

Women Alive

Winter
2019

President

One of the movies that I look forward to watching during the Christmas season is *A Christmas Carol*. It doesn't matter which version. I like them all. The movie is enlightening. It's a movie about hope. As individuals we can still be transformed if we actively make changes in our lives. The best part of the movie because it gets you thinking is when Jacob Marley's ghostly manifestation enters Ebenezer Scrooge's bedchamber dragging a great chain of lockboxes, keys, padlocks, etc.

"You are fettered," said Scrooge trembling. "Tell me why?"

"I wear the chains I forged in life" replied the Ghost. "I made it link by link, and yard by yard; I girded it on my own free will and of my own free will I wore it. Is its pattern strange to you?"

The chain that Marley wears symbolizes the mistakes that he made when he was alive. Each link representing something in Marley's life that he cared about more than what was truly important.

So, what is truly important? Is it your job, your volunteer work, an organization that you may belong to? When Jesus was asked by a Pharisee what is the greatest commandment Jesus replied, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" (Matthew 22:37-39)

I had a Marley moment this past summer when I attended a workshop at a youth event about the importance of daily devotions and prayer with God. I was reminded that God wants us to have a close relationship with each and every one of us, but sometimes we neglect Him because we are too busy, too tired, in a hurry and the list goes on. Think about it. What does a parent want from their children? The children who are grown and on their own. The children whose lives are busy with their own schedules. That parent wants quality time from them. They want to know what's going on in their lives. That's all that God wants.

This workshop taught me that I needed to actively make a change in my life with daily devotions and quiet time with God every day. Not just when I feel like it or need it or think it's the right thing to do. It is done to be obedient to God because of who He is. There are no longer any excuses.

Consider the words of Jacob Marley. Think about what your chain might look like and what things might be attached to it then think about what changes you can make in order to be transformed. Join us at the AB Women's Ministries of MA Spiritual Retreat where we will be "Hitting the Reset Button." (See the attached flyer and registration form.) There will be workshops to choose from that will help you learn how to transform yourself into building a better relationship with God.



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Mission and Service

In response to the devastating one-two punch leveled at Puerto Rico by hurricanes Irma and Maria in fall 2017, American Baptist Home Mission Societies (ABHMS), in partnership with American Baptist Churches USA (ABCUSA), launched the “Rebuilding, Restoring, Renewing Puerto Rico” multi-year initiative. Because the need is so great, ABHMS is not limiting its volunteer-mobilization efforts to specific work weeks on the island. ABHMS expects to spend the next 3-5 years working with American Baptist PR partners to restore all 114 churches and 9 missions.

Last April, I led a team of 11 to Puerto Rico. We worked alongside a team from West Virginia to rebuild the roof of a church in Yabacoa, where Hurricane Maria made land. For those of us who could not help with roof rebuilding, we painted both inside and outside the church. We cleaned debris and ran errands. There was always something to do. I am leading another team from my church this coming April and would be excited to lead a team of AB women during the summer of 2019. Cost of \$150 per person per week includes housing, food and supplies. Volunteers are responsible for transportation to, from and on the island. I have already touched base with the ABHMS PR coordinators to let them know we might have a team visiting and they have assured me that our mission responsibilities would meet our gifts to offer.

Rebuilding, Restoring, Renewing Puerto Rico

Join American Baptist Home Mission societies and Iglesias Bautistas de Puerto Rico for ongoing volunteer service work as we seek to rebuild, restore and renew the hurricane-ravaged island. Your gifts of time, energy and hands-on work are greatly needed and appreciated in restoring churches, schools, missions, homes, communities and lives.

Highlights include:

- hands-on efforts to make a difference;
- encouraging and supporting those in need;
- serving side by side with American Baptists and other volunteers from around the country.

If you are interested in more information or would like to join an AB Women’s Ministries Puerto Rico mission trip in late June or early July 2019, please contact me by March 15, 2019.



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AB GIRLS

I am excited to be working with AB GIRLS! I have always loved youth ministry and have worked with the Christian Youth Conference and with youth groups in various churches for years. Seeing teenagers grow closer to Christ is an amazing experience.

When I am not planning events, meetings, and escape rooms for kids I enjoy puzzles, reading, writing, and growing vegetables my family won't eat. I am married to a musician, but don't ask me to sing. I have one son who will be going off to college next Fall.

My first adventure with AB GIRLS will be the Spiritual Retreat on March 1 & 2. We will be learning to connect with God in a variety of ways. We will make our own journals, dance, color, and meditate on Scripture. We will also take advantage of the natural beauty of Grotonwood. There will be times when we interact with AB women and times when we keep to ourselves. Sometimes, we'll just hang out and get to know each other. This is open to girls in third grade through high school. More information is on the flyer that is attached. I look forward to meeting many girls. I hope you can join us!



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Love Gift

Happy New Year, Happy New Year!!! Have you made your New Year's resolutions yet? Have you read the many Meme's that have come across your Facebook page? Promised to love more, live better, spend more time with your loved ones? Well, you can stop right here!

LOVE GIFT!!

A small amount of your LOVE can go a long way to helping your American Baptist communities far and near! Spend more time...

FUN Fundraising:

- Game Night—Have a board game night at your church. Charge a token fee, enjoy company of your friends and church family, sell snacks and give prizes.
- Hat Sunday—Stop arguing with your youth about wearing those baseball caps in church. Charge \$1 for hats! (Adults pay too! Ladies get out those bonnets!)

LIVE Better...

- Weight Loss Challenge—Donate \$1 for every pound lost, \$2 for every pound gained!

Only, more Love!

Love (Foot)notes--\$70.64 was raised in the silver box challenge at our Fall Women's Day in October. First Baptist Church, Tewksbury, raise \$104.00 with their Love Gift Sunday in November. Extended Coffee Hour with special baked goods were offered with a free will offering taken.

Share your Love Gift fundraiser ideas!



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Announcements

Website

The AB Women's Ministries of MA website, www.abwmofma.org, is being shut down. A fresh new look and improved website is in the works. In addition to being able to download resources, look up events, and see what AB Women's Ministries in doing in Massachusetts, you will be able to register for events on-line. Stay tuned!

Human Trafficking Awareness Day



Human trafficking is an issue that touches every community, including cities, suburbs, and rural towns. Human trafficking is modern-day slavery and involves the use of force, fraud, or coercion to obtain some type of labor or commercial sex act. Every year, millions of men, women and children are trafficked in countries around the world, including the United States. It is estimated that human trafficking generates many billions of dollars of profit per year, second only to drug trafficking as the most profitable form of transnational crime. January 11 is Human Trafficking Awareness Day. To raise awareness of human trafficking take photos of yourself, friends, family and colleagues wearing blue clothing and share them on social media: facebook, twitter and instagram along with #WearBlueDay and #WeWearBlueBecause (don't forget to mention why you are wearing blue) and/or host an event. Visit the website <https://www.dhs.gov/blue-campaign/what-human-trafficking>.

Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month

Every year, approximately 1.5 million high school students nationwide experience physical abuse from a dating partner. It is also known that 3 in 4 parents have never talked to their children about domestic violence. The theme this year is "Your Love Is Unique...with Consent." You can make a difference! Use #TeenDVMonth, #TeenDatingViolenceAwarenessMonth, and #LovesRespect to share on social media. On February 12 wear orange for love. Get as many people as you can to wear something orange in honor of Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month and promote respect and healthy relationships! Visit the websites, <https://www.teendvmonth.org/resources/young-people/> and <https://www.breakthecycle.org/2019-theme> for more information.



Eye Glasses for Haiti



Gently used or new glasses, sun glasses, or over-the-counter readers are needed for a mission trip to Haiti where eye clinics will be conducted. Bring your glasses to Spiritual Retreat on March 1 and 2 at Grotonwood Camp and Conference Center.

Knitters Needed!

Beacon Hospice an Amedisys Company is in need of people who are willing to make blankets and shawls for hospice patients. Contact Megan Purgavie at 617-242-8370 or megan.purgavie@amedisys.com. For more information about Beacon Hospice visit <https://www.amedisys.com/beacon/>.



AB Women's Ministries of MA Calendar of Events

January 11	National Human Trafficking Awareness Day
February	National Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month
March 1	World Day of Prayer https://www.cute-calendar.com/event/world-day-of-prayer/33609.html
March 1 & 2	AB Women's Ministries and AB GIRLS of MA Spiritual Retreat <i>Prescott Lodge, Grotonwood Camp & Conference Center, Groton, MA</i>
March 11-22	UN Commission on the Status of Women <i>New York, New York</i> http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw
April 5-8	Ecumenical Advocacy Days Conference <i>Washington, DC</i> https://advocacydays.org/2019-troubling-the-waters/
May 3	AB Women's Ministries of MA Women's Buffet Breakfast <i>DoubleTree by Hilton, Leominster, MA</i>
May 3	May Fellowship Day (Church Women United)
May 31-June 1	AB Women's Ministries and AB GIRLS of MA Conference <i>Wonderland Conference Center, Sharon, MA</i>
June 21	AB Women's Ministries Women's Day <i>Virginia Beach, Virginia</i> http://www.abwomensministries.org/
September 15	AB Women's Ministries Sunday
September 28	AB Women's Ministries of MA Fall Women's Day <i>First Baptist Church, Norwood, MA</i>
November 1	World Community Day (Church Women United)
November 4	Baptist Women's Day of Prayer (Baptist World Alliance Women) http://www.bwawd.org/
December 9	Human Rights Celebration (Church Women United)



Note: AB Women's Ministries of MA events are in bold.

ASSOCIATION NEWS

Central Association



AB Women's Ministries in the Central Association will hold its Annual Prayer Breakfast on Saturday, April 6 from 8:30am to noon at First Baptist Church, 14 High St., Gardner. The keynote speaker will be Rev. Cynthia Maybeck, Storytelling Minister.

Merrimack Valley Association

The American Baptist Women of Merrimack Valley made a BIG CHANGE! We celebrated the coming of Advent during the DAY and ON SATURDAY.

We gathered to welcome Advent with a most lovely Christmas Tea and Fellowship Meal at Calvary Baptist, Haverhill. At least 30 worshipers from Calvary welcomed 34 of us from eight churches. We were truly blessed with an inspired program including Christmas Carols, a choir concert, and liturgical dancing by two youth.

We collected 469 knitted items, 15 bags of soaps, shampoos and other toiletries. These were distributed to the Lowell Salvation Army and the Massachusetts Baptist Multicultural Ministries.

Our project, Deborah's House, Mexico, so far has collected \$472.00. If you would like to contribute to our project, please send your donation to our Treasurer, Mrs. Ruth Shaw, 3 Middle Road, Merrimac, MA 01860.

If you have not already done so, please send your \$10.00 assessment to Ruth Shaw as well. Each church is asked to send this to help pay for speakers and other expenses for our gatherings.

If your church would like to host our 2019 gathering, please contact us. Your church can decide how much or how little you would like to do. The focus is on Faith, Fellowship, and Fun. Advent is the beginning of the Christmas Season and we look forward to gathering again to welcome our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.



ABWofMV Planning Committee

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Samuel Stillman Association

The 2018/2019 mission focus for AB Women's Ministries is Domestic Violence. Intimate partner violence, or domestic violence, is a crucial topic affecting women and families in our communities and in our congregations. Thirty percent of women globally experience intimate partner violence. Nearly 75 percent of Americans personally know someone who is or has been a victim of domestic violence. Yet, despite these statistics, few churches address the issue openly. What a powerful place of safety, healing, and recovery a women's ministry and a congregation could be for those experiencing or having experienced domestic violence, so we decided to pursue this topic for Mission-A-Rama. Hagar's Sisters in Acton was chosen. Hagar's Sisters is *ending the cycle of domestic abuse through the transforming power of God*. The remarkable effectiveness of this

Christian program is evidenced in the lives of the “Sisters” (women who have experienced domestic abuse) who they serve. As a Christian ministry, Hagar’s Sisters uniquely provides domestic violence education and support within the context of a woman’s spiritual beliefs. Whether she is a woman of deep faith or a woman who questions if God is real, Hagar’s Sisters is a safe place to explore the tough spiritual questions every woman asks in the midst and aftermath of abuse.

About a month before Mission-A-Rama women and churches in the Stillman Association were sent flyers and a list of “sisters” provided by Hagar’s Sisters. The “sisters” requested a specific gift card in the amount of \$40 and a prayer request.

Mission-A-Rama was held on Saturday, November 10th from 11:30 AM to 2:30 PM and was hosted by the women of West Acton Baptist Church. Individual women and women’s groups attending brought the gift card selected by the “sister” they chose. Before the program, we wrote messages in Christmas cards to our “sister(s)” and inserted the gift card purchased. We enjoyed fellowshiping together over homemade soups, rolls, dips and a variety of desserts.

Deb Werneburg, Hagar’s Sisters Program Director, was our guest speaker. She shared statistics about domestic violence, what Hagar’s Sisters provides for survivors and she brought an awareness of domestic violence to us. Many questions were asked of her. We praised and thanked God through singing along with a special solo by an AB girl, a reading of the poem, “I Got Flowers Today” by Paulette Kelly, lighting candles to remind us that Jesus is the light of the world and to remember the victims of domestic violence and to honor survivors, dedication of gift cards brought, an \$111.00 offering received given to Hagar’s Sisters and prayer.

Lastly, we will be praying the prayers requested by our “sister” over the year and we will have Mission-A-Rama 2019 because two women volunteered to plan and organize it.

Nancy Dodge, West Acton Baptist Church
Bonnie Sestito, First Baptist Church of Cambridge



Pray for

- *2019 Spiritual Retreat*
- *The Website*
- *Revision of the By-Laws*
- *Women's Ministries in the Local Churches*
- *Women's Ministries in the Associations*
- *Women's Ministries in Massachusetts*
- *Board of Managers*
- *Executive Committee*
- *New Leadership*

NATIONAL NEWS

Dig In for New Digs



Rev. Gina Jacobs-Strain, Executive Director of AB Women's Ministries holding up the broken wheel from her office chair.

The national board of AB Women's Ministries is launching a 60-day campaign to raise the money needed to outfit our new national office space, which are our new "Digs." Their new "digs" will have fully functional offices for staff. They will also have conference rooms for meetings, a learning and research center, and accessible storage. Staff will be able to interact easily with people on-site and off-site to further the goals of AB Women's Ministries more creatively and collaboratively. With this move comes the challenge of new expenses.

Give Now!

You can help the office of American Baptist Women's Ministries further the goals of American Baptist Women's Ministries more creatively and collaboratively. Your contribution will purchase new computers, a new phone system, chairs, tables, and audio-visual equipment.

Send your contribution to American Baptist Women's Ministries, PO Box 851, Valley Forge, PA 19482. Checks should be payable to "American Baptist Women's Ministries" with "Dig In for New Digs" in the memo line or you can give online by visiting www.abwomensministries.org.

2019 Biennial Mission Summit

Save the Date!

Biennial Mission Summit

June 21-23, 2019
Virginia Beach, VA

For more information visit,
www.americanbaptists2019.com

**AB Women's Ministries Women's Day will be held on
Friday, June 21, 2109.**

More information will be available soon on
www.abwomensministries.org



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