

Important information you need for ministries with women and girls.

Summer 2023

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2023-2025 Ministry Focus: **Be Strong, Be Courageous**

By [Rev. Dr. Gina Jacobs-Strain](#), executive director

In 2019, the American Baptist Women's Ministries (ABWM) national board deeply reflected on the Ministry Focus for the next few years. They desired to implement a Ministry Focus that expressed our hopes for ABWM to thrive as a transformational space for spiritual growth and unity. The focus needed to be broad enough to inspire our sisterhood, challenge us to take necessary risks to move forward, and help us grow internally and externally. We wanted our witness to be kingdom-building and life-affirming. We considered our history the need to continue championing women's equity, wellness, and wholeness.

In 2019-2021, after prayer, the national board decided the Ministry Focus would be *Sister Seeking Wholeness*. In 2021-2023, they decided it was *Let the Walls Fall Down*, understanding that we needed to remove internal and external, spiritual, emotional, and physical roadblocks, and walls that keep us divided and disconnected as the body of Christ. We are creating spaces for a better today and future for ABWM. We strive to be a sisterhood that is Christ-Centered, engaging, and empowering women from the inside out.

We prayerfully determined that our 32 regions will have a sisterhood that is growing deeper in our individual and collective spiritual and faith journeys. We know that it is essential that we are aligned, transparent, unified, respectful, discerning, and persistent in love, grace, justice, and mercy.

And with these ideals in mind, the National Board moves our 32 region/state forward with our new Ministry theme,

Be Strong, Be Courageous, as we walk shoulder to shoulder, connected heart to heart in God's call on this ministry to lift up women and in doing so we lift our denomination. We continue to seek holy wholeness, divine discernment to Let the Walls Fall Down removing all spiritual, emotional, and physical walls. Now we are called into a bold love in the name of Jesus. Consistent with Joshua 1:9, God has commanded us to Be strong and TO BE courageous. We will not be afraid or discouraged, For the Lord our God is with us, wherever we go.





Women and Girls' Day

By [Rev. Dr. Gina Jacobs-Strain](#),
executive director

On Friday, June 23, in Caguas, PR, we had the pleasure to experience an inspiring gathering with our sisters from all over the country for Women and Girls' Day. There we presented our new Ministry Theme for 2023-25, **Be Strong, Be Courageous!**

The event was filled with beautiful expressions of worship, fellowship, and heartfelt service that left us all deeply moved. We were privileged to have President Ada



Feliciano Vega, ABWM-PR start us off with a heartfelt greeting and to participate in a Bible study led by Rev. Dr. Yamina Apolinaris. Her teachings were empowering and renewing.



We were also treated to amazing praise and worship led by Pastor Margot Camacho Rivera. She led us in a spirit-filled worship experience, creating an atmosphere of unity and spiritual upliftment.



As part of Women and Girls' Day mission work, we successfully assembled 112 hurricane kits and decorated Sunday School classrooms at the First Baptist Church of Caguas.



Our heartfelt gratitude goes out to translator Sandra Romain who was generous with her time and gifts and the host church, Primera Iglesia Bautista de Caguas, and Rvda. Adlin Quiles Ferrer. We are also truly grateful for the support and guidance from Cynthia M. Lopez

Diaz. Their hospitality was outstanding, making us feel welcomed throughout our stay.

We celebrated ABWM's Shine the Light recipient, Laura Austin. Ms. Austin serves as the ABWM President of Connecticut. She believes in sharing the love of Christ as she volunteers weekly with FoodShare, is a retail rescue driver, serves on the Advisory Board of Willimantic Salvation Army, cooks lunch for Vacation Bible School, became a Red Kettle ringer, handed out Thanksgiving turkeys, knitted 32 hats for the Warm Hearts Warm Souls campaign and more! This is just a few of the ways she shares her gifts and the joy of Jesus with her community.



We extend our sincere appreciation to the events planning team, with a special shoutout to Dawn Doerr-Johnson, the chair as well as the committee: Mona Huggins, Cynthia Bentley, and LaRose Karr. They planned a beautiful day for all of us to enjoy!!!!



Delicious gourmet popcorn fundraiser: November 2-6, 2023

begins at 11:00 AM on Thursday, November 2, 2023, and ends on Monday, November 6, 2023, at 11:00 AM EDT

Support American Baptist Women's Ministries by ordering gourmet popcorn through our Double Good popup store. Each of Double Good's unique ultra-premium flavors is handcrafted in small batches and

made to order so that you always receive the freshest popcorn with the perfect crunch. ABWM receives 50% of every bag sold. Proceeds support our ministry and mission for women and girls! Order at <https://popup.doublegood.com/s/kd6t7j90>

Don't want popcorn? You can still participate in this fundraiser by making a gift to American Baptist Women's Ministries. [Click here to give a gift to ABWM](#) or send a check to: American Baptist Women's Ministries, 1075 First Ave STE C-210, King of Prussia, PA 19406.

Your donation will support this and so much more!

- Bible Study and spiritual formation workshops, studies during ABWM region/state conferences, workshops, retreats, and national conferences
- Scholarships for women and girls to attend college, seminary, & trade schools

- Scholarships for women and girls to attend ABWM, denomination and events related to mission/ministry events
- Grants for American Baptist churches and organizations that support ABWM mission/ministries
- Leadership training for women and girls in your church, area, and region
- Free webinars, Fall & Winter
- Speakers for conferences, retreats, and program resources
- Hi e-Steam for AB GIRLS, Bible Studies, spiritual formation, and S.T.E.A.M
- Workshop, webinars, and gatherings for Young Adult Women's Ministries and AB GIRLS
- Domestic Violence Training and Certification Workshops
- Building Beloved Communities in ABWM regions/states
- Cultural Competency Awareness Learning Opportunities

Articles from Officers



Be Strong, Be Courageous

By [Rev. Dr. Christine Smith](#),
national president

Greetings ABWM! I am excited to share that our new (2023-2025) ministry focus theme is, *Be Strong, Be Courageous*. As Joshua prepared to take over

leadership responsibilities from Moses, the Lord told him this (Joshua 1:8-9, NIV): *Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.*"

There is much in life that can make us afraid... facing the unknown, illness, injustice, mean spirited people, rejection, and change, to name a few. Of all of these, change may loom the largest. Change can be very challenging because change forces us to move from the familiar to the unfamiliar. Change forces us to think outside of the box and try things that we may have never tried before.

Joshua was leading a group of people that had witnessed a generation of their relatives, community members, and leaders, wander in the wilderness for forty years. He was leading the children of people

that had experienced marching towards the "promised land," but were never able to enter because of an unwillingness to trust God, obey his voice, and move forward. Scholars suggest that the Israelites were literally a few miles, an eleven-day journey away from crossing the Jordan river into the promised land, but they kept on going in circles. Joshua was now tasked with helping the next generation to avoid making the mistakes of their predecessors.

To enter the "promised lands" the Lord has for us; we must be strong and courageous. We must push past the temptation to be shackled by fear and cast down discouragement. We can do so by remembering that the Lord our God is with us, wherever we go. We must prayerfully work together, by faith, and in Christian love. The road will not always be easy. We will not always agree on everything. Like the adage, "teeth and tongue may fall out, but they must work together in order to eat!"

ABWM, by faith, may we be strong and courageous. May we meditate on God's word day and night. May we remember Jesus' instruction to love the Lord our God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength, and our neighbor as ourselves. Then, we will be "prosperous and successful." May we escape the trap of going in circles and lose a generation because of fear and an unwillingness to change.

"Walk together children, don't you get weary. There's a great camp meeting in the promised land!"



Be Strong and Courageous

By [Carol Wright](#), coordinator of the western section

Joshua 1:9 says, "Be bold and strong even amidst hardship. Banish fear and doubt for remember, the Lord is with you wherever you go." (Living Bible

Paraphrased)

Remembering Rosa Parks sitting in the front row, Detrick Bonhoffer standing up to Hitler, and now the Ukrainians saying "No!" to Russia, we see strength and courage. In our own lives, we experience bullying but know that turning the other cheek is the message. Working with all ages, I say act like a dog is running at you, turn your back, and it'll go away because it just wants your attention - usually!

The book, *Be Strong. Be Brave* that reminds me of "Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you" (Deuteronomy 31:6).

When facing huge obstacles, if one's faith is strong, the outcome is as God promises. The Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness, so even when we don't know what to pray for, the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed (Romans 8:26).

Remember David facing Goliath? If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to the mountain, "Move and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you" (Matthew 17:20-21 NIV). Embarking on this journey together as sisters, we know that God will give us a divine boldness to support women and girls to reach new heights that will impact ABWM's wellbeing.



Domestic Violence

By [LaRose Karr](#), coordinator of mission with women and girls

National Domestic Violence Awareness Month is recognized each October through educational events, community gatherings, and support groups. In 2018, the Domestic Violence Awareness Project developed a unified theme: #1 Thing. The purpose of this campaign is to remind everyone that ending domestic violence starts with just one small action, whether that is seeking help or sharing resources.

Domestic Violence/Intimate Partner Violence Facts

- Domestic violence is commonly referred to as intimate partner violence (IPV).

- Eighty-five percent of IPV victims are women. A woman is beaten every 9 seconds.
- Every year, nearly 5.3 million incidents of IPV occur among U.S. women aged 18 and older.
- More than 3 women are killed by husbands/boyfriends every day.

This crucial topic is affecting women and families in our communities and congregations. Nearly 75 percent of Americans personally know someone who is or has been a victim of domestic violence.

Four years ago, while on a family campout, I received the tragic news that a family close to ours had suffered the loss of their mother and attempted suicide of the father due to IPV.

We may pass someone in the local grocery store or sit beside a couple in a restaurant where the seemingly happy couple will have a physically violent argument only hours after our encounter.

ABWM offers online and in-person webinars, training, and certification. Seize opportunities in your churches and communities to point individuals and groups for training and help. Intervention and teaching will save lives!

Learn more about Domestic Violence at www.abwomensministries.org/page.aspx/contentId/83/Domestic-Violence/

What's Happening in your ABWM Region?

WESTERN SECTION

By [Carol Wright](#)

- ABWM/Bellingham Emma de la Cruz's women are enjoying small group dinners, fellowship, and Bible study.
- CA/ABWM of the West met for a retreat with Rev. Katie Choy-Wong as speaker who used her book "Building Lasting Bridges for Intercultural Ministries."
- CO/ABWM Yvonne Whisenhunt, introduced to ABWM by her mom, is thankful for our leaders.
- Olympia/ABWM made 24 hygiene kits for Maryland, 50 art supply kits for Cuba, and raised \$3,560 for Camp playground equipment, plus gave to the women and girls fund and National ABWM for webinars and programming.
- OR/ABWM Alumnae newsletter editor Virginia Holmstrom, in a faith-based retirement community, is leader of Faith Formation Team at 1st Baptist McMinnville and is deeply touched by stories of how God

has moved in the lives of alumnae. ABWM & AB GIRLS have been pivotal points for growth and leadership for many in our inclusive, Beloved Community.

- PNW/ABWM Quilters/crafters retreat will be on October 20-22. Scholarships are given to women graduate students studying for full-time Christian work.
- ABWM/Seattle's Mount Zion published "The Circle Leader's Role."

MIDWESTERN SECTION

By [Lovenia Van Haaften](#)

As you begin to plan next year's itinerary, remember our new theme, which is, "Be Strong, Be Courageous." Our theme was introduced on Women and Girls' Day in Puerto Rico. The next webinar series will begin in October.

Remember: The even year is your opportunity to support National AB Women's Ministries. If the women don't support their own organization, no one else will. Help continue webinars, programs for women and girls, STEAM programs, and scholarships, to name a few programs we provide.

Events for Women and Girls

National ABWM 2023 Events

Oct 3 — Eastern Section: What's Up ABWM

Oct 6-8 — Shalom Retreat

2024

July 18-21 — Women and Girls' Conference at Roanoke College in Roanoke, Virginia. For more event information, visit

www.abwomensministries.org/events.



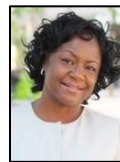
Shalom Retreat

Friday, October 6-8, 2023

Held at Restoration Ministries of Greater Cleveland, Inc (140 Richmond Road; Euclid, Ohio 44143), where our National President, Rev. Dr. Christine Smith, is the senior pastor.

Enacting God's calling on our lives involves attending to our wellness: spiritually, physically, emotionally, and mentally. This weekend spent in the company of your American Baptist sisters will help you find refreshment and renewal, as well as learn new techniques for attending to your health. Learn more at

www.abwomensministries.org/events.



Bible Study Leader on Friday and Evening Plenary Preacher on Saturday: **Rev. Dr. Martina S. Moore**, President and CEO of Moore Counseling & Mediation Services, Inc.



Workshop Leader and Sunday Morning Preacher: **Rev. Dr. Gina Jacobs-Strain**, Executive Director of American Baptist Women's Ministries



Workshop Leader: **Ania Norori**, Director of Lilly Programs at The Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board (MMBB)



Workshop Leader: **Erin Davis**, Social Media Ambassador of American Baptist Women's Ministries

Support ABWM

Make a gift to American Baptist Women's Ministries today! Gifts allow ABWM to continue providing free webinars, scholarships for events, programs, resources, and leadership training for ministries with women and girls in your church, area, and region.

- Give by Venmo: @abwomensministries
- Give by text: Text ABWM to 44321
- Give online by credit card: Give online at <http://www.abwomensministries.org/give>
- Give by check: Mail a check payable to "ABWM" to American Baptist Women's, 1075 First Ave STE C-210, King of Prussia, PA 19406



Become a Vital Partner to support the vision for the future of American Baptist Women's Ministries. Vital Partners regularly give \$228 or more a year to support our work with women, young adult women, and girls. Vital Partners give monthly, quarterly, or annually, and they may also set up automated giving by direct withdrawal from their bank account or credit card. Become a Vital Partner today at www.abwomensministries.org/VitalPartners.

Find Us On Social Media

Do you ever feel like you find out about American Baptist Women's Ministries (ABWM) events after they've taken place? Do you need more info about ABWM? Do you want to feel part of a community of like-minded women who enjoy helping others and rejoicing in God's Word? Then, follow American Baptist Women's Ministries on social media: Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter. Be a part of this dynamic Christ-centered organization and stay informed.

- www.facebook.com/abwomensministries
- www.instagram.com/abwomen/
- www.twitter.com/abwomen



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Send us "ideas that worked for me" in women's and girls' ministries, women or girls you'd like to thank or honor, theme-related devotionals, or other materials you think would be helpful to women and girls in our congregations! Please send contributions to info@abwomensministries.org.

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