

# WomenWord

AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES USA

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THE URGENT CHALLENGE OF  
AMERICAN BAPTIST WOMEN IN MINISTRY

During my Doctor of Ministry project exploring practices that promote access for women seeking to fulfill their calls to ministry, mentoring was a key practice that emerged. Because mentoring comes in a variety of ways, especially for women, we are continuing to share stories and shine a light on this key practice. As you read, consider sharing your story. Here's mine:

## REV. DR. RONNY LANIER: MY MARVELOUS MENTOR

The first week I began as Director of ABWIM, I was barely getting acclimated to my new office and surroundings when the mail cart rolled by. "Letter for you," said someone, whom I soon came to know as "Dave." "A letter for me?" I mused, figuring junk mail must be in store.

Junk mail, no.  
Luscious letter, yes.

Printed on the front of the envelope in neatly drawn block letters was my name, splayed from one end of the envelope to the other: REV. PATRICIA PEARL HERNANDEZ.

Junk mail? No.  
Peculiar, particular me. Yes!

When I opened the envelope, out fell a crisp, clean, newly minted one dollar bill, and a neatly folded letter, passionately proclaiming:

**You are called; God has chosen YOU. Believe it!**

I will be praying for you **every** day. (with "every" underlined three times!)

And then her inimitable signature,  
Be of Good Cheer!

Love,  
Ronny

On my last visit with Ronny, as we lingered and laughed over a bowl of jelly beans, Ronny leaned towards me, passionately peering not just into my eyes but deep into my soul.



REV. JENNIFER LANE, REV. DR. RONNY LANIER, AND  
REV. DR. PATRICIA HERNANDEZ

If you would like to share your mentor story, please go to the ABWIM website for guidelines on doing so.  
[www.abwim.org](http://www.abwim.org)



REV. DR. RONNY LANIER WITH SAGE KUSHNER

**“You are called, do you know it? You are called! Claim it!”** And then as she grasped my hands she added, **“I am here for you; you don’t have a clue about how much I love you!”**

Mothering mentor (this mother of many!), model of divine mirth, she continued,

**“Jesus called me out of the multitude to be a servant to my Lord. The only obligation I have is to give him the best that I’ve got. I don’t have to be as good as anyone else or as smart as anyone else or as anything as anyone else. I just have to be myself.”**

All the way home, her words echoed in my ears:

**“I don’t have to be as good as anyone else or as smart as anyone else or as anything as anyone else. I just have to be myself.”**

Just myself.

Just who God created me to be.

Everyone needs a “Ronny” in their life, someone who believes in them, celebrates their gifts and affirms their call, someone who is their advocate and their friend, someone to love them like only a mother of many can, like only a God of millions—each peculiar and particular— does.

Everyone needs someone to remind each one of us that not only are we deserving of more than junk mail, but we are not junk. We are created and called. We are gifted to serve, to “give the best that we’ve got,” in Ronny’s words.

**You are created. You are called.  
Claim it—and Celebrate!**

*I’m thankful for this marvelous mentor in my life who helped me claim my gifts and be confident in living out my call. Is there someone in your journey who has inspired, encouraged, and empowered you to claim your gifts and confidently live out your call? If you would like to share your story, please go to the ABWIM website ([www.abwim.org](http://www.abwim.org)) for guidelines on doing so.*

**Now, read on!**



REV. JUDY FACKENTHAL

## A SHEER GIFT OF GOD’S LOVE

*By Rev. Judith Fackenthal, Pastor and ABCUSA Past President 2016-2017*

In the 1990’s women clergy in Indiana and Indianapolis were blessed by the leadership of a team of dedicated clergy (male and female) from both regions. This support team established a Women in Ministry retreat held annually over Super Bowl Sunday night. It was this gathering that provided significant impact on my life in ministry. Women like Judy Allbee, Margarete Brandenburg, Evelyn Brown,

Mary Miller, Roberta White, Julia Bebeau, Laurie Hearn and

many others blessed each other with our leadership, affirmations, and support. The retreat became a holy space of safety, respite, and joy for us each year. Super Bowl Sunday was a deliberate choice because it has historically been the single day with the most acts of domestic violence in our nation. There was power, grace, and solidarity in our coming together at that particular time. It was a sheer gift of God’s love.



INDIANA AND INDIANAPOLIS WOMEN IN MINISTRY RETREAT

# PRATHIA HALL: SISTER AND FAITHFUL FRIEND

*By Rev. Dr. Edith Winters Kimbrough*



REV. DR. EDITH WINTERS  
KIMBROUGH

Prathia Hall, a sister and faithful friend in ministry, was powerfully inspirational in my life.

I met Prathia in June 1979 at the Hampton University Ministers' Conference. After hearing her preach a powerful sermon that week, I was eager to know her, and so we met for dinner.

She began sharing stories of her ministry as a leader and activist in the Civil Rights Movement, a priority for both of us. She also told me that she was ordained in 1971 and in 1978 began serving as Pastor of Mt. Sharon Baptist Church in Philadelphia, PA. I was impressed, because at that time I didn't know any woman who pastored a Baptist Church.

As we continued to talk, I knew that God had brought us together for His glory and my growth. I felt a fresh feeling that we were soulmates. Prathia helped me to understand more fully my call to Christian ministry. After she shared with me her many stories as a minister and pastor, some pleasant and some painful, I became one in spirit with her and loved her as myself. That week, we adopted each other as Sisters and never lost contact until her untimely death in 2002 at the age of 62. A part of Prathia will live within my spirit always.

For 23 years we traveled, talked and prayed together often. She spoke wisdom, courage and love to me always. She helped me see more clearly my unique gifts for ministry. I was always encouraged, inspired and influenced by her highly anointed preaching, her fervent prayers, her scholarly lectures, and the sharing of her professional resources with me.

She invited me to the first Women in Ministry Conference at Green Lake Conference Center in 1980, which helped me to appreciate how connecting with other women in ministry is important. She was instrumental in my becoming the first woman clergy to deliver a keynote sermon at the Progressive

National Baptist Convention in Pittsburgh, PA, in 1991. She opened many doors for me into the pulpits of large churches that I could never have entered without her help.

After my ordination in 1979, she encouraged me to continually mature as a person, leader and preacher. Prayerfully, Prathia constantly encouraged me to pursue my theological training with the same passion as I had pursued my secular educational training.

Based upon Prathia's wise counsel, I was able to earn, with honors, Bachelor of Theology and Master of Divinity Degrees. In 1994, Prathia encouraged me to study at United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio, where she served on the faculty as Dean of the Seminary and Director of the School's Harriet



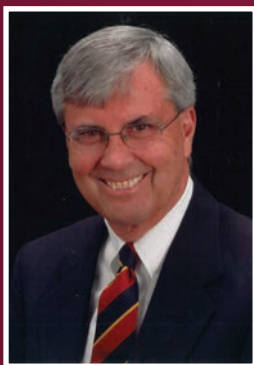
REV. DR. PRATHIA HALL, REV. MILDRED WEATHERSPOON, DR. BERNARD LAFAYETTE, JR., AND REV. DR. EDITH KIMBROUGH

Miller Women's Center, so I took her advice. In 1996, I graduated and received the Doctor of Ministry Degree, with honors. Prathia attended each of my graduation ceremonies with pride. She served on my Dissertation Committee when I defended my dissertation at United Theological Seminary.

I often thank God for Prathia Hall's inspiring influence upon my life, personally and professionally. I will always regard her as God's Masterpiece of an Amazing Woman, Powerful Preacher, Scholarly Teacher and Faithful Friend, whose Sisterhood I will always, prayerfully treasure!

# THREE WOMEN WHO INSPIRE ME

By Rev. Dr. Bruce W. Morgan



REV. DR. BRUCE MORGAN

For most of my pastoral ministry, I have been privileged to serve multiple-staff churches with pastoral colleagues. I was pleased to be called to the pastorate of Flemington Baptist Church in Flemington, NJ, in 1991, where I joined

Rev. Pamela Reed, who was already serving the church in her role as Associate Pastor.

In our early months as pastoral colleagues, as we assessed each other's gifts for ministry, we recognized the importance of working on a proposal to the church that we reconfigure our leadership model to that of co-pastors with parity in salary and responsibility.

The model was accepted, and we served as co-pastors for 13 years, until my retirement in 2004. From day one, I admired and valued Pam's pastoral gifts as leader, theologian, preacher, teacher, counselor, and spiritual guide. Pam has now ably served Flemington Baptist Church for 25 years. I am indebted to Pam, whose excellent preaching and wise counsel made our years of working together special.

Since my retirement I have had the unique opportunity of working with two other exceptional women in ABC leadership: Dr. Heather Entrekin, my pastor for nearly eight years at Prairie Baptist Church in Prairie Village, KS; and Dr. Molly Marshall, the president of

Central Baptist Theological Seminary, where I have served as president of the Board of Trustees.

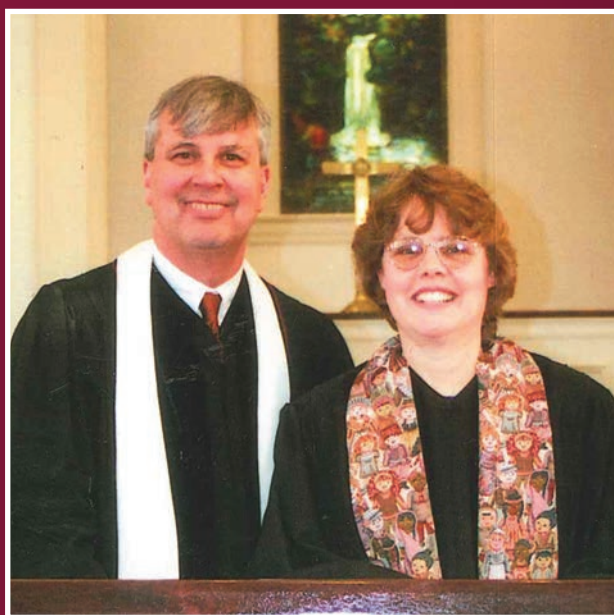
All of these women have demonstrated the most extraordinary theological depth, Christian character, and leadership ability that I have experienced in ABC life; and I have been richly blessed by their ministry.



REV. DR. MOLLY T. MARSHALL



REV. DR. HEATHER ENTREKIN



REV. DR. BRUCE MORGAN WITH  
REV. PAMELA REED

# MY DISCERNMENT MENTOR, KETLY PIERRE

By Rev. Joyce B. Duerr, Ed. D.



REV. DR. JOYCE DUERR

"You know, Joyce, lots of older women are in seminary." I heard those words again and again from American Baptist missionary Ketly Pierre while on a Mission Work Tour in LaRomana in the Dominican Republic in 1993.

When I made this trip, I was ready to retire with a full pension after 30-plus years in public education. My career had taken me from one-room school houses in New Hampshire to first grade classrooms in urban Massachusetts. I had also worked in Rhode Island as a district reading supervisor and as a school administrator in the community where I live.

I was prayerfully seeking God's direction for the next chapter of my life, but pastoral ministry was not on my horizon. In my generation a woman in ministry was not a viable option. But, Ketly's words stayed with me.

As I approached retirement, I had the opportunity to lunch with our region's Executive Minister. I had been active in our region, having served on boards and committees as well as serving a term as the region president. I was delighted when Don Crosby came to serve as our Executive Minister in Rhode Island. Don and I had first met as commuting students to Gordon College.

I was thinking I might do something in Christian Education or Conferencing, when I heard Don say, "You might want to think about taking theology courses." Then he said, "You might want to think about meeting with the Committee on the Ministry." Wasn't that for seeking ordination? That certainly was not part of my thinking.

I then worked part-time at our regional conference center as well as serving as adjunct faculty at a

private college in the area. While there, I enrolled in theology classes.

Two years after I first heard those words from Ketly, my pastor, Wes Smith, showed me a brochure about a Conference on Ministry at Eastern Baptist Seminary. He encouraged me to attend. That experience was like assembling a jigsaw puzzle. I felt like I had been looking at the back of the pieces. When I now turned them over, the pieces fell in place. I knew God was calling me to seminary.

I gathered catalogues from several area seminaries. When the summer session at Andover Newton started, I enrolled in two classes and completed my application. My home church then presented me with my Pre-Ordination License. Later, Don Crosby asked about submitting my name to the Search Committee of one of our small churches. After about two weeks in homiletics class, I preached my candidating sermon.

I started my pastoral ministry at Tabernacle Baptist Church, Hope, R.I., in November 1995. While there, I completed my seminary training, was awarded my M.Div. in 1999 and was ordained by Tabernacle.



REV. DR. JOYCE DUERR WITH REV. KETLY PIERRE

Continued on page 6

I retired after 20-plus years with Tabernacle's people of God. We were blessed to have our missionaries Ketly and Vital Pierre share their vision with us as they prepared to return to La Romana. What a time of reminiscing and praising God. I am thankful for the many blessings I have received as I responded to God's call. And I am

most thankful for male clergy who recognized my gifts and encouraged me on this journey. It is a joy for me to see doors opening to younger generations of women. I look for the day when women will be considered as equal candidates with their male counterparts.

## HOW ELIZABETH CAUDILL SHAPED MY MINISTRY VIEW

*By Rev. Dr. James Wolfe, III*



REV. DR. JAMES WOLFE, III

Bethel Baptist Church was organized April 17, 1946, with 33 members. Soon after that, the decision was made to call Rev. Elizabeth Caudill to be the first pastor of the fledgling church. Rev. Caudill served until ill health forced her to retire in 1985.

Although records are not always readily available for the early years, Rev. Caudill's ministry was significant, not only for Bethel, but also for the community at large and for American Baptist women.

By May of 1950, only four years after its birth, Bethel had attracted 249 members and had received 101 of them by baptism. Ten years later on the fourteenth anniversary of the church, 666 members and 383 baptisms had been recorded on the rolls.

In 1960 Rev. Caudill was the driving force in establishing a volunteer chaplaincy program at a local hospital. In 1974 Rev. Caudill was honored as a distinguished American Baptist woman and in 1981 received the prestigious "President's Award" at the Biennial Meeting of the American Baptist Churches USA in San Juan, Puerto Rico. During her career she received many civic and humanitarian honors.

Perhaps the greatest measure of her ministry was the number of individuals who experienced the call to ministry under her leadership. Records indicate that during the years she pastored Bethel at least 22 persons accepted the call. Some of those did not feel called to pastoral ministry but were licensed to preach by the church and served as vital lay leaders. Many others accepted the call to pastoral ministry, and some are still serving the church today.

This early experience has shaped my view of ministry in general and of women in the pastoral role specifically. It is virtually impossible to look at the success of Rev. Caudill's ministry and question the authenticity of her call. Gender notwithstanding, the impact of her ministry speaks for itself, and as those of us taught by her ministry continue to serve the church, her influence is an ongoing presence in the life of many churches.



REV. DR. JAMES WOLFE, III, REV. ELIZABETH CAUDILL, AND REV. DR. HOWARD TAYLOR

# MY INSPIRATION: CHAPLAIN (MAJOR GENERAL) LORRAINE K. POTTER

By Rev. Mary Beth Mankin



REV. MARY BETH MANKIN

Among the many women whose ministry has inspired me, one stands out. Lorraine K. Potter became the first woman chaplain in the U.S. Air Force and eventually Air Force Chief of Chaplains. Her courage to be “first” many times and her willingness to step into challenging roles have encouraged me to try new endeavors. When I acknowledged my call to ministry later in life, Lorraine was a supporter.

“Lorri” and I were classmates and friends at Keuka College. We each grew up in an American Baptist church and chose to attend this American Baptist-related college for women. While she majored in Religion, and I majored in Biology, we were both active in the campus ministry overseen by the college Chaplain. We women students planned and led worship regularly. Lorri’s leadership qualities were evident early on, both in campus ministry and when she became supervisor and scheduler of all the waitresses in the college dining room.

Upon graduation from Keuka in 1968, Lorraine attended Colgate Rochester Divinity School, earning her M.Div. in 1971. Then she became the first woman to be ordained by an American Baptist church in Rhode Island.

Lorraine inquired about serving as a military chaplain in 1972. The first response from the Chief of Chaplains of the Air Force indicated that one of the qualifications was to be male. However, several weeks later, she received a letter stating that the Chief of Chaplains had dropped the gender requirement, and that if her church gave her an endorsement, she could become a chaplain. She received the endorsement and was commissioned an officer in

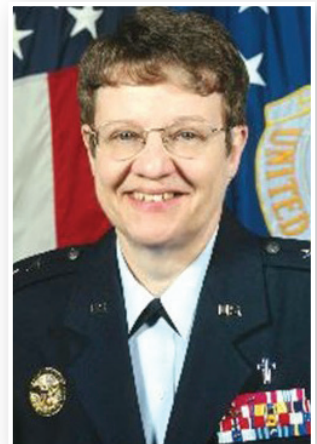
1973, the same year the Navy commissioned the first-ever woman U.S. military chaplain. Women were beginning to achieve more parity in the secular world, and thankfully American Baptists were willing to ordain women!

Being the first woman chaplain in the Air Force was just the beginning of a remarkable career in which Lorraine proved her capabilities as a chaplain, a leader among peers, a wise administrator, and capable of extreme responsibility. Reading her biography, one can see the assignments that built her experience base and gained respect for her people skills and spiritual leadership. She was promoted through the ranks, ultimately reaching Major General, the highest rank possible for a chaplain, when she became the Chief of Chaplains for the Air Force in 2001, the position she held until retiring in 2004.

Lorraine inspires me, and I am in awe of how she has allowed God to use her and her gifts. In addition, she reminds me that many of our sister American Baptist

women in ministry have found their calls outside the church. I recognize how important it is to find ways to connect with these women, whose responsibilities and schedules make it difficult for them to find support from other women clergy.

*Rev. Mary Beth Mankin retired as Pastor of First Baptist Church of Laramie, WY, in 2012. She serves in various volunteer capacities from her home in Boulder, Colorado.*



CHAPLAIN (MAJ. GEN.)  
LORRAINE K. POTTER

# REV. MARY MILD, MY MENTOR

By Rev. Elizabeth Congdon



REV. ELIZABETH CONGDON

It was my privilege to benefit from Mary's expertise and encouragement in the ordination process, to learn from Mary, and to work with her in ministry. Early in the process Mary was there as I avoided completing my profile for the American Baptist Personnel Services of which she was the Director. She offered help and continuing motivation.

Mary's background was an inspiration. She had been a committed lay person active in church, as I had been. She was a leader locally, regionally and nationally. I was a leader locally and regionally. Mary went to seminary later in life as I did. She supported me through my ordination process. My Ordination Council was held at her church.

Mary was among the Deacons and on the committee that called me as Senior Pastor of the First Baptist Church of Trenton, NJ. To my delight I could work with Mary on a regular, almost daily basis. Not only did she know the church, but she also knew about ministry and the needs of people as well as the pastor. She was a guide, coach, mentor, friend, colleague and steady helper. She was there in each ministry of the church filling in wherever needed. Together we helped First Baptist Church of Trenton begin English as a Second Language (ESL) classes for adults and youth. We also tutored youth, offering a clothing closet and a food pantry as we welcomed refugees from Burma via Thailand and Malaysia. She was instrumental in many ministries of the church including the soup kitchen and Sunday School. And she was always there to work with me and others, bringing her experience and encouragement.



REV. MARY MILD, FRONT ROW LEFT, AND REV. ELIZABETH CONGDON, BACK ROW 3RD FROM RIGHT, WITH ESL STUDENTS FROM BURMA

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Front row: Dr. Jeremy Fackenthal and Rev. John Polite III.

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**STAFF:** ABWIM Associate General Secretary and Associate Rev. Dr. Patricia Hernandez and Ms. Joyce Lake; Director of Development and Associate Mr. Kenneth Marsenburg and Ms. Evon Moody.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

<b>Contact:</b>	Rev. Dr. Patricia Hernandez
<b>Address:</b>	American Baptist Women in Ministry P.O. Box 851 Valley Forge, PA 19482-0851
<b>Phone:</b>	ABWIM Office - 800-222-3872, ext. 2070
<b>ABWIM email:</b>	Patricia.Hernandez@abc-usa.org Joyce.Lake@abc-usa.org
<b>ABWIM website:</b>	<a href="http://www.abwim.org">www.abwim.org</a>

## SAVE THE DATE

*Celebrating Ministering Women*  
**Radical. Redeemed. Ready.**

**June 16-19, 2020**  
Green Lake Conference Center  
Green Lake, WI



Check the website for more information.

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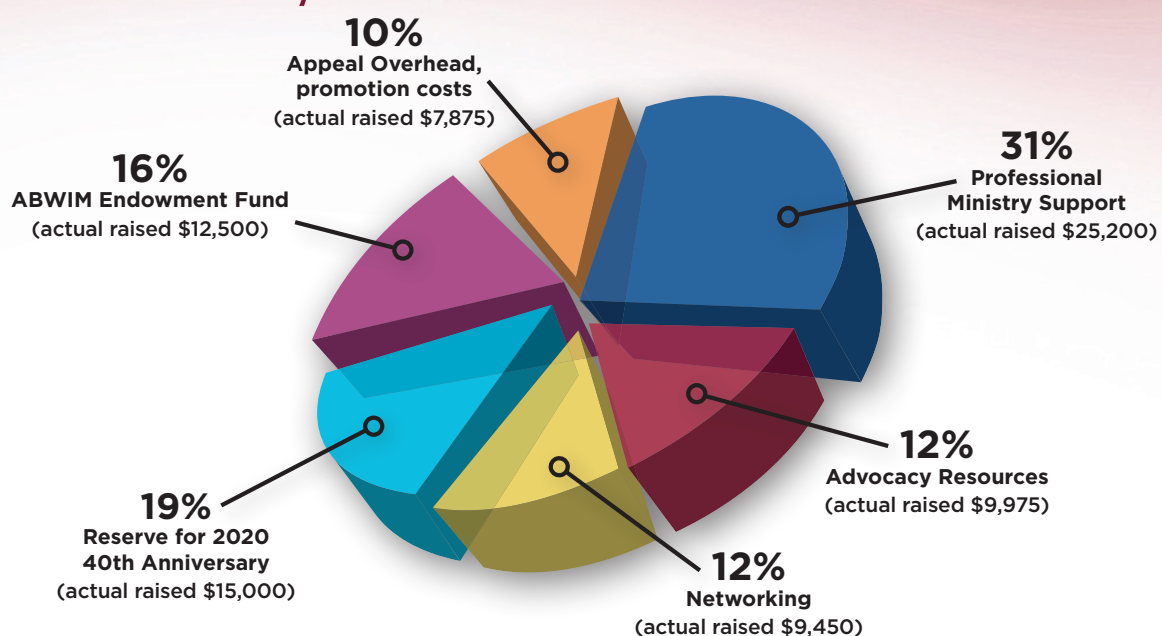
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*Italicized names above represent donor recognitions in honor of (-) or in memory of (+) a mentor, family member or friend. Please contact the ABWIM Office below, where a spelling error or omission has occurred. All donors will be posted at [www.abwim.org](http://www.abwim.org) along with written mentor stories and videos*

Please forward corrections to Ms. Joyce Lake, ABWIM Office (610) 768-2070 [Joyce.Lake@abc-usa.org](mailto:Joyce.Lake@abc-usa.org)

## ABWIM 2016-2017 APPEAL FUNDING As of December 31, 2017



### Pledge & Cash Results as Of December 31, 2017

Minimum & Challenge Goals .....	\$50,000	<b>\$100,000</b>
<b>Raised To Date (Excludes \$10k For Future Appeal) .....</b>	<b>\$80,000</b>	
<b>Amount Above/under Minimum/Challenge Goal .....</b>	<b>+\$30,000</b>	\$20,000
Number of Prospects .....	1,464	
Number of known Prospects Assigned .....	241	
Number of known asks (Pending + Refusals + Gifts) .....	233	
Number of Pending Gift Decisions (considering) .....	113	
Number of Refusals .....	11	
Number of Gifts .....	109	
Average Gift .....	\$734	
<b>Percentage of Minimum and Challenge Goal Achieved .....</b>	<b>160%</b>	<b>80%</b>

### CURRENT ABWIM PLEDGE/GIFT RANGE CHART

Gift Range	# of Gifts	% of Total	Results to Date	Average Gift To Date
\$10,000	1	12.5%	\$10,000	\$10,000
\$5,000	1	6.3%	\$5,000	\$5,000
\$3,500	1	4.4%	\$3,500	\$3,500
\$2,500	2	7.4%	\$5,900	\$2,950
<b>\$1,000</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>44.9%</b>	<b>\$35,900</b>	<b>\$1,122</b>
\$500	21	14.0%	\$11,200	\$533
\$250	22	7.3%	\$5,825	\$265
\$100	18	2.8%	\$2,200	\$122
Less than \$100	11	0.6%	\$475	\$43
<b>Totals</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$80,000</b>	<b>\$734</b>

# THE URGENT CHALLENGE OF AMERICAN BAPTIST WOMEN IN MINISTRY

Despite clear scriptural support for women in ministry and gifted women leaders throughout church history, the church falls short of its call to access, embrace and utilize the gifts of all God's people, risking the health of the church and our effectiveness in furthering God's work in the world. When women's gifts are denied and access blocked, churches are deprived of rich resources. Recognizing this, the 2015 Mission Table declared Women in Ministry a top denominational priority, stating: *The affirmation of women as full partners with men in ordained ministry and the full acceptance of the gifts women bring to ministry is needed for the Body of Christ to thrive and our churches to flourish.* **The health of our churches and the future of our denomination depend on fully accessing, embracing and utilizing all God's gifts in all God's people for all God's good.**

**VISION:** ABWIM seeks the full participation and full partnership of men and women in ministry in which both women and men are able to fully utilize their God-given gifts and fully live out their God-given calls.

**MISSION:**

- Advocate for women in ministry***
- Celebrate their gifts***
- Cultivate their calls***
- Educate about the biblical basis***
- Share their history***
- Spotlight women in ministry***



American Baptist Women in Ministry  
American Baptist Churches USA  
PO Box 851  
Valley Forge PA 19482-0851

