting from a beginning balance of \$13 million to the balance as of the end of June 2020 (\$19,234,436). The Funds performance reflect the ups and downs of the market dipping to a low of \$10,097,579 in March 2009 and a high of \$19,495,404 at the end of 2019.

Annually 5% of the average quarterly market value during the previous three years is designated to support the Region’s annual operations. Usually the Fund earns at least 5% annually to allow this annual budget support to grow. The authorized support for 2020 is \$850,000 an increase of \$35,000 compared to 2019. The 2021 budget includes \$850,000 from the Fund which represents the 5% authorized support. From the 2006 budget year through 2019, \$10,209,581 has been pulled from the Fund to support the activities of ABCRM. Even with over ten million dollars of withdrawals from the fund the fund balance has grown.

2020 has been a crazy year in so many ways. The year started at the Fund’s all-time high balance, but by the end of March, the balance had dropped by \$2,646,466 – a decline of 13.6%! The second quarter of 2020 show a remarkable recovery regaining most of the first quarters loss. During the first six months of 2020, ABCRM withdrew \$447,502 from the Fund to use for operations. So, if you add back the amount the Region withdrew, the Fund balance would have been more than it was before the pandemic started.

One of the Investment Policy requirements is that the Fund be invested consistent with the social and ethical responsibility guidelines (SER) of the American Baptist Churches USA, which excludes firms whose main business is gambling, tobacco, firearms and/or

alcohol. The Fund is currently invested in the Calvert Social Investment Funds, American Baptist Foundation Endowment Bond Fund, TIAA-CREF Social Choice Equity Fund and Vanguard FTSE Social Index Fund and each follows SER guidelines consistent with those of ABCUSA.

So, what performance should we expect for the rest of 2020? I do not know. We are blessed that the previous leadership of ABCRM set up this fund that has allowed ABCRM to provide ongoing support for the programs of the Region. We have seen the stock market fluctuate, and over the past 15 years, we have used over \$10 million to support our mission. ABCRM has a very strong balance sheet which provides us with a stable financial platform to meet the challenges that might face us in the future.

If you have any questions, please contact me.

*Karen VanValkenburgh
Region Administrator*

INVESTMENT COMMITTEE

- **Gary Diffendaffer,**
Calvary Baptist Church (Denver)
- **Marc Wallace,**
Macedonia Baptist Church (Denver)
- **Nichelle West,**
Rising Star Missionary Baptist Church (Denver)



RUACH: Breath of the Harvest

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

QUARTERLY MARKET VALUES
ABCRM MINISTRY/MISSION FUND

DATE	MARKET VALUES	5% RATE		Recommend ation	ACTUAL	Unused Interest	Unused interest reserve
Jun 2020	\$ 19,234,436	\$894,165	2021	\$890,000	\$850,000	\$40,000?	\$393,419
Mar 2020	\$ 16,849,138						
Dec 19	\$ 19,495,404						
Sep 19	\$ 18,601,171						
Jun 19	\$ 18,494,066	\$856,119	2020	\$850,000	\$650,000		\$393,419
Mar 19	\$ 17,967,149						
Dec 18	\$ 16,510,752						
Sep 18	\$ 18,068,750						
Jun 18	\$ 17,455,711	\$819,327	2019	\$815,000	\$815,000		\$393,419
Mar 18	\$ 17,338,778						
Dec 17	\$ 17,561,451						
Sep 17	\$ 17,022,859						
Jun 17	\$ 16,734,853	\$797,141	2018	\$795,000	\$795,000	\$0	\$393,419
Mar 17	\$ 16,404,527						
Dec 16	\$ 15,911,336						
Sep 16	\$ 15,998,329						
Jun 16	\$ 15,684,519	\$780,263	2017	\$780,000	\$770,000	\$10,000	\$393,419
Mar 16	\$ 15,605,948						
Dec 15	\$ 15,612,636						
Sep 15	\$ 15,307,643						
Jun 15	\$ 16,000,149	\$750,997	2016	\$750,000	\$695,000	\$55,000	\$383,419
Mar 15	\$ 16,266,769						
Dec 14	\$ 16,116,687						
Sep 14	\$ 15,670,426						
Jun 14	\$ 15,748,325	\$696,628	2015	\$695,000	\$695,000		\$328,419
Mar 14	\$ 15,388,603						
Dec 13	\$ 15,376,358						
Sep 13	\$ 14,484,963						
Jun 13	\$ 14,041,358	\$660,137	2014	\$660,000	\$659,998	\$2	\$328,419
Mar 13	\$ 14,158,732						
Dec 12	\$ 13,474,865						
Sep 12	\$ 13,512,041						
Jun 12	\$ 13,009,632	\$632,338	2013	\$630,000	\$650,000	(\$20,000)	\$328,417
Mar 12	\$ 13,552,483						
Dec 11	\$ 12,548,249						
Sep 11	\$ 11,895,197						
Jun 11	\$ 13,304,855	\$605,642	2012	\$605,000	\$649,500	(\$44,500)	\$348,417
Mar 11	\$ 13,658,825						
Dec 10	\$ 13,019,327						
Sep 10	\$ 12,357,405						
Jun 10	\$ 11,703,715	\$630,415	2011	\$630,000	\$630,000		\$392,917
Mar 10	\$ 12,580,238						
Dec 09	\$ 12,278,055						
Sep 09	\$ 11,953,143						
Jun 09	\$ 11,070,676	\$671,402	2010	\$670,000	\$670,000		\$392,917
Mar 09	\$ 10,097,579						
Dec 08	\$ 10,812,937						
Sep 08	\$ 12,617,231						
Jun 08	\$ 13,950,728	\$709,504	2009	\$710,000	\$490,833	\$219,167	\$392,917
Mar 08	\$ 14,021,266						
Dec 07	\$ 14,873,452						
Sep 07	\$ 15,340,667						
Jun 07	\$ 15,192,391	\$694,972	2008	\$695,000	\$521,250	\$173,750	\$173,750
Mar 07	\$ 14,585,023						
Dec 06	\$ 14,564,834						
Sep 06	\$ 14,009,681						
Jun 06	\$ 13,455,988	\$667,430	2007	\$668,000	\$668,000		
Mar 06	\$ 13,814,626						
Dec 05	\$ 13,375,700						
Sep 05	\$ 13,096,670						
Jun 05	\$ 13,000,000		2006	\$650,000	\$650,000		

Spending Rate - 5% of the average asset market value of the 12 preceding calendar quarters calculated each year at 3Q for next year's budget.

7/27/2020

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

ABCRM Board Designated Fund Balances

Fund	12/31/15	12/31/16	12/31/17	12/31/18	7/31/19	12/31/19	3/31/20	6/31/2020
Youth Fund	2,351,418	2,388,910	2,641,236	2,419,064	2,781,264	2,938,767	2,531,649	2,898,618
Mission / ministry fund	12,932,799	13,139,007	14,526,797	13,304,852	15,296,951	16,163,218	13,924,070	15,942,399
Unused interest allocation	328,419	383,419	393,419	393,419	393,419	393,419	393,419	393,419
	15,612,636	15,911,336	17,561,451	16,117,334	18,471,634	19,495,404	16,849,138	19,234,436
Church of the Master Scholarships /Pueblo Scholarship	13,834	14,084	81,084	85,887	82,987	89,687	69,746	69,746
New Church / transformation fund	545,479	499,229	491,269	489,373	474,623	466,373	460,873	455,373
								(Grants & Property expenses reduce the fund balance)
Curtis Park Grants	12,613	12,613	-					
FBC Pueblo		1,081,218	1,043,113	855,614	639,877	604,877	592,127	579,377
								The Pueblo Legacy Fund is divided into 5 sections: Pastoral grants, Community service, ABCRM Camps, Missions and seed money to support ABCRM Vision. Each section was allotted \$216,000 when the fund was established.
Wyoba Snack Shack Fund		17,410	17,410	17,410	17,410	17,410	17,410	17,410
Wyoba 2018 Wyoba contributions			102,339	102,339	102,339	102,339	102,339	102,339
								Spending on Memorial Hall project: -

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

ABCRM Financial Summary

2020 Projection 2021 Budget

	2017	2018	2019		2020		2021
	Audit	Audit	Audit	Budget	Projection	Budget	Budget
Ordinary Income/Expense							
Income							
United Mission receipts	71,316	63,390	62,593	68,000	55,000	60,000	55,000
Contributions	49,181	65,394	41,399	46,000	35,500	44,000	35,500
Interest & Dividends	197,544	(65,972)	303,039	13,500	12,850	13,550	13,550
Proceeds from Insurance claim	52,436	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gain / loss on Fixed Assets	6,266	0	547	0	0	0	0
Programing	51,792	53,843	45,089	49,900	11,400	47,200	47,200
Wyoba Income	109,815	150,080	79,550	72,000	25,500	72,000	72,000
Contributed properties		(203,772)					
Contribution from Unused Interest			-	55,000	-	-	-
Interest Allocation	770,000	795,000	815,000	815,000	850,000	850,000	850,000
Total Income	1,308,351	857,963	1,347,217	1,119,400	990,250	1,086,750	1,073,250
Expense							
Administrative Service	563,347	590,704	596,263	606,637	543,000	543,635	565,250
Region Support	142,181	122,271	138,950	148,902	141,602	149,402	153,602
Depreciation	39,502	35,917	59,054	40,000	60,000	40,000	60,000
Cooperative Ministries	6,700	6,700	5,876	6,700	6,700	6,700	6,700
Boards & Gathering	42,438	55,782	39,753	54,700	20,500	49,700	49,700
Missions	101,406	61,921	46,461	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000
Church Support	17,509	7,541	2,430	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Pastoral Support	32,376	36,100	29,112	19,000	17,500	19,000	19,000
Grants	67,960	127,568	121,135	0	150,000	0	0
New Church/ Transformation	0	674	0	0	0	0	0
Camp / Youth	70,662	72,688	76,080	75,000	10,000	75,000	75,000
Additional Programs	0	0	0	30,000	0	0	0
Wyoba	141,908	184,801	143,955	110,000	120,000	150,000	120,000
Total Expense	1,225,990	1,302,667	1,259,069	1,145,939	1,124,302	1,088,437	1,104,252
Net Ordinary Income (Loss)	82,361	(444,704)	88,148	(26,539)	(134,052)	(1,687)	(31,002)
Other Income/Expense							
Invest Income, net of allocation	1,569,429	(1,056,245)	2,992,838	0	0	0	0
Gain on sale of property	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Net Property Expenses	(6,274)	1,420	(5,881)	0	(15,000)	0	0
Total Other Income / Expense	1,563,155	(1,054,825)	2,986,956	0	(15,000)	0	0
Net Income (Loss)	1,645,516	(1,499,530)	3,075,104	(26,539)	(149,052)	(1,687)	(31,002)
Bd Designated Funds Adjustment	74,234	126,823	127,017	-	165,000	-	-
Grants received/ Insurance proceeds	(188,944)	77,168	(295,936)	0	(5,000)	0	0
Market Value Adjustment	(1,569,429)	1,056,245	(2,992,838)	0	0	0	0
Sale or addition of Property	0	203,772	0	0	0	0	0
Adjusted Net Income or (loss)	(38,624)	(35,521)	(86,652)	(26,539)	10,948	(1,687)	(31,002)
Wyoba	(32,093)	(34,721)	(64,405)	(38,000)			
FRCamp	(43,345)	(45,158)	(52,267)	(47,500)			

TOP 25 GIVING CHURCHES | ABMS |

Listed in order of highest to lowest

2019

2020 (through July)

1. Crossroads American Baptist Church
2. First Baptist Church, Colorado Springs
3. American Baptist Church, Fort Collins
4. Calvary Baptist Church, Denver
5. First Baptist Church, Lamar
6. First Baptist Church, Grand Junction
7. Flagler Baptist Church, Flagler
8. First Baptist Church, Sterling
9. First Baptist Church, Greybull
10. First Baptist Church, Gillette
11. Aurora Hills Church, Aurora
12. Pine Street Church, Boulder
13. First Baptist Church, Canon City
14. First Baptist Church, Torrington
15. Trinity Baptist Church, Douglas
16. Elevating Life Church, Fort Morgan
17. Bethel Baptist Church, Casper
18. First Baptist Church, Loveland
19. First Baptist Church, Longmont
20. United Church, Los Alamos
21. First Baptist Church, Delta
22. Highland Park, Colorado Springs
23. Chapel Car Bible Church, Rawlins
24. First Baptist Church, Laramie
25. Ecumenical Church, Pueblo West

1. Crossroads American Baptist Church
2. Calvary Baptist Church, Denver
3. First Baptist Church, Colorado Springs
4. First Baptist Church, Lamar
5. First Baptist Church, Grand Junction
6. First Baptist Church, Torrington
7. First Baptist Church, Canon City
8. Pine Street Church, Boulder
9. First Baptist Church, Laramie
10. First Baptist Church, Longmont
11. Bethel Baptist Church, Casper
12. First Baptist Church, Gillette
13. Flagler Baptist Church, Flagler
14. Trinity Baptist Church, Douglas
15. First Baptist Church, Sterling
16. Community Baptist Church, Glenrock
17. Chapel Car Bible Church, Rawlins
18. First Baptist Church, Delta
19. American Baptist Church, Fort Collins
20. Elevating Life Church, Fort Morgan
21. Highland Park, Colorado Springs
22. First Baptist Church, Palisade
23. First Baptist Church, Lander
24. First Baptist Church, Greybull

TOP 10 AMERICA FOR CHRIST GIVING CHURCHES

Listed in order of highest to lowest

2019

2020 (through July)

1. Calvary Baptist Church, Denver
2. Flagler Baptist Church, Flagler
3. First Baptist Church, Grand Junction
4. First Baptist Church, Greybull
5. First Baptist Church, Lamar
6. First Baptist Church, Sterling
7. American Baptist Church, Fort Collins
8. First Baptist Church, Colorado Springs
9. First Baptist Church, Longmont
10. Aurora Hills Church, Aurora

1. First Baptist Church, Lamar
2. Calvary Baptist Church, Denver
3. First Baptist Church, Longmont
4. First Baptist Church, Colorado Springs
5. First Baptist Church, Palisade
6. Bethel Baptist Church, Casper
7. First Baptist Church, Greybull
8. First Baptist Church, Torrington
9. Flagler Baptist Church, Flagler
10. Trinity Baptist Church, Douglas



TOP UNITED MISSIONS GIVING CHURCHES

Listed in order of highest to lowest

2019

2020 (through July)

1. First Baptist Church, Grand Junction
2. First Baptist Church, Colorado Springs
3. American Baptist Church, Fort Collins
4. Flagler Baptist Church, Flagler
5. Calvary Baptist Church, Denver
6. Pine Street Church, Boulder
7. First Baptist Church, Loveland
8. First Baptist Church, Torrington
9. Community Baptist Church, Glenrock
10. Community Calvary Church, Holly
11. United Church, Los Alamos
12. First Baptist Church, Gillette
13. Bethel Baptist Church, Casper
14. Ebenezer Ethnic Baptist Church, Denver
15. Highland Park Baptist Church, Colorado Springs
16. First Baptist Church, Lamar
17. First Baptist Church, Laramie
18. First Baptist Church, Delta
19. Chaffee Community Church, Denver
20. Trinity Baptist Church, Douglas
21. Ecumenical Pueblo West
22. First Baptist Church, Lander
23. Solomon Temple Missionary Baptist Church
24. First Baptist Church, Longmont
25. First Baptist Church, Canon City
26. Emmanuel Missionary Baptist Church, Colorado Springs

1. First Baptist Church, Colorado Springs
2. First Baptist Church, Grand Junction
3. Calvary Baptist Church, Denver
4. Flagler Baptist Church, Flagler
5. American Baptist Church, Fort Collins
6. Pine Street Church, Boulder
7. First Baptist Church, Laramie
8. First Baptist Church, Torrington
9. First Baptist Church, Lander
10. First Baptist Church, Gillette
11. Community Calvary Church, Holly
12. First Baptist Church, Lamar
13. First Baptist Church, Delta
14. Highland Park Baptist Church, Colorado Springs
15. Solomon Temple Missionary Baptist Church
16. Bethel Baptist Church, Casper
17. Ecumenical Pueblo West
18. Chaffee Community Church, Denver
19. CO Jinhpaw Wunpawmg Church, Denver
20. Community Baptist Church, Glenrock

TOP ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING GIVING CHURCHES

Listed in order of highest to lowest

2019

2020 (through July)

1. First Baptist Church, Sterling
2. Elevating Life Church, Fort Morgan
3. First Baptist Church, Greybull
4. First Baptist Church, Lamar
5. Flagler Baptist Church, Flagler
6. First Baptist Church, Grand Junction
7. American Baptist Church, Fort Collins
8. Aurora Hills Church, Aurora
9. Pine Street Church, Boulder
10. First Baptist Church, Longmont

1. Calvary Baptist Church, Denver
2. First Baptist Church, Lamar
3. First Baptist Church, Longmont
4. Pine Street Church, Boulder
5. First Baptist Church, Grand Junction

TOP WORLD MISSION GIVING CHURCHES

Listed in order of highest to lowest

2019

2020 (through July)

1. Crossroads American Baptist Church
2. First Baptist Church, Sterling
3. Calvary Baptist Church, Denver
4. First Baptist Church, Greybull
5. Flagler Baptist Church, Flagler
6. First Baptist Church, Lamar
7. First Baptist Church, Colorado Springs
8. Aurora Hills Church, Aurora
9. First Baptist Church, Grand Junction
10. American Baptist Church, Fort Collins

1. Crossroads American Baptist Church
2. Calvary Baptist Church, Denver
3. First Baptist Church, Sterling
4. Highland Park Baptist Church, Colorado Springs
5. First Baptist Church, Palisade

TOP RETIRED MINISTERS & MISSIONARIES GIVING CHURCHES

Listed in order of highest to lowest

2019

2020 (through July)

1. First Baptist Church, Greybull
2. First Baptist Church, Lamar
3. Calvary Baptist Church, Denver
4. First Baptist Church, Colorado Springs
5. First Baptist Church, Delta
6. Pine Street Church, Boulder
Elevating Life Church, Fort Morgan
7. Aurora Hills Church, Aurora
8. First Baptist Church, Longmont
9. Flagler Baptist Church, Flagler
10. First Baptist Church, Sterling

1. Calvary Baptist Church, Denver
2. First Baptist Church, Grand Junction
3. First Baptist Church, Sterling
4. Pine Street Church, Boulder
5. First Baptist Church, Torrington

SMALL CHURCHES WITH BIG HEARTS

Throughout our region, ABCRM recognizes our numerous churches that have a “giving spirit.” We also recognize that by identifying the top-giving churches based on the total amounts contributed to different missions, it is much harder to quantify the average contributions per church member.

Because of this inherent format, we can never analyze enough complete information on church membership, and thus, produce an accurate list of “giving” per capita.

However, we are so delighted to celebrate the generosity of our faithful members and churches that give so freely from their hearts!

- American Baptist Church (Fort Collins)
- Bethel Baptist Church (Casper)
- Chapel Car Bible Church (Rawlins)
- Community Calvary Church (Holly)
- First Baptist Church (Canon City)
- First Baptist Church (Gillette)
- First Baptist Church (Grand Junction)
- First Baptist Church (Greybull)
- Flagler Baptist Church
- Trinity Baptist Church (Douglas)

ABCRM RECOGNITIONS



MINISTERIAL



Katie Hambrick

Katie is the pastoral resident at First Baptist Church Colorado Springs. She graduated in May of 2020 with her masters of divinity from Wake Forest School of Divinity with a specialization in Ecofeminist theology. Katie also graduated from Kennesaw State University in December of 2016 with a Bachelors of Arts in English linguistics and literature. She looks forward to getting to know other ministers in the Rocky Mountain Region.



Dan Dilley

Has recently been appointed as the pastor of Smoky Hill Baptist Church in Aurora, Colorado. He has an MA in Biblical Studies from Patriot University, and he has studied at Western State College of Colorado.

STAFF AND BOARD



Lauren Parliament

Lauren was appointed as the Future Leaders Minister in July 1, 2020, after having served as the ABCRM Youth and Camping Intern from Denver Seminary for several years. Her role is to help identify individuals who have sensed a call to ministry -- whether it be ten years down the road or to leadership positions.



Rodney Perry

Reverend Perry is well known throughout our region, and as of recently, he has agreed to come alongside the staff on a part-time basis to help lead a team effort to address racism and societal issues. In addition, if all goes well, Rev. Perry also will help to serve the Denver Cluster as the Ministry and Missions Coach after the retirement of Rev. Larron D. Jackson at the end of September.



Estelle Torpy

Our grateful appreciation goes out to Estelle for her devotion throughout the years. She has previously served as the Board's Vice President (2015-2016), the President (2017-2018) and as the Past-President (2019-2020). In addition, Estelle has served as the Chair of the Pueblo Legacy Grant Evaluation Committee, and has been instrumental in her leadership on the Gathering and Nominating Committees.

Matt Manning

Pastor Matt will transition from his role as the Board's President to the Past-President.

RETIREMENT OF LARRON D. JACKSON

The following tribute was published in the July/August Newsletter

Page 4



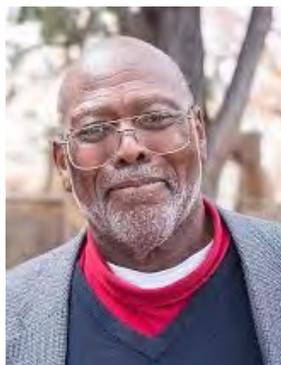
On Nov. 18, 1973, a *Denver Post* sports photographer captured an image that seemed to represent the mantra of its main subject—a young man who—at the time—was an unexpectant minister-in-the-making.

This particular photograph, now digitally archived and preserved in sports memorabilia, clearly shows the gregarious Denver Broncos’ Guard Larron D. Jackson (at the time, playing as a tackle). However, the deeper story featured in this black-and-white print is even more unmistakable: Jackson had just broken through the formidable Pittsburgh Steelers’ defense.

Behind him was Floyd Little carrying the ball in what would result in another tally mark in the “win” column that season.

That photograph—among others—has served as a common metaphor for Jackson’s nearly 42-year ministerial career. As a street-smart pastor with a huge heart and a boisterous laugh, Jackson has opened up lanes for others to discover a relationship with Jesus Christ—and to experience victory in their lives.

But now, after numerous pastoral roles in his life, and more recently, as the Ministry and Missions Coach for the Denver Cluster (for the past eight years), Jackson



has called an audible. He is scheduled to retire from his regional work at the end of September. But don’t

expect to see Rev. Dr. Larron D. Jackson, DMin., sitting on the sidelines. He’s still fully invested in God’s gridiron to help win over hearts and to further God’s Kingdom.

In fact, Jackson, who turns 71-years-old in August, has a renewed sense of optimism, health and spiritual focus.

“I’m in good health, and I still have a lot of things to do,”

Jackson declared. “I feel like the good Lord is now calling me to that fourth quarter of life. And, a lot can happen in the fourth quarter!”

Experience Matters

As a young man who grew up on the tough and violent streets of St. Louis, Jackson has an acute appreciation for how God’s Grace and the Gospel message can transform the “grittiness” of urban life. After all, he has witnessed firsthand the “legalized discrimination and racism” that still percolates throughout society.

Those experiences have always motivated him to advocate for others.

As a professional football player, Jackson lobbied on the behalf of the players being exploited by the National Football League in the early seventies. Then, as God called him into ministry, and blessed his enrollment at Candler School of

Continued on next page ...

[What’s in this RMAB?](#)

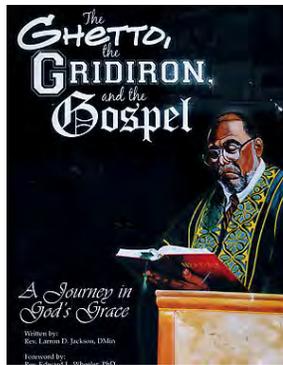
Gospel Gridiron: What's ahead ...

Continued from page 4 ...

Theology, Jackson pursued his passion to serve in some of the “roughest neighborhoods” in order “to plant, build, and to grow community.”

“I’ve always had a fire in me,” Jackson said. “And that fire still is there. God has given me a spirit to work for transformation—to speak truth, and to put together a plan to overcome obstacles and to lead others to victory.”

To that extent, much of his personal life, and his passion for servanthood, has been well-documented in his autobiography, *The Ghetto, The Gridiron and The Gospel: A Journey in God's Grace*. His reflections on life seem even more poignant given the turbulent events of 2020—from the COVID-19 pandemic to the national protests for social justice and equality. The synchronism of these current events with his retirement have only further affirmed his desire to return to his previous work in curriculum development and support for the African American church and community.



Past victories for what's ahead

“I see hope in the midst of despair,” Jackson said. “God is always shaping you for where he is taking you—and I’ve seen lately how new technology and ways of reaching others allows us to speak into their lives in a more holistic manner.”

As with any good game plan, the strategy for “what’s ahead” is still “in the works.” And, so much more could be written about Jackson’s past accomplishments.

But perhaps a short analogy is the best predictor for Jackson’s future—another metaphor that’s borrowed from a different type of ball game.

At twelve years of age, Jackson said he became “aware” of the segregation and poverty in his neighborhood. Instead of viewing the situation as a limitation, he saw it as an opportunity to “do more with less.” He rallied the other neighborhood boys on the block and together, they gathered some rubber balls and mop sticks to play stickball.

“We started going around and challenging other boys on other blocks to play ball with us. Things went so well—it got sophisticated quickly! We expanded to other neighborhoods and parks, even some that were located in more predominately white areas.”

Eventually, this stickball endeavor turned into the boys’ own Little League program.

“God is never done with us—or we should never feel that way,” Jackson recently said with one of his immeasurable smiles. “We need to let God lead us and to transform us—and with a little organization and effort, the opportunities are endless. That’s what I’m looking forward to as a way to honor Him with the rest of my life.”

Plus, never forget that Jackson knows how to overcome obstacles.

As a former offensive lineman who “knew how to move people against their will,” Jackson is now content with letting God clear those lanes—

and to open those paths—so that Jackson himself can deliver the Good News to whomever—and wherever—God might send him next. And with that, we can all say a hearty “Amen!”.

Rev. Dr. Larron D. Jackson, DMin, has served in various ministerial roles throughout the country; has guided the outreach ministries of three major faith institutions; has taught at several major colleges and seminaries; has an extensive background in curriculum development for church and community; has worked in international ministry; is a published author; a former NFL football player for the Denver Broncos and the Atlanta Falcons, and a member of The Missouri Sports Hall of Fame. As he pursues the next stages of his life, he may be reached at Ljacksonministries@aol.com.

BAPTISMS

Ecumenical Church (Pueblo West)

- Merida Leonard
- Thiago Leonard

Delta First Baptist Church

- Leta Duran
- Nancy Martin
- Ku Moo
- Ku La Moo
- Elaine Rios
- Nicholas Rios
- Ashley Salazar
- Michael Skelton
- Su Pa Wa

Rising Star Missionary Baptist

- Neveah Carrera
- Aryssa Dubberly
- Uriah Emery

- Tiffany Harrell
- Lazazaray Jackson-Howard
- Alya Marshall
- Alonna Patillo
- Landon Romero

Torrington First Baptist Church

- John D. Keithline

True Light Baptist Church

- Kameryn Brown
- James Crews
- Trevaes Sweetwine
- Jaren Williams

Palisade First Baptist Church

- Heather Cutts
- Kevin Cutts

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Note: Baptism is one of the two sacraments of the American Baptist Church. The second sacrament is the sharing of Communion in remembrance of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, and his obedient death given for us on the cross. In recognition of this redemptive sacrifice, this year, during the Gathering worship service and in preparation for the virtual sharing of Communion, we will recite together this prayer of confession.

Confession is a powerful tool in our arsenal of faith. It reminds us of the grace and redemption we have received, it cultivates in us an attitude of humility, and it calls us to holiness. Confession reminds us that sin is personal, corporate, and societal.

Before we celebrate Communion together, let us take a moment in preparation and confession. Perhaps you would take the three nails and small sackcloth as a tactile prayer of confession.

*“For the bread of God
is the bread that comes down
from heaven
and gives life to the world”
(Jn. 6:33, NIV).*

Pray with us this ancient prayer of confession:

Most merciful God, We confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed. By what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we might delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.

Might the Almighty and Merciful God have mercy on you and might He forgive you of all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ. **Amen.**



MISSIONMONDAYS



DISCOVER WORLD MISSIONS

Ruach: our Virtual Annual Gathering doesn't just end in September. Please join us for **MissionMondays** in October, which is a series of special videos and interactive conversations with some of our Global Servants around the world. Discover more at www.abcrm.org/the-Gathering-2020.



MissionBolivia:

JD & Rhonda Reed

The Reeds have served in Bolivia since 2011. J.D. is a regional consultant for Theological Education throughout Iberoamerica and the Caribbean. He is the Coordinator for the Masters of Theological Studies Latino/a Ministries Program and the liaison to Palmer Seminary of Eastern University. He works to help train pastors and church leaders throughout the region. Rhonda is a nurse (MSN) who oversees the health initiatives at the House of Hope and the Fundación Proyecto de Esperanza in Cochabamba and Santa Cruz.



MissionMexico:

Juan & Denise Aragon

Both serve in partnership with the Council of Rural Indigenous Evangelicals of Mexico and work in the training, prevention and the education of community needs. Juan and Denise look for ways to emotionally and economically empower leaders in their communities. Juan focuses on theological education and leadership training for new church leaders. Denise's ministry seeks to empower women, especially those who are victims of domestic abuse.



MissionDominican Republic:

Vital & Ketley Pierre

The Pierres work in the East Coast of the Dominican Republic to strengthen local churches and to plant new ones. One way they do this is by leading and coordinating seminars and workshops. Through these sessions, pastors and leaders of local congregations learn how to start and strengthen a broad range of outreach ministries in their communities. The Pierres also serve as a link with volunteer groups, matching them with local ministries according to where they would be the most effective, and encourage and facilitate Haitian mission work both within the D.R. and abroad.



MissionLebanon:

Melanie Baggao, and Dan & Sarah Chetti

Melanie works with the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary and focuses on learning the Arabic language and culture, building relationships and preparing for future ministry in Arabic-speaking cultures. Dan and Sarah both work with the seminary, and they also lead a number of sensitive ministries to help foreign migrant workers, to fight against injustice, and to help end human trafficking. Dan is an adjunct professor at the seminary, where his wife is a librarian, and together, they coordinate home groups and host mission outreaches.



MissionGlobal:

David & Joyce Reed

The Reeds serve as IM's Global Coordinators for Spiritual Care. Building on 20 years of ministry as global servants in Mexico and service as Regional Consultants in Iberoamerica and the Caribbean, they seek to cultivate a culture of health in which IM personnel around the globe can thrive and be effective in ministry. They offer spiritual guidance, support and presence, and walk with colleagues through significant times of transition, transformation, grief and loss; and mentor global servants during their first years on the field.

RUACHGRATITUDE

Gratitude.

Often in the Jewish Scriptures (and also in the New Testament), gratitude, as expressed through humility and collective appreciation, is the response of God's people to their experience of *Ruach*: God's Breath, Wind, and Spirit.

The political, societal, and economic events of this unprecedented year continue to challenge us as faithful Christians. However, we can rest assured of God's powerful *Ruach*. His breath still speaks to us, and it renews the breath of life in us. His Spirit indwells in us. What shall we truly fear when *Ruach* is upon us each and every day. May God bless you and your loved ones for the rest of this year, and for the new year that awaits us. Blessings.

Gathering Committee 2020

Estelle Torpy, Chairperson (Pine Street Church)
Eugene Downing (New Hope Baptist Church)
Kay Farley (Faith Community Church)
Matt Manning (Crossroads Church)
Mike Oldham (ABCRM)
Rodney Perry (Central Baptist Church)
Steve Van Ostran (ABCRM)
Karen VanValkenburgh (ABCRM)

Gathering Book Compilation

Brian Keithline (Design)
Mike Oldham
Karen VanValkenburgh