

Newsletter: Elevate 01/07/25



Dear Sisters and Friends in Christ,

Welcome to *Elevate*, our new series that celebrates the voices of women leaders within American Baptist Women's Ministries. Today, we are honored to share the heartfelt journey and reflections of our National President, Lovenna Van Haaften. Her story is a beautiful reminder of God's love, grace, and calling on each of our lives. Read below.

Why did you choose to be a part of this organization?

In the late 1970's, I joined FBC in Pella, Iowa along with my Husband and a two year old child. I had no immediate family in the area. Several women of the church wrapped their arms around me, inviting me to a women's circle, and also to the Women's Area, Region meetings and then to the National meetings at Green Lake, Wisconsin Conference Center. The women picked me up for transportation, they assisted in child care, and showed me God's love. The mission focus each year spoke to me and has helped me in my Christian walk with my Lord and Savior. I have been loved and empowered through AB Women's Ministries.

God is my strength, my salvation. "The joy of the Lord is my strength", Nehemiah 8:10. I find hope, confidence and courage in God's presence in my life. I also believe "I can do all this through him who gives me strength". Philippians 4:13.

The joy of the Lord empowers me to continue on the next step of God's purpose for my life. I can be strong and courageous.

Why do you give financially to ABWM?

I believe in the mission and vision of the organization. To do the work of our Lord takes financial resources. Giving regularly, becoming a Vital Partner, or a member of the Violet's Circle is important to sustain our mission in serving women and girls. If you haven't become a Vital Partner, please prayerfully consider doing so. Perhaps giving to the other funds is your preference, Thank you for helping to sustain women's ministry to our women and girls.

What core value of ABWM speaks to you?

ABWM has many core values that may speak to an individual. The core value that speaks to me, "We recognize the worth of all women and girls" and closely related is "Being relevant for women today". In today's world, women and girls are subjected to being called unworthy, worthless, battered, abused, and mistreated in many ways. ABWM helps to show women and girls that they are God's children and worthy of love. We need to be available to assist in enabling and empowering their lives. It is important to keep up with current methods of communication. It is difficult for the seniors to give up paper and pencil. It is important to keep them informed, but it is also important to learn the ways of communication for the younger generation. Remaining current and relevant to current women's and girls issues is important to empower and encourage one another.

What is your fondest memory of ABWM?

It's difficult to select my fondest memory of ABWM. I have witnessed many special, relevant moments throughout the years. Attending a workshop where a 50 pound bag of clay was thrown to the ground, with the topic of "mold me and make me..." No thank you Lord, I'm tired of being remolded. Made in your image, going through the fire. God's will for me. There was entertainment of women dressed in "different" styles as they strutted down the isles. And then the reverent time a lamp that was lit as the ABWM logo changed. A woman dressed in white and purple standing reverently during the presentation raising the lit lamp. So moving! Times of laughter, times of tears; all fondly remembered.

Is there anything else you would like to say to our readers?

As you walk with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, ask Him what He is calling you to do. He has a task for each of us, and He will equip you with the necessary wisdom to complete it. But you have to know what the task is. James 1: 5-9 tells us if any of us lack wisdom, we may ask God for it, and He will give it. Accept His gift of wisdom as well as the task He has appointed to you.

With hope in our hearts, we strive to do good that is ours to do.

Reflect

Lovenna's story invites us to pause and reflect on our own journeys. How has God worked through the ministry of others in your life? How might He be calling you to make an impact?

Whether through service, financial support, or lifting up others in prayer, each of us has a role to play. Together, we can continue to show women and girls that they are worthy, loved, and empowered under God's care.

With hope and faith in our hearts, let's take the next step in this mission together.

Blessings,

American Baptist Women's Ministries

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