

LEADER'S GUIDE

"I will praise you and testify about what you have done." PSALM 22:22

"TESTIMONY"



AMERICA FOR CHRIST OFFERING 2022



American Baptist Home Mission Societies



BULLETIN INSERTS INSIDE!

AMERICA FOR CHRIST OFFERING 2022

- 1 From the executive director
 - 2 Biblical reflection
 - 3 2020 ABHMS Grants
 - 4 Mission Program Grants
 - 5 Scholarships & Continuing Education Grants
 - 6 Grants by Disaster Type
 - 7 Rebuilding, Restoring, Renewing Puerto Rico
 - 8 COVID-19 Recovery Grants
 - 9 Geographical Areas Served
 - 10 2020 Palmer Grants
 - 11-14 Bulletin inserts
 - 15 Activities for children and youth
 - 16 Frequently asked questions
- Clip art (inside back cover)

All AFC gifts help fund our grant efforts. But not all dollars depicted in the Leaders Guide are AFC funds. One hundred percent of AFC dollars help fund ABHMS grants that are disbursed across the United States and Puerto Rico.

“I will praise you and testify about what you have done.” PSALM 22:22

Dear Mission Partner,

In the above verse, the psalmist tells of God’s many acts of deliverance and rescue in tumultuous times. We are stirred and inspired to praise God for all the wonders that God is performing in our lives.

That’s what you’ll witness in the Leader’s Guide we have put together to assist you with promoting this year’s America for Christ Offering. You’ll see testimony after testimony of the lives that have been touched and transformed through God’s love with your contributions.

It is my hope that these stories will move you as they have moved me, and will demonstrate the good that your contributions have done—and will do in the future. My friend, the needs are many across the United States and Puerto Rico.

It is up to us to answer God’s call to help and to heal. COVID-19 is devastating communities across the United States and Puerto Rico. Wildfires are raging in the West. Floods are rising in the East. Hurricane Ida leaves destruction from the Gulf Coast to the Northeast. Unemployment soars in many communities. In this context, our American Baptist partners are faithfully serving in congregations and communities with helping ministries and creative responses to the diverse needs in their local contexts, whether helping innocent children living in conditions of poverty, assisting a family that is being evicted, providing food and shelter to the homeless man pushing all his belongings in a shopping cart, and so many others who are hurting and lost.

What is needed is God’s love in its fullest expression in your church and your congregation. Through your generous financial partnership with ABHMS, we can—together—work to bring more hope into our broken world with leaders and disciples who are the hands and feet of Jesus.

So please, consider your gift to the America for Christ offering as we engage in transformational mission to bring God’s love and light into the hearts of people everywhere.

On behalf of ABHMS, thank you for your past generous support of our transformational mission. Our ministries—along with the ministries of our mission partners—are making a difference in the lives of so many individuals and families. With your help, we can bring God’s healing touch to so many more.

May we count on your generosity once again?



With gratitude,

A stylized, handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jeffrey Haggray".

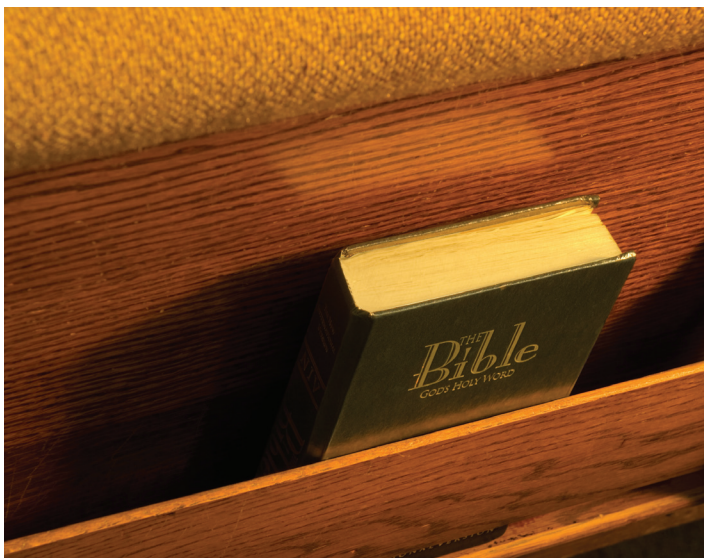
Dr. Jeffrey Haggray, Executive Director
American Baptist Home Mission Societies

Biblical reflection

“I will praise you and testify about what you have done.” PSALM 22:22

To be certain, this verse is not a line that appears to us from some detached dimension or reality. One cannot lift this passage of affirmation out of its context of human suffering and pain, both internal and existential. This particular verse is the voice of a determined and resolute spirit, a resounding affirmation of one's internal determination to embody gratitude for the God who has brought the writer from the very edges of loneliness and pain.

There is no question that the soul is in crisis, deeply troubled. The psalmist describes the present circumstance as surrounded by dogs, facing the mouths of lions and gored by the horns of wild oxen (Psalm 22:16-21).



In this turmoil and struggle, we are confused by the clear and sudden affirmation of verse 22. What is the spirit of this verse? Is it resolve or a feigned bartering with God? How many times have we, during moments of intense resident pain, promised God, “If you get me out of *this*, I will do *that*”?

In reading through the entire Psalm, one cannot deny that verse 22 is a pivotal moment of transition from the wallowing self-pity of pain to the resolution of witness and testimony. This story is part of the witness of a God who is bringing us out and bringing us into something grander and more glorious than the tumult we presently experience.

We know this all too well. This difficulty has been our circumstance for the past 20 months. We are trying to figure out whether we stay paralyzed and isolated by the devastation brought on by a global health crisis; national (global) reckoning with the history of race and racism; the awareness of the prevalence of trauma-induced mental illnesses; and the connection between all three.

*For God did not despise or abhor
the affliction of the afflicted;
he did not hide his face from me,
but heard when I cried to him.*

—Psalm 22:24

Such is the resolve of our efforts with the America for Christ Offering. We do not conclude that because there is pain and suffering, God is angered with us or our affliction. God does not turn away from communal and global crises, nor does God disperse blame on the victims for their corporate and collective troubles. Instead, God takes those opportunities to reveal God's face of compassion and an ear of empathy to our cries.

God shows God's face and affirms the devastation of our circumstances by providing resources that we cannot see because of our pain. Friends who we have not met and may never meet are dispatched to our rescue with resources from the very hand and heart of God. Experiencing God's *hesed* (undying steadfast love), we decree, “I will be a witness myself. I will tell of your name in the great congregation! I will praise you!”

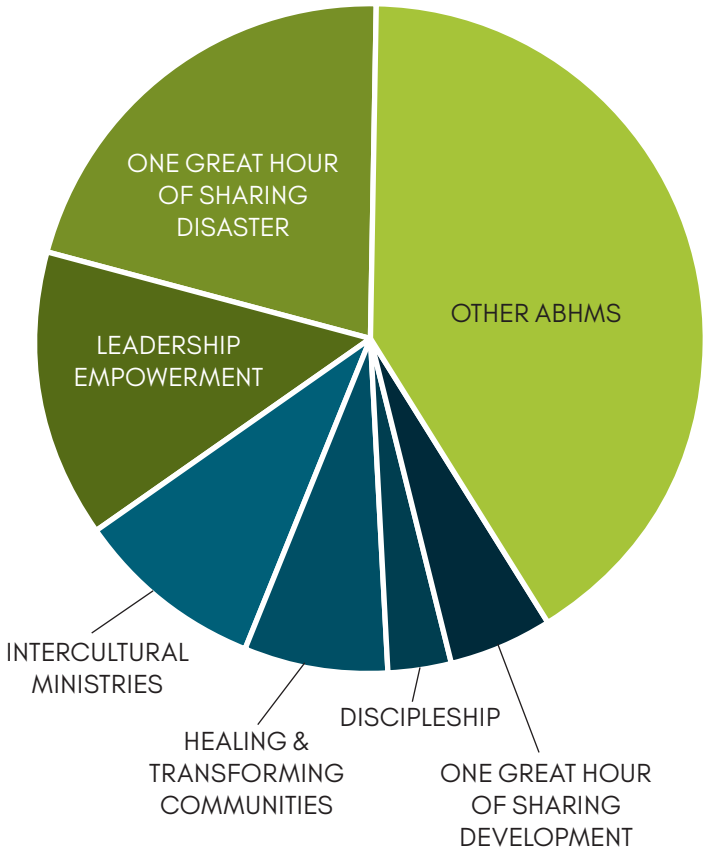


Gary V. Simpson, D.Min.
The Concord Baptist Church of Christ
Brooklyn, N.Y.

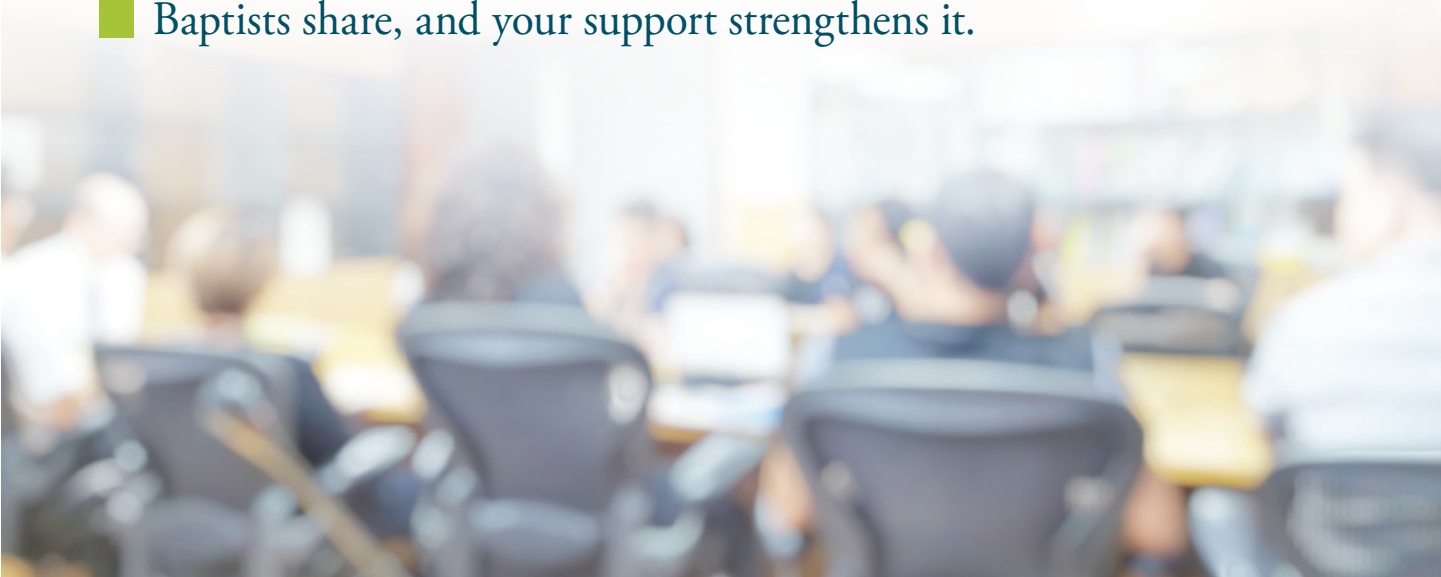
Your America for Christ dollars at work

2020 ABHMS Grants

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Discipleship | \$107,500 |
| Healing & Transforming Communities | \$214,400 |
| Intercultural Ministries | \$282,801 |
| Leadership Empowerment | \$432,375 |
| One Great Hour of Sharing Disaster | \$637,577 |
| Other ABHMS | \$1,261,578 |
| One Great Hour of Sharing Development | \$150,000 |
| TOTAL | \$3,086,231 |



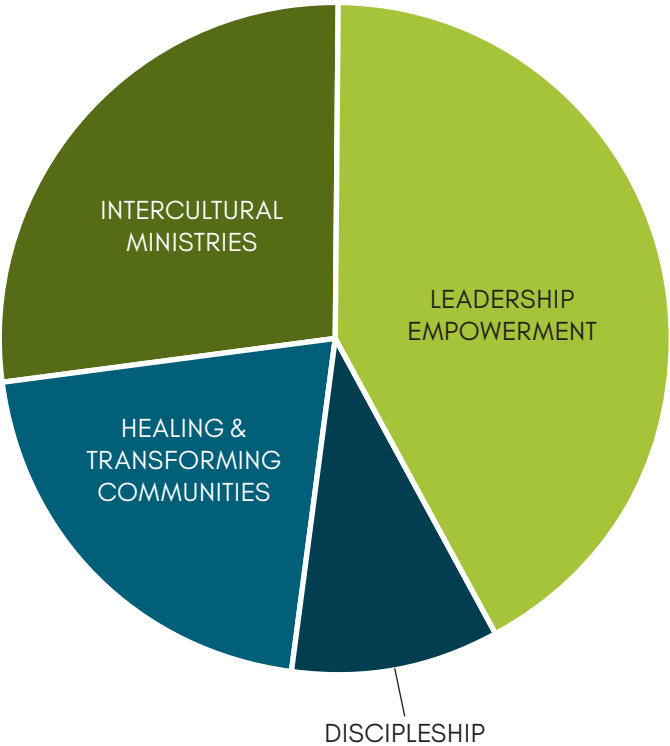
Coming from Lebanon to the U.S., Amal discovered what it's like to join an intercultural church. Today, the parishioners she serves are Japanese-American, and she works with Asian, Arab and Latino communities. This is the rich cultural diversity that all American Baptists share, and your support strengthens it.



Your America for Christ dollars at work

Mission Program Grants

| | |
|------------------------------------|-------------|
| Discipleship | \$107,500 |
| Healing & Transforming Communities | \$214,400 |
| Intercultural Ministries | \$282,801 |
| Leadership Empowerment | \$432,375 |
| TOTAL | \$1,037,076 |



A pastor, Samuel felt like an imposter speaking to his congregation about money. In Support of Excellence (ISOE) changed everything. “Now,” he says, “I feel capable of leading that conversation in my church.” Thanks to your support, ISOE helps pastors explore the personal, pastoral and prophetic dimensions of money.



Your America for Christ dollars at work

Scholarships & Continuing Education Grants Academic Year 2020-21

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| Undergraduate students | 165 |
| Seminary students | 17 |
| Doctoral students | 8 |
| Graduate students | 4 |
| Ellen Cushing students (graduate) | 4 |
| Daniel E. Weiss students | 4 |
| Number of states | 37 |
| Number of regions | 29 |
| Total amount of scholarships granted | \$196,000 |

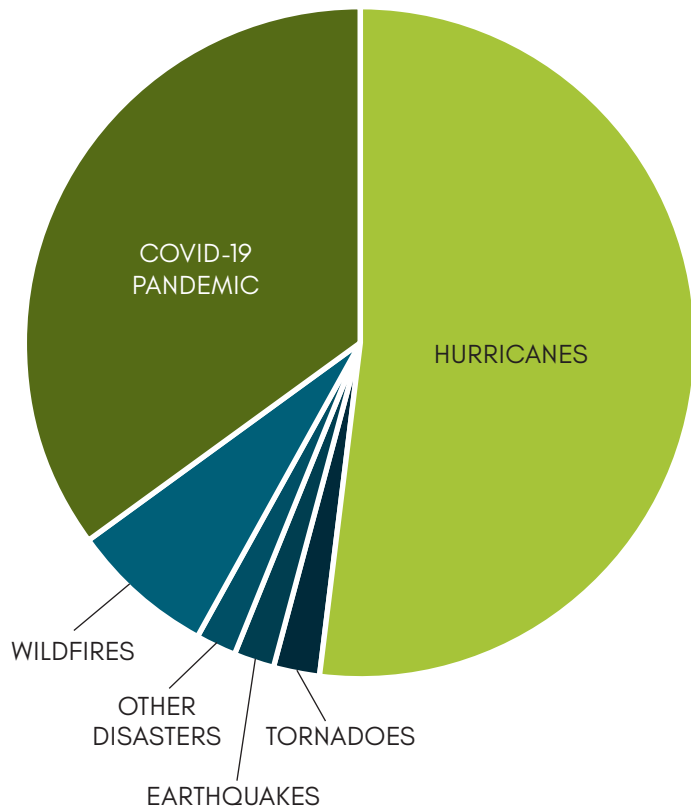


“It’s an honor to receive the ABHMS Daniel E. Weiss Scholarship. This award will assist me as I embark on my seminary journey and continue my call into ministry.” That’s Lauren Williams, a student at Wesley Theological Seminary. Bright, young seminarians like her can devote their lives to faith and ministry, thanks to your generosity.

Your America for Christ dollars at work

Grants by Disaster Type

| | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| COVID-19 Pandemic | \$221,726 |
| Earthquakes | \$13,000 |
| Hurricanes | \$334,851 |
| Other Disasters | \$11,000 |
| Tornadoes | \$15,000 |
| Wildfires | \$42,000 |
| TOTAL | \$637,577 |



After Hurricane Maria, Santos' home in Puerto Rico was nothing but four walls miraculously left standing. No windows, no roof, no doors. Despite the devastation, he's determined to rebuild, relying on his deep faith and aid from ABHMS. Wherever disaster strikes, ABHMS is there to help with your support.



Your America for Christ dollars at work

Rebuilding, Restoring, Renewing Puerto Rico



33 churches renewed
More than 100 houses and lives restored



Mary Luz Jiménez is grateful for your compassion. After Hurricane Maria ripped the roof off her home, she had to cover it with a tarp. But now her house has a permanent roof. “I don’t have to put buckets on the floor if it rains,” she says. “I can finally sleep in peace.”

Your America for Christ dollars at work

COVID-19 Recovery Grants From May 2020 to May 2021

| | |
|------------------|------------------|
| Church for Today | \$7,000 |
| Community Care | \$100,600 |
| Hunger | \$102,626 |
| Financial | \$92,900 |
| Discipleship | \$2,000 |
| Mental Health | \$7,500 |
| Healthcare | \$8,100 |
| Technology | \$5,785 |
| TOTAL | \$317,226 |

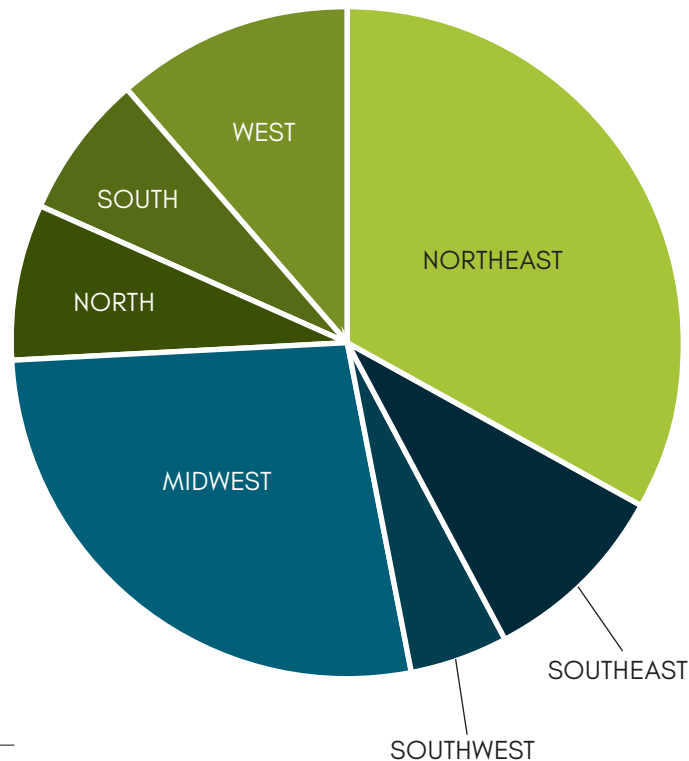
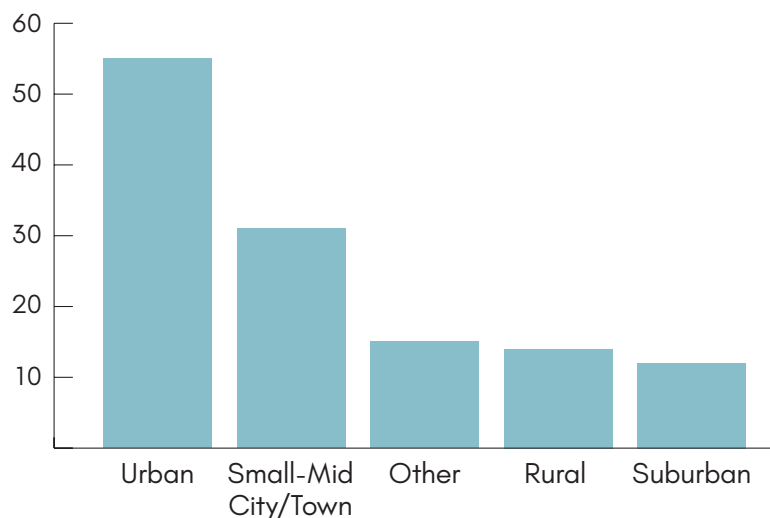


Anita is a church pastor and a chaplain. When COVID-19 took her husband's life and closed down her church, she received a recovery grant and began working as a chaplain at the hospital, ministering to others. Anita's incredible act of discipleship would have been impossible without your compassion and your generous support.

TOP PHOTO: A team of women, calling themselves the Dorcas Seamstresses, at Iglesia Bautista Luz del Mundo in Trujillo Alto, Puerto Rico, made 200 masks from fabric purchased with an ABHMS COVID-19 grant. The masks were included in hygiene-and-protection kits provided to the elderly, those most vulnerable to 2020's pandemic. (Photo by Altita Ruiz)

Your America for Christ dollars at work

Geographical Areas Served 86 cities and towns in 28 states



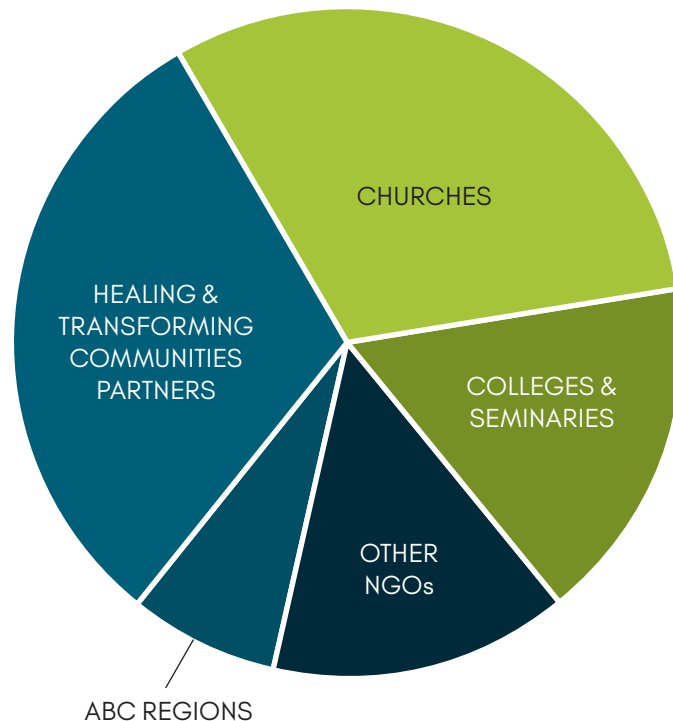
When Joe lost his job because of COVID-19, he and his wife, Carlotta, couldn't feed their family. But they found help at their church's food bank. This is the difference you make. When you give, you answer God's call to help people trapped in poverty, disaster and crisis, changing lives with His love.

Your America for Christ dollars at work

2020 Palmer Grants \$554,602

Type of Organization

| Type of Organization | Number |
|---|-----------|
| Church | 13 |
| Healing & Transforming Communities Partners | 13 |
| Other NGOs | 6 |
| ABC Regions | 3 |
| Colleges & Seminaries | 7 |
| TOTAL RECIPIENTS | 42 |



Jesus' two greatest commandments are to love God and to love people—the essence of discipleship and what it means to be a Christian. Through your generous support, you become the hands and feet of Jesus, serving those in need throughout the U.S. and Puerto Rico with the transformational ministries of ABHMS.



AMERICA FOR CHRIST OFFERING 2022

PLEASE GIVE TODAY! | www.abhms.org/afc

Abigail is answering the call to ministry, thanks to you

With health and financial challenges, Abigail didn't know whether she'd be able to follow her dream of attending seminary.



"I have asked God," she says, "how I was going to be able to receive training to do His work." But now her path is clear. Abigail has been awarded the Daniel E. Weiss Scholarship.

The Weiss Scholarship is given to emerging American Baptist leaders. "I was in shock," Abigail says, "when I received this wonderful blessing."

With overflowing gratitude, she says, "I would like to thank those who awarded me with this scholarship, the people who contribute to this scholarship, and my God who has not failed me yet and who has made it possible for me to go to seminary."

Your gifts help to train and inspire new leaders who are committed to growing the American Baptist denomination. **Please give your America for Christ Offering contribution today.**



American Baptist Home Mission Societies

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PLEASE GIVE TODAY! | www.abhms.org/afc

How you helped Maggie make a difference in her low-income community

Maggie lives in an impoverished neighborhood made up of mostly immigrant families. As a junior in high school, she took it upon herself to plan a community project.



She wanted to clean up an abandoned, trash-strewn lot in the area. Maggie led the effort with classmates and removed all the trash. Her positive act inspired others and set the wheels into motion.

A short time later, the city announced that it would transform the lot into a neighborhood park. Instead of trash, needles and abandoned cars, this spot would be a small but peaceful place for neighbors to gather. It's all because one young person decided to change the narrative and make a real difference.

This is the good you do. Your support enables ABHMS to provide scholarships, mentoring, tutoring and more to inspire young people to take charge of their future. **Please give your America for Christ Offering contribution today.**



American Baptist Home Mission Societies

AMERICA FOR CHRIST OFFERING 2022

PLEASE GIVE TODAY! | www.abhms.org/afc

Sergio is succeeding in a youth program with your generous support

A fourth-grader, Sergio carried the unfortunate label of “trouble-maker.” Perhaps not without reason. He was angry. He was defiant with teachers. He fought with classmates. He refused to take part in activities. He was clearly heading down a dangerous path.



But all that changed when Sergio began attending a local youth program. There, instead of being treated as a trouble-maker, he was treated with love. He was listened to with respect. He was guided with compassion. And he began to see how his actions were causing all the problems he was having.

Today, Sergio is a different child. He’s an active, engaged, intelligent boy who likes school and has lots of friends. This is your support at work.

With your generosity, ABHMS funds youth programs that can change children’s lives and set them on the right path for a bright future. **Please give your America for Christ Offering contribution today.**



American Baptist Home Mission Societies

AMERICA FOR CHRIST OFFERING 2022

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Magaly’s house now has a roof, because of you

Just a few short years ago, hurricanes Irma and Maria slammed into Puerto Rico, and the island is still reeling from the devastation. In addition to destroyed hospitals, schools and other buildings, many homeowners found themselves with roofs that were badly damaged and, in some cases, completely torn off.



Magaly is one of these homeowners. Long after the disaster happened, she could only afford a leaky blue tarp draped over the top of her home, instead of an actual roof.

“Every time it rained,” she says, “the house would get wet—the floors, the walls, everything would get soaked.”

Magaly no longer has to worry about that blue tarp. Thanks to you, she has a new roof for her house that will last for years to come. This is how you’re helping. **Please give your America for Christ Offering contribution today.**



American Baptist Home Mission Societies

AMERICA FOR CHRIST OFFERING 2022

PLEASE GIVE TODAY! | www.abhms.org/afc

You're countering Asian hate with God's love

A Filipino-American man is slashed with a knife on a New York subway train. "I put my hand on my face, and when I saw my hand, it was full of blood," he said. This is just one incident of many.

Attackers jeer at Asian Americans, shouting "Go back to China!" They repeat vile things like "China virus," kung flu," and "Wu flu." They scrawl hateful slogans on Asian-American homes and businesses.



"In this season of growing fear and unrest in the Asian-American community, our leaders long to be equipped and find solidarity, as we do ministry together," says the Rev. Michele Turek, former coordinator of the Alliance of Asian-American Baptist Churches.

Your support helps strengthen Asian-American churches to counter the hate, aid Asian-Americans struggling with racism and poverty, welcome Asian-American young people into ministry and much more. **Please give your America for Christ Offering contribution today.**



American Baptist Home Mission Societies

AMERICA FOR CHRIST OFFERING 2022

PLEASE GIVE TODAY! | www.abhms.org/afc

Your support enables Black female pastors like Chris to succeed

Chris was called to pastor a small, greying church with a mostly white congregation. She was their first female, African-American pastor.



With Chris' leadership, the church began to grow. But problems appeared. A number of congregants passed away. And racial tensions heightened. The new people joining the church were mostly minorities. Many long-time parishioners left.

Naturally, finances dwindled. The church could no longer afford to pay Chris, so she agreed to go without a salary, instead receiving a small stipend. Worse, the building needed extensive repairs because of flooding.

But thankfully, your support was there. Chris received a grant for repairs to the church. She received a grant for her salary and retirement. And she received help with additional financial steps. The result? The church is now on solid financial footing. This happened because of you. **Please give your America for Christ Offering contribution today.**



American Baptist Home Mission Societies

AMERICA FOR CHRIST OFFERING 2022

PLEASE GIVE TODAY! | www.abhms.org/afc

This is how you were there for Jimmy after prison

When Jimmy's mom threw him out of the house, he was only 16. He spent the next few years homeless and addicted to drugs and alcohol.



It didn't take long before he was arrested for drug dealing and possession. He was sentenced to 10 years in prison. When he was finally released, Jimmy had nothing to go back to. He had no home, no friends, no family, no job skills. It seemed like his only option was trying to survive on the streets. That's what he did for a full year. Until he found the church.

And because of your support, help was there from a network of chaplains and pastors who helped Jimmy return to society. Today he has a job, a place of his own and a future. This is the good you do. **Please give your America for Christ Offering contribution today.**



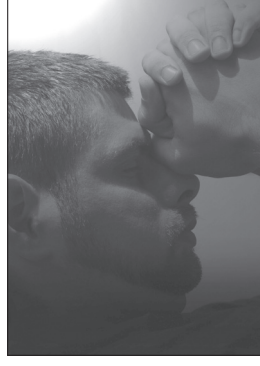
American Baptist Home Mission Societies

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Kevin was homeless and alone, but you helped

Kevin grew up in Oklahoma, an all-American kid, and he enlisted right after high school. Joining the Army was the proudest day of his life.



Deployed to Iraq, Kevin did two combat tours without a problem. Then, when he came home after his active duty, he found a job and got an apartment. He seemed to be holding it together. But something inside him had changed.

He started drinking more and more. He started missing work, until he got fired. And when he ran out of money, he was evicted. After that, he was homeless and alone. He was lost. But thankfully, he found the church and your wonderful support.

Today, Kevin is living in the church's men's shelter. He's getting help with addiction—and hope for the future. This is how you minister to people in need. **Please give your America for Christ Offering contribution today.**



American Baptist Home Mission Societies

Activities for children and youth

Word Search

Ways to Testify

How do you share God's goodness with others?

| | | |
|---------|---------|-----------|
| ACCEPT | HELP | SHARE |
| BELIEVE | LIFT UP | SHOUT |
| CARE | LOVE | SHOW |
| CREATE | MOVE | SING |
| DANCE | PAINT | TELL |
| DONATE | PRAISE | TESTIMONY |
| GIVE | PRAY | |

Z L F P W H D D L P Z V A E F
 U P R A Y N D A T D L F D V X
 S C S H A R E N J B L O O O C
 P J X A E W N C C U I D V M R
 Y T P F F R Q E E T F I B E E
 N U G B H H A V L O T F B A A
 O O B N D O I C P N U T X T T
 M H D T I G E M P C P P P V E
 I S B N S S N L J E R M N B H
 T P N I V D N F C A S Z W D I
 S X H A W O K C I J G L L E T
 E N F P H N A S G X S Q R J T
 T W O H S A E F M V E D L B U
 C U L W I T C Y P L E H Y Z S
 P V O E S E V E I L E B A D U

I Will Tell the World (That the Lord is Great)

Music and lyrics by Rachael Lawrence

D G A D G D A7 D

I will tell the world that the Lord is great, the Lord is great, the Lord is great! I will
 I will clap my hands for the Lord is great, the Lord is great, the Lord is great! I will
 I will jump for joy for the Lord is great, the Lord is great, the Lord is great! I will
 I will share my gifts for the Lord is great, the Lord is great, the Lord is great! I will

6 D G A D G D A7 D

tell the world that the Lord is great! I'll tell ev' - ry - bo - dy a - round me.
 clap my hands for the Lord is great! I'll tell ev' - ry - bo - dy a - round me.
 jump for joy for the Lord is great! I'll tell ev' - ry - bo - dy a - round me.
 share my gifts for the Lord is great! Share with ev' - ry - bo - dy a - round me.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the national goal?

American Baptist Home Mission Societies (ABHMS) is promoting the America for Christ (AFC) Offering 2022, which seeks to raise \$1,000,000 to support American Baptist mission and ministry across the United States and Puerto Rico.

What is the AFC 2022 theme?

The theme for the AFC 2022 Offering is “Testimony” based on Psalm 22:22: “I will praise you and testify about what you have done.”

How can I support AFC 2022?

You can give during the congregational offering Sunday at your church, or you can give an individual gift online by visiting abhms.org/AFCnow. Also, consider encouraging your congregation’s Mission Committee to include an America for Christ Offering contribution in its annual budget.

How is my gift making a difference?

Your generous AFC gifts support our mission—connecting our partners to cultivate leaders and equip disciples who bring healing and transformation to communities across our nation and Puerto Rico. Your contributions share God’s love by:

- Cultivating Leaders — Strong leaders advance the mission of faith communities.
- Equipping Disciples — Broadening the understanding of what it means to be a follower of Jesus.
- Healing Communities — We believe the power of Christian love can—and will—change the world.

How is the AFC Offering used?

The offering is distributed in three parts:

- 59% supports the ministries of ABHMS;
- 12% supports the offering’s promotional and deputation costs and
- 29% supports regional ministries. (ABHMS is the only mission board to share its offering with American Baptist Churches USA regions.)

Whom do I contact for more materials or if I have a general question?

Contact personnel in ABHMS’ Development office:

- Kim Wilkins, Development Coordinator, 610.768.2413
- Vincent Dent, Chief Development Officer, 610.768.2420
- Monique Sadler-Taylor, Director of the Annual Fund and Major Gifts, 610.768.2410

Where do I find the electronic versions of AFC 2022 materials to download?

Visit abhms.org/AFC for downloadable items and the opportunity to show the videos directly from the Internet.

MISSION MOMENTS: America for Christ Offering Videos

The online videos can be used during a “Mission Moment” in worship or in a small group setting to illustrate how America for Christ Offering contributions impact and transform lives across America and Puerto Rico. Go to abhms.org/AFC to download the videos.

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FOR CHRIST
OFFERING**
2022

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“TESTIMONY”

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PLEASE GIVE TODAY! | www.abhms.org/afc

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**“I will praise you and
testify about what
you have done.”**

PSALM 22:22

**“I will praise you and
testify about what
you have done.”**

PSALM 22:22



AMERICA FOR CHRIST OFFERING 2022

**“I will praise you and
testify about what
you have done.”**

PSALM 22:22

PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS

Obtain promotional materials by visiting abhms.org/afc or by contacting Kim Wilkins at kim.wilkins@abhms.org or 610.768.2413.

- Poster
- Leader's Guide (available in English and Spanish)
NOTE: Bulletin Inserts are inside the Leader's Guide.
- Offering Envelope
- Coin Box
- Speaker Request Form
- Videos (available online at abhms.org/afc)
- Flyer (available online at abhms.org/afc in English and Spanish)
- Evaluation Form