



Celebrating the 65th Anniversary of American Baptist Women's Ministries

*A collection of resources to help you
in your recognition of 65 years of mission and ministry
by American Baptist women and girls*

American Baptist
Women's
MINISTRIES

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Introduction

By Bonnie Higgins

National Coordinator of Eastern Section (2012-2015)

American Baptist Women's Ministries will be celebrating 65 years of encouraging and empowering women to be Godly women! I remember my own journey that started over 20 years ago with AB Women's Ministries: The first meeting I went to was an association meeting in my area. I didn't know much about AB Women's Ministries then, but the women were friendly and made me feel very welcome. I then began my journey from the local level, to the state level, and then on to the national level. I held many positions during my journey, with each position helping to grow me into who I am today. Because of my start in AB Women's Ministries I have delved deeper into God's Word and seen how AB Women's Ministries has spread around the world, helping women and girls grow by encouraging and empowering them to seek God, to rely on God, and to find hope in God. I am grateful for AB Women's Ministries for giving me the strength to step out of my comfort zone and pursue God's plan in my life. I do give credit to AB Women's Ministries for allowing me to grow and to expand my life in God's Word.

Thank you, American Baptist Women Ministries! I hope many more women and girls will see that God has a plan for them and that AB Women's Ministries is a part of it. Please help celebrate 65 years of women and girls who have been transformed by American Baptist Women's Ministries!



The 65th Anniversary Logo

The traditional gift for a 65th anniversary is a star sapphire. The purple star sapphire has been chosen by the public relations team of AB Women's Ministries to symbolize the AB Women's Ministries 65th anniversary. Sapphires are mentioned twelve times in the Bible. The star sapphire traditionally symbolizes hope, faith, and destiny. The color purple is the signature color of AB Women's Ministries.

Celebrating the 65th Anniversary

The national celebration of the 65th anniversary launches at the 2015 Women's Day on Friday, June 26, in Overland Park, Kansas, and concludes at the 2016 national events for women and girls in July, 2016. You are encouraged to plan 65th anniversary celebrations in your congregation, area/association, or region/state events at any time in 2016.

A Celebration of the Anniversary and Prayer of Dedication for National Support

By Linda. R. McKenzie

President, AB Women's Ministries of Massachusetts

In the words of our saintly sister, Mother Teresa, let us pray:

Make us worthy, Lord, to serve our fellow men throughout the world who live and die in poverty and hunger;

Give them, through our hands, this day their daily bread, and by our understanding love, give Peace and Joy;

Lord, make me a channel of Thy peace, that where there is hatred, I may bring love; that where there is wrong, I may bring the spirit of forgiveness; that where there is doubt, I may bring faith; that where there is error, I may bring truth; that where there is discord, I may bring harmony; that where there is despair, I may bring hope; that where there are shadows, I may bring light; that where there is sadness, I may bring joy;

*Lord, grant that I may seek to comfort rather than to be comforted; to understand than to be understood; to love than to be loved; for it is by forgetting self that one finds; it is by dying that one awakens to eternal life. Amen.**

Song: *God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending* by Robert Lansing Edwards. (Lyrics available at this link: <http://www.oremus.org/hymnal/g/g299.html>. Many sung and instrumental versions are available online—search YouTube for the title.)

The ministries of American Baptist Women—local, national and international—are evidence of prayers answered, eyes that see, ears that hear, and hearts that hold onto God's Word as found in Scripture. In Deuteronomy 11:7 Moses tells the Israelites, "But it was your own eyes that saw all these great things the Lord has done," (NIV). Let us remember all of the good things we have done in God's name and by God's grace, and wish to *continue* to do, by giving monetary support to our national organization. Let us ask each woman in our congregation to give \$13.00 every 5th Sunday and on AB Women's Ministries Day, traditionally the third Sunday in September. This will total \$65 by June 1, 2016. The five Sundays to take the collection are August 30th, November 29th, January 31st, May 29th, and on September 20, or AB Women's Ministries Sunday: \$65 for 65 years of women's ministry of being servant leaders.

May we recite Mother Teresa's prayer with conviction, so that we will be the hands and feet of Jesus. May we continue to rely on the tools that God made for us to use: our eyes and ears to enable us to "See..." and discern the needs of others. And may we have a willing heart to support one another in this ministry by sharing our resources, thereby sustaining our organization for another 65 years.

Prayer of Dedication

Almighty God, please hear our prayer in the name of your son Jesus, through whom we pray. We bring you our gifts, Creator God, in gratitude for your power and presence in the workings of our ministries and within our hearts and minds. We thank you for the legions of women over these past 65 years who have faithfully given of themselves to American Baptist Women's Ministries.

We thank you for the generous spirit of the women who have shared their gifts with us today, and we thank you for the privilege of partnering with you to continue the work of Jesus here on earth. We ask for your continued blessings upon our leadership, both nationally and regionally. We ask your blessings upon this offering, that we may use it according to your will, and we ask that you send to each one of us another woman of faith to join us in this ministry. These things we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

**From Mother Teresa's address to the United Nations on the occasion of its 40th anniversary, "One Strong Resolution: I Will Love," General Assembly Hall, October 26, 1995, http://www.piercedhearts.org/purity_heart_morality/mother_teresa_address_united_nations.htm, accessed May 29, 2015. Part of the prayer is based on "Lord, make me an instrument of your peace," attributed to St. Francis of Assisi.*

Prayer of Dedication for Our Ministries

By Mariann Curl

President, AB Women's Ministries of Ohio

Today we are in celebration of 65 years of American Baptist Women's Ministries! The women of the early gatherings in 1871 who organized the Woman's Baptist Mission Society were inspired by the need for ministry in foreign lands. The Woman's American Baptist Home Mission Society of 1909 focused on evangelism and ministry in the United States. In 1915 the need was discerned to establish a program for girls to train them in Christian leadership, and inspire and empower them for Christian ministry; this ministry with girls was formed under the name of World Wide Guild.

The National Council of American Baptist Women was nationally organized in 1951 and eventually became the American Baptist Women's Ministries we are today. In 1992, AB Women's Ministries affirmed and accepted the responsibility for girl's ministries, and AB GIRLS was born out of those early roots of World Wide Guild generations before.

How far have we come? The Lord has bestowed blessings on American Baptist women in many ways. It is doubtful that our predecessors would have imagined going on a mission encounter to Africa or the Czech Republic, or a "virtual" mission encounter through computers to be exposed to mission and ministry concerns worldwide without leaving home; it's unlikely they could have imagined being able to listen to a podcast, *In Their Shoes: Women Walking with Women Worldwide*. Wouldn't they have been pleased to read a blog post written by the executive director to inspire and encourage them? Educating and funding alternatives to those plagued by human trafficking, and the idea of ten women accompanying our executive director to Lebanon and the Republic of Georgia to engage in peaceful dialog with Muslim women would have been beyond imagination.

American Baptist Women's Ministries has been and will continue to be a source of spiritual blossoming to women and girls alike. It is a haven of fellowship where the generations come together to study Scripture, educate themselves on missions and ministries, and pray for guidance on how to serve. We are the servants in our churches and communities, showing the love of God as we minister to our friends and neighbors. The blessings are abundant when we spend time together in praise, worship, and prayer to God.

Let us come together and focus on God as we are thankful for our heritage, blessed by our service and ministry, and appeal to God to guide our future.

Luke 4:18–19 tells us, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor," (NRSV).

Litany of Dedication

Leader: As American Baptist women, let us continue to stay committed to the mission of Christ-centered ministry.

All: Lord, help us to reach out and encourage women and girls of all ages in developing relationships within American Baptist Women's Ministries, empower them to grow and develop their individual spiritual gifts and skills you have so graciously bestowed, and to strive for excellence in all that we do.

Leader: As American Baptist women, we ask the Lord to help us keep the vision alive as we look to have active and vital ministries for women and girls in every American Baptist church, ministries that encourage all women and girls to grow and develop as God's person.

All: Lord, grant us the desire to search your Word for the answers we seek. May we practice good and faithful stewardship as we serve your community. Help is to be ever diligent in seeking the needs of sisters in our community and those around us in the world as we plan ministries that are relevant to the needs of women and girls today. Empower us to further explore our diversity. Enlighten us as we learn by the diversity of clergy/lay, age, geographical area, racial and ethnic representation in our denomination and presence in our communities.

Leader: Develop us as servant leaders as we serve our American Baptist churches by encouraging vital ministries with women and girls; implant a desire in our churches to build such ministries.

All: Lord, guide us in strengthening our leadership skills as we plan and implement new ministries. Be with us as we spend time in Scripture and in prayer focusing on what your desire is for each one of us, and for the ministries before us. We ask your blessing for another 65 years of serving you.

Leader: Amen.

All: Amen.

A Celebration of Mission

By Bonnie Sestito

National Coordinator of Mission with Women and Girls

The Great Commission is seen by many as the most important Scripture. Not only is it the last specific, personal instruction that Jesus gave the disciples recorded in Scripture, it is also a clarion call given to disciples then—and now—towards action.

Long before American Baptist Women's Ministries became a national organization in 1951, women heeded the call of Jesus Christ. The Woman's Union Missionary Society of America, founded in 1861, was the first American organization to send single women to the mission field. Today AB Women's Ministries empowers women and girls throughout the world through the Women and Girls' Mission Fund.

As we celebrate AB Women's Ministries 65th anniversary, let us remember that the mission of yesterday is the mission of today: furthering Jesus Christ's plan of salvation through us. Use this Mission Litany on AB Women's Ministries Sunday or another time of your choosing as a reminder of what we were called to do 2000 years ago and today. It may also be used when commissioning a person or group going on a mission encounter.

A Missions Litany

Leader: Jesus said, in Matthew 28:19-20, "Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey all I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." As followers of Jesus Christ, will you go?

Congregation: Yes, by the grace of God, we will go.

Leader: What will you do?

Congregation: We will make disciples by sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with others.

Leader: Where will you go to make disciples?

Congregation: With the help of the Holy Spirit we will go into our neighborhoods, downtown, across state lines, and abroad to make disciples.

Leader: Let us pray: Loving God, your son, Jesus Christ, promised that we would never be left alone. Be present with all who go forth in his name.

Congregation: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for an increase in evangelism and ministries of mercy in our local community and abroad, that all people may come to know and enjoy your blessings.

Congregation: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for the poor, the hungry, and the oppressed people of the world, and all who suffer for the sake of the Gospel.

Congregation: Lord, hear our prayer.

All: Lord, strengthen each of us to participate in your mission in the world. May it be pleasing to you when food, education, healthcare, justice, and advocacy is provided to enlarge your Church in our neighborhoods or other continents. May your love and your truth be known through Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.

To Support AB Women's Ministries:

Give by check payable to "AB Women's Ministries." Mail it to AB Women's Ministries, P.O. Box 851, Valley Forge, PA 19482-0841.

To give online or to read about other ways to support our ministries, visit www.abwministries.org/give.

Women who give \$120 or more a year to National Support are recognized as Vital Partners. For more information about being a Vital Partner, visit www.abwministries.org/vitalpartners.

To learn more about or contribute to the Women and Girls Mission Fund, which supports AB GIRLS, Leadership Development Fund, Refit, and national mission projects at home and around the world that focus on bringing healing and hope to women and girls, visit www.abwministries.org/wgmf.

“Come and See What Has Changed”

A Skit for the 65th Anniversary of American Baptist Women's Ministries

By Sheryl Wise

Past president, AB Women's Ministries of Ohio

This skit demonstrates that while styles may change, and our methods of communication may change, women still focus on gathering to do God's work together.

Cast: 6 women

- Ethel and Myrtle: Women of the early 1950's
 - Costumes: Apron, pearls, heels. Think June Cleaver!
 - Props: Chair, side table, an old-style dial telephone on it. Myrtle needs a paper list in a purse or apron pocket. Ethel should be knitting or crocheting an afghan, scarf, wrap, or another project that would have been popular in the 1950s. Try to have yarn colors reminiscent of the 1950s: pastels (pink, turquoise, mint green), or a vibrant red, electric blue, etc.
- Chris and Tiffany: Women of the 1980's
 - Costumes: Clothes with high shoulder pads, neon colors, leg warmers, etc.
 - Props: Chair at a card table or TV table; on the table a cordless phone, one with an antenna, if possible. Tiffany needs a paper list in her pocket or a backpack. Chris is seated in the chair at the table making friendship pins—these are safety pins with a variety of seed beads strung onto them and closed, then the pins are hung onto another safety pin. Do an Internet search for “friendship pin” if you are unfamiliar with them.
- Jillian and Kaleigh: Women of 2015
 - Costumes: Jeans, something comfortable and obviously “today.”
 - Props: Chair, smart phone, iPad or other tablet

If space allows, have all three scenes visible on stage at once. All six actors should be in position at the start; actors should be “frozen” in place until their scene is being played. If you have the ability, use lighting to highlight each scene in turn, then all six actors together at the end.

Scene One: The 1950's

Ethel is seated, knitting or stitching as Myrtle enters.

Myrtle (*admiring Ethel's handiwork*): That is really beautiful, Ethel! What is it for?

Ethel: Hello, Myrtle. I have been working on it to donate to our women's bazaar on Saturday.

Myrtle: The bazaar is really going to be great! I have six dozen cookies in the ice box, myself. I'll be baking more this afternoon.

Ethel: Our women's circle has really worked hard for this bazaar, and every penny raised goes to support our American Baptist Women's Ministries.

Myrtle: I think the whole church looks forward to it every year.

Ethel: Well, we had better get busy.

Myrtle: I brought my list of people that we are supposed to write to for donations. (*She gets out her list and starts to look it over.*)

Ethel: You know, while you are doing that I am going to call everyone in our circle to go over the details. (*Ethel puts down her knitting and picks up the phone.*)

Myrtle (*putting a hand on Ethel's shoulder to stop her*): Only one more thing to do before we start... (*They both freeze in place.*)

Scene Two: The 1980's

Chris is working on the friendship pins as Tiffany enters.

Tiffany (*admiring the pins*): Those are totally awesome, Chris. What are they for?

Chris: Hey, Tiffany. I've been working on these to donate to our women's auction on Saturday.

Tiffany: The auction is going to be radical! I made two wall hangings: One with Care Bears and the other with Strawberry Shortcake!

Chris: Our women's group has worked really hard for this auction, and every dollar raised goes to support our American Baptist Women's Ministries.

Tiffany: I think the whole church looks forward to it every year.

Chris: We'd better get busy.

Tiffany: I brought my list of people that we are going to write to for donations. (*She pulls out her list and starts looking through it.*)

Chris: I am going to call members of our women's group to go over details. (*Chris picks up the phone.*)

Tiffany (*putting her hand on Chris' shoulder to stop her*): Only one more thing to do before we start... (*They both freeze in place.*)

Scene Three: Today

Jillian is seated and working on her iPad/tablet as Kaleigh enters. Kaleigh is looking down at the smart phone in her hand as she walks in.

Kaleigh: Hey, Jillian. I just saw your post online (*she holds her phone up for Jillian's notice, indicating that she read the post on her phone*). Is everything ready?

Jillian: Hey, Kaleigh! (*She lifts up the tablet as if showing Kaleigh what she's accomplished.*) Yep, I just have to upload a few more pictures and I'll be done posting all the items we already have. Your idea to create an eBay site to raise money for our women's group was brilliant!

Kaleigh (*grinning*): I have some more stuff in the van we can use, too. We're launching the site on Saturday, right?

Jillian (*nodding*): All of our women's and girls' ministry groups have worked hard for this online auction, and every dollar goes to support our American Baptist Women's Ministries.

Kaleigh: Our whole church is looking forward to this! (*Again holding up her phone to Jillian's notice*) I've been getting tweets about the launch all week!

Jillian: Well, we'd better get busy!

Kaleigh (*starting to tap at the screen on her smart phone*): I am going work on getting the word out on social media.

Jillian (*continuing to work on her tablet*): As soon as I finish uploading these pictures, I'm going to send out an email blast!

Kaleigh (*pausing in her tapping*): Only one more thing to do before we start...

All six actors move into a line at the front of the stage, each pair turning to hold both hands with each other and bowing their heads.

ALL: Dear God, we ask you to bless our efforts as we work hard for you. Help us to be ever more like you each and every day. We give you all the praise and honor. Amen.