



# The Rocky Mountain American Baptist

A Newsletter of the American Baptist Churches in the Rocky Mountain Region

## A Word From Steve ...

Dear ones,

As I write this Annual "Pastoral" Letter for the Christmas season, I am aware that the world is a very different place for many of us this year. 2017 has been unusual!

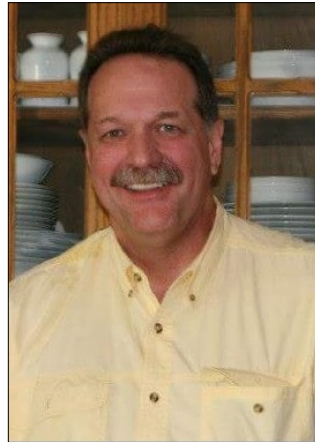
It began with the inauguration of a new President whose leadership style is at the least controversial. His tweets take on a combative air and his decisions are bold and dramatic. Our President seems to be in love with superlatives almost as much as himself. For many he is not what they want in a leader and yet for others he is exactly what they want. Our thoughts about him in many ways exemplify where we find ourselves as a nation: divided, positioned and all too intransigent.

Add to this a year of natural disasters...hurricane lined up after hurricane, each seemingly more destructive than the past. And hurricanes aren't just any old type of natural disaster...they pack a one-two punch. First there is the storm itself with the wind and driving rain and then there is the flooding that generally follows. But the hurricanes weren't the only disasters.... There were wildfires out west that kept hot-shot teams on duty for literally months on end and the eruption of a couple of volcanos and, by the way, we still had our usual tornados and other types of storms.

And if all of this was not enough to make the year stand-out for you, add to that the continuing presence of evil in our world... people who feel compelled to take a stash of assault rifles and shoot into a gathered crowd of people who are enjoying a country music concert... people who drive trucks down bike paths and try to force the police to take their life because they are afraid to do it themselves. We live in a time where young people who have not been taught to value life and think nothing of planning a shoot-em up of their school because they have been embarrassed, ignored or made to feel unworthy.

And this is all on the home front.

What about the on-going war in Syria, the continued genocide in Myanmar and



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the ethnic cleansing we see in various places around the world? And don't forget the rampant poverty and homelessness that exists all around the world.

Yes, the world seems to be a different place than in years past. But then again, is it really all that different?

Hasn't this type of thing been seen in every generation? Were there not "wars and rumors of wars" since the beginning of human existence...since Cain slew Abel?

And yet it was into a world full of division, hate and evil that God sent the Son all those years ago. It is in that world that the Holy Spirit has continuously sought out people to make a difference and empowered those who would be a light unto the world...reflecting the true Light of Christ. It was into an ugly and divided world that Jesus was born and fled with his earthly parents from the dangerous political leadership. It was into this type of world that He introduced the message of God's Love and the promise of Tomorrow.



And so, as we approach the celebration of His birth and consider the ugliness and evil that exists around us, we need not despair. For just as Christ came into an ugly and broken world long ago, Christ is still entering our world today.... He's just doing it through the hands and feet of the church. And instead of allowing the ugliness to paralyze it, we must allow it to compel us to proclaim the Hope that we alone have through Christ, the message that we alone have been given: The message that God so loved this broken, worn-down and evil world that God sent the Son to redeem, restore and transform us.

May you and yours claim this message and promise of hope.

In Christ,  
Steve Van O

# Retired Clergy "Thank You" Luncheon

Our retired clergy gathered for a time of fun and fellowship on November 16. We met at the Augustine Grill Restaurant in Castle Rock. We shared good food and wonderful fellowship. This year we held a drawing for two people to win a framed photograph of the Rocky Mountains by Ken Jenkins. Our winners were Paul Edie and Aladine Neuenschwander. We can't wait to do this again next year. If you are an ABC retired clergy and did not receive an invitation, contact the Region office (303.988.3900 or [office@abcrm.org](mailto:office@abcrm.org)) and update your contact information. We don't want to leave you out next year!!





*We want to say, "thank you" to the ABCRM staff for the invitation to lunch, and the opportunity for fellowship with other "old timers". Shirley and I were unable to attend the Gathering this year. Therefore, the thank you luncheon was particularly appreciated.*

*Keep up your good work  
Sincerely,*

*Roy and Shirley Gardner  
Colorado Springs*

## Camp Wyoba 2018 Calendar

### WyobaFest

Friday, January 19th at FBC of Laramie. Great opportunity to connect with friends, have lots of fun, enjoy a great dinner, and we will award the prize to the church that supported Wyoba the most in 2017. We will have a silent auction that anyone can contribute to.

### Youth Camps

Senior High	June 24 – 30	For students who are in, or graduated from, high school.
Junior High	July 8 – 14	For students who have graduated from 7th & 8th grade.
Junior	July 15 – 21	For students who have graduated from 5th & 6th grade.
Primary	July 22 – 25	For students who have graduated from 3rd & 4th grade.
Mini-Camp	July 1 – 3	For students who have graduated from 1st & 2nd grade accompanied by an adult they trust.

### Camps for Families and Adults

Family Camp	July 26 – 30	A fun time away for the whole family. Enjoy the nature and rustic atmosphere of Wyoba while affirming, and growing, your faith and love for one another.
Women's Retreat	August 10 – 12	A chance to deepen your faith and relax your body, mind, and soul. Led by Rev. Mary Fabin.
Men's Retreat	September 7 – 9	A chance for the guys to get away and nurture their souls. Led by Rev. Bryan Roberts.
Taize Saturday	July 7	Come worship like they do in Taize, France. The day will begin at 10 am and you can be home that night.

### Wyoba Board Meetings

January 20th in Laramie	September 15th at Camp
April 14th in Glenrock	October 27th in Glenrock
June TBD	



## The Importance of RMMO

Please provide support to those who have worked and prayed with you over the years. RMMO restores the lifeline and ongoing connection to the American Baptist family. Hear from those who have served:

“For over 40 years I’ve been promoting the annual RMMO offering in churches. And now to be on the receiving end is gratifying to say the least.”

— Retired pastor in Mineral Wells, WV

“I found it tough financially going through ministry. MMBB has been very supportive of my wife and I in these years of retirement. When we get the Thank You check, yes, we have some bills to pay but I always remember to take some and pay it back because I feel very grateful for what our denomination has done in this way.”

— Retired pastor from Phoenix, AZ

“The Thank You check is more than a check; it sends love. This year the check arrived at a time when I was faced with many bills, and I applied the check to those expenses. Thank you for remembering me.”

— Retired widow from Albion, NY

RMMO exists to alleviate the stress and hardship of unexpected expenses. Your generosity makes this possible and is an example of the thankfulness that flows from our abiding faith in God. For more information and to give, visit [www.abc-usa.org](http://www.abc-usa.org).



Retired  
Ministers &  
Missionaries  
Offering  
2017

## A Word From Pastor Hikmat...

Rev. Dr. Hikmat Kashouh (one of the keynote speakers for this year's Annual Gathering) is a research professor and former academic dean at the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary (ABTS) in Beirut Lebanon. He is also the senior pastor of Resurrection Church Beirut, a vibrant and growing missional church located in the suburbs of Beirut.



The Arab world is going through an unprecedented transformation and the Church is playing a key role in accomplishing God's mission in this part of the world. We would like to invite you to be part of a spiritual movement that is taking place in our midst.

RCB is a missional church that exists to make disciples in Lebanon and the Middle East through calling people to follow Jesus.

Today, more than 2 million people are exposed to Biblical teaching through the broadcasting of the RCB weekend services through satellite and social media, more than 1,200 people are engaged weekend in RCB activities, and life groups, and more than 300 people are actively involved in leading ministries that help people get closer to God and follow Jesus actively.

You can join us in being part of this journey through your prayers and support for the specific projects and areas of ministry.

GO TO THE LINK: [www.rcbeirut.org/ministries](http://www.rcbeirut.org/ministries) to find more about our specific projects.

We are experiencing a great spiritual transformation in  
Lebanon and the Middle East  
We ask you to join us!

## Upcoming Houston Hurricane Relief Trips

**2017 Dates:** December 3-9

**2018 Dates:** January 14-20; February 11-17; March 11-17; April 8-14; May 13-19; June 3-9; June 10-16; June 17-23; July 8-14; July 15-21; August 12-18; September 16-22; October 14-20; November 11-17; November 18-24; December 2-8

**Contact:** Dr. Stuart Lord at [texashurricanerelief1718@gmail.com](mailto:texashurricanerelief1718@gmail.com) — volunteer coordinator for Texas Hurricane Relief of the ABC of the Rocky Mountains.

Visit our website at [www.abcrm.org](http://www.abcrm.org) for the service flyer (below), volunteer information packet, and directions to base.



### SERVICE OPPORTUNITY

**Sponsored by the ABC of the Rocky Mountains  
Working with All Hands Volunteers organization  
Rebuilding Hope**

Service trips to the Houston area are in response to the devastation caused by Hurricane Harvey. They will focus on helping families whose homes have been flooded and left for ruin.

The gutting of homes is happening quickly, so teams should come with an open heart, ready to serve and step into the process. Efforts may include gutting, cleaning, and demolding. This is an incredible opportunity for people to mobilize and help their neighbors in a time of great need.

So much of what people once knew has been covered by floodwaters and/or swept away.

In addition to Service trips ABCRM is currently accepting financial donations to help fund these trips. Their goal is \$25,000. Contact Dr. Stuart Lord at [texashurricanerelief1718@gmail.com](mailto:texashurricanerelief1718@gmail.com) if you are interested in making a financial contribution to these critical efforts.

#### Upcoming Houston Hurricane Relief Trip Dates:

2017  
November 6-11; November 12-19; December 3-9

2018  
January 14-20; February 11-17; March 11-17; April 8-14; May 13-19; June 3-9; June 10-16; June 17-23; July 8-14; July 15-21; August 12-18; September 16-22; October 14-20; November 11-17; November 18-24; December 2-8

**Contact:** If you are interested in serving on a trip as an individual or bringing a group on a trip contact Dr. Stuart Lord, volunteer coordinator for Texas Hurricane Relief of the ABC of the Rocky Mountains, at [texashurricanerelief1718@gmail.com](mailto:texashurricanerelief1718@gmail.com) for further information.

Sleeping accommodations and meals are provided by All Hands Volunteers at no cost to the volunteers. Headquarters are located at Faith United Methodist Church in Richmond, Texas.

# Thank You



October 28, 2017

Dear Partners in Ministry, *ABC of the Rocky Mountains,*

Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ! What a wonderful Savior we serve! Thank you so much for the ways in which you have contributed to our support over these past years as we lived and worked in Thailand to share God's love with the people there. We have been mightily blessed to be your hands and feet to the Akha people, as well as to the Thai and foreign communities in and around the Chiang Rai area of northern Thailand for over 18 years.

About a year ago, we began to sense that perhaps our time in Thailand on a long-term basis was coming to end. For one thing, our ministries have evolved and grown over the years. New leaders are ready to or have already stepped into important roles that we filled at one time. This is exciting to us! Additionally, we have had a concern for some time for Chuck's parents. Chuck's sister, Cathy, and parents have been very supportive of us over all these years, but at 88 and 93 years old, we felt that it is time to "give something back" out of our deep love and respect for all of them.

So what does that mean for us? Chuck began in his new role as pastor at the First Baptist Church of Pittsburgh, PA on October 15. That role began yesterday! We are excited for the ways in which we see God's hand at work. Chuck needs your prayer support as he makes this transition!

Ruth still has a strong sense of calling to ministry, as well, and is in discussion with International Ministries about ways in which she may use her experiences in mission overseas to continue to serve in some capacity. The discussions regarding those possibilities will take a couple of months. She is officially on home assignment for the next 4 months, and would be delighted to come and share with you or your church about what God is doing in Thailand and in our lives.

While we will no longer need financial support for Chuck, we hope that you will prayerfully consider continuing to support Ruth. If you would like to support the projects we manage (CRICS, STEP-Chiang Rai, and General Specifics), these will continue. Your ongoing support of these projects allows those who are currently benefiting to continue receiving the help they need.

Again, we both want to say how much we appreciate your friendship...your partnership...your support and encouragement for the many years we have known you. We look forward to continuing our relationship with you as we move into the future. Please don't forget to contact Ruth if you'd like a visit this fall or early in the new year. Ruth's phone number is 724-221-4695 and her e-mail is [ruth.fox@internationalministries.org](mailto:ruth.fox@internationalministries.org). She is also available on Facebook as "Ruth Gilson.Fox" if you are not already connected.

*Thank you SO much for your many years of support! If you choose to continue supporting me, please send it in as "targeted giving" for "Ruth Fox" or for the "work of Ruth Fox" if it's for a project.* *Many blessings! Chuck & Ruth*  
*Chuck and Ruth Fox*  
*Blessings!*





Moving day!

Glimpses of our last month!



CRICS says "thank-you"



Our new jackets!



Our good friends in Sukkasem Village



A painting of an Akha village



Farewell at the airport



Prayers for our transition



Welcome to FBC Pittsburgh and time with Mom and Dad Fox



## A Recipe for a Great Church Website

It's the most wonderful time of the year. When family and friends visit and bring lots of food. Everyone ooo's and ahhh's over the delectable treats until someone inevitably asks for a recipe so they can replicate the wonderful flavors.

Imagine baking up a church website that everyone will enjoy, engage with, and eat up. It all starts with the right ingredients with directions for combining them into something that keeps people coming back. Prep time will vary.

### ASSEMBLE THE BEST INGREDIENTS:

- 1 Easy-to-remember URL
- 1 Easy-to-use CMS
- Enough People who represent your Community
- 1 Desired Communication Thread
- 5-6 Menu Items
- 12-15 Unique Keywords
- About 50 Words per Module/Page

### DIRECTIONS:

1. Find a reliable hosting company and buy a short, obvious, easy-to-remember URL. Check pricing and get the best value. Install a Church Management System (CMS) that allows your website content to be managed easily and inexpensively (compare with squarespace and wordpress).
2. Understand [who will taste your website](#). Make sure you prepare content that people will love to take a heaping helping and then return for more. Again, and again. Ensure you're building your website for enough people who need it. Make sure they represent the community where you live.
3. Find out what they want from you. Concentrate on their concerns, pains, and goals. Narrow your church's vision and mission to a simple, unique thread that communicates a solution or a path to their goals. Become known for it.
4. Organize your [content](#) into a few, obvious file drawers (menu items) so everyone can figure out where to find whatever they're pursuing. Make this menu dominant at the top of every page.
5. Brainstorm a few keywords that your community would google to find your ministries based on your thread. Sprinkle them liberally throughout your content and add them to your metadata. Don't use too many. Branding is about limiting choices. Including all visual branding components!
6. As each of your pages are developed, use lots of images and short videos. But restrict your words since people don't like reading paragraph text on a website. Concentrate on descriptive, short headlines. Main module/page content should be limited to about 50 words. Create eye-interruptions on the page such as bullet points and links to other pages.

Keep tweaking this recipe to make it your own until it tells your unique brand story. Enjoy and share.

**Serves:** Thousands

To view this article online, click [here](#).



**Mark MacDonald**

Senior Brand Strategist, Creative Director, Blogger  
[BeKnownForSomething](#) [PinPointCreative](#)

Originally published at [BeKnownForSomething.com](#) (who holds the copyright); an organization dedicated to effective church communications while helping individuals and ministries become known for something influential; so they'll point to Christ. Printed with Permission.

IRS Year-End Giving Guidelines	Report for 2017	Report for 2018
Checks written in December 2017 and deposited in church offering in December 2017	X	
Checks written in December 2017 and deposited in church offering in January 2018		X
Checks written and deposited in church offering in January 2018 but "backdated" to December 2017		X
Checks written and deposited in church offering in December 2017 but "postdated" to January 2018		X
Checks written in December 2017 and deposited in the mail and postmarked in December 2017, but not received by the church until January 2018	X	
Checks written in December 2017 and deposited in the mail in December 2017 but not postmarked until January 2018, and not received by the church until January 2018		X

ABC-USA Mission Giving Guidelines		
Monthly cut off is the 8th of each month (except for weekends, holidays, and December year-end). Checks received prior to the 8th of each month are posted to the prior month. For example; checks received October 9 through November 8 are posted to October.		
	Report for 2017	Report for 2018
Checks received in Region office through January 10, 2018, but dated 2017	X	
Checks received in Region office through January 10, 2018, but dated 2017		X

[What's in this RMAB?](#)

## Calendar

**December**

Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering Month

- 1 Executive Committee Meeting
- 2 Western Slope Pastors Christmas Party
- 9 Wyoming Pastors Christmas Party
- 12 SE/NM Pastors Christmas Party
- 14 NFR Pastors Christmas Party
- 15 Denver Pastors Christmas Party
- 24 Christmas Eve
- 25 **Christmas Day** 
- 25-Jan 1 Christmas Holiday Break  
*Region office is closed*
- 31 New Year's Eve

**January**

- 1 New Year's Day (*Region office is closed*)
- 15 MLK Holiday (*Region office is closed*)
- 19 WyobaFest, FBC Laramie
- 20 Wyoba Board Meeting, FBC Laramie

**January Newsletter Deadline**

**Articles for the January newsletter are due by December 15. Please send your articles to [akeys@abcrm.org](mailto:akeys@abcrm.org).**

**HOLIDAY OFFICE HOURS**

Your Region office will be closed December 25 through January 1 for the Christmas and New Year Holiday Season.





*Merry Christmas!!*

*The Rocky Mountain  
American Baptist*  
is published by the  
American Baptist Churches  
of the Rocky Mountains  
[www.abcrm.org](http://www.abcrm.org)

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*This newsletter is published  
on the 1st of each month.*

*The deadline for submissions  
is the 20th of each month.  
Send submissions to  
[akeys@abcrm.org](mailto:akeys@abcrm.org)*

*Reprint permission is granted  
to ABCRM churches.*



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